

Florida 2011 – Trip Diary – Part 2

Sunday January 16 – We drove over to Congo River mini golf to try to feed the gators they have there, which never works out because it's usually too cold in January for the cold-blooded gators to care much about eating, and this time was no exception. But we spent a long time just watching the gators and their habitat-mate turtles climbing around and over each other, getting in and out of the water – kind of like a free little zoo exhibit. My kids are too little to enjoy or let us enjoy playing mini-golf, so we went to Sizzler for an all-you-can eat lunch buffet. We spent the afternoon relaxing at the house so Hubby could watch the Chicago Bears game and the kids could swim, and we even took a dip ourselves at half-time. For dinner, we went to Medieval Times, which is a dinner show – it is SO fun!!! Everyone is seated around an arena, and the audience eats a Medieval-style feast while watching a show complete with horse, knights, and jousting. You are assigned a seat in a certain color section (we were green – note the crown in the picture below), and you cheer on your color knight in the jousting and games – it's a blast!!



After watching the knights duke it out, Grandma took the kids back to the house and we took Jamy on the extreme go-karts at Fun Spot. The track called The Vortex is wicked; you wind up and around 3 or 4 times until

you reach the top, and it's strange to be up so high in a go-kart. But you don't really have time to think about that, because there is a steep drop down, followed by a couple of hairpin / bowl-like turns that you have to navigate as driver of the kart! Super fun, though not for everyone. We thought this is what caused Jamy's back injury that ended up plaguing his trip, but turns out it was something else. And we took our daughters on these go-karts later in the week – with helmets of course – and our oldest hated them and wouldn't let me use the accelerator; it was SO frustrating!! Our daredevil 6-year-old Sammie loved it though, and I found her to be a passenger more willing to go my speed – pedal to the metal!!

Monday January 17 – We ate breakfast at Sizzler at their breakfast buffet, and then headed out to Universal Studios as planned despite the dire forecast of rain all day, and the weathermen were not mistaken. It was like a monsoon when we arrived, and scarcely let up all day. Many of the rides at Universal are indoor, but Hubby and I did take a bit of a gamble (and lost) when we got in line for the new Rip Ride Rockit coaster. They had to shut the ride down when they saw lightning, and wouldn't you know it, we were first in line! After investing that much time waiting, we really didn't want to get out of line, but the kids were waiting with Grandma and Jamy, so we called them to see if they were ok and able to stay dry. We waited probably about 20 minutes, and it was fun to try to read the different hand signals and procedures the staff was doing to see if we would get to ride soon or not. Finally, they opened the coaster, and we were first – test rats. This coaster looks more intimidating than it is, mostly because the first lift is straight up, face pointed at the sky, your back is parallel to the ground. Other than that, it's a pretty lame coaster; the best thing about it is that you get to choose a song to listen to while you're on it, and your song choice plays in the speakers behind your head. I chose "Devil Went Down to Georgia" which made a very good

coaster theme song, but the coaster was so tame that I was able to do some air-fiddling along to the song. I heard Hubby beside me rocking out to Gloria Gaynor's I Will Survive, and that seemed like fun too, but I wasn't about to wait in line again for this ride. The other thing that stank about the Rip Rokit is the rain – riding a coaster in the rain is not a lot of fun. The rain pelts your face; it hurts and you can't see anything, so it takes a lot of the fun out of it. And oh yeah, this is how soggy we looked when we were done riding:



Most of us made the best of the rain; after all, where we were from in Ohio the weather was sub-zero, so rainy 50's still felt good to us. Our oldest was not a happy camper, however, and she soon grew tired of walking around in the rain, even though Grandma splurged and bought the kids ponchos – I didn't think to bring any, but maybe I will next time. It never does the all-day-rain thing in Florida! It usually rains or storms for less than an hour and then the sun comes back out so we were unprepared for the all day down-pour. But seriously, how could Universal be anything but fun? Even though the rain slowed us down a bit, we were still able to catch our first glimpse of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter – it was very cool!!

