

Fun On The Farm

I think most people have fond memories of visiting a special family fun place in the fall. The pumpkin farms that my husband and I grew up going to are much different now – his has closed down, and mine has expanded beyond the family-owned small operation into a little carnival of sorts; I visited a few years ago. It was fun, but not the same. We've since moved away from the place of our youth, and we are happy to have found a fun place in NW Ohio to make memories with our own kids: [Leader's Family Farms](#).

Leader's has something for every age group: 2 haunted attractions for the older crowd, and for the family: mini-golf, a petting zoo (complete with exotics – more on that later!), hayrides, a hay maze, slides, chicken coop shooting, and a corn maze. For the little ones, there are bouncy castles, a moo-train, a hay-climber with tunnel, and a corn box. The under 5 kids area is really fun, and it's all free! My 2-year-old and my 3-year-old had a blast over there for hours, even if my son came home with a diaper full of corn – it was worth it! Actually, he still had corn coming out of his coat the next morning at church but again, it was well worth it! Here is a video of him playing in the corn box in case you're wondering what I'm talking about. The video pans to the rest of my kids, and finishes with my 3-year-old crawling through the little kids' tunnel:

My husband took my two oldest girls and their friend into the haunted corn maze. This was a big deal because this thing is SCARY! It is the best (read: scariest) haunted house in the area, and my daughter's friend wanted to go in it, so we convinced our daughter to go as well (they're both 10). Thrill-seeker little sis (age 6) really wanted to check it out, so she went too. They might have been REALLY scared, but they all made it out, and no one cried or tried to back out at the last minute! I wish I could have seen them in there, but the little ones were WAY too young for something like that, so I stayed out with them. I didn't mind too much since the exotic petting zoo was free – I hung out there for the hour and a half or so that it took my family to get through the haunted house. They had goats, sheep, alpacas, a teeny-tiny little pig, a camel (just a fuzzy baby, not his full height even though he was taller than I... I was wondering how old he was, and I found out he shares a February birthday with a fellow tangenteer...), and some kangaroos. They also had some other baby animals (a fox for one) and some parrots, but they could not bring them out because the weather was terrible – windy, cold, and rainy. But I got to pet some kangaroos and even feed them – I think it was the first time I've ever touched a kangaroo! They were good-tempered, soft, and really interesting to see up close and personal. I think the petting zoo people got sick of me, and I would have hung out more by the country band which I also liked, except that the weather was so terrible that it was hard to even enjoy the band – we all just wanted to stay out of the wind and rain. Look how little this pig is:

And here is more of the kangaroos and of the camel:

The hayride goes out way back into the forest, and luckily we rode it in between rain showers. The tractor even drove through a small creek bed that was partially filled – it looked like we were going to get stuck in the water:

My kids all liked it, even if there were some concerns about tipping on the steep hills going down into the forest – but we didn't tip. I can't wait to take my son on the hayride in our town in a few weeks -there are spooks that jump out from behind the trees there, and given his fascination with monsters lately, I know he'll have a blast! I brought out the Halloween costumes last night for the kids to pick through to find what they're going to be for Halloween, and my son found a Friday the 13th Jason hockey mask and insisted on going to bed with it. ☐

I must also add that Leader's is a family-owned farm; we struck up several conversations with the owners, and they are extremely nice and caring for their customers. The farm opened a little late when we visited because of the rain, so they gave us free passes to come back again – as busy as our Octobers are (this one being no exception), I think going back to Leader's when the weather is better is a MUST!! By the way, I was *this close* to taking home a straggler from the petting zoo. Only time will tell if I am able to resist next time we visit... ☐

My men on the hayride:



And my girls... note the beautiful NW Ohio countryside in the background. The scenery will only get better as the leaves change a little more and the sun comes out:



Clap, Clap, Slap The Chest...

What IS this? It's something that is popular among tween girls lately. They walk around doing some kind of ritual that involves clapping and slapping their chests, among other things. I didn't really think much of it, until my daughter's 9th birthday party, and there were other kids here doing it. When my 2-year-old picked it up, it became annoying and I decided to take action by writing a blog post and looking it up on the internet. I asked my daughter if it's from a movie or a tv show or something, but she didn't seem to know where it came from. When I tried to look it up on the internet, I just got instructions for other games of this type and didn't see anything about any sort of fad that's sweeping our tweens. So is anyone reading this whose kids do the same thing, or is this a NW Ohio thing? I'd like to know where it came from so I can decide if it's a behavior I want all of my kids duplicating.

