

# A wet, snowy journey home

It seems as if yesterday I skipped over Saturday morning, so I guess I will go back to it before skipping ahead to Sunday. Saturday morning several of us met at Ritzy's (did I get that right?) for breakfast. For those who weren't there, they somehow interpreted a party of 12 as a party of 20, so here were five tables put together in a C shape. Most people sat together, but Jamiahsh and I kind of sat alone on the opposite side, though in my defense there was only one seat between C and I. The eldest girls and their cousin Austin had some fun being little animals under the table. The look on J's face when he was caught unawares one time was priceless- sorry J! ☹

Following breakfast (oh yes, the food was good) L's family bid farewell and headed out. The rest of us headed back to C and L's house. The girls invited J and myself into their room to play with their pet rats. Now, I never had rats growing up, but we did have hamsters, gerbils and guinea pigs at various times so I was familiar with rodent pets and didn't freak like the preschool teacher mentioned in T's blog. I was happy when they didn't relieve themselves on me during this playtime as often happens with rodents. After we had enough of the rats, T took us into their closet and showed us some Viewmaster (R.I.P.) slides on the ceiling using their projector. Call me old-fashioned, but I think the whole point of the Viewmaster was lost by using the projector, that of the images in 3D. I think we went through their entire library. Finally, T and S put on a puppet show for J and me, during which time I was called away and we finished organizing our fun activity- see previous blog entry.

So... Sunday rolled around and I got up and showered, then went to Mickey D's for a small breakfast before church. Too bad for me it was 10:28 and they had just closed breakfast. I'm I the only one who thinks anything before 11AM should be considered breakfast? I must be in the minority, else why

would McD's have changed to 10:30 so long ago and stuck with it? So breakfastless, I headed to the house. Fortunately I had bought a box of Crunch and Munch at the dollar store the previous day. That worked.

We headed to their church, which I had to admit was pretty nice. I'm not sure I liked their pastor's preaching style, but that's probably because I'm used to my own pastor constantly on the move while he gives his sermons. I did enjoy the worship time though. Following this service T, who had gone to children's church was waiting for us- apparently grade school kids can be trusted to be let out on their own, or maybe their teachers were still watching, I don't know. The younger ones still needed to be retrieved from their rooms though. After church, we headed to a hotel by the turnpike for brunch. There was no waiting time to be seated as there were plenty of seats, but there was definitely some waiting to get the food. I would have to rate this meal lower than Saturday's breakfast unfortunately, but at least I could eat as much as I wanted since it was a buffet.

Back at the house again, C and L pulled out their Office board game and we played. Unfortunately, I learned that seeing every episode only once, including deleted scenes for seasons 2-4, did not mean in any way shape or form that I would remember the details. I did manage to get three Dundies, though once by a complete guess and once because C pretty much gave the answer away (thanks!). L won the day though, but even C earned more than me even though he took the harder ("regional manager") questions while I barely managed the "assistant to the regional manager" ones. Oh, well. Finally, they had to do some cleaning for the meeting that night and I bid my farewell. This, however, doesn't end the post...

As most of my readers here are well aware, Sunday was a day of rain, starting after brunch. For much of the trip driving was fine, but as it got later it started coming down pretty hard. The worst parts were the trucks- just approaching one would

cause a torrent of water to be unleashed onto the windshield from their wheels. Passing them was a nail-biting experience. Remember- the speed limit for trucks is 15MPH less than for cars until Illinois. Speaking of Illinois, when I got there- you think I'm going to say traffic, don't you? Well, traffic can be a hassle, but I lucked out. While there were some traffic spots, for the most part it was fairly light for suburban Chicago. Maybe people just weren't driving because of the sleet. That's right- the rain turned into sleet and snow. Wonderful. No longer was it a nail-biting experience just to pass a truck- now just driving was problematic. But as I said, traffic wasn't bad at all and I did manage to make it home in one piece. Next time I think I will check the weather report before I leave, even if it might mean having to leave earlier.

So, that was my weekend, how was yours? ☐

---

## **This Town's Got Talent AND Faith**

I already wrote about our 3D movie-going experience in my previous post, so I will skip that part of the weekend here, but I neglected to mention the cool restaurant we found because I didn't want to enlarge an already lengthy post...

Friday night after seeing My Bloody Valentine 3D in Maumee Ohio, a suburb of Toledo, we noticed a restaurant across the street called Nick's Cafe who advertises breakfast all day. My husband and I are both Eggs Benedict connoisseurs – we really appreciate a great-tasting serving of Eggs Benedict, which is a breakfast dish consisting of English Muffin halves

topped with Canadian bacon, poached eggs, and a layer of Hollandaise sauce. In our pre-parenthood days, we explored the country and sampled various versions of the dish along the way to our traveler's goals; whether they were destinations of business or pleasure. A requirement of great Eggs Benedict is homemade Hollandaise sauce, and by 'homemade', we (unlike many of the restaurants we tried) don't mean mixed up in the kitchen from a package. You need a double boiler to make it, and good Hollandaise sauce has nothing to do with a powder or a package. In all of our travels, we never found anything that even compares to the Hollandaise sauce at Uptown Cafe in downtown Arlington Heights, Illinois. We've visited numerous restaurants in our quest, and we've called some of them ahead of time, but even if you ask if their Hollandaise sauce is homemade, many will say yes, even if we don't agree on the definition of homemade. Such was the case Friday night at Nick's Cafe in Maumee, Ohio. They said their hollandaise sauce was homemade on the phone, but oddly, when we arrived, they wouldn't let us taste a sample. That was a first! Of the dozens of restaurants we've visited in search of the perfect Eggs Benedict, no restaurant had ever denied us a sample! On Friday night, my husband bravely ordered the Eggs Benedict at Nick's Cafe without trying the Hollandaise sauce ahead of time, and disappointingly, it was of the non-homemade, out-of-the-package variety. He did say that the Canadian bacon on the Eggs Benedict was great, but it unfortunately cannot rescue the dish if it uses packaged Hollandaise. So negative Eggs Benedict experience aside, the reason I would highly recommend this place is for their Mediterranean cuisine. And regular readers of my blog (and of those email forward all-about-you quizzes) know that this is my favorite type of food, therefore I am a huge critic. But Nick's Place in Maumee has excellent gyros, Tzatziki sauce, and Greek salads. Gyros are only good when they're off the spit and even then, it's easy for them to taste too salty. Not the case at Nick's Place; if you like Mediterranean food, I **highly** recommend their gyros and Greek salads – incredible.

But I must move on to Saturday afternoon, when we took our kids to see the movie, [Hotel for Dogs](#). I've been waiting for this movie for months, which is probably why we didn't want to cancel our planned outing there on Saturday even though Kid #1 went off her rocker. Seriously, the kid went berserk and I was really tempted to give her "the talk", especially after I noticed a pimple on her cheek... (well, one of 'the talks' anyway – the one about womanly bodily changes – she's 9 years old and I would rather we talk about puberty stuff *before* it happens to her). But anyway, she'd probably be *mortified* if she knew I was posting this on the internet (what are mothers for?), so I better get off this tangent... After the episode Saturday morning, our oldest really didn't deserve to go to the movie, but it's difficult in a large family to not 'let the bad apple spoil the bunch'. Our younger girls had been very good all morning, so why keep them (or me!) from going to the movie? Our oldest was punished for the tantrum by having to go without a Kid's Pack (popcorn, pop, and candy) at the movies, and to her credit, she was mature about the consequences of her actions. However, soon after our arrival at the movie theater, the tide changed and our 2-year-old became the problem. I don't know why we keep trying to take a 2-year-old to the movie theater, but every time, it's regrettable. Actually, it's been this way since even *months* before she turned two... I guess we keep hoping that one of these times, she'll actually settle down enough to enjoy an entire movie without driving anyone crazy. So anyway, I'm trying to keep our 6-month-old busy and quiet while attempting to watch Hotel For Dogs and not disturb our neighbors, and my husband is busy with our handful of a 4-year-old, so next thing we know, our two-year-old is drinking my Mountain Dew. Of course she loves it, but even *before* the Mountain Dew she's had a sugar-infused Kid's Pack, and now she's practically bouncing off the walls. She smiles and announces in a loud voice, "**I take clothes off!**", so now I'm trying to put my son back in his car seat so I can stop his sister from stripping off her clothes right there in the movie theater... Too late.

She is down to her diaper by the time I get both hands free, so my husband covers her with a coat. For some reason, she's willing to wear nothing but a coat and a diaper in the movie theater, and somehow we make it through the rest of the movie without having to leave. So as for Hotel For Dogs, I liked it (I think – I actually didn't see much of it)... it's a cute, predictable fun movie, and if you're a dog lover, there's plenty of canine eye candy.