Hogwarts castle was amazing, and I guess I must have misplaced the picture I made Hubby take of me in Hogsmeade, which was beautiful at night. We got some Butterbeer, and it was yummiier than the version we attempted at one of our game nights here in Ohio. The Wizarding World has 3 rides, and we

only had time to get on The Forbidden Journey on this day – that’s the one inside the castle. While you wait in line, there is plenty to see – it looks like you are on the movie set except better because it doesn’t look like a set – it looks real! The portraits move and talk, and there are 3D projections of Harry, Ron, and Hermione that look like real people. As you wind around the corridors of the castle, you get to explore many scenes straight from the books and movies: Dumbledore’s office, Gryffindor common room – even the Sorting Hat makes an appearance! And the ride itself is *amazing!!* If you are a Harry Potter fan, this area is a **must-see!!** Though we did have a slight oopsie – while trying to rush over to the Harry Potter World before the park closed, we skipped lunch, so now we were cold, wet, and hungry. It would have been ok, except that once we snaked throughout the corridors of the Hogwarts castle, we learned that the Forbidden Journey ride was down. After waiting in the dark hallway listening to the Sorting Hat give his spiel over and over and on empty stomachs, we had had it – especially grumpy oldest who, if you remember, was not happy with the day at Universal in the rain to begin with. Our torturous wait in the hallway of Hogwarts became so irritating that I wished my husband had bought the flaming wallet we had seen at the magic show – so we could throw it at the Sorting Hat, flames and all! ☐

We did finally get on the ride, and it was awesome, but my oldest neglected to try it – she doesn’t like anything faster or more thrilling than the Scrambler. As I said, the ride was amazing, so now we were all famished after a day at Universal. But being budget-conscious we wanted to leave the parks before finding dinner, though I must confess: I was so hungry that the idea of the ‘whopper bar’ on Universal’s City Walk that had turned my stomach that very morning was actually sounding quite good after a day walking around in the rain! We ended up at Denny’s, which is a place I hadn’t been to in probably over a decade, and while the food wasn’t great, it sufficed.

(to be continued in part 3)

Was it me?

Okay, it has been a little over a week since my last post and it's time to post, and now that I have deleted the spam comments that have shown up in the last week I can begin. I see that some of you have been posting machines over the last few days, so hopefully mine will be seen among all your furious activity. ☐ Let's start with a quiz- which of last weeks videos were actually of my church choir and not just songs picked from the web by someone else? C'mon- the post mentions one directly, and you might be able to logically deduce another one even if you don't watch/haven't watched them. The answers are in the order of the videos in the previous post. Good luck! Answers will be forthcoming.

[poll id="6"]

So on to the post topic (and all said- "finally!" ☐), last night we had the ~~second~~ first of my small group events for the 4th-graders at my church. Why the ordinal confusion at the beginning of this paragraph? Well, last Saturday was the first scheduled event, for the Saturday night boys but one of the leaders backed out due to work so we are rescheduling it. Last night was for the second-Sunday-service boys. Or as it turned out, boy. That's right- out of over a dozen 4th-grade boys that service only one showed up. So it was two leaders and one boy. The chosen event was indoor mini-golf on a glow-in-the-dark course. Being really nice out, and with outdoor

courses starting to open, it was quite dead for a Friday night- no one in front of us though people started to come in behind us. So since it was just the three of us, we kind of spoiled the one boy. His mom gave him extra money for food or whatnot, but told him not to spend it on the video and redemption games, so what did Brian and I do? Spent a few dollars on tokens for him of course!

About the title of this post, even though last Saturday was canceled, I still can gather a statistic for that day as the one at church who was going to notify the parents of the cancellation failed to do so for some reason, so as far as the parents and kids knew it was still on. The result? Only the two confirmed students would have been there (only one showed up only to be disappointed since I called the other one personally as I had their number). Lesson learned- if the parents don't RSVP, the kids most definitely will not be there.

So what was the deal? I know warmer weather kept people away who would have otherwise dropped in, but these were planned events. Do boys not like mini-golf? Was it too expensive? Do all of them have full plates outside of church to prevent participation in any event? Well, the last can't be true as there were plenty of kids at the official movie night last year and at the winter retreat. I hope it wasn't me! ☐ Okay, not likely. I really want the next one to be successful. To be safe, I think we will not make it mini-golf. Plus, hopefully something cheaper than the \$8.50 this one cost. Maybe we could have an all-ministry event again like a picnic and games (maybe hiking) at the forest preserve- something to perhaps bring up to the leadership.

Edit: I asked the kids tonight about it and they pretty much agreed that mini-golf would have been fun, but the outdoor kind not indoors. So, we will likely try this again for the middle of May. Of course, this was the kids talking. I didn't get a chance to question the parents so who knows if cost or transportation was a consideration? In any event, now to locate a local, fun outdoor course...

Putting The Fun Into Labor...

Well, it was a last-minute attempt at a Labor Day outing with friends, and even though we strayed from our original idea of going to a Lake Erie-area haunted house and drive-thru zoo, we had LOTS of fun!

