

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!!

Nightmare On... Elm Street?

We checked out the Nightmare on Elm Street remake a few weeks ago. It was better than the Friday the 13th remake and the

Halloween remake but not comparable to the Texas Chainsaw remake, which was very well done and better than the original, in my opinion. Nightmare on Elm Street, not so much. For starters, I don't understand why the new Freddy Krueger was so short. His burned face was much less scary than the original Freddy, and I have to say that having high school kids tower over him did take away some of the intended fright. Also, Freddy's back-story changed for the new version, which now includes allusions to child abuse of Freddy's victims at a preschool rather than all of the terrorized kids being from Elm Street. In fact, I don't really know what Elm Street has to do with the new version of Nightmare on Elm Street. Part of the reason we wanted to check this one out is because much of it was filmed in the suburbs of Chicago where we grew up, but we didn't recognize anything, and my husband did not recognize which scenes were filmed in his former high school. But not recognizing the filming locations was not what disappointed us most – the 2010 version of Nightmare on Elm Street is just not as scary as the original. Sure, the special effects are better and the throwback and remakes of certain key scenes were done well and appreciated, but the movie just didn't have the same effect.

We also recently took in the original My Bloody Valentine, the 1981 version, and it was a good horror movie. I read afterward that much of it is actually filmed in real mines, which must have been really dangerous, and I wish I had known that before I watched the movie. Many things were changed for the 2009 version, which I really enjoyed – probably my favorite modern day horror movie. But to enjoy the original version was nice too. We picked up the 2009 version on a sale at Walmart, and it came with both the 2D and 3D version and some glasses. I've never had any luck with the old red/green 3D glasses technology, and this time was no exception – my vision is just too uneven, I guess. It worked for my husband, but I ruined his fun because seeing everything in red and green was incredibly distracting for me.

We've also been watching the [After Dark Horror Fest](#) movies lately, and there have been too many to review, so I'll just make quick lists of recommended vs. terrible ones for any horror fanatics reading my blog and looking for some opinions.

Good:

[The Final](#)

[Kill Theory](#)

[Perfect Getaway](#) (more thriller than horror, but good)

[My Bloody Valentine 3D](#) (2009) – especially if you can get the 3D to work for you at home. The 3D for this one in the theater was amazing, and I really enjoyed my first horror movie 3D experience on the big screen when it came out.

Worth one viewing:

[Dread](#)

[My Bloody Valentine \(1981\)](#)

[The Graves](#)

Awful waste of time:

[The Broken](#)

[Grace](#)

And, I think I'll throw this one out there separately since it's not horror at all, but we also watched [The Prestige](#) again yesterday and it's very good – especially the second time around. It's a story about two rival magicians that takes place in the 1890's. If you're going to give it a try, pay attention! Oh, and I would not look too closely at the imdb entry for it – there is too much that can be given away. That's all I'm going to say other than I highly recommend it, but again -it is in no way a horror film; we just watched it again recently which is why I put it in this horror-movie-laden post.

Some Might Have Called It A Disaster...

... but not me. I'm talking about my hugely busy, albeit super-fun weekend. It began Friday night when we took the kids to the Fort Wayne Tin Caps (minor league baseball) game. We decided to go mainly because we needed to get to a Ticketmaster outlet to buy tickets for an upcoming arena football game. Since we live in a rural area, the nearest Ticketmaster is an hour away, but the drive to the city to get tickets was still cheaper than all of the service fees Ticketmaster wanted to tack on for phone or internet orders. So we decided while we were in the city, why not take the kids somewhere fun, so we decided upon the baseball game. The only problem is that we found out just as we were leaving (at 4:10) that Ticketmaster closed at 5 – we live more than an hour away, especially at rush hour on a Friday evening. It was a big deal because we had already bought our baseball tickets, and the only reason we decided to go to the baseball game with such a busy weekend ahead was because we were going to use the money that we were going to save buying the football tickets at Ticketmaster – except now we weren't going to make it by 5 (did I mention that Ticketmaster's website said they were open until 6? So this really wasn't our fault...) Long story short, we arrived there at 5:20, and the people at the Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne were very accommodating. We got our arena football tickets at the original price without the crazy sur-charges – YAY! So on to the baseball game... It was fun, though we had barely sat down on our lawn seats when my almost 2-year-old son took a tumble and was one dad-catching-his-shirttail away from falling from a 3-foot-high ledge onto cement and cracking his head open. We promptly moved seats, and after my son ran around for a bit, we were actually able to watch some of the game, even though our team lost.

