

Florida 2011

Well, I've been back in town from a glorious family vacation to Florida for a few days now, and realistically, I guess I could say that I'm getting back on track. But catching up is going so slowly, and it's easy to feel overwhelmed and like I'll never be done. But you know what? With 4 small children in the house, I NEVER feel caught up on the to-dos, even when I don't leave town, so what does it matter if I took a week and a half off? It was great! Eventually I'll get around to posting an in-depth trip diary – these have come in such handy when I go back to find the name of a restaurant we visited or certain info about the trip; it's fun for reminiscence purposes too. For now, I will just post a small run-down of the 20-hour drive from Florida to Ohio which illustrates the dramatic temperature decrease we endured between the south and the north. There will be more to come later, I promise, so please don't forget about me and my little blog.

Sat Jan 22:

Orlando FL = 58 degrees at noon

GA / FL state line = 48 degrees at 5:20pm

Atlanta GA = 34 degrees at 10:15pm

Sun Jan 23:

Chattanooga, TN = 24 degrees at 12:30am

TN/KY border = 18 degrees at 2:45am

Van Wert/Paulding County borders, nw Ohio = NEGATIVE 8 degrees at 7:45am

BRRRrrrrrrr!!!!!!

I think it might be a bit warm

My new phone (the droid with no name), chirps whenever I get weather updates. For the past few days, it has been trying to chirp its speaker off. There have been quite a few "Heat advisories". I'm very curious about what makes it a heat advisory. Do they have these in places that normally get hot? Do the deserts in the SW have one every day of the Summer?

I realize that the heat can be dangerous. If you don't get enough water, or if you push yourself too hard, heat related illness can be deadly. But I know people survived many years without air conditioning, without ice water and other cooling refrigerated beverages. How did they do that? (heavy sarcasm...)

Me, myself and I slow myself down on days like today. It may take me twice as long to do something. No need to push myself on the hot days. Days like today are mad for sitting in the shade waiting for that next breeze.

Hot summer days, and warm summer nights. Savor them, you will want them in January.

Waiting...

It's 1am and I can't sleep. Why? We are right in line for our second round of severe weather tonight. Round one was kind of fun. The two older kids were still awake, and they came downstairs panicked at the Tornado Warning that was flashing on their tv. It turned out to be for a different county, but then one was issued for our county a few minutes

later. But it soon became clear that our town would be spared – a few very soft claps of thunder, and we were done. The tornado sirens blared, so we dutifully went to the basement, but before we could even get everyone down there, the sirens were off. So right before bed, I checked the radar again, and round two is headed straight for us. I've had the news on while laying in bed, and after all of the very serious reports of damage and that which is yet to come, I gave up on sleep. My husband and I came downstairs to watch the radar on the news and... wait.

I've got a comforter and some bottled water and snacks waiting by the basement door; it looks really bad. I hope I'm over-reacting, but better safe than sorry, I guess – and it's 1:30 in the morning so it's easy to panic; I'm tired. Plus, preparing for disaster keeps my mind of the feeling of impending doom from outside. The county just north of us has a Tornado Warning. It feels like a pressure cooker outside – the humidity is stifling, and the wind is picking up. So far they're saying on the news that tornadic activity is heading straight for our town, but weather is very unpredictable. But even if we don't get a tornado, they said to expect winds 80-90 mph. Did I mention we invested in an inflatable pool for the kids yesterday? ☐

I'm praying for the safety of our family and friends who are spread all over this county and the next one over. I'm praying for our old house and for all of the tall trees around it. There are reports of heavy damage (possible tornado) in the county to the east, and we have many friends who live there – praying for everyone.

Well, this thing appears to be in our county now, and no tornado warning for us. The wind is howling, so I better go before I lose power – I have flashlights and battery radios, think we're well prepared... just difficult to decide at what point it's safer to panic the kids by waking them and taking them into the basement... always a tough decision. I've lived

in the midwest all my life, but this is so much harder when you're the parent and the one who has to make the calls.

Stay safe everyone... I will leave an update on this post tomorrow, but so far, it looks good for us – the storm turned due east at the last minute...

UPDATE – Yes, the storm turned away from us at the last minute – a miracle. So other than being extremely tired, we are unscathed. Some friends I saw at church today are ok too, so I'll have to do some digging about the rest of the area, but I think everyone is ok! Time to catch up on that sleep...

Wow, the weather outside is

wonderful.

I just can't believe the day we had today. I'm sure the weekend is going to spoil everything, but today is a good day. Now, if I could have spent the day outside to enjoy it all, the day would have been stupendous.

It is a bit funny that even days that I can be outside, I don't always go out. But I do like having the option of doing it. I guess that is the whole point, isn't it. If you have the ability to choose, the day just seems nicer. I'm not outside right now, but I do have an option of going out. At work, I can only look out the window as I get my cup of coffee. Choices make the difference.

Enjoy the day as you can, and hope that tomorrow brings all you need.

I Don't Want To Play Inside All Day...

