

# How Hubby Saved Halloween

October is normally one of the busiest months for our family, and that was true before October 2011 – the month that saw us being blessed with a new baby, starting homeschooling, and Hubby starting a new job/career all at the same time. There are so many fun fall and Halloween events and activities that we like to do this time of year; we didn't even realize exactly how many until this year when we had to scale it back a bit. We skipped the corn mazes, the pumpkin farms, and all the haunted attractions this year. We did take the kids to the mall for the trick-or-treating there, and it was lots of fun even if there were 50 times more people than last year – there was a line circling the perimeter of the entire mall! Not a problem, seeing as how we live near the smallest mall I've ever seen and the line was continuously moving – as I said, lots of fun!

I heard about a congressman on the news who wants to pass legislation to move Halloween to the 4th Saturday in October because it's safer for kids and easier to work around school if trick-or-treating is always on a Saturday and earlier in the day. Some lady they interviewed for her opinion on the street was against it; she said that would be like moving Christmas to make it more convenient. Umm, not even close in my opinion, but I won't go there. My point is that the area in which I live always schedules the Halloween stuff on Saturdays anyway – I guess we're ahead of our time here in rural Ohio, haha. This year we had 2 Halloween parties and our trick-or-treat on Saturday October 29. Except we found out during the mall trick or treat (which was on Tuesday night) that baby Luke is a homebody – he gets really fussy when we try to take him places, especially if it's outdoor places, and yes, we do bundle him up. Saturday was a very big day for all of us because Hubby's and my lack of sleep finally caught up to us. We began the day on a very grumpy note, and

everything was very hectic as we tried to get our work done at the church and ready the kids for the Halloween festivities. We made it to the first party – the community Halloween party they have at the ice rink (no ice of course). We had tons of fun as usual, and we even got on the hayride before the rain came and before the line got too long. But Luke decided he was finished with the Halloween party before we were. No sticking this baby in a stroller and feeding him on the go like we did with the other 4 kids; he just won't have it and voices his complaints loudly. Luke is our fussiest baby; the others were all very adaptable babies – in retrospect, I guess we were spoiled. We are a very busy family, so either us scaling things back for Luke or trying to get him to adapt to our busyness will be interesting. He can go from what I call 'zero to screaming' in a matter of seconds, but don't get me wrong – he's oh-so-incredibly cute and lovable. It's just that his idea of a good time is being held and cuddled – constantly. Which also explains my lack of blogging lately – while I am feeling better after being sick most of the pregnancy and am recovering well after the surgery, I am not a very successful one-handed typist. There really isn't a choice between cuddling a cute baby or blogging, now is there? So anyway, I took Luke to the car while Hubby finished up at the party with the other kids, and we decided to put off trick-or-treating until another day and do it in a nearby community that had scheduled it on Sunday. We also decided that Hubby would stay home with Luke that evening while I took the other kids to our other planned Halloween party. We went home and tossed a couple of frozen pizzas in the oven for a quick dinner, but wouldn't you know by the way that Saturday was going – we burnt a pizza and only the kids got fed. At least our evening plan worked out – I went to the party with the 4 older kids, and we all had a blast. Luke actually let Hubby catch a nap while we were gone too!

Sunday we drove the 10 miles to the town where we were going to trick-or-treat, but we quickly became confused – no one was

out; it was like a ghost town. Hubby stopped at a gas station and found out that the trick-or-treating was from 3:30-5. We had readied ourselves and arrived there ready to trick-or-treat from 5:30-7. Apparently my lack of sleep had impaired my ability to read the time correctly in the newspaper. I can't beleive I did that – I had checked the paper probably about FIVE times throughout the week to make sure I had the right time, day, and place. And I had misread the information each of those FIVE times. So my genius Hubby made us a plan. He stopped at Walmart and picked up 2 huge bags of candy – at full price I might add, which was hard for him. He loves store clearances and sales, and it's a testament to how much he loves his family that he bought all that candy at full price knowing that it would be half off in just a day or two. But anyway, we got the candy and stopped at the dollar store and bought each kid a flashlight. We drove over to the park, and Hubby hid the candy all around the park and then we let the kids loose with their flashlights and trick-or-treat bags to find it. They loved it! They said they liked it even more than trick-or-treating, and we even got an unprompted handmade thank you card later that evening from 7-year-old Sammie – and I quote, "I love wat we did today". I should add how great the kids were in the car as we tried to figure out what was going on with the trick-or-treating. They were all in their costumes and ready to go, and then mom and dad starting driving around aimlessly. When they found out they wouldn't be trick-or-treating after all, there was not a tear, not even a protest. Just a few questions and much patience as they waited to see what we would do instead – they are AMAZING!