Saturday was my daughter's birthday party, and we ended up with about 10 kids (this is a guesstimate – they were never still enough to count them all!). Thankfully, the weather was nice, so we decided to keep all the kids outside for the entire party. The kids started to get rambunctious, and it was difficult to keep so many kids entertained and out of trouble for so long (note to self – next year, an hour is plenty long for a kids' birthday party) – we had the parents coming 2½ hours after the party started on Saturday, which was WAY TOO LONG! Everything was going ok though, until one of the party guests opened the gate while playing hide n' go seek. Suddenly, we had 2 dogs loose and roaming the neighborhood. 2 of the adults fanned out to go catch the dogs, and I was left to control the 10 kids (AND my son and his cousin who are around 2 years old). Some of the kids were scared for the dogs, some were bored by being outside, some were whining for cake, and others just stood there, looking as shell-shocked as I felt. Then the phone rang, and it was a neighbor on the next street over (whom I've never met) saying that they have our dogs. Thinking my husband was still around, I followed my mom and oldest daughter with some leashes to capture the dogs. Somewhere in the melee, it became apparent that my husband was just on his way back from looking for the dogs, and he comes back to the entire birthday party which he thought was unattended (though I was leaving as he was coming), but in the meantime, my daughter had decided to lead her guests into the house, like some sort of catastrophic parade. We got to the neighbors house, but they only had one dog by this time, so my mom and my daughter went to find the other one while I returned the puppy to the house. When I got back, we were still missing a few adults who were out looking for the dogs, and my daughter the birthday girl is begging for her cake. Eventually, my mom and my daughter returned with the dog, everyone was fine, but we were still missing some adults who were still out looking for the lost-now-found dogs. We found everyone, and tried to relax, even though there was still an entire hour left of the

party – WHEW! For the most part, the kids were good, but there was one little girl who was not a very good listener. She seemed to rub off on the other kids too. Is it a coincidence that this is the same little girl who had opened the gate in the first place? For the rest of the party, she was obsessed with the puppy. She wanted to hug him, squeeze him, and hold him every second. After his romp around the neighborhood, he was quite tired and made an easy mark to catch, but he was still a good sport – good thing he's great with kids. I asked her to leave the puppy alone at least 4 times, and I heard my mom doing the same, and later my husband said he also tried, especially when he saw her dragging the puppy by his collar. She reminded me of the character Elmyra from the cartoon Tiny Toon Adventures. For those of you who aren't familiar, I had fun finding the following clip – picture this little girl at our birthday party leading the pack of 10 kids, and you'll wonder how we survived. Starting at the 35 second mark, this could have been a scene from our house on Saturday:

After the fiasco of a party (the kids had fun, so I wouldn't call it a disaster, even if it was stressful at times), my family took the kids to their hotel for a party, and Hubby and I got some alone time. The problem was, after the busy week we'd had, we were too tired to do much of anything. We hastily chose a Redbox movie, and it was terrible. To my husband's credit, he wanted to just forget it after seeing the small selection, but I pushed for [Meadowoods](#) since it was the only horror movie available and it was just \$1 and we had already waited in line at the Redbox – I didn't want it to be for nothing. But it was a complete waste of time (movie-wise I mean, for any time with Hubby is well-spent); we would have been better off watching someone's youtube videos for 88 minutes instead, that would have been far more interesting. If only Redbox had an imdb link at the Redbox units – perhaps Meadowoods' 3.1 rating would have made me just want to forget it too...

