

# A sobering Tuesday



On Tuesday I was on my way to a job and had to choose a route to take. One of the routes, the one I didn't pick, was blocked with police tape and vehicles, which I found out when I passed it taking the other route. Like accidents and such I pass from time to time, I wondered if I would see it in the paper tomorrow whatever it was. I found out much more quickly than that. When I arrived at the school, I signed in and took note of an article someone had laid out, printed from the local paper's website. A fire had claimed the lives of a mother and a fifth-grade boy that very morning. The dad, who is said to have set the fire due to financial problems, would die in the hospital a day later. Being closer to the school I was at than any other school in the district I figured I would be dealing with more than teaching today because guess what- I was subbing for fifth grade. As it turned out, while this school was closer the main road was a dividing line so in fact he went to a different school. I guess they didn't want kids to have to cross the busy road. For me that meant not having kids who needed to be consoled, but now the ones at the other school would be the ones involved in the crisis counseling. The fire wasn't even mentioned where I was, but I can bet today this school had some counselors on hand since after all, the family lived only about a half-mile away. There were two surviving children. I pray that they get the help they need to be able to move forward. I am not sure if I ever subbed in the fifth-grader's class. His name isn't familiar, but I think I may recognize him, but maybe not- I have been with hundreds of different kids after all. One thing is for sure though, I will never be subbing in his class again.

May God comfort those two kids who are now parentless and minus one sibling. Peace to them. Typically I don't identify the districts I sub in, but this news deserves a couple of

links:

[Officials look to cause of fire that killed members of 'perfect family'](#)

[Police: Kevin Finnerty left suicide note, started fire](#)

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## **The Scariest Night Of Our Lives...**

... happened just the other night. It's really frightening and a huge reality check to know that you could be sitting somewhere (camping and enjoying the beautiful outdoors in my case), totally relaxed, and the very next minute, there is a life or death emergency – literally.

Before you fret, let me disclaim that everyone is fine but this was almost not the case. As you may have read in my previous blog post, we decided to take our 4 kids camping and have been in the great wilderness of northeast Indiana during the past week. A few nights ago, my husband and I had gotten the kids to bed, and we were enjoying a horror movie on the porch of our cabin when we heard a strange noise – kind of like a kid laughing or coughing. Then, through the window, we see our oldest daughter Taylor practically jumping down the ladder that leads to the loft area in our cabin where our two oldest kids have been spending the nights. From her body language, it was obvious that someone was very hurt. My husband and I ran inside the cabin, just as Taylor said something about her sister choking on a gumball, and that's when we see our 5-year-old daughter Sammie in the loft, CHOKING. My husband grew wings, flew up to the loft and gave her the Heimlich until the gumball shot out of her throat and

across the room. Sammie was catching her breath, but she was still drooling and not talking – the scariest moment of our lives! I was already on the cell phone with 911, and the dispatcher was asking me if I could bring her up to the front of the campground, so they didn't have to waste precious time by trying to find our cabin. Miraculously, Sammie started to talk and act like nothing even happened – that's kids for you! Poor Taylor was scared and shaking, so we told her what an AWESOME job she did *saving her sister's life*. We are going to write to our local newspaper about what a hero she is – without her quick thinking and correct response to the situation (she was actually dozing when it happened), I shudder to think that we could have lost Sammie... I just can't bear to think of it. Thank God everyone is ok! The very cool (thank you Steuben County emergency dispatch!), calm and collected dispatcher asked if I wanted to cancel the ambulance that was already in route, and I agreed and thanked her before I hung up – so that makes FOUR times I've had to dial 911 on my cell for this or that, not fun!

But we have outlawed gumballs in our family – just not worth that kind of agony! Maybe on their wedding days or on the days they move out of our house and gain their independence, maybe then we will be the family that celebrates with gumballs after outlawing them for decades!

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## **Bloggging In The Great Outdoors**

Now that school is out, we decided to take a last minute camping trip with the kids and dogs, and it's been wonderful. More on that later – I am in a cabin, “roughing it” in the

great outdoors (so to speak – we do have beds, running water, a bathroom, a/c, even a little fridge and microwave), but it doesn't even seem appropriate to be using a computer – just kind of takes away from the outdoorsy ambiance a little bit. But it rained yesterday, with more storms forecast for today and tomorrow, so I figured I would use some of my free time to let my faithful readers know that I haven't skipped town. Well, I kind of have skipped town, but in a good way, and someday soon, I'll be back to blogging like a maniac whenever I have the chance...

Until then...

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## Halfway there...

My dear daughters again gave me a 1-2 punch. This was when my oldest got married and my second youngest graduated from High School. My Second youngest is getting married in 2 weeks and my youngest graduated high school today. So, as a family we are halfway there. It has been an interesting 3 years. I was actually reminded today that it is a 1-2-3 punch since both this year and in 2006 I had daughters graduating from the community college. Since they got early graduation gifts for college (they both 'needed' laptops), they didn't really want to do much for the college graduations. I'm grateful for that, but I should recognize that they both got their degrees.