We went to the Toledo Zoo, always a great zoo, even if this Labor Day Saturday of 2009 equated to being one of the most crowded we've ever seen that zoo. It was just over 80°, so the animals weren't all that active, but we did get to see Louie, the "baby" elephant (who is now 6 years old and awaiting the completion of construction of his very own zoo exhibit area) lying down and taking a break, which was cool. We also saw one of their huge hippos swimming in the underwater hippo-quarium, which is always a treat because you can see a humongous hippo swim right past up close. After the zoo, we ate at one of our favorite places in the Toledo area – Nick's Cafe on Reynolds (not sure if it's actually Toledo or the suburb of Maumee). But the place is just north of Ohio's turnpike, I 80/90, and they have great food and almost *unimaginable* portion sizes – are they used to feeding GIANTS?!? Unfortunately for Nick's, the place was empty, but this is (just) one of the reasons we go to Nick's when we're in the area – they have GREAT food. Besides, **you** try

withstanding the crowds to get a table at the Olive Garden on a Saturday evening, especially with 4 starving kids!

After dinner, we were going to head to another nearby Toledo suburb for a free exotic animal / magic show, something right up our alley. But the combination of the big weekend, crabby kids and crowds at the zoo caused our driver and his wife to veto that great idea, so luckily we hadn't told the kids since it sounded like fun and they would have been disappointed (no matter their exhaustive state) to miss it. But we've learned that over-doing it with little kids along is **always** regretful, and so we happily prepared for our journey home after we gorged ourselves and piled leftovers into boxes at Nick's. But we grew distracted by a strip-mall across Reynolds from Nick's Cafe, and that's how we finally discovered what Nickel World of Toledo really is...

We had seen it in the strip-mall before, but we had always busily assumed that it was the 2009 incarnate of the early 20th century 5 and dime store. On Saturday night, we discovered that Nickel World is actually a family entertainment place, filled with **many** arcade, skill, and video games! They have a unique business model – they charge an entrance fee of \$2.50 per person, and then they sell \$5 bags of nickels for use on the games. Most of the games are just one nickel to play, some are two, and there's even a large selection of FREE games! The place is so cool; what a great concept! For about \$25, our party of 4 adults and 5 kids were easily entertained for at least an hour, PLUS the kids took home quite a bounty of prizes with the 5,000 tickets they were able to rack up in just that hour! Nickel World has just about every type of video game you can think of – two types of Skeeball, multiple Crane Games, ball-roller games, basketball shooting games, racing games, Bozo Buckets, even air hockey as well as FREE! vintage arcade games like X-Men, Bust-A-Move, Dueling Dragons, and many more... We had a GREAT time, and Hubby and I are dying to return on a date night to

fight, race and out-shoot each other without distraction from the kids! The only thing is that they are closed on Tuesday nights when we have our date nights... oh well, perhaps we can reschedule. If **you** are in the Toledo area, you **have** to check out Nickel World on Reynolds (US 20) – a rarity for an awesome value in family entertainment in this day and age of recession! And while I'm on the topic, Nickel World reminded me of another cool arcade-type place in South Bend, Indiana. [Megaplay](#) has two indoor mini-golf courses, as well as lots of video games (some of the classics are free) and even an inflatable jousting area where they hold tournaments. I've never had the pleasure of participating in something like this, but it looks like lots of fun. If only I had discovered this sport before my sense of balance expired... I did see an indoor inflatable jousting space at another place in Toledo that we visited a few months ago. This place was pretty cool – they had adult-sized bouncy slides and ladders to climb, and my husband and I bounced down the slides and ran around like little kids until the unfortunate voices of reality (muscle strain and fatigue) made it loud and clear that we had better take it easy... But I can't remember the name of that place or where exactly it is, and I can't find it on the internet. Probably a bad sign that we were the only ones there at the time, I hope it hasn't closed down, but that's a lot of why it was so much fun – my kids weren't getting run over by eager older kids, and hubby and I weren't laughed out of the place by nasty teenagers...

