

A-Z's of Me

I received another 'getting to know you' email forward, and this one promises to be 'different' so here goes...

Here's a new one & it's much better than previous versions. Cut and paste and fill in the answers. Then, send to all your friends!

- *A – Age: 30
- *B – Bed size: Queen
- *C – Chore you hate: drying dishes
- *D – Dessert you love: depends upon my mood
- *E – Essential start of your day item: yogurt
- *F – Favorite actor(s): Steve Carell, Tom Hanks
- *G – Gold or Silver: Gold
- *H – Height: 5 ft. 8 in.
- *I – Instruments you play: little bit of piano, various percussion instruments
- *J – Job title: Homemaker
- *K – Kid(s): 3 girls and a boy
- *L – Living arrangements: Husband, 4 kids, 2 dogs, and a parrot
- *M – Mom's name: Phyllis
- *N – Nicknames: Mom, Lis
- *O – Overnight hospital stay other than birth: other than MY birth or any birth? Cuz I've had 4 kids... Also some ear infections when I was a baby.
- *P – Phobia or fear: frogs
- *Q – Favorite quote: Until I can think of a better one – "Abraham Lincoln said, if you are a racist, I will attack you with the North." – Michael Scott
- *R – Right or left handed: Right
- *S – Siblings: 1 older sister
- *T- Talent: multi-tasking
- *U – Unique skill: I can hang a spoon off the end of my nose

*V – Vegetable you hate: peas
*W Worst habit: procrastination
*X – X ray: dental
*Y – Yummy food you make: I just made a California blend soup
yesterday out of leftovers that everyone loved
*Z – Zodiac Sign: Cancer, the crab!

Here We Go Again!

Everyone who has been reading my blog since I started it in the beginning of 2008 knows my disdain for the 2-hour delay so frequently used at my daughter's school. Well, it's that time of year again – Tuesday was our first 2-hour delay of the school year. It's not like I want the buses to go out on the slippery country roads and endanger kids and drivers; it's just that the delay throws off the entire family for the whole day! If there was some way to effectively implement the delay for those who would have trouble getting to the school in poor weather conditions, I think that would be a good solution. However, it's obvious that would lead to kids falling behind other kids and such, so it's obvious why they don't do that. But 2-hour delays frustrate me nonetheless.

My 2-year-old gets frightened or crabby if we do things differently from our normal routine. So when there's a 2-hour-delay, she sleeps in until after 10 and wakes up disoriented, hungry and crabby. I guess I could wake her, but I figure if she's sleeping in then she needs the sleep – and it will pay off for me later in the day because her daily pre-naptime intensity won't be quite as demanding as usual. So Tuesday's delay was caused by snow, which meant that my 4-year-old wanted to play in it all day (no preschool today). But of course she wants someone to play with, and I'm not

comfortable letting my 2 and 4-year-olds play outside by themselves of course. And on Tuesday it was too cold to take the baby out with us... So we were all stuck inside and my middle two have a rivalry going on, which means that they fight over everything and constantly; Tuesday being no exception because why would it be? Hopefully the salt shortage there is for the roads this winter won't lead to more school delays – our first one did not go smoothly!

Walmart Saves The Day

What?!? Believe it or not, the title of my post does not have the slightest hint of sarcasm! Walmart really DID save the day for us yesterday! It almost makes me sorry for my many rants against Walmart and their shady practices designed to put small companies out of business... almost sorry, but not quite there.

It all started when we decided to take the kids over to Fort Wayne, Indiana, which is about an hour away. We pulled into a stall at the Sonic drive-thru for a light lunch and some slushies (Sonic has awesome slushies and drinks), when we realized we had forgotten my husband's wallet, which left us without money or credit cards. Luckily, we had picked up the mail before we left the house and brought it in the car with us. And luckily², we had gotten a commission check in the mail. So we braved the 'big city' Walmart customer service line on the Saturday after Thanksgiving to see if they would take pity on us and cash the check even without my husband's ID. We were gifted with even more luck when they accepted my driver's license to cash my husband's check, and we were able to eat lunch. Except now it had gotten really late and we were all really hungry, so we decided to skip Sonic and go to