Well the graduation portion of this is finished except for a party or two. It is interesting how the students stagger their parties from weekend to weekend.

The graduation was the easy event of the year. My youngest was able to give a short speech as one of 4 students with perfect 4.0 grade points. That is out of less than 100 young adults.

(Yes, this is a small rural school.) It was interesting to hear what the students found to be important in their 4 years of high school. It is also interesting as an adult to realize that what they think is important now may not remain that way in the coming years. They get to experience a greater freedom and less free time as they grow into the adult world.

So here are my best wishes to all the graduates of 2009.

One final thought, the wedding dress is finished. That is a full 2 weeks before the wedding day.

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## **Rookie in Training**

This afternoon was the big day in which I had to train the new employee at the store. I must say that I was really impressed. By the time 9pm rolled around, he had learned A LOT. I began by taking him on a tour of the store... all the departments, the walk-in coolers, the backroom of doom, and the milk crate/smoking cage (something my young protege was quite curious about since he is a smoker). Since it was graduation day, ALMOST everyone needed the day off. This was one of the reasons I was training today (I would have been by myself for 7 hours). I taught the basics: milk and egg filling including rotation, floor cleaning, phone etiquette, bagging and carrying out groceries. I was actually surprised how busy the store was not only with the last minute graduation card pick up.

At the beginning, I had him watch as I waited on customers. In the early evening, I noticed that the ground meat was REALLY low, so I told Nate to stand by the register and to call when a customer needed waited on. At first, he was apprehensive to say the least. I told him that he would be

fine... I knew he could do it. After paging me three times to the front, he was ringing up transactions by himself. As long as they involved cash only, I was ok with it. Anything beyond that (check, credit, food stamps, or WIC) he was to call me right away. By the end of the night, he was taking check transactions. I was really impressed.

I asked him to demonstrate how HE would answer the telephone. Without any training, he picked up the phone and said "Kaiser's... may I help you?" WOW!

All in all, a totally rewarding day. Hopefully, he retains what he learned in such a short time. I'll find out Tuesday. Sometime, I will need to show him the basement of doom.

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## Missing them already

*This post was written last Tuesday, before the last post, but the sentiments still apply of course. There was a video too, but unfortunately I did not get permission to post it here. However, once it is officially posted at the church website I will be allowed to post that link. Technically, the video is viewable now online via the site it's hosted on, but since the link isn't public yet it's still being treated as private. So, to the post:*

Well, this last weekend was it. Maybe it was the way we went back to permanent small groups so I had the same kids each week, or maybe it was putting together the video, the first time I have ever made a video like this for 4th/5th grade, but I don't recall feeling this way about any other group of 5th-graders leaving. Maybe it was both. It's not as if I haven't gotten close to the students before, I have. There is even a select group who I shared a cabin with for two summers a

couple years back. Maybe my memory is just faulty. I don't know. So two weeks from now we'll be introducing an entire new group of kids into 4th grade as we move this last year's 4th grade up to 5th. Due to the way things are done in the kid's ministry with 4th and 5th grades going to service with their parents the last weekend of every month, the 3rd-graders actually have one more week before they come to us as 4th-graders. This weekend was also the swan song for this year's drama for the K-3rd grade kids. This would ordinarily have been my week, but I had switched with someone who couldn't do his week last weekend. Ironically, I received a call on Friday night that the one playing the guest role for the weekend couldn't make Saturday night, so could I fill in for him? I did, which rather made things strange. I was performing with my cast, but not in my normal role. I did wear a false mustache and Fedora (can you guess the role type it was from the headwear? ☐ ) so I would at least look less like me in my other role playing a different role. Hmm, could that last sentence of mine be more confusing? At least you now share something with undoubtedly some of the kids who watched. ☐ . If you haven't yet figured out the guest role this weekend, I'll have to pull out my whip and... do something with it. So anyway, as it turned out the original actor couldn't make Sunday either, but the director filled in that day so I could at least spend an entire service with the very last 5th grade group at the 11:15 service. Yes, I do miss them.

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## **Cosmic Bowling That Was Not Out of This World**

Tonight after I got off work, I headed over to meet a group of family members and some friends of my visiting cousin for a

night of fun-filled cosmic bowling. However when we arrived, it was soon discovered that cosmic bowling is on FRIDAY night. Ok... but two lanes were reserved for SATURDAY night at 9. Someone had called earlier in the week to hold the lanes and was informed that cosmic bowling was indeed on Saturday. Someone was asleep at the wheel. We asked them to locate the reservation list for Friday night to see if they had put the name down and misinformed our party. The sheet from last night could not be located. Ah... *c'est la vie*...or group of 10+ got three lanes and bowled three games.

