

# Fun On The Farm

I think most people have fond memories of visiting a special family fun place in the fall. The pumpkin farms that my husband and I grew up going to are much different now – his has closed down, and mine has expanded beyond the family-owned small operation into a little carnival of sorts; I visited a few years ago. It was fun, but not the same. We've since moved away from the place of our youth, and we are happy to have found a fun place in NW Ohio to make memories with our own kids: [Leader's Family Farms](#).

Leader's has something for every age group: 2 haunted attractions for the older crowd, and for the family: mini-golf, a petting zoo (complete with exotics – more on that later!), hayrides, a hay maze, slides, chicken coop shooting, and a corn maze. For the little ones, there are bouncy castles, a moo-train, a hay-climber with tunnel, and a corn box. The under 5 kids area is really fun, and it's all free! My 2-year-old and my 3-year-old had a blast over there for hours, even if my son came home with a diaper full of corn – it was worth it! Actually, he still had corn coming out of his coat the next morning at church but again, it was well worth it! Here is a video of him playing in the corn box in case you're wondering what I'm talking about. The video pans to the rest of my kids, and finishes with my 3-year-old crawling through the little kids' tunnel:

My husband took my two oldest girls and their friend into the haunted corn maze. This was a big deal because this thing is SCARY! It is the best (read: scariest) haunted house in the area, and my daughter's friend wanted to go in it, so we convinced our daughter to go as well (they're both 10). Thrill-seeker little sis (age 6) really wanted to check it out, so she went too. They might have been REALLY scared, but they all made it out, and no one cried or tried to back out at the last minute! I wish I could have seen them in there, but the little ones were WAY too young for something like that, so I stayed out with them. I didn't mind too much since the exotic petting zoo was free – I hung out there for the hour and a half or so that it took my family to get through the haunted house. They had goats, sheep, alpacas, a teeny-tiny little pig, a camel (just a fuzzy baby, not his full height even though he was taller than I... I was wondering how old he was, and I found out he shares a February birthday with a fellow tangenteer...), and some kangaroos. They also had some other baby animals (a fox for one) and some parrots, but they could not bring them out because the weather was terrible – windy, cold, and rainy. But I got to pet some kangaroos and even feed them – I think it was the first time I've ever touched a kangaroo! They were good-tempered, soft, and really interesting to see up close and personal. I think the petting zoo people got sick of me, and I would have hung out more by the country band which I also liked, except that the weather was so terrible that it was hard to even enjoy the band – we all just wanted to stay out of the wind and rain. Look how little this pig is:

And here is more of the kangaroos and of the camel:

The hayride goes out way back into the forest, and luckily we rode it in between rain showers. The tractor even drove through a small creek bed that was partially filled – it looked like we were going to get stuck in the water:

My kids all liked it, even if there were some concerns about tipping on the steep hills going down into the forest – but we didn't tip. I can't wait to take my son on the hayride in our town in a few weeks -there are spooks that jump out from behind the trees there, and given his fascination with monsters lately, I know he'll have a blast! I brought out the Halloween costumes last night for the kids to pick through to find what they're going to be for Halloween, and my son found a Friday the 13th Jason hockey mask and insisted on going to bed with it. ☐

I must also add that Leader's is a family-owned farm; we struck up several conversations with the owners, and they are extremely nice and caring for their customers. The farm opened a little late when we visited because of the rain, so they gave us free passes to come back again – as busy as our Octobers are (this one being no exception), I think going back to Leader's when the weather is better is a MUST!! By the way, I was *this close* to taking home a straggler from the petting zoo. Only time will tell if I am able to resist next time we visit... ☐

My men on the hayride:



And my girls... note the beautiful NW Ohio countryside in the background. The scenery will only get better as the leaves change a little more and the sun comes out:



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## A New Title

Yesterday after putting my time in at my day job, I headed over to the Huber for set construction. I finally got a glimpse of the old theatre full of flats, scraps, set decor, etc. It was like walking into an attic which I enjoy doing looking at the treasure trove of the past. We took a bunch of flats and furniture over to construct Holmes' abode at 221B Baker Street as well as Baskerville Hall.

When it comes to set building, I fall into one of two categories... those who can... do. Those who can't... stand aside. The paint brushes were snatched up before I got a chance to put my painting to use.

