

# Saturday Slobber

Well, school starts on Tuesday, so for one last summery hurrah, we ventured over to the coastal cities in Ohio on Lake Erie for some fun. First stop was the African Safari Park in Port Clinton, which is really more of a drive-thru zoo than anything having to do with Africa. They do have zebras, giraffes, and camels, but most of their animals hail from North America. It's always an extremely fun experience, and we try to go every year. Since this summer was very busy with the new baby and all, it didn't occur to me that we hadn't gone yet until I struck up a conversation with a really nice elderly couple at a restaurant the other day. When I asked where they were from, they replied, "west of Cleveland", so that got me thinking about the Safari Park in Port Clinton. On the way home from the restaurant that night, I said to my husband, you know, we haven't been to the safari park this year... An idea was hatched, and there we were on Saturday with 6 of our closest friends.

Saturday morning was almost like a one-act play with all of us standing there on our front porch, trying to figure out who was going to ride with whom; we were trying to find the best way to do things to be as economically (and environmentally) friendly as possible... We ended up taking just 2 cars for the 12 of us, and then once we got to Port Clinton, it was like musical chairs (cars) once again while we tried to figure out how to position everyone to get the most bang for our buck, so to speak, since the safari place charges by carload *and* by individual...

So anyway, after a stop at Cheese Haven In Port Clinton – and now I have to go off on yet another tangent because Cheese Haven is SOOO good and totally worth a stop if you're in the area. And what I mean by "in the area" is anywhere up to 100 or even 1000 miles, depending on how much you like cheese. They have so many varieties, along with fresh jerkies and beef

sticks and other yummy treats. We stopped there to get our lunch of corned beef sandwiches – and they have the **best** corned beef sandwiches, yum. Unfortunately, I was not willing to take 4 kids into the cheese store to run around, so I was stuck in the car with the kids, but my oh-so-thoughtful hubby talked the worker into making me a sample bag (which they're not supposed to do, you only get the free samples if you go into the store, but hey, I was stuck in the car), AND he made my sandwich for me – how sweet ☺

Ok, tangent aside... now we've arrived at the Safari Park, and it is SO crowded... Makes me think twice about going there again next summer unless it's near their last weekend of operation like it was when we went last year... I mean, I just can't stand waiting in line to go to the bathroom, of all things... Waiting in line is not much fun at all, but when you're waiting in line to do something as necessary and as unrewarding as going to the bathroom, it's really annoying. So, because it was so crowded, it took us forever to get through the drive-through zoo part; although not as long as it took the other vehicle in our caravan because they were stuck behind an obscenely slow white van the whole time... So while we got out of the drive-through section, they had barely just begun... But the whole park is a really cool place; even more so if you don't care about the vanity nor cleanliness of your car since there are some rather huge creatures (including deer, elk, elands, buffalo, zebras, giraffe and longhorns) who drool, head-butt, lick, slobber, and basically invade your car as you drive through *their* habitat. I think you must truly be an animal lover to appreciate the place since you come out filthy... This was the first time we had been there in our new car, but I'm happy to report no major damage, that I know about, at least; but what's this about driving our car through a pond, jamiahsh?!?

We'll get to the bottom of that later... when you come out of the drive-through part, it's time for the walk-through zoo

section, and there they have monkeys, macaws (military, not green-winged as the sign said), ocelots, warthogs, alpacas, and tortoises; not to mention rides for the kiddies: ponies and camels. I noticed that they had 2 camels for riding; one was resting while the other gave the rides. But interestingly, one was a Dromedary and the other a Bactrian camel, the difference between the two species being mainly in how many humps they had... My daughters rode the Dromedary (1 hump), and they really seemed to enjoy themselves – I wonder if riding the Bactrian (2 humps) would have been any different? I was envious because I'm no where near the 125 lb. weight limit, so I'll probably never get to ride a camel... After that, we got to check out an animal show, ironically titled "Laugh With the Animals". It was ironic because our host for the show was so dry – she had the audience doing everything *but* laughing... It was a fun show, though, and something that we hadn't yet done at the park in our previous visits. Overall, an interesting day... as it is anytime you have 12 people on an outing together!

If you liked reading my synopsis of the day, check out my fellow tangents.org blogger and get Jamiahsh's take on the whole thing. I'm going to take a lesson from him and blog this in 2 installments... got to leave the readers craving more, so they say! Check out my next post for a full summary of our visit to a year-round haunted house – Ghostly Manor in Sandusky, Ohio! Until then...

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## Wild Kingdom

WOW... WHAT AN EXCITING DAY!!! A bunch of my EXCELLENT theatre friends and I took the short (?) road trip to Port Clinton to the [African Wildlife Safari Park](#). It was a very fun place to

visit as you drove through a trail on which not only do you see a variety of African wildlife, but you also ENCOUNTER them. Elk (baby as well as adult), zebras, monkeys, giraffe, gazelle, longhorn steer, and don't forget the buffalo, and LUDO who was a friend of the friends I traveled with. I am told that Ludo had gotten along in years since their visit last year and was not nearly as active. Along the trail, most of the animals come to your vehicle to check out who was trespassing on their turf and to perhaps snatch a quick snack (of carrots or whatever was in the cups that were purchased at the starting gate. Quite an interesting experience having a buffalo stick his head in your car and leave his calling card of drool and stench.

I made two journeys through the safari. On the first, I sat in the back of the van with no operating windows. In order to get the full impact, a brave woman and I ventured out alone to brave the wild beast. Armed with the remaining four bags of carrots that I had purchased at Wal-Mart earlier that day, we circled the perimeter once again. I was really waiting for the hairy beast of buffalo to sneeze inside the car; thankfully, this did not happen. Carol and I seemed to have taken longer going through the tour the second time (still not as long as it took our companions in the other vehicle the first time). At times, a multitude of baby elk seemed to be congregating right in the middle of the road, blocking oncoming traffic. Our solution, blare the horn and make a speedy dash through a small pond. Maybe that was the strange feeling encountered later concerning the van's "pick up." Near the end, the giraffe decided to be more sociable and ventured to the stream of cars. The presence of carrot vendors along the path may have had something to do with that.

Following our hair-raising excursion through the faux African wilderness, we rejoined our companions at a show featuring a few of the other animals at the park: a cockatiel named Sydney, a chinchilla, a hedgehog, a Vietnamese pot-bellied

pig, and a boa constrictor. Following the show, a few of our brave troop had a photo op with the snake. For a great time apart from the ordinary trip to the zoo, take your family (we had a 5 week old along with us and the next oldest who is nearly 2 seemed to enjoy herself visiting the animals) for an African safari.

In my next post, I will continue on our fun-filled extravaganza.