the Golden Corral that was in the Walmart outlot instead. If you braved my posts about our vacation diary, then you know how much we like Golden Corral. And I'd say that the one in Fort Wayne is of the best quality out of any of the others we've been to. After lunch, we took the kids to a McDonald's Playland, but it had only one little tunnel and one small slide; prompting our 4-year-old to proclaim, "Dad, this is *boring!*" But our 2-year-old loved it, and soon there were more kids to play with and everybody had lots of fun – including mom and dad since there was also a foosball table. When we left the McDonald's, we noticed there was a Burger King across the street (when isn't there?), and that Burger King had a 3-story play area! Oh, well, we had fun where we went and we can remember the BK for next time. We quenched our thirst with drinks from Sonic, and there was a cool looking car wash next door, so we treated the kids to a car wash also -they love watching the soap, brushes, and water cascading off the car. The second we pulled out of the wash –*ding ding* – our low fuel bell rang – uhoh. My husband and I just looked at each other because it wasn't like we had unlimited money with us. In fact, we had spent the last of the check money at the car wash. Thank goodness gas prices are decent these days because with the change we were able to scrape together from my wallet and the car, we had enough to get us gas to get home... whew! Perhaps it can even be considered a blessing in disguise. When you compare the variety of shopping Fort Wayne offers to our hometown choice of Super Walmart and... well, just the Super Walmart, unleashing us in a larger city with all those shopping varieties could have been disastrous to our bank account!

And by the way, the Walmart customer service line wasn't too bad, all things considered. Most of the line consisted of a family who had 6 kids and one on the way -wow. And I thought I had a lot of kids!

Rectal Gas Policy

We're all adults here, right? Then you'd think the following sign spotted in the band room at a local high school would be less amusing:

Rectal Gas Policy

- Any student who releases audible rectal gas will receive one after school detention.
- Any student who “reacts” to audible or inaudible rectal gas will also receive one after school detention.

If you feel the need to relieve yourself of rectal gas you must stand in the hallway to pass it.

Where do I start? First, it must be said that I was visiting the school while attending a wonderful show choir performance starring (as far as I'm concerned) a good friend and my favorite teenager. She did an awesome job!

After the concert, another friend gave us a brief tour of the new school where she works. It's a really nice school, but we were surprised to find that they apparently have an entire policy about a specific bodily function. I wonder if students actually go into the hallway to abide by the policy. And it really makes one wonder about the incident(s) that caused the policy to be drafted in the first place. Asking my friend to make copies of the policy so I can post it on my blog is juvenile, I'll admit... but funny is funny, and I find it amusing. I wonder if the teacher realizes that strangers come through her band room sometimes and read her rectal gas policy? Did she have to submit it to the principal for approval before posting it? Hey, Derek, do any of the schools you sub at have a body function policy?

Windy City White House

“Windy City White House” is more of a reference to our visit to the Windy City rather than a blog post about the recent election – it’s over and done with, and although I won’t talk much about the outcome, I am happy to not have to hear about it on the news anymore. While in Illinois, my mother-in-law kept talking about what huge news it is that Obama was elected and how his pick for Chief-of-Staff, Rahm Emanuel is a fellow Chicagoan – making it a ‘Windy City White House’.

But back to our family – it’s my blog, after all. We scheduled an early Christmas with our family in Illinois this past weekend (the early Christmas theme is something that seems popular with tangents.org bloggers), and overall, it was great. There are a few reasons we decided to do things this way – 1) We’re sick of the hustle and bustle of opening our presents from Santa and then rushing off to Illinois on Christmas Day – add to that having the flu during this trip twice and UGH. Best to travel *before* flu season. 2) My daughter was off school Friday for parent/teacher conferences 3) We wanted to beat the rush and other travelers. Overall, it was a really great decision, although the trip was last minute, and so we did forget a few of the presents which we’ll now have to send. We left Ohio on Friday morning and after a bit of traffic-sitting (of course), we got to my grandparents house about 40 minutes past schedule. But no matter, they’re fully aware of the traffic problems plaguing their area. We were treated to a delicious lunch of my grandma’s sloppy joes (love ’em), and the girls got to open presents. My grandpa gets tired really quickly, and so we didn’t stay too long there, and then it was on to our hotel. My husband uses hotwire.com and got us a suite at the Sheraton for \$49 – a