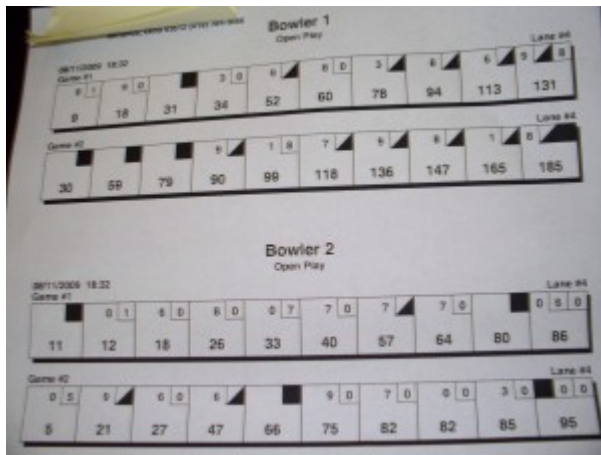
So... back from my tangents. We had a really nice and safe Labor Day weekend free from any of the [speed traps we encountered in previous years](#). Hope yours was safe and fun also! God Bless!

Bowling For Columbine

While I'm on the topic of date night (see my previous post)...

This week we did not feel like mini-golfing again on date night, so we went bowling instead. I did so well, we got a printout of the scores, much to my husband's dismay – I've already mentioned how he has bad luck at physics-dependent sports like bowling and mini-golf. And I got tons of practice at bowling as a kid – I was in a weekly bowling league for I don't know how many years. Later in high school, I took bowling in gym class and joined intramural bowling after school where I was crowned, "Female Bowler of the Year" for the two years I was in it – not a difficult feat, seeing as how there were under 10 girls involved, but still, if we had had a competitive bowling team in high school, perhaps I would have been a high school athlete, hehe!

I've spent about 23% of my adult years pregnant (!) and most of the rest of those years raising small children who would wreak havoc with a bowling ball, so needless to say, I have not had a chance to hone the skill I developed as a youngster. I do enjoy the occasional bowling game, though, and rarely do I top my previous bowling average from back-in-the-day: 132. Well, the other date night, not only did I top my old average for the two games we played but I somehow tied my all-time high score! Well, anyway, here are the scores, and this reminds me to make joining a weekly league a priority when the kids get a little bit older!



And about the title I chose for my post... I just finished reading the book *Columbine* by Dave Cullen, and it was a fascinatingly detailed account of the 1999 Colorado high school massacre dissected from just about every angle. If you like to read true crime or just want to know every detail about the massacre (it holds a special fascination for me since it was unfolding just as Hubby and I arrived at our honeymoon destination after a 24-hour road trip back in '99), you should read this book. It's both sad and informative, and the author does mention that the Michael Moore movie, *Bowling for Columbine*, has little to do with the circumstances involving the high school massacre. But, *Bowling for Columbine* is a catchy title nonetheless, which is why I borrowed it, not because I'm a Michael Moore fan. Actually, we saw a parody of his movies the other day, and I will be sure to include the movie review in an upcoming post called "It Was A Redbox Summer". Stay Tuned!

This Economy Stinks!

A few weeks ago, we found out that one of our favorite summer activities will not be an option this year. [The Fun Spot Amusement Park](#) in Angola, Indiana will not be opening in

2009. This park was absolutely perfect for a family with kids the ages ours will be this summer: 9, 5, 2, and 1. They have (had) lots of rides for the little ones, as well as zoo animals like tigers, lions, parrots, and deer. They also had a few awesome coasters for Mom and Dad, and we were planning on bringing along a friend or a Manny (man who is a nanny; see some of my previous posts) so we could indulge in some coaster action together, a rarity for us. But alas – Fun Spot is a victim of this bad economy. The message on the home page of their website says it all: “Due to the Economy, Fun Spot Park and Zoo Will Not Be Open For The 2009 Season”.

Where is President Obama? I thought his campaign promises entailed the repairing of the economy? The Fun Spot in Angola was perfect for our family – it was only about 45 minutes away, the price was right – it was only \$56 for our entire family to see the zoo and ride the rides and even the waterslides all day. And that was before using any coupons that were always available (they would even offer good grade discounts that allowed our oldest FREE admission!) Compare these prices to Cedar Point, which is 2 hours away AND would cost our entire family \$128 for one day, not to mention that Cedar Point is much less targeted to young kids – plus Cedar Point has long lines in which to wait, something that wasn't a concern at Fun Spot. I can only hope Fun Spot will re-open in 2010 or at least before my kids grow up – we have some amazing family memories of Fun Spot, and I can only hope there will be more to come!