I was useful in my new role of facilitat**TORE** (emphasis on the **TORE!**). I am perfectly willing to do my part even if it means playing fetch, holding a ladder, or whatever seemingly minor job needs tending to. I even got to tape some of the seams in the walls before the paint was applied. I know where my real talent lies I just am taken aback that some have more than one theatrical talent.

But after nearly 10 hours of work, the set is (according to

reliable sources) about 90% complete. I must say that working with friends to get the job done definitely helped. Laughing, pizza, laughing, and a lot of work goes somewhat more smoothly when you have friends with you and even some who actually know what they are doing... or do a good job acting like they do.

To see the finished product (which I feel will only help make those on stage look better), reserve your tickets now to see the immortal Sherlock Holmes mystery, [\*The Hound of the Baskervilles\*](#), October 15-17.

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## A breather at last

Well, it is Saturday and I am neither working nor rehearsing. For the moment. The last week has been tech week, so the set has been going up little by little as we have rehearsed. Even after last night, the final dress, there was still work to be done. Thursday we got glowing praises from the director on how well the show looked even if the blood wasn't present yet. Hey- people die, so there has to be blood- especially for one of the deaths involving a slit throat. Yes, I will wait while you take care of your stomach in the bathroom... Well, I do know some of you three readers are horror buffs so you are still with me. ☐

My death is clean so I don't have to worry about blood at least. Moving on, last night the director was extremely po'ed after the first act. He didn't yell, but he did make sure everyone knew. He was far more pleased with the second act and so during notes he crumpled up one note after another without reading them aloud so as not to get down on us. I shudder to think of the contents of the notes had the second act not gone so well. I do think the first number at the

start of the act was the best we have ever done though, even if it did drag a bit.

Following this show I am now in the first community theatre non-musical, that is straight play, I have been in in a very long time. Now I have done straight drama in church of course, but as for community theatre is has been far too long. It is the same show [Jamiahsh](#) was in last year, but my role is far more humble though I felt my audition went fairly well. So did others' apparently. This is my role:



Oh, sorry. That was [Gowron](#). My role is Gower. Mr Gower, the druggist a young Mr. Bailey worked for, originally played by [H. B. Warner](#). They asked if I would be willing to play additional roles if necessary and I said absolutely. Well, hopefully next time I try out for this group they will know me better (in a good way ☺ ). We all have to start somewhere. I do not know when I will begin rehearsing, but I will miss the first read-through because of my Monday night small group. I'll try to post more on this topic.

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## A Pair of Thick, Woolen Socks

I just finished watching a fascinating interview on Oprah. I am not a regular viewer by any means but she seems to be going out with a bang. I could not pass up the opportunity to watch her sit and chat with the world's first self-made billionaire author. If ever J.K. Rowling has her memoirs published I will be in line to snatch it up. Just one hour totally fascinated me. How from very humble beginnings to a 13 month and one day marriage to the death of her mother and the estrangement from her father all combined to give her the ammunition to create

what has become a worldwide juggernaut.

The term "phenomenon" came up in one intriguing moment. Remember back in the mid 80s when Michael Jackson's *Thriller* was declared the phenomenon of the day. At the time, the concept did not enter the King of Pop's head. And neither has it entered Rowling's. If it had, she feels that she would now be trying to do herself one better. Attempting to create the next great world and leaving Harry Potter by the wayside. Incidentally, the author turned down Jackson's offer to turn her world into a musical.

Did you know it took Jo twelve rejections before, on the lucky 13th publisher, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (which we blokes know as the Sorcerer's) saw the light of day? Even then, she was warned that children's books make little to no money. Well... after seventeen years, 7 books, 6 movies (with two coming), millions in collectibles, and the theme park... who is laughing now?

She even detailed some of the downside of her life that is very much a part of the masterpiece. In her eyes, every other page seems to point to her mother's failing from MS. The dementors (who prey upon the happiness of their victims and seek to suck out their soul) represent her own battle with depression. However, the prevalent theme throughout the entire series is love. I say shame on all the groups who would criticize or even ban the books when the strongest virtue of Christianity is seen through every page, every frame. However, the surest way to ensure that your work is read is to have it banned.