I think I have some video of the kids at the mall, but other than that, things were way too hectic during our Halloween celebrations to take many pictures or video. We have our wonderful memories though, and those of course are priceless.

Here's a picture of my kids dressed in their Halloween costumes on the day they arrived in the mail from Grammie.

11-year-old Taylor was a pirate, 7-year-old Sammie and 5-year-old Disney were princesses, and 3-year-old Christopher was Superman:



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## Halloween Fun (Was Had)

It's officially mid-November already, and Halloween is over. Because Halloween is one of our family's favorite holidays, we try to take advantage of doing every Halloween-related activity we can, which often stretches the season. We began on the Tuesday before Halloween at the mall. They held a weather-proof (good thing too, the weather on Tuesday was so awful our tornado sirens were activated) trick-or-treat event in the mall, with costumed kids going from store to store receiving candy. Our kids had a blast, and our little guy got the hang of trick-or-treating REALLY quickly! He would receive his candy, and his way of saying 'thank you' was to give a little wave – it was adorable – see for yourself! He's the one in the Blue's Clues costume:

At first he was afraid of some of the scary masks, but he was quickly over that too. The rest of the week stayed relatively Halloween-free, until Friday, when we had planned a Halloween-themed game night. We requested guests to wear costumes (any excuse to dress up in a costume for Halloween – I really like to participate as much as I can!!), and we had quite a variety: from an escaped inmate (Hubby) to Flo the Progressive Insurance nurse, a nerd, a couple of hippies, a professor, a zookeeper on safari (me) – even a few members of the “real” Mafia made an appearance (we frequently play a game called ‘Mafia’ at game night and it’s tons of fun! A few of the regular game nighters decided to dress up as Mafia as a shout-out to the game). Fun was had, and we were able to rest up for Saturday, which was the annual community Halloween party. My kids loved the hayride, complete with monsters that jump out of the brush and chase the wagon, and we rode 3 times. There are all kinds of things to do at the community party, and it’s all free: from gourmet slushes (best wild berry slush ever!), cotton candy, hot dogs, and popcorn to carnival games, bouncy castles, and a maze for the kids, it’s all so much fun!

After that was time for Trick or Treating, and we had fun even if Hubby wasn’t feeling so well (he is better now – thanks for your thoughts and prayers!). Let’s see... don’t think I mentioned the kids’ costumes: my oldest (almost 11 already!) was a cowgirl, 6-year-old Sammie was a princess, 4-year-old Disney was a witch at the mall who switched to Dora for Saturdays’ events, and 2-year-old Christopher was Blue from Blue’s Clues. We had fun Trick or Treating, and Hubby and I chose an old favorite movie of ours to watch afterward: The Uninvited – not totally scary (we usually try to watch a scary movie together on Halloween), but we both felt like a great thriller more than a horror movie this year. Here is my little boy dressed as Blue:



Sunday saw church, and we had a blast in Sunday school as usual – except that poor Hubby had to stay home. Also, we were very tired on Saturday after trick or treating, so we didn't get a chance to get our annual picture of the kids in their costumes sitting on the couch. But we got one of all 4 of them in the mall, so here it is:



Overall, a very fun 2010 Halloween, one that I can't believe came and went so quickly – SO quickly in fact, that it's already been over for weeks! Unbelievable!! Hope your Halloween was safe, fun, and happy, and that your Thanksgiving will be the same!!

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**You're telling me I missed**

# Halloween?

Last year I was unable to celebrate Halloween with friends due to some ailment. I was all set to bring some 'frightening' festive holiday food to a party, but was unable to make it.