But some of us don't have a choice where, or even if, we get to play all day. And it's tax day, and shame on you if you haven't done yours yet! I don't know about you, but where we live, it's oh-so-nice out – I'm talking 80° weather! But you might be stuck inside doing your taxes...

So here is a song just to torture you. I've seen this on Sesame Street twice now, and I just think it's so cute; especially when Elmo sings along! It aired again the other day, so blog time! Sorry if you were stuck inside all day for work or other unpleasant tasks. Take comfort in that there will be a whole spring and summer's worth from where this came from – I ♥ Spring!

Let It Snow... Well, Just For Tonight

I am glad to be home. I've got a nice warm cup of coffee next to me as I sit at my computer... but don't let my facade of relaxation fool you. I've already changed 3 dirty diapers and broken up 4 squabbles in the past hour since I've been home, with more of both sure to come. But my errands today went even worse – one of those days where most things, even the littlest things, are going wrong – too many things to list, and I'm exhausted.

And it's snowing, which made everything I did today more difficult. It depends upon the news outlet of choice; the radio says we are to get 2-4" of snow today with another possible inch tomorrow. I am also a fan of weather.com, who says my area is due for a possible 3-5" today, and another 1-3" at night. Basically the same forecast, but I know they weren't exaggerating this time – there are already at least 3" of snow on the ground. I know because I had to trudge through it, both on foot and in the car. The roads are terrible, but walking is a breeze thanks to the boots I got a few months ago. Well, it would be a breeze if it weren't for all the little ones I have to bundle and re-bundle and lift out of the car at every stop. I had so many stops to make and was so sick of the snow today that I decided to not go to the library and pick up the second Harry Potter book. I know, it sounds great to be snowed in with a good book, especially because hubby is working all night, but it's difficult to imagine that I will achieve any kid-less time. I just couldn't bring myself to make that extra stop, especially when the day's other errands had already gone so awry. Some of it was just plain bad luck and some had to do with the fact that all 4

kids – well, ok, 3 of them, but I'm not mentioning any names – have been terribly behaved lately.

In what has turned into a ranting blog post of complaints, where was I?

My husband had a major issue with his work in December, so he needs to work basically whenever he's awake to get our family back on track. I lost my other best friend in this house in December, and it feels kind of lonely when the people you hang out with all day do nothing but poop, cry, or argue, sometimes all doing all 3 things at once. And I started today on such a good note; where on earth would I be right now if I hadn't? I stayed positive this morning while I cleaned the poop out of the bathtub, and I even smiled when my son pooped again on the floor and slid on it like it was a banana peel – disgusting, that's obvious, but you have to admit that it makes for a humorous mental picture (no one was hurt, unless you count my bathroom floor).

The trip to Walmart today went surprisingly well, even though I didn't leave myself enough time for lunch. But then the kids lost it as I was loading the groceries into the car, and between the yelling and the snow, I realized I was not really IN the drive-thru at McDonald's – I was kind of taking up the drive-thru lane AND the drive-past lane simultaneously. It was too late for me to move over, at least not until the car in front of me moved, and sure enough, there came someone *squeezing* past me... I turned my head, ready for the dirty look I knew I was about to receive, and the driver did not disappoint. He glared at me, and that's when I saw it was a county sheriff, and I sank low in my seat – how embarrassing. And great – I feel sorry for the other red vans that get pulled over if this guy is looking to get revenge on me; he looked awfully perturbed at my ignorance.

So then I get home, and my little boy has fallen asleep (only took 15 minutes of crying in the car), so I put him in his crib and venture back out into the snowstorm because I forgot

milk – a morning requirement in this house o’ kids. But because it was today, and because anything that could go wrong **was** going wrong (remember that I’ve left out still most of the gory details), the first store I check is completely *out of milk*. So I go to another place, and they do have milk, but there I run into an acquaintance with whom I am forced to make chit-chat. Normally, I’d be ok because I like most people I meet, but there are a select few (usually those afflicted with [P.A.S.](#)) who really get on my nerves. Enter this guy, today, one of “those days”. But I’m nice, I’m still in a positive mood, I’ve got my milk, and I’m on my way home. When I slide into my driveway (reminding me it has to be shoveled later), I want to sit at my computer with my cup of coffee and relax, but I decide instead to play a game of Dora Candyland with my 3-year-old because it’s something we can’t do when her brother is around and wreaking havoc. No sooner do we get out the Candyland than her brother wakes up – great, so all I accomplished during his nap today was getting milk! No “me” time and worse yet, no quality one-on-one time with my daughter – just errands, UGH!

Well enough ranting for now, let’s just say that I did end up with my cup of coffee and my quiet time. But if you think the kids relented and gave me this on their own, you should read more of my blog posts because that is SO not the case. My husband had to take a break from work and spend it with the kids. So now it’s my turn, and my quiet time is over. But let it snow – we don’t have anywhere to be because Girl Scouts was canceled this evening due to snow. Maybe we can counteract some of today’s unpleasantness by spending some quality family time together tonight while we’re snowed in... but please, not another day off school for the kids – after today, I don’t think I could handle a snow day!

