

Vacation Diary – Chapter Four

Wednesday, October 22 – Breakfast at Golden Corral – best omlette I've had in a long time. Then it was off to the Magic Kingdom where our group got separated. It was ironic because they make an announcement on the monorail on the way over to the Magic Kingdom about picking a meeting place in case your party gets separated, and during that announcement, I had a feeling we should probably do that. We ended up finding everyone but not at the meeting place we had designated. The Monsters Inc. show is funny as always, and my husband was chosen *again* to participate, this time playing "Sully". We skipped Space Mountain this time around because the line was long and by the time we remembered to get fast passes, we were ready to leave Tomorrowland. I also skipped one of my favorites, Peter Pan's Flight, but it was well worth it to get my husband a wheelchair so he could get off his extremely painful infected toe. Besides, the girls still got to ride it with our friend, Jamiahsh. Splash Mountain was fun, although the recent updates the ride incurred saw the song on it changed from the extremely catchy "Zippidy Doo-Dah" to something else I don't even remember. That's 0/2 for me liking the rides they've updated this trip, if you're keeping track.

And this is the second Florida trip where both my husband and I saw a strange and unidentified creature. We're not crazy, but both times we both saw the same things. This time, it was a black figure running across the road which was actually a bridge over another road. When it got to the edge of the bridge, the black shape just kept going – which means it was airborne. I didn't see it "running" really; to me it was a black oval traveling across the road – I couldn't make out any legs. My husband, who has better eyesight than I, saw something running and then flying. Either way, none of this describes any animal I'm familiar with, especially one who is

native to the United States. And since I'm on the subject, I will describe our first unidentified creature encounter. It was a few years ago on our way down to Florida, somewhere in the wilderness of Georgia in the middle of the night. I saw something sitting by the side of the road, and then it opened and flapped a LARGE pair of wings and flew a short distance upwards onto a low branch in a tree. It's wingspan was huge – a diameter of a full grown man at least, 6 feet or more. This sighting was witnessed by my husband also, and we call it "Batman". I've looked up various birds and the largest I've found is a condor, but this creature seemed even larger and its body was bigger and shaped less like a bird's body. Mysteries as yet unsolved...

Well, anyway, talking about the strange creature on Wednesday night disoriented us, and after we got out of Disney World's huge tangle of roads, we went to the Boston Lobster Feast where at least one kid stayed passed out. Because we had 3 of the 4 kids asleep by the time we got back to the condo, Chris and I decided to take our night out that had been scheduled (and cancelled due to kid neediness) for the previous two nights. We went over to the Fun Spot, a newer amusement park next to Old Town. We went on an extreme ride – check this out:



It actually was much more mild than it looks – and no, that's not us in the picture. The ride was kind of lame, really... Conversely, two of the 4 go-cart tracks at Fun Spot are wicked, simply put. And I'm not exaggerating when I say that someone might be killed on those tracks. Unfortunately, I had to witness a little girl speed out of control and hit the wall at a high rate of speed. I think she was alright; she was conscious at least, but she was very scared, and it was terrifying to witness. The one track starts by winding up a ramp, and then when you're at the top, the track drops off so

suddenly that I'm sure a cart could get some air if one was on a suicide mission and wanted to try it. So your cart picks up speed down this steep hill, and before the track even levels out, there's a hairpin turn – looks like you're driving in a bowl – followed by another downward slope. I can't believe they let kids drive the course, and I shudder to think what careless, invincible (so they think) teenage boys would do with a go-cart on that track – especially a whole pack of them driving it together. But for us adults, it was lots of fun, although I prefer something much more mild in a go-cart – the things have no padding! Another course they had there was very small but it had a lot of sharp turns, and it reminded me of a live version of Mario Kart – without the fake gift boxes and shell weapons, of course ☐

Here is a picture of crazy go-cart course – it doesn't even show the “32 degree banked bowl”, just the “shear drop”:



Bee In Your Bonnet?

Very often, the best way to help ease the tension of a rough few days is to do something fun with people whom you consider dear friends. This past week has been a doozy. I learned through a rather ill-timed phone call that my mentor, (one of) my greatest influences, and staunchest supporters (to put it mildly) is in her final days of her nearly year-and-a-half battle with leukemia. Then, I learned that one of my best friends, influences, and staunchest supporters is having medical problems of his own. I am constantly praying and hoping for both of them, but that was not at all what today was about.

Following my shortened shift at work today, friends gathered at the area miniature golf/go-cart racing park. It was a blast. I loved the thrill of traveling at breakneck speeds along the hairpin turns and steep banking of the quarter-mile track (more or less). Most times, I was accompanied by one of three darling girls (even when they are highly animated when faced by spiders/bees) who enjoyed it at least as much as their adult(?) counterparts. I am quite pleased to say that I do not believe that I finished anything less than 3rd place and came in 1st at least once that I recall. If only I had not kept tapping the brake at inappropriate times...

The group then decided to visit the batting cages at a nearby park in order to practice up for our 2nd annual funday/softball game coming up in a few weeks. Some of us did better than others but it was just another excellent diversion.