This year was going to be different. There as another party to go to,. More festive food to prepare. And I had a choice of many costumes. But somehow I missed the entire weekend plus a day or two.

Harumph No party, no costume, but one heck of a cold/flu/sinus infection.

Too make things worse, my oldest was moving and I was unable to help. I think that made me feel worse than my flu. Well, I understand there may be more to move, so as soon as I have my strength back, have truck will haul again.

Oh well, maybe I'll just have to make my next get together with friends my own personal costume night, complete with bloody fingers and toes. Yes, that may be on my list. It isn't like me at all to miss two Halloweens in a row.

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## Chicken What?!

Halloween... my SECOND favorite holiday. I guess you could say that it began last Monday when I ran into my very good friend at Wal\*Mart where we decided to get coordinating costumes. I'll share a photo or two later.

Friday evening was the quite festive game night... ALWAYS A TON OF FUN! My niece and nephew have had a pretty tough couple of days so I invited them to come along with me. Alex was his

normal crazy self in his "professor who just graduated" costume. Poor Shelby, I think, finally came out of her shell as the games began. Later, I took them back home and returned in time to enjoy the very haunting *Exorcism of Emily Rose*. A very good mix of *The Exorcist* and courtroom drama.

Saturday night (or Sunday morning) I was awakened about 4am by my cell phone. Oh, great! What joker is playing around when I am trying to get my beauty sleep. Somehow after I found out who the culprit was, I did manage to get a few more hours of shuteye. All good! I did get a good chuckle out of it ☐

After getting off my shift on the big day, itself, Dad, my second oldest brother and assorted nieces and nephews ventured to a relatives yard of terrors. Year after year, they transform their house and yard into a fun, family-friendly fright fest complete with touring train. After having your fill of frights, you are invited into the house to sign the guest book and each family is invited to take a plate of treats and goodie bags for the kiddies. All this for the exorbitant amount of \$0. Certainly is amazing that they can operate this year in and year out for the entire month and not charge a cent. Most of the items that are on display are generously donated. In fact, just the other day, a tombstone was given that had some defect which caused the original buyers to turn away. Visitors even bring along bags of flour and sugar for baking help. But leave your checkbook at home.

They may take donations in form of decorations but never monetary.

Even more amazing is the number of people who have signed the book in just the last month. Over 2000! From word of mouth and flyers passed around the area. We were shocked to learn the distance travelled by some of the visitors: Louisiana, "New" England (from "across the pond"), France, Germany. WOW! So... when next October creeps its spooky head around... be sure to visit the Geren's. I have not visited the site after daylight hours for more than a few years but I do remember



that after the sun sets is when the real frightful fun begins. Unfortunately, some of the little ones are a little young for that. Even some of the older ones were a bit fearful of the maze in the daylight. OH, Puh-lease!

Hope you all had a Ghoulishly fun holiday weekend!



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## 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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# What Did Porky Pig Ever Do To You?

The following news story caught my eye because well, let's be honest – any sort of physical comedy involving someone in a big mascot costume is funny.

Ok, so it's not funny when someone gets hurt; I stand corrected. Best wishes to Ms. Porky Pig for a speedy recovery. From suburban Chicago's newspaper, [The Daily Herald](#):

*Two employees of Six Flags Great America turned against a coworker dressed as Porky the Pig on Monday after posing for a photo with her.*

*Dmytro Petrychenko, 19, and Taras Sikalchuk, 20, were visiting the park on their day off and were seen slapping a woman dressed as Porky Pig in the front and back of her head multiple times, according to Gurnee police. Both men are from Waukegan, reports indicated.*

*The men were apprehended, removed from the park and issued local battery citations by Gurnee police.*

*The victim was taken to a first aide station after complaining of a headache and neck pains. She was treated and released, according to a Six Flags spokesperson.*

Kind of reminds me of the Sausagegate incident of 2008...



