

# Not Even A Snow Day!

Our first ground-sticking, hill-sledding, angel-making, sidewalk-shoveling snow of the year is here. And why not – it's already December 6th!

I slept in this morning, which is more than I can say for my poor husband. Ironically, last night, he was all gung-ho about staying up late. He's like, "And we can stay up late because the kids have been sleeping in lately – nothing to do tomorrow until later..." And he was right – the two littlest ones *have* been sleeping in lately – until today, of course. We stayed up really late last night thinking the kids would sleep in, but WRONG! They woke my poor husband at 7:20 in the morning today! Myself, I didn't stir until 9:30ish, and I was lolling out of bed when WHOOSH! The door to our walk-in bedroom closet flies open, and it is **snowing** into the closet! Turns out, the closet window was not locked, and so the winter storm had pushed it open, which pushed open the door to the bedroom, and all of a sudden, we had a winter storm *in our house*! "I guess we're getting some snow," I thought as I pushed the window shut, closed the door, noticed the baby was still sleeping and climbed back into bed. A few minutes later, and WHOOSH! It happened again. "Wow, we're *really* getting snow!" I said to myself as I noticed the ground was already blanketed when I shut the window the second time. This time, I manipulated the frozen lock until it was shut so we wouldn't have to experience the WHOOSH effect again. Well, that's a heck of a way to wake up, especially twice. Besides, it was late enough and time for me to contribute to the daily household stuff. Once downstairs, I checked weather.com, which informed me that we were forecasted to get 1-2 inches of snow during the day, and another possible inch at night. Immediately we began making plans to go sledding, especially since our 4-year-old had been waiting for this all year. Well, it took us all over an *hour* to get ready. And that

didn't even include lunch. We dressed everyone in 2-3 layers, and then we realized we should probably have lunch before we tackled the sled hill. Seeing how difficult it was to unravel everyone from their winter clothes enough to find mouths to insert the lunch, we munched on a few pieces of lunchmeat before heading to the sled hill.

Well, the baby wasn't happy on the sled hill – and before I get all kinds of nasty comments, YES he was bundled intensely! 2-3 layers, then a snowsuit, then a fleece bag-like thingie, then a few blankets, and my husband and I built a little tent-like thing around his carrier... But he IS a July baby, and I have a theory that people are best suited for the season in which they were born, so... no sledding for the little guy. Or for mom, for that matter. I got down the hill once though, and it was lots of fun – much easier climbing the hill this time than last year being a few months pregnant! Although I was disappointed about only getting to go down the hill once, after that I got to sit in the warm car and catch up on my newspaper reading in peace and quiet after the baby fell asleep, so that was nice. And after sledding, since we had kind of cheated on lunch, we treated the kids to Pizza Hut because for some reason, they like to eat there. And every time we're set to go, I realize I don't like it, but I think I'll be able to find something – but I was wrong again! I just don't like Pizza Hut! Well, their iced tea is pretty good... but their buffet sucks, and so now I'm headed home with 4 exhausted kids and I'm all hepped up on iced tea... But the rest of the afternoon went surprisingly smoothly and we even let our daughter have a friend over – providing her mom drove her here so we wouldn't have to venture out in the snow again. When the friend's mom got here, we were chatting about the snow, and we were all dumbfounded about how much we were supposed to get. Usually, the weather channel will over-forecast us. If they say 1-3 inches, we usually get a ground dusting. Today, they say 1-3 inches, and for most of us, it snowed from the time we woke until well after the sun set.

We waited until it was finished to go out and shovel, and by then it was dark and we had gotten a few inches. Now I see on the news that we could get a few more inches...

But anyway, lots of fun today, and all without calling an official Snow Day! Can't all major snow falls be on Saturdays?!?

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## 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!