Following our early dinner (must have been early as some of the items on the menu were not available before 5), four of us returned to the Putt-Putt location and accepted the round offered by our resident miniature golf regular... who claims that he has made a hole-in-one on every hole but one on the course). Although I came in third, it was still fun and I thought I did well... a 58? [Justj](#) just happens to carry his \$8.00 putter (that was the clearance price) wherever he goes.

Before we departed our other group of friends, I could tell that C was beginning to feel fatigued. I just hope that all goes well tomorrow and am certain that his tests come back with good results. And I know that [Ma 2](#) is soon going to be in a much better, peaceful place and remembered by everyone whose lives she touched and will continue to touch. To paraphrase a quote from a classic curmudgeonly (guess that is a word) science-fiction [physician](#): She really will not be gone as long as we remember her. (I refuse to use the "d" word).

So thanks, Chris, Lisa, Taylor, Sammie, Disney, Christopher,

John, Megan, and Carol. You all are so important to me and I cherish every moment we spend together. I love each and everyone of you.

The Lucky Rainbow (And God) Saved Us

Ok, of course *all* the credit goes to God, but I was going for the catchy title. Yesterday I had one of the biggest scares of my life – a near-death experience. I'm going to start at the beginning of an otherwise wonderful day...

We were looking for a fun place to take the kids, and we decided upon the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. The kids had their usual fun playing in the water hole, and the capuchin monkeys were quite active, enjoying a game of tag. It was really cool to see; one would chase the other and then when he caught him, they'd switch and the chaser became the chasee – is that a word? Doesn't matter, I think you get the point. Capuchin monkeys are smart.

There was a kangaroo separated from the rest of the roos, and we thought it was a baby, until we looked a little closer and noticed she actually had a little baby sticking out of her pouch – SOO cute! It must have been a different type of kangaroo or wallaby than the eastern grey kangaroos though because it was much smaller, and obviously an adult since she had a baby. But anyway, they were definitely the highlight of our trip.

Earlier in the day, when we were deciding where to go, we had brought up the possibility of go-carts, and our 4-year-old had not forgotten. Since the kids were being (somewhat) good and it was still early (we were hoping for a triple kid pass-out

on the hour-long drive home), we decided to stop for some quick laps around the go-cart track. I stayed in the car because we had 2 kids who fell asleep, and from there, I was able to watch the storm roll in. It was really neat; there was a lightning bolt that struck near the go-carting place, and everyone waiting in line said "whoa!". It was followed by a VERY LOUD crack of thunder, and that was the end of the go-carting. My husband had already ridden once with our 4-year-old, and they were waiting in line so our 8-year-old could go. But the poor kid has her father's bad luck because they shut the place down for the storm before she got to go. But she was a good sport about it; I actually think she was just so happy to be out of the storm and in the "safety" of the car... but you will soon see why I put the "safety" in quotes while referring to the car.

As we headed away from the go-cart place, it rained heavily. So heavily that the road flooded immediately and visibility was down to almost 0. I told my husband he should pull over, but you couldn't even see enough to do that. But then it cleared a little, and there was a huge rainbow. It was beautiful; I don't think I've ever seen one in a full arc like that. I tried to take a picture but we had now gotten on the interstate and were travelling fast, so we'll have to see how it comes out. I was distracted by the rainbow, and this is where everything happened so fast it's kind of a blur. But I'll recap best I can... The cars in front of us were braking, so my husband made a hard stop – not all that hard, so I didn't really feel like we were in danger. I see a car on the shoulder all smashed up and facing us. The driver is getting out and looking at his car, and that's when I realize that it had *just* happened – no emergency vehicles were on the scene yet, and it's still happening because I hear horns honking. Then my husband says very calmly, "We're going to get hit." I looked in my sideview mirror and saw a semi coming at us, and he's not stopping. Instead he's coming right at my mirror and the next thing I know, the semi is next to us on the

shoulder. Thank God there was a shoulder. Thank God my husband didn't pull onto the shoulder trying to save us, or he would have steered into the path of the semi. Thank God for a lot of things, but most of all, for the safety of my family. Turns out the horn that was honking was the *semi* warning us of our impending doom. All these news stories were flashing through my head on the rest of the way home about people whose vehicles got pancaked by semis. It was a split second away from happening to us, and there was nothing that could have stopped it, except Divine Intervention. I called 911 to report the accident, and that's when I learned that my cell phone makes a little noise when you do that – to make sure you really want to call, I guess. But the good news is, it didn't seem as if anyone was hurt because like I said, the driver of the car that caused it all was out and looking at his car. He was either brave or not very smart, because if that semi hadn't of stopped next to our car where it did, he would have been plowed over. Someone should tell that Subway guy from my last post that this is what 911 is really for! And this whole incident makes a case for my husband to try to get me to fly to Florida next time rather than drive. All I know is, in the car, we had a **very** close call. Rarely are there close calls on a plane – you either crash or you don't!

A reminder to all to be thankful every day for everything you have!