I asked Megan to join us after the Weekender's evening of Belly Dancing and we shared a lane with my sister. I did break a hundred (too bad this was after the two games were added together). For our final game, I got a score of at least 120... let's see if I can get someone to post a reaction to this ☐ If not.. then it will be my story and will stick to it. OK, OK... I cannot tell a lie... we decided to change our order for the final game... and Megan (as me) got the 120+ but the third game was my best so at least I improved. But it was a fun time

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## Risky Business

One of the highlights of a lot of weeks is the semi-regular game night. A bunch of friends gather to play a WIDE assortment of games. I think we have barely scratched the surface of the [game closet](#). I love all types of games (Monopoly not so much... think I mentioned that before). Tonight was memorable for two games. First was Cranium Pop in which I elected to give a humming clue to the name of a movie. We needed one point to win the game. However, I elected not to do a charades version of the movie in

question. So, I began to hum the old Bob Segar song “Old Time Rock & Roll.” And hummed, and Hummed AND **HUMMED**. I even began clapping in time to the song to get the full effect, to no avail. I ask you... how many movies feature that song in a memorable sequence? The only scene I could think of to reenact is the scene from the movie in which the song was used and I was **NOT** going to do that... besides there was no couch to dance on in the room. However, somehow, the opposing team also failed to get their points so it came back to our side and we won.

Another game was one that has been threatened with banishment into the “Jamiahsh banned game pile”. Three for All involves a series of three words which the reader tries to get his teammates to say which then leads to the word that ties the other three words together. For instance:

*milk...dark...white = chocolate*

After defeating our opponents, I became the delegated clue giver for the next round. Kind of like hosting my own game show. For some reason, the score was much closer. Honestly, I don't know if my friends get annoyed with me or not. Maybe I should try a different approach next time and “let the wookie win” whoever that might be.

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## **Munchkin Junction What's Your Function?**

To wear out a thirtysomething who went along with his niece nephew and their eighteen year old babysitter. Elizabeth, Noah, and Nate showed up around 12.30 and asked if I wanted to

go across to the school playground. Since school was still going on, I suggested going out to the park across town. Elizabeth and Nate go to a neighboring school that let out yesterday and big brother had to go to school for a work day. Being outnumbered, we decided that I would drive the two or three blocks to the park. Really fun times, but got wore out. One of the first things Elizabeth asked me to attempt was the swinging tire. BIG MISTAKE! Nate had to help me get out of it. Later, we played some hide and seek amongst the pirate ship (AAAARGH!), wooden car, and drawbridge. I think I was the ultimate victor since no one was able to find my spot. We also had fun at the old water sput... one of the things you actually have to pump to get the water to come out. Elizabeth and Noah got a little wet with no help at all from me (ok... maybe a little) but I would not complain if I had gotten a little wet... it would have felt good. I even slid down the slide to depart the ship and join in glorious battle or to at least capture the scalawag who was firing cannons at me. After discovering that the batting cage was not working, it was time to return.

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## **Utter Chaos – The Good Kind**

The school year is winding down... my third-grader's last day of third grade is today! When I was a kid, we always went to school into the month of June – never ended in May. Well, except senior year when we graduated on May 31 – but the seniors always finished early. I don't understand Ohio and their strange school schedules (what with fog days and stuff, which are unheard of in Chicagoland where I went to school), but I do like them. My third-grader is a HUGE help around the house, and I'm excited to have another pair of hands and someone to talk to during the day.

So anyway, yesterday was my 4 5-year-old's end of the year picnic for her school, rain or shine. And rain it did. Even though we arrived right on time, all of the sheltered picnic tables were taken. So, we had to slish the double-stroller through the puddles and the mud to sit in the rain with 3 little kids and eat our lunch. Luckily it was only drizzling, but the picnic table and bench were all wet – note to self to start keeping a towel in the car. After lunch, they started to set up the large bouncy castles and my husband wisely took our 5 and 2-year-olds (Sammie and Disney) over to get in line. Judging by the huge turnout for this event, we didn't want to wait in line all day, especially if the drizzle turned into a downpour. My kids were first in line, but Disney chickened out, so Sammie bounced without her sister on the regular bouncy castle. Then it was time to check out the MEGA-bouncy! It began with a crawl-thru maze, followed by a ladder up a vertical wall and finished with a steep slide, and it was total chaos! There were kids everywhere! The adults were scrambling to regulate how many kids went inside, but somehow kids were getting stuck... next thing you know, there were kids crying and yelling and adults couldn't get to them because they were in the crazy maze of this gigantic bouncy! My daughter Sammie emerged from the maze, and she climbed the steep ladder like a pro. Matter of fact, Sammie was thru the entire boucy obstacle course 3 times before most kids got through once – she is a very good climber and couldn't care less about the pile of kids at the beginning which is where most of them freaked out for their parents. Disney kept saying she wanted to try it, and noramlly we like our kids to try new things, but the huge bouncy was littered with kids of all types and sizes: crying kids, climbing kids, big kids, screaming kids – I was sure my sweet little 2-year-old would get eaten alive in there. So she watched for awhile and decided she still wanted to go in it, and we found a side entrance that bypassed the crazy maze of kid-doom. To our surprise, Disney climbed the ladder (with help from big sis Sammie) and went down the slide – and she had fun! And Sammie

loved seeing all her friends and her teachers and having fun with them. Chaotic as it was, it was all worth it because it was for Sammie – and she loved it! This is Sammie helping Disney up that huge ladder:

