

# Our Eleventh

This past Saturday, April 10, 2010, marked 11 years of marriage for my husband and I. Since it was a weekend, and we treasure that as family time, we didn't think about calling the babysitter to get some alone time. A generous friend stepped up and offered to watch the little ones for a few hours for Hubby and I to have some alone time, and we contemplated our options that morning. I love the zoo, but it seemed like too big of an endeavor to travel all the way to Toledo after staying up until 3 the night before for game night. We had an awesome time Friday night, but note to self – no more game nights the day before our anniversary! Boy, were we tired on Saturday! So anyway, we ditched the Toledo idea, and we thought about just staying home since Zambrano was scheduled to pitch for the Cubs, and he is always entertaining. Finally, my husband came up with a great idea – we'd go to Buffalo Wild Wings, and our friend could take the kids across the street to Menards to play while we sat and watched the Cubs game at Wild Wings. Before you think I'm nuts, I should mention that Menards (at least our location, anyway) has a hugely awesome indoor play area for the kids – they have many of their playground sets, play houses, and sandboxes on display for people to see and for kids to play in while parents shop – our kids love it and always have a blast, plus it's free!

So Hubby and I sat at Buffalo Wild Wings and watched the entire Cubs game on Saturday! And, as a special Anniversary present to us, Zambrano led them to victory! They started out playing terribly, but turned themselves around (which is rare for the Cubs!), and actually looked pretty good by the end of the game – I'm talking diving catches, great plays, homeruns, and most importantly, turning a 3-0 deficit into a 4-3 victory! YES!!

And I have to add that Buffalo Wild Wings was actually a

great, albeit non-traditional place to celebrate an anniversary. Not only did they not mind us sitting there for hours watching the game, but they were happy to accomodate us in letting us choose which channel we wanted, AND they gave us a hat with 4 balloons attached to take home for our four children. AND a free anniversary dessert!

After watching the Cubs win, we got the kids and took them over for some go-carting. Always fun, and this is the first time in a long time no one had to sit out with a baby! Our son is old enough to ride this year, and although he was apprehensive at first, it only took him until the first turn when he began squealing with joy! First time he rode with Dad (because everything is less scary with Dad), and I was able to snap this pic before we took off:



Then I got to take him on the second time, and he was such a wonderful little passenger; he had so much fun! As I was riding in the beautiful weather with my little guy next to me, I had the thought, "It doesn't get much better than this!"

Happy Anniversary, Honey, it was a great one, as always! And thank you for eleven wonderful years of marriage and for four beautiful children! I love you!

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# The Unborn Gran Torino

Luckily for us, Tuesday's date night was not hindered by the recent barrage of snow in any way. We ventured to the larger town nearby to see what all the Golden Globe fuss was about Clint Eastwood's latest movie, [Gran Torino](#) (they didn't have [Slumdog Millionaire](#)). But after the previews and especially when the movie started, it became painfully obvious that there was something wrong with the theater's sound – you couldn't hear the dialogue. My husband went to report it, and all that did was cause several loud popping noises and lengthy annoying electronic burps while they tried to fix it. There were 3 other people in the theater with us, and we all left – seemed like a movie where you really need to hear what the characters are saying. They offered our money back, but that wasn't really enough because we had spent \$7 on pop and popcorn that we wouldn't have bought if we weren't going to a movie. The incredibly flustered but sensible kid working the counter saw our point, and apparently his manager agreed, so they let us go into another movie AND get a refund – COOL! Earlier in the day, we had been up in the air trying to decide between seeing Gran Torino and The Unborn anyway, so I guess the choice was made for us – We only had 20 minutes to kill before a showing of [The Unborn](#).

The Unborn was just as I expected – a PG13-rated supernatural horror movie, not quite as good as others in the genre like The Ring, Shutter, or One Missed Call. There were some jump-out-of-your-seat moments in The Unborn, but it was obvious when they were coming, at least to me. I don't want to give away too much like an article did that I read in the newspaper, so I'll just say that if you like the supernatural horror genre, check out The Unborn because it's entertaining. Back to the newspaper article I read... seems the little boy who plays a scary kid in the movie is from the area where I grew up, so they featured him in the suburban Chicago

newspaper I sometimes like to read online – but they spilled a major spoiler about the movie at the end of the article! But anyway, that's another thing I enjoyed about *The Unborn* – it is set in Chicagoland, so I enjoyed the sweeping overhead views of the city and some of the familiar sites in suburbia. Apparently the screenwriter of *The Unborn*, David Goyer, has a fancy for Chicago since he also wrote *The Dark Knight* which was filmed in Chicago, although set in Gotham City. But anyway, enjoyable movie for what it was – I might have liked *Gran Torino* better, but I guess I'll have to see that one another time.

And that brings me to the Applebee's saga. We don't really like Applebee's. They try to tell us we belong there, but I don't buy it. Their food seems pricey for what it is, and we stopped going there when the kids are with us because their food takes *forever* to come out (that and the small fortune it would cost our family of 6 to eat there). My husband was given an Applebee's gift card for serving on the board of a local non-profit agency (no, I am not talking about the community theater – did you really have to ask?), which is really nice of the agency of course. We got the same gift card last year, and so back then we decided to give Applebee's another chance. Last year, we got some sort of bland pasta dish and an appetizer sampler and shared everything, but we left there hungry AND having to add money to our gift card in order to cover the check. Flash forward to now, and we find ourselves with another gift card. Time to give Applebee's another try, we decided; after all, how bad can it be? They have lots of corporate suits overseeing those kinds of places, so maybe they've implemented lots of changes in the past year to make it a better establishment. Not the case. First, our food took forever to come out. I had gotten a soup-and-sandwich combo, and the waitress came to tell me they burnt the soup and it would be a few minutes while they made a new one. My husband wondered if that meant his food was sitting under a warmer while mine was re-prepared, and his concerns

were legit because when he got his food, the shrimp was cold. Not only that, but they had given him the wrong kind of buffalo wings. So they apologized, and that's another thing about places like Applebee's that really bug me – the pesty fake gushy niceness. I do appreciate a friendly server, but the people who work at these places are way over the top... I will cite an example in the hilarious movie [Office Space](#) – there's a character in the movie who is Jennifer Aniston's coworker at a TGIFriday's type of place who acts just like these people... annoyingly and unrealistically enthusiastic about his job – funny stuff, but only in the movies.

So anyway, we're waiting for my husband's new wings when the manager comes out to say that they have now put the wrong sauce on them, and they'd have to make him yet *another* order. Honestly, what is the cook *doing* back there? Again, for the second time this day (see my Dawn's Great Idea post), my fears of starring in a hidden camera show run rampant... And what has happened to all the food that they've messed up? From just our party of 2, they must have had 2 orders of wings and a bowl of soup all go to waste. I've often thought that restaurants should have a deal with local homeless shelters, giving them their leftovers and food mistakes, but I guess that wouldn't be considered sanitary. I wish they'd change this; something tells me that food is food and many people would be very grateful for restaurant "leftovers"...

We calculated our bill correctly this time, and we were about to rid ourselves of the entire giftcard, when the waitress showed up to tell us that because of all the errors, they were going to give us the employee discount on the bill. That was really really nice of them, but that means we STILL HAVE \$ LEFT ON THE GIFTCARD for another trip to Applebee's! I told my husband, maybe we'll just stop in for a couple drinks sometime, but of course, you can't use a giftcard on drinks, at least on alcoholic ones, and after trying their flavored tea yesterday, I won't be stopping in for any more of that –

yuck! And in case you're wondering, both my sandwich and my soup were virtually tasteless, save for the cheese on top of the soup – that was really good!

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