What does the future hold for the billionaire? More writing. If she doesn't write she will lose her sanity. Spoken like a true artist. Did she know that Harry would become so huge while writing at nights beside her sleeping baby daughter while one step away from homelessness. Absolutely not. She had no idea that: "This boy will be

famous. There won't be a child in our world who doesn't know his name."

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## **Moving AGAIN!**

Three months after we first move to Maumee, Tony and I are moving again.! It is time for us to have a place of our own again, and though it was hard to find a place that would except four cats, we found a couple. We are still close to my family and I love the place. And...not only will Tony and I have a place to ourselves once again, we will finally be on the same shift! After three months of never seeing my husband except for a few hours a day because of opposite shifts, we have been put on the same shift. It might have had something to do with me telling the supervisor that we were moving and that we only had one car.

Tomorrow is the big moving day, we have gotten most of our stuff back into boxes. Well, what we had unpacked. Most of our things were put into storage, since we are currently staying with my sister and her husband. My cats and their animals are not getting along very well, even after three months! Padme, the baby of our family, has gained a lot of weight since we moved here. She has started eating so much more since we moved in and we think it's because she is stressed and that she is eating more also because one of the dogs keeps eating her kitty food! She has to save her food from the "stupid" dog! ☐ Once we move, we are tinkering about having set food time to see if that helps, if it doesn't get any better.

Finishing the packing and then heading to bed is the goal once Tony gets home. Too bad, I won't have internet for a week. Hope to get back on and find plenty of support from my

friends! ☐

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## Two Weeks To GO!

Two weeks from tonight will be OPENING NIGHT of the Sherlock Holmes classic (still can't believe how many odd looks I get whenever I mention the title) *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at the splendiferous (yes... that is a word) Huber Opera House!

For my part, I am happy to state that my lines are learned which is quite common at this point in a show (more common than the line learning from my last play... still a great experience but challenging which was even more rewarding personally). The next couple of weeks will be a whirlwind of activity from work to vocal lessons to rehearsal and whatever else may come my way but as always... I AM SUPER EXCITED!

Sunday, my talents will once again be used in set construction. As many of you know if you ever need anything painted... I am your guy! I remember the praise I received for my last set painting... I think it was a few years ago for *The Odd Couple*. Funny how no one has ever asked me to once again use my paint brush. Their loss, I guess. But my talent has not gone unnoticed. More than once [justj](#) has commented to [Mare](#) about my remarkable painting prowess. We'll see on Sunday if it used.

Hopefully, by Tuesday everyone will be better on their lines to avoid the dreaded Saturday before review rehearsal day. I just learned that another tangenteer will be coming to review the show. Hopefully, it will not take as long for her review to be published as the one I wrote for OKLAHOMA! did.

Click the link to the [Village Players](#) website for tickets and time information.

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# Technically Sound But...

Not good enough in my eyes either. A good lesson today.

Worked on two songs... one a light, fun, fluffy piece that includes a patter line (a long, section spoken in time to the beat) at the end. K suggested I do it as a rap instead of the traditional. For this piece, I think not. I envision a small group of friends accompanying me as I recite the section full of alliteration. Definitely will work on that! Could be much worse, I could have to learn "[I am the very model of a modern Major-General.](#)" (Not yet, please!)

My coach also decided to test me on another song. Although the piece is written in the key of C (no sharps nor flats... shouldn't be difficult to play), she kept hitting the wrong keys in order to find out how confident I am in the correct notes. At the end, she told me that, technically, it is good but it is time to go beyond the technical. A very dramatic piece which I believe is meant to show the lead character's vulnerable side. I was challenged to find that vulnerability and let it come out. **SELL THE SONG! OK!** Homework! Character songs are easy... digging into the vulnerable side of a heroic character will be a fun challenge. One I am confident that I will be able to rise to.

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# School For Bullies

I think it would be rather difficult to be the only male cheerleader in a relatively small school system. However, even after being bullied to the extend that he received a

broken arm for his pains, Findlay, Ohio sixth-grader Tyler Wilson has no plans to give up on it. His trials have met with national press as he and his mother were featured on Good Morning America this morning. He has also received phone calls and visits from male college cheerleaders. And although Tyler has stated that he has been threatened with another broken arm, he has no intention of sitting on the side lines.

**GOOD FOR HIM! YOU GO DUDE!**

As I learned long ago: Find something you are good at and do it the best that you can. Wise words... wonder who came up with that.