Sunday our church service ran late (of all days), and so we were running late for the entire day... But we had a nice brunch with our family before seeing them off back to Illinois. We then picked up my daughter's friend for a playdate, and I was off to my MOPs (Mothers of Preschoolers) group get-together a little late because I had to finish up my thank-you notes and my appetizer. I had decided upon little smokies in the crock pot instead of picking up a 7-layer dip as I had originally planned because I didn't want to be even later after having to stop at the store to get the dip. Everything was well-planned, and the appetizer actually tasted good... but I forgot to drive gently on the way there – I was already late and in a hurry. I wasn't even out of town before I had to hit the brakes and make a hard stop, sending the crock pot flying, leaving me with a huge pool of barbeque sauce on the front passenger-side floor. I pulled over and cleaned it up best I could – I am so thankful I had a roll of paper towels and extra plastic bags in the car! But when I got to my friend's house, my smokie appetizer in my crock pot

had NO sauce left... oh well, what could I do? There was plenty of other great food, and I ate too much. I think I was the only one to take the food they brought home with them, but I can't really blame anyone for not wanting seconds on the sauceless smokies. To add injury to insult, the crock pot tipped again on the way home (what is WITH my driving?), and I had smokies on the floor of my car this time. Did I mention that Hubby and I spent an hour cleaning out the car last week? But I guess it worked out since if we hadn't cleaned out the car, the BBQ sauce would have spilled all over the junk that was in the car – this way I just ruined the floor of the car and the floor mat – and luckily for me, I have 4 kids and therefore don't put too much stock into the car's appearance or condition. Besides, talk about built-in air freshener... if anyone accuses our car of stinking like anything but BBQ sauce for a long time, I will certainly be surprised!

After everything that went wrong this weekend, some might classify it as a disaster, but we call it FUN!! ☐

The Haunting In The Redbox DVD

So, following Broadway Cabaret night at the Little Theatre, Megan decided to take me up on my pizza/DVD night at the house while I am still alone (one more week... and it is still standing). I suggested venturing to Wal-Mart to check out the redbox kiosk... rent a movie for \$1 per night, return when you are done or after 25 days it is yours. After going to Electronics, I met Megan at the box and we made our choice of two movies... more on those in a bit.

We then travelled to casa Shaffer where I gave her the grand tour, upstairs, downstairs, beauty shop. Did I show C&L the shop the other night? My memory fails me. So, after the pizza was baked, we put in the first movie. [He's Just Not that Into You](#) is just what you would expect: a chick flick. While it was no *Pretty Woman* it was not all that bad and Megan wanted to see it and I gentlemanly let her pick one.

However, I chose a movie which [taylhis](#) has posted about and a friend recommended the other day. Megan had already seen [The Haunting in Connecticut](#) (for some reason, I thought it was A Haunting, but no big deal) and it scared the xrap out of her. I must say that I enjoyed it very, VERY much and it did give me a good jump or 5. Even more so knowing that it was based on a true story. I will have to check out the frog site thingamajig to get the lowdown on how much accuracy is involved. If you like a good horror film with lotas of thrills and chills, check it out.

However there was a downside to the DVD: it was badly scratched and about half way through it began to skip. UGH! Way to almost ruin a great movie! I did send an email to the customer service dep of redbox to request a free rental or refund. Megan asked me to watch out for the minister and see if I could recognize him. I must admit that I was unable to. [Elias Koteas](#) is the same actor who played Casey Jones in the ORIGINAL Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movies. Never would have guessed since it has been years since I have seen it.

All in all, another fun night of music, friendship, pizza, movies, and great times!