nice price for the area. When we pulled up to our hotel, we were pleased to see it was the same hotel where we spent our wedding night – that was a nice surprise. My mom and my sister brought her two boys over for some swimming, and we all had a blast even though their indoor pool was chilly. Luckily, I had thought to turn up our room's thermostat so when we got back to the room we didn't freeze, although it was quite crowded trying to get 10 hungry people changed out of bathing suits and trying to order pizza at the same time. It was a suite, but it was probably the smallest suite I have ever seen, and we had 6 little kids and 4 adults in there. My mother and sister wisely decided that they couldn't wait for the time it would take to get pizza, and they got something to eat on the way home. That was a good idea because my mom had to get up early the next day and didn't want to be out too late. They know their area well enough to realize that pizza delivery on a Friday night would take over an hour – and they were right. My poor kids were starving and I had to raid my diaper bag. I found a little bag of oyster crackers and two small bags of peanuts, so I divied everything up 3 ways (Survivor-style) and it quieted them a little until the pizza came. Overall, the kids were kind of spastic all day, especially my oldest for some reason... My husband blames the tension of the Chicagoland area, but then again, he hates it as much as I do. We love seeing family, just wish we could visit them somewhere else!

Saturday morning we were up bright and early to meet my mother-in-law for breakfast at Uptown Cafe in Arlington Heights – the place has the best eggs benedict in the nation. And I know this because way back when, before we had all these kids, my husband and I used to travel constantly, and one of the things we would look for was good hollandaise sauce. We never found any that came close to Uptown Cafe's. And the owners remember us – we used to go there a lot when we lived in the area; I was pregnant with my first daughter. They are surprised every time they see us because we usually have a new

baby or two. After breakfast, we went back to my mother-in-law's house, and I felt badly for dropping in on my husband's sister and her family without any notice. This is one of the details that was overlooked in the last minute planning. But it was ok; I didn't have my gifts for their 3 kids, so I'll have to send them. But our kids had lots of fun playing together, and it's important to me that my kids know their extended family, especially since a lot of hatchets have been buried over the years on this side of the family.

Next, it was time to see our good friend, the author of the sublife blog on tangents.org. It was great to see him, especially on his own turf, but he's right in his blog – there really wasn't much time for chatting. The kids wouldn't have allowed us to just sit and talk peacefully, and we wanted to take them somewhere fun, so we went to an overflowing Chuck E. Cheese. After waiting in line to park, I realized that I hadn't seen our camera since I took a picture of the kids on the luggage rack at the hotel that morning. Sound familiar? Yes, I have terrible luck with digital cameras. And worse, this one was not mine – I had borrowed it from Jamiahsh for the trip, so I was sick about losing it. Luckily for me, it turned up when we got home though – YAY! I was especially upset because I knew that I had put it in my diaper bag – I really thought someone had taken it. Pessimistic of me, you'd think, except that we did have our tokens stolen from our table at Chuck E. Cheese with my husband less than 5 feet away. Takes all kinds to steal game tokens from little kids, doesn't it... at least they didn't also steal my digital camera. We got lunch at a Vienna Beef hot dog place in Arlington Heights called Jimmy's – highly recommended you get real Chicago-style beef sandwiches and 'dogs if you're in the area – YUM!

The ride home was uneventful – the kids slept most of the way, thank goodness. We did manage to stop and get me my crave case of White Castles, and so our car reeked of steamed onions

– thank goodness we weren't pulled over or we may have gotten a ticket for disturbing the peace. Maybe I wouldn't have stopped if I'd known what White Castles would do to a 2-year-old's diaper. I tried to deliver some to my friend Carol who graciously pet sits for us, but for some reason, she neglected to pick them up. My husband says that not everyone likes White Castles. We picked up the slyders (as White Castles are known) in Dolton, Illinois; not the best area, but it just off the expressway so we made it unscathed. Ironically, something made me talk about Dolton just before the stop; I was telling my husband how it's gotten to be a really bad area and that I knew a family that had left there in the '80's because it was getting so bad, so imagine it now. Then we saw a sign that said "Dolton Bowl" right across the street from the White Castle, and we laughed at the irony. But overall, a nice trip, especially considering the area where we had to take it. One positive thing I will say about the area is that they have excellent food.