Wow the wind has picked up

Another very windy night. I'm hearing branches and various nuts hit the house and roof. I'm sure there will be a couple of trees down somewhere with this storm. Guess I will have to leave for work early, just in case something falls over the lane.

Anyway, now is not the time to be running around in the woods, but that is exactly what one little dog wanted to do. I guess when you got to go, you got to go. Being so close to the ground, he is out of most of the wind. He didn't stay out too long, I guess the falling acorns bothered him.

I'm not sure if I will get any sleep with this wind. After seeing one huge tree on the ground this week, I guess I'm just expecting another to fall. Nothing nearly as big as the fallen oak, but there are a few a bit closer to the house, like within 10 feet.

I don't recall many fall days with heavy winds like this. To have so many in a week seems to be really out of the ordinary, but I'm not sure. I usually think of late spring and early summer as the heavy wind days.

I was just thinking about the last time a big tree blew down near the house. We were all in the house that evening, and we were having another big wind storm. There was a loud crash and the house shook, but we could not see what fell. The next morning we saw that the big ash behind our house fell directly away from the house. That was about 18 years ago. My youngest was home and on a breathing monitor. We lost power, and I remember being on a list for a quick restore. Funny how that came to my mind this evening.

The blustery day

We had a bit of wind today and into the evening. A few of us at work braved the elements and tried to go for a bit of a walk at lunch. Didn't happen. It started to rain a bit, and it was driven hard into our faces. Not much rain, but it hurt. We went in and were lucky to find that there we were allowed to hit the buffet that was provided for a meeting. So today I got a free lunch. Can't say that every day.

Anyway the wind and rainy conditions made me think of book and a video "Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day". As a family we would watch the video, and I remember reading the Pooh books to my daughters many times. Now, the Disney movie "Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day" was taken from the book "The House at Pooh Corners". Other Disney Pooh movies were made from other chapters in this book and the first Pooh book "Winnie-the-Pooh". My daughters, wife and I read the original books and some of the Disney versions based on their movies. Always fun to read and watch. And I think I can still get my voice into Eeyore every now and then. I tried to add voices to all the characters in the book, but the girls had the video voices to compare mine to. I think they liked my 'Eeyore'. Maybe one daughter will comment?

So on this cool and blustery evening, I just have to say "Oh bother".

Sick Of Winter?

If you're like me, then you are sick of winter. I'm sick of getting snowed in, sick of bundling up the kids, and sick of the high heating bills. So even though it's a very dark type of humor, I did have to chuckle at this picture of a poor snowman I received via email; no doubt created by some poor soul who is a victim of the winter blues:



And since we're on the subject of snowmen, I read an article a few weeks ago with many interesting tidbits about them, so I'll share a few. After all, it's the least I can do after sharing such a depressing picture like the one above, right?

- Snowman art is one of the few activities modern man shares with his earliest ancestors. The earliest illustration of a snowman found was made in about 1380, and snow sculpting was a popular pastime during the Middle Ages.
- In the year 1494, Michelangelo sculpted snow figures in Florence, Italy.
- In 1999, residents of Bethel, Maine constructed the largest snowman ever built with 8 million pounds of snow. They beat their own record in 2008 using 13 million pounds of snow when they created Olympia (actually a snowwoman) who stood 122 feet and one inch tall and could be seen from 4 miles away! They used snow skis for her eyelashes, car tires for her lips, trees for her arms, and kids created her 6-foot nose from chicken wire and muslin. Her hand-stitched hat had a 48-foot circumference. Here is a picture of Olympia:



So don't let the winter blues get you down, especially since us here in the Midwest are having a winter relapse today with

icy winds and snow flurries – yuck! Get some snowman inspiration, and go out there and try your hand at building your own winter work of art! Hurry – the first day of spring is only a month away – and thank goodness for that!

The preceding blog post contains information obtained from [American Profile magazine](#).

Winter Weather Ahead

I'm all cozy at home waiting for a winter storm. We already have about 3.5 to 4 inches of snow on the ground with up to another 12 inches still coming. I realize that for some parts of this country, that is just flurries, but for my part of Ohio, that is a major storm. We just aren't equiped to handle that much snow. My guess is that if we get that much, there will be some level of snow emergency here. Oh well, I have plenty of food and firewood.

The house is very comfortable, I finished a wonderful bowl of stew, some fruit and a cup of tea. The creature comforts are here. I wish I could say everything was going well, but I'm missing an evening with friends tonight and my youngest is a bit under the weather. That, of course, is the way of life.

As I've said this part of Ohio is not used to this much snow. There are many High School basketball games being canceled. Dance classes canceled. Bingo Canceled. And the biggest thing that indicates bad weather, the outlet mall nearby will be opening later in the day than normal... Shock of all shocks!!!

Planned events for the weekend – canceled or postponed, but I'm home safe and fairly sound. That my friends makes a good

evening for me. Now off to study my lines....