

I'm Still Here, Somewhere...

Just a quick note because I've been too busy, and I miss blogging! I had started two posts about last weekend, but haven't had the time to finish either one – hopefully I will soon! It's been really difficult to blog with a 17-month-old who only wants to climb on me and bang on my keyboard when I actually do have the time to sit down! So then my computer will reset, and that's the end of that...

More later – I'm hoping! STAY WARM!!!

New Baby!

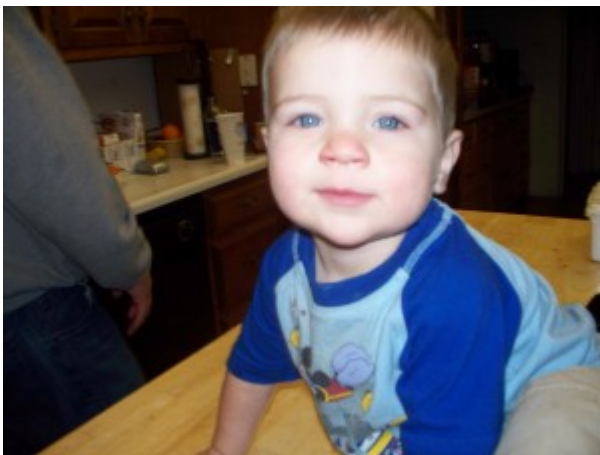
Made you look! Did you think I was going to say we were awaiting the arrival of our 5th child?

No such luck – probably wouldn't declare it for the first time on a blog anyway. I just wanted to share my son's first professional haircut that made everyone joke about him being a different baby – although “toddler” is a much more appropriate word here than “baby” – my son is all over the place, and the haircut made him look SO MUCH older! He's really cute with the haircut, but why do they grow up so fast!?! These pictures were taken only 4 days apart.

BEFORE:



AFTER:



Tool Man

My almost 17-month-old son has started using “tools”. When we put up the Christmas decorations, he started pulling chairs away from the table, pushing them over to the bookcase to try to climb and get at the nativity. Yesterday, he took down a wall hanging and began to use the hanger rod as a spoon for his mashed potatoes. When I told my dad about this mischief, he said that this behavior seems pretty smart. Yeah, I replied, smart like a chimpanzee! I really don’t remember the girls doing so much climbing, tool-using, or just general sabotage!

And another thing about little boys – the parental chasing. I always see moms chasing their little boys; running after them around the store, the zoo, wherever – and nine times out of ten, the kid being chased by the parent is a boy. I had a little boy almost a year and a half ago, and I've been wondering when my turn would come. Yesterday I got my answer. While I was getting my little boy dressed, he said an emphatic "NO!", then turned around and ran from me. He dove under the dining room table, where I had to drag him out, kicking and screaming. So yeah, the chasing of little boys by their parents begins shortly after they learn to walk.

Ah, the toddler days again – feels like it's been awhile, probably because the toddler in our family before our son was Disney, who is an almost perfectly behaved child. We often joke that Disney is [D.A.R.Y.L.](#) – remember that movie from the 80's about a boy who is actually a robot? And she is a quick learner! We've been doing "sight words" with our Kindergartener Sammie, which are flash cards with words on them, like "orange", "the", "purple", "my", "I", etc. Disney, who just turned 3, has been picking up the sight words as we practice with Sammie! She knows all the ones I listed above and is also starting to work on letter recognition – 3 years old is pretty early to start reading! I just feel badly for Sammie, who has her own gifts but is also very competitive by nature – it might be difficult for her to see her little sister learning certain things faster than herself.

But the point is, Disney's toddler stage was barely noticable, which is probably why her little brother seems like more than a handful – and I hate to tell myself this, but I think this is just the beginning!!

IT Is HERE

It's official – there is a flu wreaking havoc in our house. I don't know if it's H1N1, but all the signs are there. Our middle-schooler came down with it Friday night, and she's been in bed ever since. She had to miss a birthday party and church this weekend, and she won't be going to school tomorrow. Today our 5-year-old and 1-year-old starting showing symptoms, and tonight our 3-year-old looks like she might be starting to get it. And oh yeah – why would you think this one skipped Hubby, who gets EVERYTHING that comes around? Looks like it's making an appearance in him tonight. As usual, (except for the flu season when I was pregnant and was sick from Thanksgiving until Christmas – one bug after another) I remain the last one standing, as yet untouched by the virus (crossing fingers, knocking wood...)

So up goes this post, and down goes our family – I think a flu outbreak is a good reason to go to bed at 10, don't you? Here's hoping and praying that it doesn't hit us too hard and also that I may stay well enough to care for my family. We are going to have to quarantine ourselves this week, which is a shame since we had plans for every single night. Tomorrow will see a slew of phone calls made and emails sent to cancel everything. Health comes first, of course. Best wishes to readers for staying healthy!!!