Nightmare On Alumni Street

As has been the trend lately, they are going to remake a popular horror movie from my youth – [Nightmare On Elm Street](#). When the movie came out in 1984, I was too young (and scared) to watch it, but the main character, [Freddy Krueger](#), was everywhere. Everyone wanted to be Freddy for Halloween, and just his picture was enough to scare me silly. I think even people who don't like horror movies know who Freddy Krueger is – a burn victim with a hideously scarred face who has knives for fingernails and invades the dreams of his victims. We tried watching Nightmare On Elm Street as adults not too long ago, and it wasn't scary – it just came across as dumb. So maybe a remake IS in order. I just hope it's not horrible like Rob Zombie's Halloween remake. Actually, the Friday the 13th remake wasn't so great either. I did enjoy the Texas Chainsaw Massacre remake though, and I really liked the remake of My Bloody Valentine – two movies that prove slasher films can be successfully remade. So I hope this Nightmare on Elm Street is on par with the latter two I mentioned.

The reason I'm bringing this up is because I read an article about how they are going to be filming this remake in Chicago, with some scenes being filmed at the high school my husband attended. The students had a surprise assembly on Friday, where they were told that their high school is going to be used to film a movie and that extras would be needed. How cool of an assembly would THAT be? The article mentions that the movie will be out April 16, but it doesn't specify which year – I'm hoping they mean 2010 because I'm anxious to see it! I just hope they don't try to do any funky computer stuff for Freddy's face or glove. I think good old fashioned makeup is sometimes what makes things scarier! [Here is the article about the choosing of the high schools](#). And just for fun, here is the trailer from the original Nightmare on Elm Street:

The “B” horror movies..

Before Mystery Theater, before Elvira, there were other hosts of the ‘B’ horror movies. The one I was most familiar with ran his show on Saturday afternoons for 15 years. We would sometimes have to go out and adjust the antenna to pick up the station. It never came in very good, but then again we were trying to pick up a TV station over 60 miles away. The station was Channel 2 out of Detroit Michigan. The host of the show, the one, the only [Sir Graves Ghastly](#).

I can remember spending many a Saturday afternoon watch things like [Attack of the 50 Foot Woman](#) or [Them!](#). Or any other show about sinister spacemen, Giant killer beasts, angry mutated humans, the living dead or cursed half-man/half-animal combinations.

Most of these show had poor story lines, bad acting and fake looking sets/monsters. Most were done on a low budget. They were released in the theaters/drive-ins as the second feature or ‘B’ Movie. They were played on late night TV for years, or in my case Saturday Afternoon.

Sir Graves made fun of the movies, fun of himself and just made the best afternoon of television. So now I get to watch some of these old ‘B’ movies on my computer, and I remember Saturday afternoons with Sir Graves.

Happy Haunting...

The Strangers

Such a busy week this week, we had to move date night to Monday since we have meetings every other day this week. So we traveled down the road to see the movie called [the Strangers](#), a suspense horror film. And I don't really have much to say about it. It was exactly what I was expecting, not a thing more. Lots of suspense, so the movie was good for that edge-of-your-seat anticipation, but there was no background about why the terror was taking place, which I would have liked – just a movie about a couple who are victimized in a remote vacation home by scary people with extremely creepy looking masks. And, this isn't really a spoiler because right there in the film's introduction they tell you that the main characters are not going to make it. So watching these people struggle the whole movie knowing they won't triumph over evil was kind of... well, I guess I'd say almost pointless. There is also another event that takes place in the movie involving someone's demise that you can see coming a mile away. So, while the film was incredibly predictable, it was good for suspense; it's not like I'd say it was a bad movie or boring or anything like that... Just nothing to write home about. [Liv Tyler](#) is not a bad actress either, but I'd have to say this wasn't one of my favorite horror / suspense movies. I appreciated the fact that it was done without the gore that seems to be plaguing many a horror film these days, but I really would have liked more story than just people getting terrorized by other people for no reason. If you like suspense, check it out; it is 90 minutes of nail-biting tension, but don't go expecting too much. I like many horror movies better, including the [Texas Chainsaw Massacre](#) remake from 2003 to name an example.