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# Day Planning

A Saturday off with nothing scheduled?! What am I to do? Nice to have one off every other week, but then I go crazy coming up with fun things to do. Well... I volunteered myself to help in the reorganizing of the Huber costume room so we can begin blocking scenes while we await the usage of the grand stage. What's this you say? A costume room large enough to rehearse in? Sounded unbelievable to me, too until last winter when I saw for myself while looking for costume pieces for Grandpa Propater. I had grown accustomed to a small, cramped closet full of things that by a show's end is always in need of an overhaul. Well... maybe once that \$5 million complex is built...

Of course, there is the OSU/Penn State game today at Happy Valley at 3.30. With 2 weeks to go until **THE GAME** at the so-called Big House. My Saturday off better not be screwed up. the Bucks are 7-2 (4-1 in the Big 10) A rematch of last year's conference co-champs and they are neck and neck for second place in the Big 10 behind Iowa.

Later tonight, I am filling in as song leader at mass. There really are so many there that each person only does one mass every month or so. I will be singing one of my favorites: "Prayer of St. Francis" (*Make me a channel (instrument) of your peace/ Where there is hated, let me bring your love, etc*).

Plus, it sounds like it i going to be a beautiful day with sun and near 60 degrees. Not bad for November 7.

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# More of last week's news...

When mentioning costumes for the 5th grade class I subbed for last week, I forgot to mention one other costume. Or two, rather, though only one of them was in my class. It is strange it slipped my mind because this boy was wearing a video-game-related costume which was very good. He came as Mario, complete in the right colors with hat, large white cartoon gloves, and of course, mustache (though this piece kept falling off). I mentioned to him that with his build he might have made a good Luigi too, but his costume did have the extra padding to make him pudgy ala Mario. During the costume show, who walked across the stage with (I think) a third-grade class but Luigi, which from a distance also looked pretty good. When our Mario waved to him I figured they were brothers, but when I asked him about it the only fraternal relationship was in the characters, so this just made for a cool coincidence.

I said I would mention Friday night, so I am finally getting around to it. Friday night was our second annual movie night for 4th and 5th grade. Last year we saw the excellent [Meet the Robinsons](#). This year was [Bolt](#). Having never seen this movie before I was looking forward to it even if I wouldn't really get to see if I had to keep too much of a watchful eye on the kids (as it happily turns out, my fears here were unfounded and I was able to watch the whole thing). Before the movie, however, there was game and pizza time. This year they separated the boys and the girls so one group was playing games while the other ate. We started out in the gym. There was a fun game set up called "the gauntlet" but before we did that we warmed up with another game, link tag. No, this has nothing to do with:

[collegehumor]<https://www.collegehumor.com/video:1923420>[/collegehumor]

though that's a hilarious Family Guy-esque video (click to see it in a larger size). It is a game with one (or a few) runner(s) and one (or a few) tagger(s) with the rest spread out, standing linked in pairs. At any time the runner can link up with one pair and the person on the opposite side would become a new runner so the pair doesn't become a trio. If the tagger tags the runner, the runner becomes the tagger and the former tagger links up with a pair and a new person becomes the runner. I think we had played this before a couple of years ago, calling it squirrel tag. After this game came- The Gauntlet. This is just as insidious as it sounds. The kids have to run through a course, going over or under as the course dictates, while trying to avoid getting hit by balls thrown by us leaders (heh, heh...). If hit, they would have to go back to the beginning. For those of you crying "aww, no fair for the kids," don't worry- they got their turn getting back at us. I didn't make it very far...

So for food time, we had pizza. I was expecting the variety made in our church's kitchen, but it turned out they ordered from Little Caesars. The parents had to pay for this event, so why not? This was the time where we leaders got to hang out with a few boys sitting together, thereby selecting our small groups for the end of the night. After the boys grabbed their dinner, I waited a minute or so before grabbing my own and sitting down with four boys. There were almost a dozen guy leaders, so the small groups were quite small. There were more girls and fewer girl leaders present, so their groups I understand were a bit larger. Did I mention this was an outreach event? The kids were encouraged to invite friends who didn't normally come to our church, so it turned out that two of these boys were such invitees. In fact, both were invited by one of the other boys, but all four actually knew each other from school. After a brief time in conversation with them, it was time for the movie. We cleaned up and headed to the learning center where the movie was shown on two screens. We were supposed to sit with our groups, but the

boys kind of crowded together, so I sat in the row right in front of them instead. Don't worry, the seating was tiered and the screens high up besides so I didn't block their view.

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As I wrote, we were able to enjoy the whole movie with no more distraction than some kids going to the bathroom now and again. They even provided popcorn for the whole movie experience. Now, I typically say I don't like popcorn all that much, but it is strange that I typically find myself eating it anyway, and this night was no exception. While not in the same class as Meet the Robinsons IMHO, I still enjoyed this movie about a dog raised thinking his "human" was a spy constantly threatened by the evil Dr. Calico (with his evil cats of course) and that he was a superhero- managing to escape from his trailer, he heads out on a mission to save his human whom he thought was captured (they ended the day's shooting on this cliffhanger) but in fact headed home as this was after all just a TV show no matter what Bolt was raised to believe.

Finally, Pastor Steve came out and talked a little, focusing on superheroes and how God is the only superhero. It was just a bit more exciting than what I just wrote, but you get the idea. We then broke into our small groups and talked some more about it, ending with handing out Gospel tracts that folds in several ways to reveal the message. I actually picked up a fifth boy who hadn't been selected already by another leader so I may have ended up with the largest boy's group of the night. I felt the discussion went very well. The two visitors actually attended different churches, so they weren't as green as expected in an outreach event, but that was okay as I'm sure everyone still picked up something from the small group, especially on sharing Christ with others if they had already had a relationship with Him.

It was a great night- I can't wait for Winterblast in a few months- the overnighter at the church. The only disappointing

time was seeing another fifth-grade boy at the church with his mom for a single-parents meeting who chose to not attend movie night because the ones he wanted to invite were not in 4th or 5th grade, which I learned was sort of a limit in this event though not strictly enforced.

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## That October Holiday

So what does it mean when it's November and I still have posts from September sitting on my front page? Still not all that excited to blog I guess. It has now been over a week since some of my Ohio friends came out and we all went haunt hopping. It's a little late to review them, and I'm no expert on this sort of thing anyway so I think I'll just say that it was a good time had by all of us. Fortunately the threatening rain stayed away. Sorry you had to miss the last haunt, J and M. According to C & L it was really good, though whether it be that I was third in a group or just my logical mind drowning out the "let's have fun" portion I just didn't get as much out of it. That said, I thought the actors did a good job, especially outdoors (I really wish I had seen the one jumping out at the younger kids but I was facing the wrong direction at the time- apparently their reactions were priceless). Thanks again C & L for paying for that one.

For work, this week was much better than last for the most part. The only work-day that had rain was Friday, but I was able to take a full-day sub job that day instead, bumping my one Friday gig to Saturday- yes, the holiday. Did you all have a happy Martin Luther day? You know, the anniversary of Luther nailing the [Ninety-Five Theses](#) to the church door in 1517 (the doors were popularly used as bulletin boards at that time). Oh, you celebrated a different holiday you say? Well,

so did the kids on Friday. Unluckily for the teacher I subbed for, her son got sick on party day so I was the lucky one who got to take the job in her place. It was my favorite grade, 5th, and it was quite easy. The morning consisted of three tests- didn't you hate days like that in school?- split by an hour of gym and music. At least one of the tests was only spelling, so only two of them were big thinking tests. Of course, I say "at least" for the spelling test as I was a really good speller in school. I suppose for some it may have been just as rough as the other two.

Lunch time, then the kids were back in costume. Did I mention this was the one day of the year 2/3 of the class went home for lunch? All afternoon was party time. There was a costume parade through the neighborhood scheduled as well, but- you know- rain. As a result, the parents came to the school and watched the kids march across the stage instead. Outside of this time the parent volunteers were in charge. They organized the classroom party- the food, games, and whatnot- while I just helped as needed. The kids had a scavenger hunt, played cauldron bowling and a scooter-relay with toilet paper mummy-wrapping, created a haunted story web, felt brains, hearts, and whatnot in a box, jumped for donuts on a string, and had cupcakes and water (where was the punch??). Most of the year in hometown district serving food in classrooms is a big no-no- they even stopped birthday treats last year- but this was one of the few times they still get to eat sweets in class.

Some of the costumes were classic. There were a few wearing ghoulish costumes including the obligatory Scream mask, some costumes of movie/tv characters like Darth Maul, and a few M&M girls, but there were some stand-out ones including a girl with an overturned bowl of spaghetti on her head (represented by white yarn with brown yarn-ball meatballs), another girl who came as a washing machine with her head under a pile of "dirty" clothes on top, and a boy who came as a vending

machine. Actually, while original, I'm not sure the last one would have won any awards. The front really did look like a vending machine with real chips, candy bars, and whatnot, but in reality it was what could have been a store demo with straps so he could wear it in front of him. It was apparently heavy too, as he took the elevator upstairs instead of the stairs. I hope he had permission, but I felt for him so I didn't ask. The washing machine on the other hand was an excellent costume. I already mentioned the pile of clothes to hide her face, but it also came complete with a box of fabric softener and bottle of detergent taped or glued to it. The only thing that would have improved the costume was if the round door in front actually opened revealing more clothes.

So what did I do for halloween? Well, following work on the windy day I... handed out candy. Yep, that was it. I did have a "phantom of the opera" half-mask, so I wore it when I answered the door, but that was pretty much it. We had our usual half-dozen groups of kids come to our door. Seriously, is our house on the sex-offender list or something? Since moving here we have had no more than ten groups of costumed candy-beggars stop by each year. Nothing at all like our previous location across from a school. Oh, well.

We did have a 4th/5th grade church party Friday night, but this post is getting long so I think I will save it for a future church post.

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## **A Not-So-Perfect End To A Perfect Day**

WHEW! I have to admit that we totally overdid it on

Halloween, but in a good way – at one point in the evening, my 5-year-old said “how many parties are we going to?!?” We threw a Halloween-themed game night on Friday, complete with things like spider venom, truth serum, and rat vomit for drinks and snacks. Most guests wore costumes, and there was a wide collection of characters, from witches to fishes to Star Wars characters and a vampire – we even had a gay construction worker! Fun was had, but as usual, we stayed up too late and failed to rest up for our huge day ahead – HALLOWEEN!

We began Saturday by making the rats costumes and taking them to the pet store for a costume contest. No word yet how they placed in the contest, but Bobby Jack dressed as a zebra while Oreo was a Pink Lady from Grease – the kids had a blast! We took the rats home and headed out to the ice rink for the annual community Halloween party – one of my favorite things about living here. We get there right when it opens and head straight for the hayride, where we are driven around the huge park. Occasionally, creepy creatures run from hideouts among the trees and chase the wagon! Not as many people were in line this year, so we got to ride the hayride twice, and then the kids tried some of the games, the maze, and the bouncy castles, while Mom and Dad chatted with long-lost friends and sipped slushies and hot chocolate (everything at this party is free and donated by local businesses and organizations!) We got our hot dogs to go this year, and they told us to take a huge pumpkin home – we still have to carve our pumpkins, so we were more than happy to get one more!

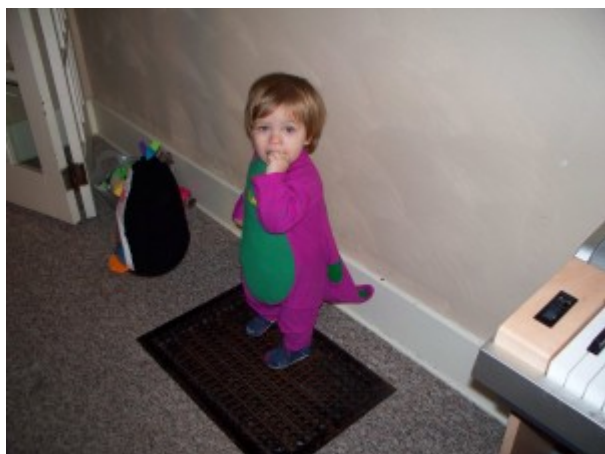
We were able to rest for about an hour, then it was time for trick-or-treating. We moved into our neighborhood 3 years ago, and we learned the first year that it's not good for trick-or-treating. We love where we live, but come Halloween, it seems like many neighbors aren't home, so we'd have to make the kids walk blocks for only a few houses with porch lights on. So we drive across town and trick-or-treat in a friendly neighborhood where some friends live, and we started with



their house. Our little guy dressed as Barney, Disney was Dora the Explorer, Sammie was a princess, and Taylor was a bloody prom girl.