Adding to my angst about losing Fun Spot, I just found out yesterday that Ball Quest in Defiance, Ohio will not be open this season either. Ball Quest had a mini-golf course, a driving range, and batting cages. We had lots of fun there last summer as well, and it was a place we visited often with friends. We even had some batting cage tokens left over! But the sign on the gate of Ball Quest says, “Not open due to increased taxes. Thank County Commissioner Kime”. Ouch – a

little bitterness, it seems? Ball Quest was a small family owned business. My friend once showed me the “tea room” they had decorated beautifully in a Victorian motif. I wonder what will happen to gorgeous room and its antique furniture, complete with an antique wooden high chair? I really loved min-golfing at Ball Quest – the course went up a small hill that overlooked beautiful NW Ohio farm fields... and I’m not sure if there are other batting cages nearby! Yet another source of family entertainment – GONE! If they keep going at this rate, we’ll be left with nothing in no time! People complain all the time that families just don’t do as much together as they used to and as they should, but if family entertainment keeps getting shut down, that trend will only continue and increase! Here is a picture of my girls having a blast at Fun Spot last year – their baby brother was to be born only two weeks later. It was over 85° that day, and I was physically miserable, but we all still had SO much fun!



Pedal To The Metal

Yes, a fun day indeed, if you read Jamiahsh’s blog, then you know what I’m talking about. To get our minds off of certain medical dramas (not like House or Grey’s Anatomy or anything

like that – our real-life medical dramas taking place right now are much worse than some crappy tv), we decided to have a day of fun. It began with go-carting, which is always fun but even more so if you can fill up the track and drive with people you know – which we were able to do. I like the place we went to because they don't charge any extra if you take a kid along with you, and seeing as how we had a few nice adults who didn't mind chauffeuring some little kids, all 3 of our daughters got to go around the track a bunch of times. But I'm the dummy who forgot my camera, so I didn't get a picture of my little almost 2-year-old in a go-cart like I wanted. It's funny because I had the camera with me, just forgot to use it, which should signal how scatter-brained I've been lately because of the worry and lack of sleep resulting from my husband's as-yet-unidentified medical condition. And while we're on that subject, we won't know anything until next week now, because they've ordered further tests for Thursday, and they won't get the results back until next week. But they've eliminated gallstones, so at least we know that much. He blogged a little update here.

But anyway, enough *tangents*, back to the fun day. After go-carting, we decided to practice in the batting cages for our upcoming annual theater softball game. The batting cages reminded me how hilarious last year's game was – I mean, theater people playing softball? It was a riot!

After that, we went to a nice little restaurant we like on the river. If you sit outside, you get to enjoy the beautiful weather, the view, and a game of cornhole while you wait for your food. I like cornhole; if anyone has a set, we should bring it to the theater family fun day and play that along with softball... Why is it called cornhole? Is that a NW Ohio term for it? They have that where I come from in Illinois too, but I don't think they call it cornhole. In case you aren't from NW Ohio and you don't know what I'm talking about, I'm referring to the game with the wooden ramps with holes in

them... you have 2 of these and station them about 15-20 feet apart with half of the team at each end; then you throw bean bags into the holes – hopefully.

After dinner, the kids fell apart (what else is new? They've been acting HORRIBLY lately!), so we had to leave, but I hear the rest of the group went mini-golfing. I was actually tempted to mini-golf earlier in the day but I knew the kids would drive me nuts because they get bored of it after about 6 holes. So we left, thinking maybe the kids would fall asleep in the car, giving me and hubby a much-deserved and needed night alone together to watch a movie. Didn't happen. And starting with the kids spazzing out at the restaurant about bees (and there weren't that many – our almost 9-year-old is a wimp about certain things and her craziness got her sisters going – don't you love how they chain-react to one another? Hence the name of my blog), things went from bad to worse.

I'm going to blame Carol and Megan for this one, since they brought it up earlier in the day, but what a coincidence – we got pulled over on the way home. So thanks Carol and Megan for jinxing us!! Just kidding, of course it's not your fault... I guess poor Chris really got used to putting the pedal to the metal on those darn go-carts. The state highway patrol officer who pulled us over had the personality of a housefly, and she wasn't going to act like a human being and be thankful we weren't drunk driving or even think about giving us a break on labor day, so our fun day ended up being pretty expensive when you include the \$100 speeding ticket. Our luck SUCKS lately, but if we can get the all-clear on my husband's health, then I will stop complaining.

