

# Monkey, Er, Ape See – Ape Do

To take a break from the vacation unpacking, I took the little ones to the zoo a few weeks ago. We had a great time – oh how I love winter zoo visits! There aren't many people around, and the animals can act like the animals they are instead of worrying about the hoards of visiting humans. Well, most of the time it's cool to see the animals acting like animals, unless they are doing disgusting things like the gorillas last week – don't watch this if you are squeamish, but I have to publish it because of how embarrassed the gorilla seems about her behavior. I felt so badly for filming her after she tried to hide that I turned off the camera, and that's when she got up and went and sat behind a post – out of my view. Why would she do something so gross if she is embarrassed by it?

**WARNING: it's VERY gross!!!**

The chimp was another story! His name is Harvey, and he is a senior citizen chimp – he just had his 52nd birthday, which is quite a milestone for a chimpanzee. Despite his age, Harvey is quite playful and has a penchant for young kids. When we walked over in front of Harvey's window, he was sitting in the corner wearing a sparkly lei, presumably from his birthday party which had just taken place days before.



When he saw us, he pulled off his lei and came over to his window to see the kids and play:





These videos were taken almost a month ago, and I've been trying to get back to the zoo, but my oldest child has decided that the zoo is "boring" – her words, *NEVER* mine. In fact, I'm wondering if I need a DNA test – how could someone with my DNA find the zoo boring???

During the week, I'm so tired and have so much to do that just writing this blog post is quite a challenge – I'm having a towel thrown over my head by my 2-year-old as I write! I think I fell in love with Harvey that January day, and I miss him!

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## Meet Marty

Question: What's the best way to dislodge me from a "case of the Mondays"?

Answer: A surprise trip to the zoo on a work day, of course! Hubby knows me so well ☐

Tangent: If you have your own "case of the Mondays", rent the movie Office Space – it's hilarious!

So we took off Monday for the zoo, and we were torn between which side of the zoo to visit – Toledo Zoo straddles a major highway, the Anthony Wayne Trail, and we never visit both sides in the same day because it adds a TON of walking, much of it up long ramps pushing a heavy double stroller. We usually park in the back and opt for the larger side of the zoo, but we have been visiting a lot lately, and since it was a work day and Hubby had to get home at a somewhat decent hour to get back to work, we opted for the smaller side of the zoo. This side might not have many exhibits, but there is this almost-year-old baby polar bear that I've been wanting to

see, so it seemed like the right choice – until we saw the sign at the gate that read, “Our baby polar bear, Siku, will not be on exhibit today.” WHAT?!? Well, we had already parked, unloaded kids, and walked into the zoo, so visiting the other side was no longer an option. We trudged on, determined to make the best of it.

And lucky us, it all worked out wonderfully! We may not have gotten to see a super-cute baby polar bear, but we got to see a full-grown male polar bear up close, nose to nose – I’m talking within inches. Sure, there was a pane of glass separating us from the polar bear, but that’s a given – look at this:

In case you're wondering, Marty the polar bear (Siku the cub's dad) has a bucket containing frozen fish in an ice block. We watched him conquer the first bucket and devour the fish, and then he bullied the 2nd bucket away from the other polar bear and worked on it for a good 30-40 minutes – we had to leave before he got to the fish from the 2nd bucket. I could not decide which video was best, so I'm just going to post all 4 – they're all under a minute long anyway so they don't take forever to unload off my camera. All of the videos were taken while Marty was working on the 2nd ice bucket. You can see how he dips the bucket in the water and even dives into the water with the bucket in his mouth in order to let the water loosen up the fish ice block for him.







In case you're wondering, being up close and personal with a thousand pounds of polar bear (give or take a few hundred pounds) is really as amazing as it looks!!!

And my two little ones had a great time also – at first my son was afraid of the polar bear, but he got over that once he realized that Marty was much more interested in his bucket than some zoo visitors. Here are the kids posing in an “arctic cave”:



And the kids' favorite part of the day? Climbing on and posing on this mock dung heap near the giraffe exhibit. Kids – gotta love 'em!



# My Favorite Amphibian

Recently, a friend and fellow tangents blogger wrote a [blog post regarding her bucket list](#) – for those who haven't seen nor heard about the movie of said title, a bucket list is comprised of things you want to do before you die. Her post got me to thinking about my bucket list, and maybe I'll post it in the future. For now, I know that one of the items on my bucket list – or many items, depending upon how I write it – will involve seeing certain species of animals; many of them endangered and rare. If seeing rare animals is on my bucket list, then I can cross off one item – last week I got to see several specimens of the [Kihansi Spray Toad](#) – an animal that is considered *extinct* in the wild!



Given my intense fear of them, I never thought that a frog or a toad would be on my list of animals to see – but the Kihansi Spray Toad is actually kinda cute! For me, it seems that the more brown and dry the amphibian, the more it creeps me out – not including salamanders, which I don't have a problem with at all. I'm not at all frightened by the beautiful blue Poison Dart frogs or other colorful species, which is strange since those are the ones that tend to be poisonous and harmful to humans. Weird. So anyway, I think the Kihansi Spray Toad is both extremely fascinating and very cute!

The Toledo Zoo is the only place in the entire world where

people can view these special little toads who were first recognized as a species as recently as 1996. Not only that, it is estimated that over half of the earth's entire population of the toads live in Toledo. I am so glad I decided to venture over to the Museum of Science in the Toledo Zoo last week to see the spray toad! It was the highlight of my zoo visit; all of the other animals were kinda lethargic. Oh, there is one more thing – my 10-year-old daughter got pooped on by a bird in aviary! She was a really good sport about it, and it just **plucked** right out of her hair – no harm, no **fowl**. My daughter's unfortunate accident:



It was neat to see the local wildlife congregating in the unused Hippo-quarium. It's too cold for the hippos to be outside, but the ducks have a nice place to swim – who would have thought about what a group of ducks look like from under the water?



My 3 daughters fit into one giant egg!



This was taken on a different day, but I had to put in this cute picture of my 2 youngest. My little guy is learning to say "CHEESE!" for the camera ☺