Oh wait, you need to see Barney with his tail ☐



I absolutely love Halloween – of course I think my own kids were the cutest, but I love seeing all the kids dressed up. An honorable mention goes to the 4 teenage boys who were dressed as the Teletubbies – my 3-year-old daughter was asking where the Teletubbies were all night, but we never did catch up to them...



We took in quite a haul with the 4 kids, and after the second house, our 15½-month-old had the hang of taking candy from strangers. Ok, that sounds really bad, but Halloween is a unique event, he was allowed, and it was really cute! We got in the car after we were done trick-or-treating and headed over to a party at our friends' church. The kids had a blast there as always, and we made out like bandits in the raffle! Years of not winning anything we entered apparently caught up with us on Halloween night because a few bucks in raffle tickets won us 2 value meals at Burger King and 3 really cool brand new toys for the kids!

But here is where things start to change from perfect to overwhelming – at the church we ran into my Kindergartner's friend Hannah from preschool. This child has many medical issues, and she's been in and out of the hospital her entire life for brain surgeries. Her mother was telling us how she doesn't like her preschool anymore and how she's been depressed because she doesn't have any friends. So who could possibly tell this little girl "no" when she asked if she could come sleep over again? Certainly not us, no matter how exhausted we were from the weekend's activities...

After the church, we headed over to the community theater where they were having a Wizard of Oz party. I was completely exhausted, and we had to hurry home to meet up with my daughter's little friend, but I really enjoyed the Wizard of Oz party during the short time we were there. They did an

AWESOME job with the decorations, and there were so many neat Oz-themed games and activities – even a yellow brick road! - that I will forgive the inclusion of some things from Wicked. I guess I should say for any readers who don't know – I'm a huge Wizard of Oz fan, but it's the movie that I really enjoy. I don't remember the book much, and what I've seen of Wicked did not impress me, to say the least, but that's another blog post altogether...

So FINALLY we get home, and Hannah is waiting for us. At this point, I was SO incredibly tired, not to mention my car full of garbage, pieces of costume, and spilled candy. All I wanted to do was end Halloween my favorite way – watching a scary movie with Hubby. So we got the kids (all SIX of them, since two daughters had friends over) as settled as was humanly possible after I-don't-even-want-to-think-about how much candy and were about to start our movie when Hannah comes down the stairs. We sent her back up, and checked email and basically killed some time until we felt confident we could start a movie without any kids coming downstairs or calling for us. Well, that never happened. Somehow, we had forgotten that Hannah is a friend who is very needy and also one who outright REFUSES to go to bed. We started the movie anyway, and we only had to interrupt it like 5 times (a late 80's thriller called [I, Madman](#) – both hubby and I recommend it!). But Hannah began one of her many descents down the stairs right during a climatic moment in the movie, which made my husband jump a mile high, which in turn made my heart stop and stomach drop. And that was when I knew I wouldn't be falling asleep for hours. Hannah finally fell asleep when there was only 15 minutes left in the movie, but she outlasted every one of the other kids, and by then, it was 2 am! I guess you could say I put my extra daylight savings hour to good use; I think it's the only hour of sleep I got! I had trouble falling asleep, then I had terrible nightmares all night and kept waking up – one was about Hannah; I'm not even kidding! I woke up early to the sounds of kids playing and

couldn't fall back asleep. So here we are, the Sunday after Halloween, dead tired with a messy Halloween-themed house and a trashed car. But at least our house once again contains only the 4 kids who live here, and the main trouble-maker has been sacked out all day – told you we overdid it!

Hope you had a GREAT Halloween!!!