Puzzling The Night Away

Our 3-year-old Disney is really good at puzzles. Last night, she tried her first 63-piece puzzle, but she didn't quite finish it:



She got a pretty good start – that puzzle is particularly difficult. We were all enjoying a wonderfully peaceful evening since our little 5-year-old instigator had her first sleepover at a friend's house. She had a great time, and when she returned home today, the conflicts between siblings resumed immediately. There's always one in every bunch, I guess ☐

And today's lesson in everyday life: Coffee can dye a black dog brown. Don't ask me how I know that, but it was quite a mess.

Boys Are Gross!

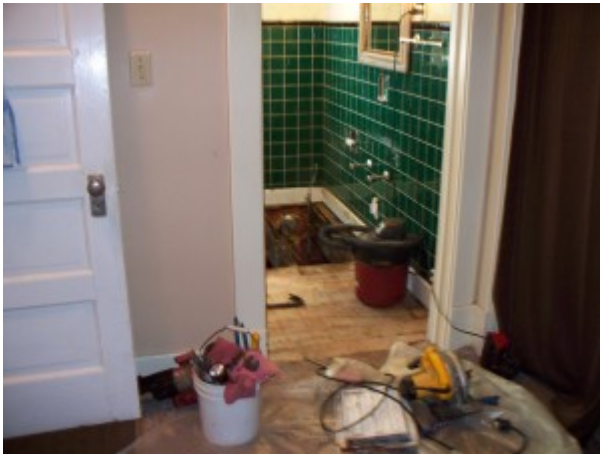
It's becoming clear to me why little girls think little boys are gross. They have a point – little boys ARE gross. Case in point: my almost 15-month-old **boy** was playing on the stairs today. When I went to retrieve him, he had taken half of his diaper off, and... well, I really don't want to get too technical or disgustingly detailed, so let's just say that he had gone #2 in his diaper and that it was a precarious situation and made for a difficult maneuver to get him off the stairs and cleaned up without spreading the mess. Leave it to

the boy...

Not going to comment on my now 5-year-old daughter's 'painting with poop phase' she had when she was a toddler – that was far worse, but just a phase. Our boy seems to live to get into things he's not supposed to, whether it be splashing in the dog's water bowl, dumping the dog's food (he does each of these activities 2-3 times a day!), wanting to play with wires, throwing food, smearing food, squeezing food in his fist, dumping drinks, playing in the toilet, the list goes on... BOYS!

One Of Those Days...

I knew it was going to be a busy day today before I even woke up, and I was dreading having to get up early. I am very lucky (thanks to my wonderful husband) that I don't have to get up early every day; I'm not a morning person. But today there was an early morning dentist appointment and someone also had to be here for the plumbers (more on that later). So I had begrudgingly set my alarm, but someone nearby decided to mow their lawn early this morning, there were dogs barking (turned out to be ours, of course, doh!), and a weird smell in the house (like someone had just gotten a perm, yuck). So I got out of bed a half hour before my alarm even got a chance to make a peep. And when I went downstairs, I found this where our downstairs (and most popular) bathroom used to be:



Well, ok, so it wasn't a complete shock. We had scheduled the plumbers to come today to fix [our bathroom floor bulge](#), but I wasn't expecting the bathroom to be **missing**! And obviously the plumbers' estimate of the work is going to be way low (and the estimate was frightening enough in the first place!) since much more of the floor was affected than they originally thought even before they tore it to pieces. Tomorrow we find out if the plumbing itself is "worse than they thought" as well, which would add yet another day to this project and who knows how much money, yikes! Plus we still have to get a new bathroom floor; to be installed by a different contractor all together – how much is **that** going to cost? Did I mention I've had a headache all day? The plumbers' drill isn't helping; it seems like they're drilling my head open... All this after we put a bunch of money into house stuff earlier this year when my husband sold his software which we considered a blessing at the time (more on that later). We got rid of our humongous, room-sized furnace and put central air in the house, and then ironically it was the coolest summer on record and we barely needed the new air conditioning system. We have the strangest luck sometimes. I wouldn't go so far as to call it bad luck; after all, the irony is born from good things we're receiving, so how can that be bad? I do get a new bathroom floor out of this, at some point anyway – we might have to try the ~~primitive~~ classic wooden look for awhile... And while I'm venting about the frustrations of today, let me just go off for a bit about how darn

inconvenient it is to get things done while sharing a house with a few (extremely talkative) plumbers who are tearing apart the bathroom! Not only do I have to keep the kids away from there, but I have to bring the whole gang (of kids – not the plumbers of course!) with me upstairs every time I need something from the bathroom!

And back to the stress of my husband's work right now... Back in the spring when his business deal went through, we were ecstatic that we would be able to pay some bills, fix some things on the house, and most importantly, spend the summer as a family without having to worry about work as much. It was a great summer, but now we have come to find out that a major company wants the software that was sold and is willing to pay much much more than for what it was sold just months ago. In short, if we had waited to sell the business for just a few months, we would be... let's just say 'in a very good financial place' right now. I'm learning a bit about the lessons of patience and greed (ain't human nature grand? Just months ago we were perfectly happy with the business deal the way it was, and now I think about regretting selling because it's worth so much more money), but it's frustrating; especially on a day in front of little sleep and after the destruction of my beautiful bathroom. Does this make sense? I feel like I'm rambling a little bit... I stopped in the coffee house drive-thru on the way back from the dentist appointment, and it's been a while since I've had a White Lightning, so I kind of feel like I'm all over the place...