Gas Prices

Unlike previous posts of mine, this one is being written to compliment the status of gas prices these days. Here in NW Ohio, we 're paying \$1.99 for gas – it was actually weird looking to see a 1 up there on the price board at the gas station.

But I'm really happy about it, of course, seeing how gas prices have been cut in half from only a short time ago. All of a sudden, it's taking me twice as long to pump gas – but I am NOT complaining! Also, it's now feasible to round up to the next dollar amount when topping off your car's gas tank. Did you notice that when gas prices were so high, one squeeze of the gas pump cost, like 6 or 7 cents? If I wanted \$15 worth of gas and I stopped the pump at \$14.96 or above, there was no way to get it so I'd be paying the \$15. One squeeze of the pump and my total was now \$15.03 or above all of a sudden! So now, even though it takes me twice as long to pump gas, I appreciate being able to choose a dollar amount to spend and be able to stick to it. And when I was in Illinois last weekend, I asked my grandpa what he remembers the gas prices being when he owned his gas station way back when. I don't know what year he was talking about, but he said he remembers gas being 19¢ per gallon!

What was the reason for the sky-rocketing gas prices, and how did the problem seemingly fix itself? Something to do with politics, I'm sure, but I don't really care as long as they keep getting lower. Since I spent so many posts complaining about the gas prices when they were horrible, I thought I'd try to send out a little bit of good karma by noticing and sharing my appreciation for the low gas prices we have now – cross your fingers that they'll stay!

Fall Back

It's been over a week since we've been in NW Ohio, and really, not much has changed. There are many less leaves on the trees than there were when we left for Disney World last Friday, but other than that... We haven't yet had a chance to check in with friends, so hopefully all is well everywhere. I have to admit that I was a bit scarred from our last vacation – we returned to the horrible news that my beloved kitty had passed away. So this time, I was nervous about coming home. I told our pet-sitter that if anyone dies this time to not tell us while we were in Florida, thinking, what good would that do... but that decision ended up backfiring majorly because then the whole time I was worried that something had happened and I didn't know about it because I had left the instructions not to call us... But nothing catastrophic occurred, at least not to us or any of our pets, and we had a wonderful time. Now more than ever I know what people mean when they say that they need a vacation from their vacation. After taking 4 little kids on a 1,000+ mile road trip each way and returning with the trashed car and the dirty laundry and housekeeping catch-up for a family of 6, I could really use a vacation!

Oh well... we had a great time and I wouldn't trade our experiences for the world – or all the laundry in the world. More to come about the trip after I unpack some and get used to the fact that I did not gain an extra hour this weekend like Jill my GPS friend told me I had – guess she (along with my alarm clock – glad I noticed that before tomorrow morning) is pre-programmed for the “fall back” switch for daylight savings time. The only problem is that Jill and my alarm clock were programmed before the daylight savings hours were adjusted thanks to President Bush. So they are now an hour

behind... but no matter, they can stay that way for another week or two, whenever we change the clocks... and then, I will get my extra hour of sleep – always fun!

Doors to Nowhere

In the town where we live, I've noticed a weird phenomena: there are many houses with second floor doors that lead seemingly nowhere. Well, they lead outside, but that's it – no stairwells, no balconies, no screened-in porches. Just random doors on houses. Perhaps there used to be something there, maybe a staircase, etc. It would be one thing if there were only a few houses like these, but in my town alone, there are at least 10, one being next-door! In a town this small, that is a lot. Actually, they aren't all second floor doors. The church down the street has one that is about 3-4 feet off the ground – enough to see that it's a door to nowhere, but not enough to be on the second floor. I wonder what the purpose of these doors are and why there are so many? Maybe it's something to ask the library historian about, or maybe some of you fellow NW Ohioans who read this blog and have lived here longer than I can enlighten me – people didn't waste doors in Chicago!