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## Cold

It's a strange sensation; something I haven't experienced for about a year. Last winter I was pregnant, and due to the fact that pregnant women have 2/3 more blood coursing through their bodies than non-pregnant people, they rarely get cold. Then I had the baby in the middle of summer, went to Florida, and now that we're back in NW Ohio, it's cold! The older I get, the more I dislike the cold weather. Not only do I dislike bundling everyone up, including myself, but I especially dislike the winter gas bills. We have a humongous furnace that increases our gas bill by 144% in the winter months, which is why I opt to freeze a few months out of the year. I just can't bring myself to turn on that huge furnace for the season yet. Every year when we get our first winter-sized gas bill, we vow to winterize the house and we talk about getting a new furnace, but somehow, we never get around to doing anything. Maybe this year will be different, but in the meantime, I'm going to try to hold out until at least November 1. Maybe I should check the weather forecast before I say that...

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# Unforseen Side Effect Of Hurricanes

With all the storm activity in the Atlantic Ocean lately, I've been especially interested in hurricanes. I've lived a lot of places, but since I've only resided in the midwest, I've never witnessed a hurricane firsthand. Well, that's not entirely true. There was a hurricane a couple of years ago (I forgot its name unfortunately) that ventured up to our corner of Ohio. By the time it got here, it had been over land for quite some time which had reduced it to nothing but rain, lots of rain. It was really no different than any other rain we've gotten, except that I had been watching the radar, and I knew that it had been a hurricane in a past life – that made it special to me; I really enjoyed it.

Anyway, last night, the baby decided to wake up right as we were going to bed, so I was stuck watching tv while I fed him. And it's strange, because I really used to enjoy tv, but that's changed for me recently. Maybe it's because we are so busy all the time so I got used to not watching tv... I don't know what it is. All I know is that I used to be the kind of person who could be happy watching anything on tv – I could find something that would entertain me at any time of the day or night. Not so much anymore. I still like tv, and I love watching my favorite shows (like The Office – almost time for new episodes!!!), but “junk tv” as I call it (reality shows, documentaries, etc.) isn't so appealing anymore. My point in detailing all of this is to explain how interesting I found some random documentary I caught last night on the History Channel while I was feeding my son.

The documentary was about giant snakes, specifically pythons,

and how they are starting to become a threat to people in Florida. What I found most fascinating about this is the fact that these snakes are not indigenous to the United States, but in 1992, when Hurricane Andrew hit Florida, many pet stores and homes that had kept these animals as pets were destroyed. Baby pythons were released into the wild and because of Florida's tropical climate, especially in the Everglades, these animals now have a wild population that is thriving. On the show, they had pictures of one snake that had swallowed an adult human whole. They weren't sure if the pictures were real or a hoax, and unfortunately I never found out because my son let me go to bed before the show was over. They also had pictures of a snake that had swallowed a 6-foot-long alligator whole, but it had ruptured the snake, causing his death. In the words of a snake expert on the show, "snakes can digest anything" – it's just that the alligator probably clawed the snake open. But you could see the outline of the alligator in the snake – it looked like an alligator colored like a snake – it was bizarre.

I may have to find this documentary again so I can watch it when I'm not half asleep. But it's really interesting to me that because of a hurricane, Florida now has another fearsome reptile lurking in the Everglades. I'm sure that was the last thing on people's minds after Hurricane Andrew wreaked its havoc 16 years ago – I bet this scenario didn't cross anyone's mind. Who knows what unforeseen side effects we'll see from Hurricane Katrina in a couple of decades? One can only imagine...

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# Fire and Rain

I have relatives all over this country. Some I know quite well, others not so well. But just about a month ago, my daughter was in the middle of some wildfires blazing in her area of Florida. Now my little sister is in the midst of massive flooding in Iowa. I suggested putting the water in buckets to carry it to the drought areas, but I think the cost of that is a bit much.

This did get me thinking about all the things that happen and get out of control.

Fires, on one hand they are beneficial. For warmth, cooking, light, ambiance, and at one time protection, fire is wonderful. Out of control, it can be a very destructive and fast moving force. After seeing the destruction of a wild fire, it is a wonder how anything can survive them.

As bad as that is the destructive force of the wind (hurricanes and tornadoes) can overwhelm our control at an even quicker pace than fire. There is nothing humanly possible to stop the quick and often deadly force of the wind.

And finally rain and floods. If you've ever seen the power generated by flood waters first hand, you would know enough to stay very clear of them. As little as 1 foot of quickly moving water can move a full size car. Just recently on the news 2 story houses were shown washing away in the power of a flooded river. Bridges, road, houses, and the land itself are washed away by the power of water.

We need the air, rain and even fire (I don't care what you use to heat your house I bet something is burning to provide it) to survive and flourish, but we need to heed the hidden strength these things carry. It can sometimes make you feel very small to see the power released.

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# It's HOT!

For a few days now and a few more days to come ☐ the temperatures in our region have been over 90°. For a pregnant woman of my girth, it is proving disasterous. I am so lathargic – I don't feel like doing ANYTHING, including eating! The house is a mess, and the kids have been cooped up because I've been cooped up in the a/c. It's not the best a/c though because we have window units, not central air, so it's still hot! Luckily, the kids are going on vacation with their Grandma and will get plenty of stimulation next week. After that, I have to hope and pray for an arctic streak until I deliver the baby in mid-July or we won't make it. Since I'm sitting here doing nothing, just as I want, I decided to post this poem as a distraction to myself in lieu of the heat. It's a poem by Shel Silverstein, and I had to memorize it in 5th grade. While I no longer have it memorized, certain lines keep running through my head as I sit here and boil. Enjoy and stay cool!

## **It's Hot!**

*By Shel Silverstein*

It's *hot!*

I can't get cool,  
I've drunk a quart of lemonade,  
I think I'll take my shoes off  
And sit around in the shade.

It's *hot!*

My back is sticky,  
The sweat rolls down my chin.  
I think I'll take my clothes off  
And sit around in my skin.



It's *hot!*

I've tried with 'lectric fans,  
And pools and ice cream cones.  
I think I'll take my skin off  
And sit around in my bones.

It's *still* hot!

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## Three days, three meetings

No, not *that* kind of meeting. I mean meeting three students from my church. I should add that none of them were in my class but rather I sort of just ran into them. Two of them approached me, and for the other I recognized his name and approached him. It started with graduatin rehearsal the other day. They were going through the names and I heard his. I recognized it immediately. After all, I was his AWANA leader one year in addition to the 4th/5th grade ministry. Okay, that doesn't entirely mean anything as I didn't remember another such student right away who is one year younger than him and helps out in the ministry. Anyway, once I heard it I looked out for him and he was sitting in one of my (well, the teacher I was subbing for anyway) rows. I talked to him a little. I asked about his sister too who is two years younger. Now, sad to say I don't remember a lot of the girls but his sister... let's just say I had a reason to remember her. Something she will grow out of if she hasn't already.

The next meeting was the next day when I subbed for a librarian, who also helped out in the computer lab. There were four classes to come in that day, pared down to three when one of the teachers canceled. I sorted books when I wasn't helping students at the computers. Now aren't you glad

I didn't actually write about this assignment yesterday? The three of you who still read this blog would have gone down to zero! ☐ So, in the afternoon a third grader asked me if I played the doctor in the drama at church. Of course I told her I did, and not only that, but I would see her in fourth grade this weekend, even though she will still be in third grade for another week at school.

Finally, just today I ran into yet another one. She was in one of the four fifth grade classes I was not subbing in (five total at that school! ☐ ). She saw me in the hall and asked if I worked in 4th/5th grade at my church. When I said yes, I of course told her I *wouldn't* be seeing her there this weekend since she is no longer a fifth grader there, but a part of the junior high ministry. She was a little disappointed in this- I know I would, knowing I would have to attend regular worship from then on! True, now I willingly go and enjoy the service but I know at age eleven I wouldn't and didn't when I served as an acolyte once in awhile at the church I grew up in. And that was only an hour-long service. At my church now the service is half again as long.

Three students in three days- who would have guessed? Of course this doesn't beat the three students in one **day** a month ago, but still. As for my day today, as I said it was fifth grade. I corrected work with them, watched over their work on some projects in the morning, did some teaching in the afternoon, etc. The principal and I watched a few students play *Rock Band* in music. They were pretty good. Then he came and watched *me* teach science. About a topic I knew little about (cold/warm fronts, high/low pressure zones). Sigh. I hope he wasn't too disappointed, but then I'm sure he understands a sub will not necessarily be an expert in anything taught during the day. The students were pretty good. A few had their minds on other things during silent reading, but hey, summer's almost here.

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# Strange thinking..

I kind of follow the political news. I try to stay on top of scientific news. I'm very confused when the two of those collide.

The biggest collision of politics and science in my mind is global warming. Governments all over the world, and of course the United Nations are trying to "solve" global warming. Jumping over any science that is actually happening. With this scientists on both sides of the debate are getting very political on their views. Me, I want to talk about the science and leave any political views out of the picture. Feel free to comment on either picture.

Global warming – is it really happening? The best answer science has right now is.. Wait for it.... Maybe! That's right maybe! The past 20 years of weather data shows some warming, the past 10 years has been very stable. Hmm. Global warming simulation programs show that the warming of the planet will be increasing in the next 20 to 40 years. These same simulations can not use past information to determine the global average temperature in past years... Hmm again! There is a lot of science going on here and it all points to maybe. (at least for me)

Global warming – What causes it. Well until you actually determine that it is happening, you can't really say what is causing it can you? This is where the politics really gets going, so I'm not going there. Just for the science background, most of the heat on earth comes from 1 source, the Sun. Yes, there is planetary heat (think radioactive decay and volcanoes), and heat produced by man (burning all sorts of stuff and other things from our mechanical world), but that is

minimal. The thing to determine is how much heat comes from the sun, and how much is released back to space. If the heat in is more than the heat out, you have global warming. If you have more heat out than heat in, you have global cooling. If they are the same, well, you have steady temperatures. This will have to be measured for more than 10 – 15 years to determine if we are warming or cooling. As far as I know, nobody has these measurements. Big world, and it is hard to do, if not impossible with today's technology. So the talk about carbon footprints and greenhouse effect has no bearing on actual science known.

Global Warming – What can we do? Nothing and everything. Most things people come up with to actually combat the global warming are good to do. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle is scientifically a very good choice. There are a limited amount of resources available to us. While this may have effect on global warming, the best thing is using less, wasting less, and getting better value. By carbon credits? Doesn't do much except move your money to someone else. Not much science in that choice. Alternate fuels? That one is still up in the air as far as science goes. There are some good alt-fuels, some bad. We really need to check to see if the energy cost producing the fuel is less than the energy created. The science I see that may make the biggest impact in the next 10-20 years is [algae](#). Another is the new [Volt from GM](#)

One final thought, remember when it comes to weather forecasting: This is one of the few jobs where you can be wrong 50% of the time and still have a job.

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# Snow Day #11,572

Ok, I'm exaggerating just a tad on the number of snow days we've had, but that's what it feels like by now! I suppose with the new dog in the house, today was as good a day as any to have yet another snow day, but my poor husband is going to go crazy from shoveling all this snow! It's become almost a daily chore – just what he needed! And, the weather guys are saying that they're tracking ANOTHER system due here on Friday! They won't use the dreaded 4-letter "s" word though, it's kinda funny. They'll just call it a "weather system" and "let's see what it drops on us" – as if there's any chance it will bring something other than snow (that dreaded 4-letter word!), yeah right.

Hubby and I braved the weather last night to venture out to a movie for date night. Our date night is once a week on Tuesdays, and wouldn't you know it, it's snowed for the last like, 5 Tuesdays in a row, no exaggerating this time! Last week, our movie theater was CLOSED because of the snow – that stank. Instead of having a nice dinner, we got snacks at KFC cuz we were running late for the movie, and then we got there, and they were closed! So sick of this weather already! What did that groundhog say again?!? So anyway, we ventured to a neighboring town with a movie theater that's a little bigger; that way we could be assured it would be open. We saw Vantage Point, an action movie with Dennis Quaid, Forrest Whittaker, and Matthew Fox. And speaking of Groundhog Day, if you've seen that movie, even though it's a comedy, Vantage Point actually had something in common with it in that they kept showing the same scene over and over. The point of the movie was to take the audience through an incident of terrorism, one perspective at a time. Dennis Quaid and Matthew Fox played secret service agents, and Forrest Whittaker was a tourist bystander who happened to catch everything on video. It was a satisfying action movie – MUCH better than Gone Baby Gone... I

might actually say it was kinda like Groundhog Day meets In the Line of Fire, if you've seen that movie, since Dennis Quaid's character had been through an assassination attempt on the President before and was jumpy – just like Clint Eastwood's character in In the Line of Fire. If you like action movies, this one won't disappoint. I was actually surprised there wasn't a little more to the plot, and I can't believe the constant violence earned it only a PG13 rating. But when I think about it, I suppose you could see the same type of violence on tv any given night or even on cable during the day – it's just what has happened to entertainment these days, I guess. Vantage Point has constant action, the movie is never slow, and seeing the action from the different people's perspectives (vantage points ☐ get it?) was interesting and not at all confusing like I was concerned about. I found something at the end of the movie incredibly hokey, but then again, that's common in action movies, you gotta appreciate them for what they are.

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## **Ohio VS. Illinois – weather**

From time to time, I will be talking about what it's like to live in various places throughout the midwest because I have a lot of experience in that area. We've lived in central Illinois, northern Illinois, and various suburbs of Chicago. We also lived in Lincoln, Nebraska and rural Ohio. Of all these, I love rural Ohio the best! But it is really interesting how different things like dialect and attitudes can vary from place to place, even places that are only hundreds of miles apart and in virtually the same climate. One thing I'm still getting used to in rural Ohio is their attitude about weather. I spent my childhood in Illinois, specifically the suburbs of Chicago, so I am used to the

attitude of snow days being a rarity. I wonder what the average is there, but I would guess it's one per season or even less – they will not cancel school unless the schools are buried. There was one time when my mom's car was snowed in, she couldn't get it out of the driveway, and so she wanted to take the school bus with me to school – she worked at the same school I attended. So I did what any mature 12-year-old would do – I cried. Foolish, maybe yes, but I figured I had suffered enough with her working at my school – why should I have to face the humiliation and ridicule of her riding my bus? It had nothing to do with how cool I thought I was; it was more about how MEAN kids can be... I was so afraid of what the kids would say or do once they found out my mom was riding the bus! So anyway, lucky for me, she got her car out, and I was saved. But my point is, her car was stuck in the snow, yet they hadn't cancelled school. Here in Ohio things are MUCH different. We are on our 6th snow day already this season! And I've lost count of how many 2 hour delays we've had – which luckily (for them, not me) the kids don't have to make up. Coming from Chicagoland, I had never even heard of a 2 hour delay before we moved here – they don't exist there. But in Ohio – they are quite common, most of the time because of fog – FOG! We actually have fog days! School has been CANCELLED because of fog... it was really hard for me to get used to at first... you'd think we live in a swamp or something! Oh, wait, – that's just it... this area used to be the Great Black Swamp before it was turned into farmland a few hundred years ago. So I guess that explains it... but I would be willing to bet that if Illinois had a fog problem, they still wouldn't cancel school. I don't know anything about Nebraska's attitudes about weather and school since we didn't have a school-aged child while we lived there. I don't really have an opinion about who is right or who is wrong – it's not that Ohio devalues education or anything like that... they are just over-sensitive about childrens' safety when it comes to weather (is there such a thing?), and the school days and curriculum are made up in the end so they're not behind. I'm

just enjoying my role as an amused spectator observing the differences in weather attitude between different regions.