Following the movie, I went to a local talent show based upon the popular "American Idol" TV show. Some great friends graciously stayed with the kids, and my husband also stayed home to catch up on the work he missed last week during the 2-hour-school delay and the school closing we have on Friday and Monday. He works from home, and it's all I can do to keep the two little ones out of his hair every day – add the older two to the mix and all Hell breaks loose – any chance of getting anything productive done flies out the window. So, a strange occurrence at the talent show – me, myself, and I for a change. I did attend with friends, but it's not like I would bother Carol next to me with my philosophies on music or the tone of one's voice; that would be something to make my husband endure. And it was bizarre to simply sit back and listen and watch the show... For those hours, I had absolutely **not one thing** else to do besides enjoy the show... such a change of pace for me and much appreciated. Not that I would want to experience that all the time, but it was very nice for one night...

Adding to the relaxation for me was the spiritual tone of the evening. I had known the event would be sponsored by a local church, but I didn't realize that we, the audience, would be praying to both open and to close the show; as well as the fact that the majority of the acts were religion-themed. As I said, for me, it was refreshing and relaxing, but I think they should properly advertise such a theme if they do this again next year. Less open-minded people may have been displeased.

My dear friend and the entire reason I was a part of this concert experience in the first place, performed wonderfully and I was pleasantly surprised to be able to pick out her voice from the rest of the delightful group with whom she performed. Despite my best efforts to vote for them, however, they didn't win the competition, and the top prizes went to a drama group from the church who sponsored the event (!), a very talented violinist, and a well-known local talent who is only a Junior in high school but who has already been a vocalist with the Toledo Opera going on her 3rd year. Besides seeing and hearing my friend perform, my favorite part of the evening was when a boy who was part of the drama group that won burst into tears. Their skit was acted out to music, and it portrayed a young girl being bullied by 'temptations' but ultimately triumphing over sins and choosing Jesus. The group got a standing ovation after they performed and because they were from the church that sponsored the event, it was no surprise when they won first prize in the competition, but the kid asked the crowd, "I just want to know that everyone was moved – was everyone moved?" There was applause and verbal affirmations, and the next thing I knew, the kid had burst into tears and it slightly reminded me of the movie [Leap of Faith](#)... But it was sweet and real, and I was glad to be a part of it. Even though the talent show did a poor job of advertising the theme of the show; thereby the religion kind of snuck up on its patrons, it was a welcome and calming change of pace – at least for this member of the audience. And even though I wasn't aware that I needed it, the evening restored my faith while proving to me yet again what a great place it is in Northwest Ohio to raise kids – we have so much talent and so many opportunities here for our youth!

---

# Pancakes, waffles and french toast

You'd think that these three foods would be easy to serve for a meal. Not so fast in these times. You can get all three in the frozen food section, but outside of toaster waffles, I don't care for any of them. Pancakes should be easy, but there are different recipes for these and some the girls like, and others they don't. You have your Bisquick pancakes, blueberry pancakes, Buckwheat pancakes, corn fritters, apple fritters, and so on. We generally stick to our tried and true recipe. I guess I should copy that out of the cookbook before it falls completely apart.

Waffles, well you have to have a special device (the waffle iron) to make them, or just buy the frozen toaster waffles. I said I like the toaster waffles, but I do like the home made better. Then you could always get a Belgian waffle iron if you want waffles with deeper pockets/holes. Do you want round or square waffles? Hmmm, seems like you can have as many choices as the pancakes.

But french toast, I grew up with one and only one type of French toast. Mom would either cook it on the griddle or she could bake it in the oven. Both ways, the french toast tasted exactly the same. Then I got married, my lovely wife's family had a different version of french toast. It was a heavy batter dip, compared to the Egg and milk dip used by my family. It was tasty, but very, very filling. I found it was cheap to make too. So my little family grew up with my wife's family recipe for french toast. Now they don't care for the kind I grew up with (tastes too much like egg!!). Oh well, they are getting older now, and soon I'll be able to make it the way I want. Or better yet, go to [IHOP](#) and order the stuffed french toast. Good eating, and now I'm hungry.

No toaster waffles, so I guess I can wait till morning...