Oh yeah, so anyway, when we got home, our almost-2-year-old was the last one awake, and since she had only napped for about 10 minutes during the day, we thought we were almost home-free for a nice evening together – WRONG! About 30 minutes into the movie, our oldest came down, asking for a snack. No biggie, but “Did you wake your sister?” we asked

her, panicked beyond belief because our 4-year-old has been a little hellian again lately. She said she didn't think she woke her up, but 5 minutes later, guess what happens? Sammie comes down the stairs, and now we're in the middle of an R rated movie with all 3 kids awake and downstairs. So much for our peaceful early night, sigh. We sent the oldest 2 upstairs, and that's actually the last we heard from Sammie, believe it or not. Disney, the youngest besides the baby (and he's not old enough to cause any trouble yet, thank goodness!), got so OVER-tired that she started crying for about 45 minutes straight until she finally fell asleep. But then Taylor, the oldest, must have come down the stairs at least 3 more times because she was worried about various bugs that were in her room and in the house, according to her anyway. If this were still the age of the VCR, our movie would have been eaten by the VCR by now because of all the pausing and unpausing we were doing... but ultimately, we just gave up anyway because I was falling asleep during the first part of the movie, and we could tell Taylor was going to be "bugging" us all night... So we missed the end of [No Escape](#) – some crappy [Ray Liotta](#) action film from the 90's. I think it was crappy anyway, I really didn't see much of it – let me know if it's any good and maybe we'll go back to it.

But for what it was worth, the day provided a nice distraction from the worries that have been plaguing us lately, so thanks to all who participated. Now we just have to wait *another* week to find out more medical test results... ugh, I hate the waiting!

Crazy Busy

In the past few days, I've been able to catch up a little, but I haven't written much before today and yesterday because we have been too busy having fun!

It started last Friday when we took the kids out to the [Fun Spot](#) in Angola Indiana. We had a great time, but I think I learned a lesson about taking 3 kids out for a full day of fun in the sun while I'm trying to nurse a full-term pregnancy. It was over 80°, and we ran out of water and I got sick. I think what pushed me over the edge was trying to watch my 20-month-old as she sat at the edge of a pool while my other children and husband went on the water slide. It's hard to explain to someone who doesn't know, but being this hugely pregnant is basically like being incapacitated – if my toddler had fallen into the water, it would have taken me way too long to get over to her. There was a lifeguard present, but still I was a nervous wreck and the stress of the situation was too much, so I picked her up and took her away from the pool. This of course made her cry, and so the exhaustion came from trying to redirect her and do something else in the heat... it was all just too much for me when all I wanted was a seat in the air conditioned arcade. And for his part, my husband only got to go down the waterslide once which also made me feel badly because he had so much fun, but I just couldn't handle our toddler any longer in the heat alone.

After the water slide fiasco, we made our way to the animal area – they have a macaw parrot and a few baby deer and some big cats. They are rescue cats; lions and tigers and a cougar, and I'm not sure where they were rescued from. I was a little disenchanted with how small the animals' enclosures were, but since they are large cats and spend roughly 20 hours a day sleeping, I think it's a good thing that they've been rescued at all and get food and shelter every day.

Then it was time for more rides, and this place is built for kids my daughters' ages! They have about 10 kiddie rides which all 3 of them could ride, and my 8-year-old still really enjoys these since she's not ready for big rides yet. Her little sister, on the other hand, cannot wait until she is a little taller and gets to ride the 4 roller coasters the Fun Spot also has. Then they have several middle-of-the-road rides for everyone, like flying boats, a scrambler, a tilt-a-whirl, and even more I'm not mentioning. Compared to the carnival that just left our town, admission into the Fun Spot is a steal – it was \$4 for me, a non-rider who just wanted to visit the zoo. Our little toddler cost only \$4, and she was able to ride about 10 rides. Our 4-year-old was \$8, and my husband and our oldest were \$16 each. So for a grand total of \$48, it was a full day of family fun and much cheaper than the traveling carnival or even the county fair, based on what you get for your money. And I have to add that in June – too bad it's over now – but in June they had a special promotion where if you bring in a report card with A's and B's on it, the kid that earned them gets in free! So subtract \$16 from our \$48, and our day of fun was only \$32 – we were really pleased. The only problem with the place is that they are at the mercy of the weather always, and with all the rain and storms we've been getting, our day of fun was no exception and was cut short when a sudden storm moved in. But it was only an hour and a half away from closing anyway. Also, we had been about to leave as it was, and the staff handed out half-price admission coupons, so we will definitely be back when I can enjoy some of the rides myself after the baby is born. And I will be able to give hubby another few rounds on the water slide! We were so pleased with the place that we tried to go back Sunday since we wanted to take advantage of the report card promotion one more time before June was over, but alas, the weather foiled our plans and we ended up at [Crazy Pinz](#) in Fort Wayne, Indiana instead. Still a fun day, but no where near the value of Fun Spot. Crazy Pinz is an indoor entertainment place, and they have an arcade, mini-golf,