Not the GMA clip, but you get the gist of it. One thing the clip does not mention. After Tyler got home with the broken arm, he told his mother that he tripped over a curb and landed on his arm. Just like a sixth-grade boy.

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## Meet Marty

Question: What's the best way to dislodge me from a "case of the Mondays"?

Answer: A surprise trip to the zoo on a work day, of course! Hubby knows me so well ☐

Tangent: If you have your own "case of the Mondays", rent the movie Office Space – it's hilarious!

So we took off Monday for the zoo, and we were torn between which side of the zoo to visit – Toledo Zoo straddles a major highway, the Anthony Wayne Trail, and we never visit both sides in the same day because it adds a TON of walking, much of it up long ramps pushing a heavy double stroller. We usually park in the back and opt for the larger side of the zoo, but we have been visiting a lot lately, and since it was a work day and Hubby had to get home at a somewhat decent hour to get back to work, we opted for the smaller side of the zoo. This side might not have many exhibits, but there is this almost-year-old baby polar bear that I've been wanting to see, so it seemed like the right choice – until we saw the sign at the gate that read, "Our baby polar bear, Siku, will not be on exhibit today." WHAT?!? Well, we had already parked, unloaded kids, and walked into the zoo, so visiting the other side was no longer an option. We trudged on, determined to make the best of it.

And lucky us, it all worked out wonderfully! We may not have gotten to see a super-cute baby polar bear, but we got to see a full-grown male polar bear up close, nose to nose – I'm talking within inches. Sure, there was a pane of glass separating us from the polar bear, but that's a given – look at this:

In case you're wondering, Marty the polar bear (Siku the cub's dad) has a bucket containing frozen fish in an ice block. We watched him conquer the first bucket and devour the fish, and then he bullied the 2nd bucket away from the other polar bear and worked on it for a good 30-40 minutes – we had to leave before he got to the fish from the 2nd bucket. I could not decide which video was best, so I'm just going to post all 4 – they're all under a minute long anyway so they don't take forever to unload off my camera. All of the videos were taken while Marty was working on the 2nd ice bucket. You can see how he dips the bucket in the water and even dives into the water with the bucket in his mouth in order to let the water loosen up the fish ice block for him.





In case you're wondering, being up close and personal with a thousand pounds of polar bear (give or take a few hundred pounds) is really as amazing as it looks!!!

And my two little ones had a great time also – at first my son was afraid of the polar bear, but he got over that once he realized that Marty was much more interested in his bucket than some zoo visitors. Here are the kids posing in an “arctic cave”:



And the kids' favorite part of the day? Climbing on and posing on this mock dung heap near the giraffe exhibit. Kids – gotta love 'em!



# Dropping Like Flies

It's been really difficult to blog with a 2-year-old in the house, especially because mine is a boy. He just seems to get into anything and everything, and this phase of his is lasting longer (and is much much messier and harder on my house) than was any of his 3 sisters' terrible twos. Complicating my schedule is the fact that he seems to be growing out of his naps, so now Mom's daily time-out has been reduced to mere hopefulness for a time-out.

So anyway, this explains my blogging absence, and now you know why it's taken me so long to blog that...

My 6-year-old daughter Samantha lost her first tooth last week!

She was SO excited, and of course the tooth fairy made her nighttime visit. You might have read that I've been teaching 1st grade Sunday school (which just happens to be Sammie's class), and that's been going very well – I really enjoy it. Sammie's lost tooth prompted me to ask last Sunday how many of my students have lost teeth, and they were all full of stories. One little girl (who is missing her two front teeth) told about how she lost *this* one and *that* one in the same day – and she was pointing to her missing bottom teeth, not even the top two that were visibly missing! So it seems that Sammie is just beginning – she has lots of teeth to lose, and because teeth seem to drop out of 1st graders' mouths constantly (dropping like flies? That doesn't sound quite right now that I think about it), it makes me think that I had better bring a little container or two with me every Sunday just in case I need to send a fallen tooth home with its owner.

What an exciting time in a kid's life, and it was neat to hear how enthusiastically all my first graders talked about losing

their teeth and getting visits from the tooth fairy. By the way, the going rate for a baby tooth seems to be around \$5 these days – WOW! Do you remember how much the tooth fairy gave you for your teeth?

[poll id="21"]

Congratulations Sammie!