Three quarters of my kids on the luggage cart:



Our Friend, The Doctor

With 4 kids, many of them small in years, we are at the doctor's office lots. We are so lucky to be really happy with our pediatrician, especially since we see him often. Today was another such visit – time for our 2 year and 4 month check-ups for the little ones.

Disney (2 yrs. old) liked the fishies in the waiting room and the Dora sticker she got at the end but that's about it. She didn't want the doctor near her, she didn't want to be weighed, measured, nor have her heart listened to, and she didn't want to walk in front of the doctor like he asked. Best we could tell during all the kicking and screaming, she is 2 feet, 10 inches tall and weighs 25.5 lbs.

On the other hand, Disney's baby brother Christopher seemed to love the doctor's office. Then again, he smiles all the time, so it's hard to tell. He smiled when they measured his head – both times, since the nurse forgot the measurement from the first time (43 cm). He smiled when he was weighed (15 lbs. 6 oz.), and he smiled some more when his length was measured to be 25.5 inches. He's a really good baby – the doctor says he acts more like a 5 month old than a 4 month old because of the strength in his limbs and how he uses them.

Disney's a great kid also, but she is two years old. And "terrible two's" is not just one of those sayings; it's based on truth. Disney was the sweetest baby and toddler you could imagine... then she turned two. And she's still sweet, she just has a miniscule amount of patience and tolerance for things that don't go her way. She could be chatting happily about doggies one minute, and the next thing I know, she's melted onto the floor into a puddle of two.

But there must be something going on with the body chemistry of two-year-olds. Everyone knows they're like that, and it's

not just an unearned bad reputation. If it weren't for the "terrible two's", I think I would want an even larger family – but it's the dreadfulness of the terrible two's that give me pause – only one more bout of terrible twos to battle, if we can survive Disney's, of course!

The Haunting of Molly Hartley

Even though our car is out of commission, we were still able to get out to vote yesterday with our rental car, courtesy of our car warranty. I have to say that after years of driving a loaded mini-van, I kind of enjoy zipping around in the little Malibu they gave us. My husband pointed out that it's probably because all the kids won't even fit in it, so for the first time in a long time, I find myself alone in the car, which means blaring country music of my choosing rather than listening to kids fighting, KidsSongs, or Veggie Tales. He's probably right; although I do enjoy the quick pick-up and the fact that I can easily back out from any parking spot I find myself wedged into. So anyway, the movie theater in the neighboring town was offering free popcorn to those who voted in the election yesterday. They had a movie called, "[The Haunting of Molly Hartley](#)", which I hadn't heard about. But the title sounded promising, as did the fact that the movie came out on Halloween. But then I looked it up on imdb.com, and it had a 3.8 rating. Ouch – that's a pretty stinky rating! Not only that, but examples of users' comments on the movie include: "What's the point of this movie?" "Don't worry about getting up for a snack, you won't miss anything." "A fright fest without the scares." "Reminds me a of a Nickleodeon movie." – you get the idea.

But we decided to see it anyway, and I'm glad we did. It

really wasn't that bad – it even has replay value; I'd watch it again. The plot centers around a young girl named Molly who, days before her 18th birthday, begins to have episodes characterized by nosebleeds, anxiety attacks, and hearing voices. She is really worried that she is "going crazy", especially given her mother's mental instability. The audience doesn't really know if everything is just in this girl's head because of past trauma or if there is really more to it. I would describe the movie as [Rosemary's Baby](#) meets [Proof](#) (I've only seen the stage play, not the movie though). In *Rosemary's Baby*, a woman is having a baby and is paranoid that her neighbors are demons who will harm the baby. The movie is done in such a way that the audience is left guessing the entire time if she's just being paranoid or if her concerns are legit. And *Proof* is the story of a woman who is following in the footsteps of her mathematical genius father, only to worry if she is also inheriting his mental illness.

And I disagree with some of the comments made about the *Haunting of Molly Hartley* – there were plenty of scares. The movie had a creepy mood to it, and there were plenty of jump-out-of-your-seat startles. They were quite predictable, but I've seen lots of scary movies, so the predictability of the scares probably had lots to do with my experience of knowing when to expect them. Overall, I'd definitely recommend this movie to people who like horror movies. I liked it much better than [Saw V](#), and they're really two different types of movie since unlike the entire *Saw* franchise, this one had no gore and was rated PG-13. Apparently it was too tame and lame for teenagers, which scares me to think about what it must take to shock teenagers these days. But for grown-up thrill movie fans, it's worth a view!

About This Blog...

For some reason, I was inclined to go to my "About this blog" page today. I knew it would be outdated, but I was still surprised about how wrong it really was, check it out:

This is a blog about my life as a mom of 3, (soon to be 4!), girls. I am the matriarch of a family that includes 2 dogs, a parrot, and kids ages 8, 3 1/2, and 1 1/2, and coming soon, a newborn... Wish me luck!

That was the old original version I slapped up in a hurry way back when I started this blog. In case you're not a regular reader, I should tell you that girl #4 was actually a boy (surprisingly, my doctor has a reputation in town for reading the ultrasound wrong when it comes to gender – I always thought the circumstances were exaggerated until it happened to us), and so I now have three girls, ages almost 9 years, 4 years, and 2 years old. We also have a little boy who is almost 4 months old. I was right about the needing luck part – 4 kids at one time, especially ones this little (and spoiled!), can be very needy all together and quite a handful. We still have the parrot and the dogs, and they just add to the chaos. It's stressful, but that's my problem, I have to learn to lighten up about some things. Most of the time, I have great fun watching them all interact as the daily chaos unfolds. The little guy loves his sisters!

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”:



A Twisted Episode of Survivor

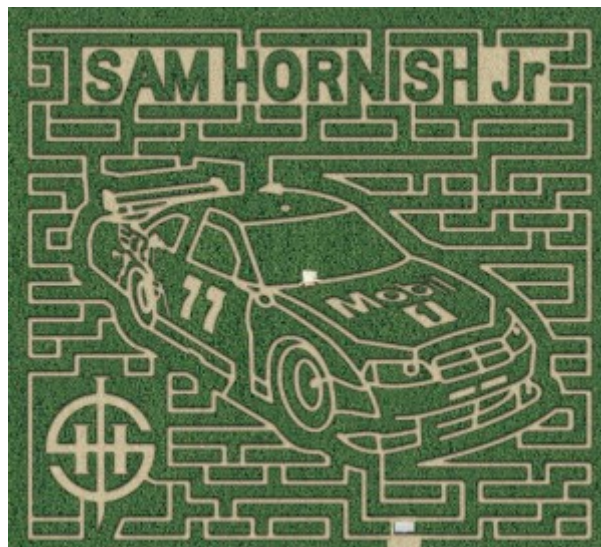
I had a wonderful weekend. It all started with another visit to a haunted house on Friday night. Although I enjoyed my previous haunted house experience at Ghostly Manor earlier this year, I just wasn't feeling the Halloween vibe enough to subject myself to scariness – I didn't sleep well the night before and little sleep makes me feel claustrophobic – weird. But anyway, the haunted house was actually a haunted corn maze and they had other things to do at the farm, so I enjoyed myself immensely hanging out with my kids and the coolest teenager I know. There is just something about farms that make me feel an inner peace; something that was illustrated again during the weekend – more on that in my next post.

Literally a cornfield in the middle of nowhere, [Leader's Family Farms](#) has things to do to keep all ages entertained. There were even a few things we didn't even get a chance to try after spending so much time being lost in the corn maze.

Next time I will have to check out the hayride and the coop shoot – I have a special affinity for hayrides because they remind me of the week-long vacations to a dude ranch I took with my family as a kid. But one thing about Leader's that really impressed me was their ability to make appealing and fun attractions without the large budget or the mechanical reliance that a major theme park would have. The "Barnyard" or family area had several things for the kids to play with: bouncy castles, a zip line, haystacks to climb on, a hay maze, slides – all physical activities which would guarantee kids' exhaustion giving the parents some "mommy-daddy time" at the end of the evening – the problem is everything was physical for Mommy and Daddy too, and like the DJ noted, "I don't know who is getting tired out more – the parents or the kids!" But that illustrates my point about the ability to entertain every age group without spending big bucks – and that is true for both the patron *and* the establishment. Actually, let me back up for a minute and go off on a tangent – the purpose of the site, right? □ Why do they call it a hayride when you're actually sitting on straw? I learned from a display at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo that hay is green and made from grass. Straw is yellow and made from wheat. So the kids were climbing on *straw* stacks, they played in a *straw* maze, and people were enjoying *straw* rides... doesn't have quite the same ring to it as hayrides, I guess...

But back to Leader's – they had a DJ, who hosted Karaoke and played wedding-style audience-interactive songs like Hokey-Pokey, The Chicken Dance, YMCA, and Shout. I was trying to teach Disney (my almost 2 year old) the YMCA, but she only liked the part where we clapped. Maybe next time we will get down on the dance floor – this time my other girls were too shy and tired was I. My insanely brave (or psychotic, depending upon who you ask) 4-year-old Sammie was intent on going into the haunted house, and my husband was actually going to take her in, but before she could even enter, she was frightened away from the experience by the scary music alone.

We got a cell phone call just as we were entering the corn maze, and so we retrieved Sammie and let her enjoy the experience of the corn maze, which ended up being what I would describe as a twisted game of Survivor. Take 4 kids, all under the age of 9, into a corn maze and wander around in the dark for over an hour. No bathrooms, no snacks, and you only have enough stroller for two of them, so the other two have to walk. It was fun, but also quite an experience. I would love to go back and explore the maze – without kids though. And when I got home, I looked at an aerial photo of the thing, and now it all makes more sense. Here is where I spent my Friday night:



You enter at the small white building at the bottom of the picture and go left. Where we really started losing it was around the back tire and the spoiler of the race car. You can see how many forks and circles there are in the paths in that area. And again, while in the thing, I had no idea what it looked like because I didn't think to check a map before going in. I would also bring a flashlight next time; well, maybe not if I didn't have kids to worry about. We were using our cell phones for light, but then the other half of our group who went into the haunted house called to see where we were and when I said I didn't know, the cell phone lost service – adding to the stranded feeling we were experiencing. I must have stashed my cell phone on top of the stroller really quick

because my daughter had turned backwards in her seat and was falling out, so after I fixed her, I frantically searched for the cell phone with no luck – apparently it had fallen off the stroller in the corn maze. So when we finally got out, I had to tell the staff that I lost my cell phone in there. As they laughed at me, they asked if it was on vibrate or silence mode – “Of course it is!” I said, because it would have been too easy to find it otherwise, and let’s face it – a lost cell phone in a corn maze wouldn’t be funny if you could call it and hear it ring. So a small black silent cell phone lost in a corn maze in the dark? Forget it. They did call me the next day though, saying that they did eventually find it, probably with the light of day. Well, anyway, the corn maze with 4 little children in the dark was quite an experience. Not horrible, but not recommended... quite an experience – I can only describe it as having felt like I came through an ordeal after we got out... it was kind of like being stranded in the wilderness, not knowing when rescue would arrive. Sure, there are “corn cops” and all you have to do is yell, but I don’t know how they’d hear you and I honestly didn’t want to be the group that yelled for help. We did it on our own, and for that, we got the satisfaction of accomplishment.

Well, I’ve rambled about that long enough... I had fun. I loved the serenity of the farm at night, and it was a beautiful night weather-wise. It was cool but not cold, and being in rural Ohio meant that we were navigating the maze under a canopy of thousands of stars... I would love to go back and explore the maze without worrying about the kids being hungry, thirsty, having sore feet or having to go to the bathroom. And someone remind me that if I have any more kids, a corn maze is NOT a good activity for a pregnant woman – too much walking and not enough bathrooms. This post is so lengthy I’ll have to save our alpaca farm adventure for the next post... stay tuned!