bowling, and a 3-story play area for the kids. We've been there before and really liked it, but this time, everything had changed and was MUCH more expensive. But, we had 4 little kids (brought a friend along) who really thought we were doing something really fun that day, so what could we do but spend the day at Crazy Pinz regardless. I have to mention that somehow, on the way to Fun Spot on Sunday, my husband and I got to talking I guess and somehow missed the exit and overshot the place by about 20 miles. (Sorry for not using you, Mr. GPS, I thought I knew where we were going!) Then Fun Spot was closed for rain, so we had to head down to Fort Wayne, and overall we ended up spending an extra \$20-30 on gas... Kind of a big oopsie with gas prices being so high in this day and age. It was a bad luck kind of day, but we did end up salvaging it, and overall, it was an AWESOME weekend.

Saturday we went with friends to see the movie [Wall-E](#) and then visited a friend who is recovering from heart surgery. He is doing well thankfully, and we all enjoyed our visit together – even the kids, who played with cats and bugs and other creatures found around their house in the country. We ran up to their church which was having an ice cream social and enjoyed delicious food and homeade ice cream – a dream for a pregnant lady – YUM! Wall-E was pretty good and as it turns out, the Pixar people had a brainstorming meeting years ago, and this is the last film to be made from ideas presented at that meeting. Others are [A Bug's Life](#), [Monster's Inc.](#), and [Finding Nemo](#), so needless to say, that brainstorming lunch should go down in history! I have to say I was a little taken aback by the lack of human dialogue in Wall-E. Even after seeing the previews, I wasn't prepared for it. I think this is what may have finished off my 4-year-old since she had to leave the movie theater with dad before the movie was even half over. She's been able to make it through the last 5-10 movies we've been to in a theater, so that's why I think it was the lack of dialogue in this one that did her in. It was a cute movie though, but not on par with Pixar's latest

features like Monsters Inc. or especially Finding Nemo, at least in my opinion. Then again, it was SO different, mostly because it was so futuristic that I suppose it's hard to compare to the others.

So yeah, fun extended weekend, even though piles of laundry await my folding. If you're anywhere nearby, head out to Angola, Indiana and visit the Fun Spot, it's well worth it especially if you have really little ones – it totally trumps a place like Six Flags with their high admission prices and long lines.

Wild And Crazy Kids And Some Other People

Yesterday (it was yesterday as I am making this post) was a fantastic fun-filled day full of little people, great friends, and a surprise or two. It actually began last night when I received a phone message that I was to return to see if I would like to do something this weekend. It was a good thing we did not plan it for Friday night with all the storms in the area. Instead, a bunch of us went to an indoor Entertainment Complex known as [Crazy Pinz](#) full of arcade games, games of skill, mini-golf, and mini bowling (which I must admit to being a real master of... my score may not have shown it but a master nonetheless). Watching C walk up the lane crawling on his hands and knees to fix the lane several times was humorous at times. Then it got to the point where it became ridiculous.

There was also a very fun and if you were not careful, addictive, Deal or No Deal game. However, the prize was not **ONE MILLION DOLLARS**, but anywhere from 1-200 (or 2-400

depending upon which version you played) tickets to be redeemed for prizes. I did pretty well collecting tickets from this game (better than the bowling which was great too).

The surprise came in when we were getting ready to sit at a table to enjoy a small break. I suddenly felt someone wrap her arms around me and say "Guess Who?" After giving up or just allowing my captor to get off her tiptoes, I discovered my "Aunt" Carol standing behind me. She then led me over to her group where my cousin was having a gathering of her own at the bowling alley. Some of them were dressed for what seemed like Halloween party or a superhero convention. Stacy was dressed as the Amazon Princess Wonder Woman. There was also a Batgirl, Catwoman, and a few others in costumes I do not remember. But how strange was that?!

After eating dinner, and being taken back home, I was ready to crash. A great day but most great days do seem to wear you out. I did forget to mention the rather lame amusement park roller coaster simulation that gave you the sense of nausea however, none of the rush of speed and euphoria felt during the real thing. Just watching it from behind I kind of got the same impression.



What a day...

This day actually started some time yesterday evening. During a thunderstorm in the area and a tornado close to us, 4 outlets in our house went out. I'm thinking something in the

storm caused it, because to was only part of a complete circuit. Looked like I would have to replace at least on outlet. I couldn't tell from a exterior glance as to which outlet shorted out. So I put a trip to the hardware store on my Saturday to-do list. The first thing on the list was getting my daughter to her SAT testing.