But anyway, I should get the kids out of here and away from the busy plumbers (imagine that, a gaping hole in the bathroom floor attracts kids like flies to... well, I won't go there. At least the drive this morning to the dentist through the NW Ohio countryside at the beginning of the beautiful fall season relaxed me a little. If only there was time for a nap before I go and try to lead a group of 13-year-old spastic seventh-graders...

Four Day Weekend, Already?

But didn't school JUST start? And wasn't the kids' first weekend a THREE day weekend? Yes and yes. But to be **fair** (pun intended), this 4-day weekend was not planned in advance, well not entirely, anyway. It began with Monday being Fair Day for the kids – our county fair opens tomorrow, and the kids are off school on Monday to go to the fair and also because many of them have 4-H projects that will be judged at the fair on Monday – that was a planned day off. So then today, my husband was driving our daughter to school, when he realized he was the only one on the road and at the school. At least, that's what he thought -it was so foggy they couldn't see much of anything... so they returned home only to find that there was a two-hour delay because of the fog – our phones had been turned off so we didn't get the early morning call... So anyway, the 2 hour delay turned into an entire fog day because the dense fog would not clear early enough for the school district to send the buses into the country to pick up the kids. Fog Day on Friday + Fair Day on Monday = the first 4-Day weekend of the new school year, taking place on only the third weekend of the new school year! Luckily our student calender is set up to include 5 calamity days, and in NW Ohio, early morning fog is considered a calamity, I guess! What will we do when the 5 yearly calamity days are taken out of the calendar since the governor's plan calls for calamity days to be phased out? Wait and see, I guess...

And now I have to totally rearrange my day – so much for advance planning! I'll have to juggle the not-4-kid-friendly errands I have with my husband's planned business call – keeping 4 kids quiet and out of the way for that? Good luck to me! These are the times when I wish he had his own

office... The benefits of working at home outweigh the negatives of him working at an office of course, but on days like these, ugh! It's funny because I'm not native to NW Ohio and so both fog days and fair days are new to me – man, would I have loved these as a kid. As an adult... not so fun. Maybe we can have another calamity day later this year when we have nothing planned and we can just sit inside and watch movies and play games all day... Then, let it snow!

Another Installment of Cute

I realized that I hadn't emptied my camera in awhile, so when I finally did, I found some great pictures!



Told you it was a busy Labor Day weekend!



The girls dressed Charity up like a princess – her blue eye always gets photographic red-eye, but she actually let the kids dress her up! Wonder what kind of food they enticed her with...



The “baby” has been climbing everything in sight. Here he is on top of the folding table in the laundry room. And he’s been running while using his walker-toy; he went right from crawling to running! Guess it’s time to start calling him a toddler!



Here are all 4 four kids in the same cart at Menard's... awww!



And this is the ~~baby~~ toddler's first time going all the way up in the tunnels at the McDonald's Playplace – he loved it!

Tale Of Tartar

I did not go to Walmart yesterday, but I still have enough of a complaint to sit and write a blog post about the place! In case you've missed my other (many) Walmart rants, I'll save you the search and link to a few of the various episodes depicting the times they wronged me. Like [this time](#). And [this time](#). And [this time](#), to name a few...

So anyway, back to last night – I needed tartar sauce for

dinner and didn't realize it until after the kids got home from school, so I ran out (for what I thought was going to be) really quick to get some. I went to Walgreens first, but they don't carry tartar sauce, so I went across town to Dollar General, and they don't carry tartar sauce either. Is this a side effect of living in a small town – it's hard to find the things I need last minute if needed? If so, I will gladly take it in exchange for the traffic, air pollution, and the general stress that exudes from larger cities (see [hubby's blog post](#) about a recent news article about the most stressed cities – ew). But most likely the apparent lack of tartar sauce in rural NW Ohio is due to scenario #2 – ever since we got a Super Walmart a few years ago, the competitors have phased out certain grocery non-necessities like tartar sauce. Why should they carry old crusty tartar sauce when no one buys it there because everyone shops at Walmart? I begrudgingly include myself in that category – you can read those previous posts of mine if you really want to know more about my Walmart paradox and why I shop there. (At least my kids were never [slapped by strangers](#), and I haven't shown up [here](#) – yet.)

If you're still with me – I've linked all over the internet in this post, so I wouldn't be surprised if I've lost some people – I'm going to blame Walmart for my lack-of-tartar-sauce problem. And in case you're wondering how it all turned out, it really wasn't a problem after all. We just convinced the kids to try ranch dressing instead of the tartar sauce, and they actually liked it – well, until the ranch dressing came out too fast and spilled and incited a tantrum that caused a chain reaction that ruined dinner, but that's another post! And before my comment board lights up with healthy eating advice, I'm already aware that the kids really shouldn't grow up so sauce-dependent. But in these parts where the kids outnumber the adults, you must adapt to survive, and “pick your battles” is essential parenting advice!