Now on to Saturday Morning... Storm damage from the previous night's storms caused some rough driving. A normal 40 minute drive took closer to 1 hour. We just made it just in time to the SAT testing site. Hmm, day not starting off well...

I had to wait around for at least an hour for the hardware store to open, so I stopped for coffee. Those who have known me for a while, know that my favorite coffee shop closed for good a little over 2 years ago. This was the place my dear wife and I spent many happy times, just getting away from the kids, planning for future things, getting to know one another again after 4 children. Good memories in that little place. I have yet to find any coffee shop that comes close to the atmosphere, quality of the coffee, food ect. and the people who frequent the shop itself. The place I stopped in today had a very nice atmosphere (except for the big screen TV, but I went around the corner from that). The coffee was very good. The food I had ok, but nothing special.. Not many people there, so I couldn't say anything about that. Too bad it was a 40 minute drive... Too far for a once a week type of thing.

After the coffee, I could get the things I needed to replace at least 1 outlet. I got 4 new outlets just in case. I still had at least 2 hours to wait for the SAT to finish. Stopped at another store and was able to find some water filters for our office at work. I installed an older water filter on the tap at work, but the filters have been hard to find. I try to pick up extra whenever I see them on the shelf. Filtered water makes better coffee ya know... Now only 1 1/2 hours for the test to let out...

Got a call from my daughter in FL, we talked until my Cell battery almost died. Then I got a notice that I had 3 messages... Two were from the day before!!! They weren't there when I got up in the morning, I checked... Storm must have hit a local tower or something?? Anyway a friend wanted to get together to (in his words) "just get out of the house". Great!! How does one decide what to do when I was already invited to oldest daughter's place for fun and games... Hmm. Well, I was expecting a call from the oldest earlier in the week to finalize the plans. It never happened. I let my youngest test goer decide... Friend won the toss.

So after a good lunch youngest, and I head out for some fun. We played games (all sorts), and just had a lot of fun. We played a miniature bowling game. The balls were slightly larger than a softball, no holes, and the pins were on strings/wires. If you ever see one, try it out. They are very fun. We also played indoor mini-golf (black lit area with dark black 'greens', and glowing colored bumpers and obstructions). This was fun to, but it did make it hard to 'read the greens'. I ended up with a hole in one on the last hole. We also played a number of arcade games for 'tickets'. It was a fun afternoon/evening... Good idea C...

Now I'm tired and ready for bed... What a Day...

A Day of Mini

Finally the snow has stopped (quick, where is some wood for knocking?!? Our snowblower has been put away, which is enough of a jinx, but add a comment like the above, and I'm asking for trouble!), and the weather is finally being cooperative enough for some outdoor fun. So this weekend had us taking in

the first mini-golf game of the season with friends. Unless, of course, you count the mini-golfing we did in Florida in January, but I don't count that since in Florida the mini-golf is more like a distraction to the lizards hopping around the course and the captive alligators you can feed at our favorite mini-golf place in Orlando.

I did not do very well this weekend. Of the four of us actually playing (the kids futzed about the course), I came in last. I will blame it on my pregnancy bump – it's getting quite large lately and is throwing off my balance, not to mention my stamina. I was distracted by looking for a bench to sit on after every hole. Yeah, that's it, I can't mini-golf while pregnant. Nevermind all the practice I got on my computer this winter (see previous mini-golf posts of mine where I have links to (mostly) cool computer versions of mini-golf), I just can't mini-golf while pregnant. Oh, just kidding, I've done it before, it's no big deal and not that much different, just gotta swing around the bump. I just lost because I was rusty, and I didn't take my time putting. Besides that, my husband did extra well this time, and he usually comes in last, so last place had to go to someone. I don't really care if I win or lose, for me, it's just about learning what the ball does in various situations, gaining that experience, and most importantly, having fun! I did win the mini-bowling we played afterwards though... I really want to get one of those for my basement. I've always liked bowling, and here is a way the physically impaired (as I am for a few months here) can still enjoy participating in the sport. Pipe dreams, of course... if I had that kind of money or space in my basement, I could think of a dozen better things to put down there... mostly animals...

But anyway, I looked for cool mini-golf shots on youtube, and I actually didn't see any... just a lot more people worse at mini-golf than I am who don't even realize it. But I did come across this pretty cool contraption at a mini-golf course in

Colorado, check it out: