

(Note to the reader: The following work was not written by me. It was the work of Robin Costello. It was posted on a major Internet community dedicated to Disney World known as "The DIS Boards". "Delswife" was Robin's user name on that community. In 2003 Robin posted a series of writings from her family's recent trip to Disney World. This "trip report" became legendary within the DIS community for its content and humor that would have put "family" humorists like Erma Bombeck to shame.

However, it is sad to report that the DIS community got word that "Delswife" had passed away suddenly after a period of ill health on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Due to a number reasons, all of the previously posted copies of Robin's famous trip report are no longer available, as far as I can tell, on the Web via normal means. As a tribute to Robin Costello, I searched the Internet Wayback Machine archives and was able to reconstruct her full report, minus the originally imbedded photos. My intent is to allow those that weren't present on the DIS back in 2003 to be able to enjoy Robin's "classic" work. The only editing I performed was to correct spelling and expand certain shorthand notations. Also, it's customary to use nicknames for children in DIS trip reports.)

## **Part 1, Getting ready to go and the airport incident 10/2**

The group that went:

Our group~

Me, you know that because I am writing the trip report.

DH (Dear Husband), We needed someone to carry stuff, and eventually earned the title of "Suba Steve".

DD (Darling Daughter) (17) Commando Nikki, the brat *actually* had a whistle. She's up hours ahead of everyone and stands around clapping her hands yelling, "Move it people, we have a park to visit!"

DD (14) Beetlebum, just plain happy to be there.

DsD (Darling Step-Daughter) (6) Em, The tree hugger.

DS (Dear Son) (19) Airman, Just a few days of leave, then back to the base.

My brothers group~

DB (Dear Brother), Expert at standing outside shops, holding bags, and WAITING.

SIL (Sister In-law), Black Belt shop-a-holic.

DsN,(Dear Step-Nephew) (18) The "Where's Waldo?" of our group.

Two other people that I was never introduced to. I know they where SIL's son and DIL, and that they slept two rooms over from us. We called them "Pigtails" and "Scruffy".

Pigtails never really spoke to us, but I think she may have had some family problems and when Scruffy did talk to us, we couldn't understand anything he was saying anyway.

I tried to sleep in as late as I could because I knew I had to work that night, and we had to leave here at three in the morning, but that didn't happen. I was way too excited and I still had a lot of things left to do before I went to work anyway, so I made a phone call to DH and gave him his last minute instructions.

He does none of the planning, but he follows directions very well. 🤖

I grabbed a few things and headed off to the bank to cash checks, move money, turn in change, that kind of stuff. I started off down the street and my phone rings.

Not my cell, my cordless from the house. I never hung it back up. The sad part is, I still didn't realize it until I answered it and got an ear full of loud static. 🌐 Then, for some reason I even felt the need to lock my truck while I was in the bank, just in case someone saw my cordless phone, and decided to use it. *Yeah, I'm 6 miles away from the base, it could still work.* 😬

I continued to have small "stupid attacks" throughout the day. I really needed a vacation.

We did pretty well packing up our 1/4 ton of belongings. The 5 of us, myself, DH, and 3 DDs, (DS met us there) each had a suitcase and a carry on.

Then there was a suitcase with a suitcase in it.

I just couldn't get DH to understand why I was doing *that*, and was accused of just giving him more stuff to carry or just trying to find a reason to use my luggage rack on my truck.

I admit it, okay, that the luggage rack was one of the first features of my truck that I pointed out to him when I bought it, and I was tickled pink to own a vehicle with one. DH is just funny about driving around with things on your roof. I don't know why? 🤪

It's about 100 miles from our place to the airport. I can't ride in a car across town unless I am driving. I freak out thinking about someone else having control over my life for that long. When I was growing up my dad and 4 brothers all drove stock/race cars. They traumatized me. I don't like to fly either, and at the risk of sounding like a commercial, I rely on Xanax.

*That's right folks, Xanax, for those afraid to fly.* 🤪

I thought I would just drive to the airport, park the truck, pop a Xanax, get on a plane and all would be right in the world. I couldn't have been more mistaken. The minute I saw those huge signs that say "Hey, the airports over here" I had a full blown panic attack. I was trying to stay cool about it, but DH noticed that I went from driving 35 mph to 10 mph. I managed to get a parking spot, but failed to pay attention to where we were parked.

I figured I would never see the truck ever again anyway, because I was about to die, so who can be bothered by these little details?

The first thing I did was take my wonderful little Xanax, (no water, just swallowed that sucker dry) as soon as we stopped moving. Did anyone else know it takes about 20 minutes for those to work? Yeah. 20 minutes. But when it does work....

We got to the security line up. In all honesty, this is what I was really the most nervous about. Once I am on a plane, I am fine. There is something about going through the line up that freaks me out.

So, I hand the nice man my tickets and out ID's and guess who got selected for random search? ME, the one who sets off alarms every time I go somewhere. The reason why my

mom makes me sit in the car. OH boy. The rest of my family goes through another line, while I am taken off to the side. The man asked me if I had ever done this and I start to say "I haven't flown since the..."

Are you allowed to say terrorist attack? I know people have been arrested for saying things about bombs, so what happens when you come right out and say terrorist attack?

At this point the Xanax is kicking in, and I began using sign language to represent terrorist attack. No, I can't speak sign, but I can fling my hands around. Nearly poked the guys eye out. That scared me, figuring I am about to be arrested for assault with a finger, so I jam my hands in my pockets. 😬

No, that certainly doesn't look suspicious.

He led me over to a chair and another lady comes over and they remove my shoes. She swings a rod around my foot and is explaining to me that if it goes off she will need to touch my person.

I look right at her and say "Could you kiss me first?"

*Yes, ladies and gentlemen, that's Xanax, for inappropriate responses.*

Well, of course, I set off the alarm, that's what I am good at. I had change in my pocket. I take it out, put it in a little dish, and she continues to swing around her little rod. I continue to set off the alarm. What ever it is, is in the front of my pants. So I have to lift my shirt up to show her what is in front of my pants. I even pulled my pants out to give her a good look, prepared to remove them (Xanax stupor) and she steps back and says "That is not necessary m'am, it's the snap on your jeans." She saved Manchester airport from seeing me in my underwear. She is a hero.

We gather back together, DH & I need to cigarette. We wonder over to the smoking area, that is really a glass boxed room. Makes you realize what a display item feels like. The girls are directly on the other side of the glass doing silly things like pushing their faces up against it and what not. They turn around and discover the rows of phones. They start to play "phone call" and we are watching them, when a police officer comes over and starts talking to the 6 yr old. "Oh, officer friendly is saying hello, how nice."

Yeah, till I noticed my other two brats looking around like there's birds suddenly in the place and slowly walking away.

So I put one hand on DH's shoulder and one foot on his hip and give him a big SHOVE 🤪 and tell him to go find out what happened. He gets up off the floor and I head over to the other two monsters and asked what happened. She called 911. 🤪 I asked her why and she said..

"It's the only number I know"

They still let us on the plane and we were off to the world.

## **Part 2 A very important announcement, and we arrive at POR (Port Orleans Riverside) 10/2**

So Delta kindly lets us board their aircraft and on the way down the ramp I was taking swings at the older girls for allowing the little one to call 911. They are very good at dodging and weaving, by the way. 🤔 I know it's really mine & DH's fault for assuming that a 14 & 17 year old can keep an eye on one 6 yr old while their parents are sitting on the other side of a glass wall, but it's usually better to have someone else to blame? I think so. 😊

The flight from Manchester, NH to Atlanta was, ohh, I'd say about 5 minutes. *Xanax to the rescue!* I was woken up to beatlebum(14) saying "Mom, your drooling on my homework." I wasn't really drooling, I was testing the underwater durability of the paper, there is a difference. We somehow ended up on another flight that took us to Orlando, but I'll be honest here, I was in a fog. I remember being dragged off the plane by commando Nikki (17), who at this point, probably could have used the Xanax more than me. She was on overload. "People, lets move, move, move!!" We got to baggage claim, and I was feeling fresh as a daisy. Then it occurred to me that our limo wasn't there! 😞 I tell the crew to stay put, do not move, I will be right back. I am walking back and forth past all the other people holding signs with other peoples names, but none of them are ours. Thinking, maybe I have forgotten how to spell my own name, I check a third time. Nope, nada. I had thought of pretending we were another family, but I got over it. One lady holding a sign asked me which company I was looking for and I said Star limo and she said, "Oh, that's too bad."

😞 Apparently, they aren't very prompt. "You will have to call them to get them to come." I never had to call Tiffany Towncar. They were always there, with the sign and my name spelled correctly. Great, someone has to go tell commando Nikki, we have no ride yet. I flip open my cell, left the cordless at home, called Star and they said "yeah, someone will be there, *eventually*." Well, that's mighty nice of them. I was very afraid to go back and tell the crew that for right now we didn't have a ride. This could get ugly. So, I started skipping back over to them. Yes, really skipping. Dainty fingers in the air and everything.

Well, what would you have done to distract them??

Commando Nikki(17) is a very smart child. She knew instantly there was a problem. A normal 17 yr old would have been mortified that their mother was skipping across an airport, but my kid knew I was trying to create a diversion. "Okay, Star is a no show. I will call my brother or a cab and see..." That's as far as I got. Commando Nikki calmly said "Ah, pardon me, *mother* (like a dirty word) are you saying we have no ride?" Oh she's a quick one. She actually turned white, began to sweat, and for a quick second, I really believed she was gonna faint. Thank the good lord at the same time, a limo guy was running across the airport. Just before DH tripped him, he was yelling our name. Only 25 minutes late. What's 25 minutes to three girls who are dying to get to Disney and a mother who hasn't

seen her Air Force son in months and a DH who is really wishing there were some men to talk to. Not a problem. 😊

We went out, carrying our own luggage because the limo guy was busy trying to find his keys or something. We didn't care about that, we just wanted out of the stupid airport. As the limo guy and DH are loading our 1/4 ton of stuff into the trunk, I started to say something to him about our 1/2 hour grocery stop that I was guaranteed. "No, no, no I have no paperwork for that and we are running late, your going straight to Port Orleans Riverside or your paying me an extra \$25.00." *WE??* We are running late?? I'm sorry, I didn't notice *him* skipping across the airport. I already paid them \$200.00!! I wasn't paying him more. So because this clown was late, I didn't get my grocery stop. Wow, was I mad! 😡 But I was at the point that I just wanted to see my family and I knew that I would do this:

**ATTENTION TO THE 55,000 MEMBERS OF THE DIS BOARD: STAY AWAY FROM STAR TAXI/LIMO. THEY CHARGED ME \$200.00, THEY WERE LATE, RUDE, TRIED TO GET EXTRA MONEY FROM ME AND THEY DIDN'T GIVE ME MY GROCERY STOP!!! ON THE WAY BACK TO THE AIRPORT THEY WERE 45 MINUTES LATE AFTER I CALLED THEM TWICE!!**

Ahh, that feels so much better, Thanks.

So, we finally made it to Port Orleans Riverside.....

### **Part 3, Finally make it to MK STILL 10/2 \*Photo added\***

We climbed into our limo and my entire family sat towards the front, all squashed up together, with skin-to-skin contact because they were afraid that I was about to blow a cork. They didn't dare come near me. Once the car started rolling, I knew I would get even. I would tell the Dis. Ha! Mess with me, will ya?? Treat one DISer badly and they will only tell over 55,000 of their closest friends. How do you like me now?

With my plan firmly in place, I really started to feel better. I told the crew to start breathing again, and we finally arrived at POR. The driver barely had stopped when I jumped out because my baby boy, the child who has made me so proud, with his sweet little cheeks, smiling ear-to-ear was just standing there, in his clean white shirt with his military hair cut and all these new muscles, holding a Mickey Mouse doll....

Excuse me \*\*sniff, snort\*\*

The girls were so happy to see him, especially Em (6). She has a really hard time understanding where DS went. To her, he was a super hero. She climbs all over him and tries to beat him up. He lets her pretend that she has him in a "sleeper-hold" and makes him "tap-out" before she lets go. They are so great together. The Mickey doll was for her.

We were so excited to be together again, all of 6 us. When you have a "blended" family and they are growing up, it becomes more and more difficult to get together. The bell hop guy was really great, and zoomed us to our room on that little buggy thing pretty quickly. Em(6) thought this was a ride.

My brother and his crew were already there and unpacked. They arrived a couple hours before us and got lucky that POR gave them their room so early! When we pulled up, they thought we would need time to unpack and get organized. Why did they think that? Commando Nikki (17) had the door to the room opened, luggage thrown in there and was headed for the bus stop before we even got of the little buggy thing.

Okay, I'm exaggerating a little bit.

We really did open the door & throw the luggage in, BUT we looked inside for a second. We were ready to head to the Magic Kingdom. I passed out lanyards, pins, autograph books, pressed penny books and Epcot passports to everyone that I had bought from Gifts of a Lifetime before hand. I was glad I had done that, it really thrilled the heck out of the kids.

The whole bunch of us headed off for the MK without Pigtails and Scruffy. I think there was an issue with them, I don't know, we couldn't wait. I hadn't been there for 4 years and I forgot about the bag checks going in. It wasn't there last time. It only took a few minutes to go through, no big deal. Then I go through the turnstiles and stand and wait for the rest of my crew to come through and hand me their resort ID cards. Brother looks at DH and makes a weird face. Must be a guy language I don't understand because all DH said was "She won't let me carry my driver's license either." Brother nodded and rolled his eyes.

Well, come on, my DH has a wife, because he needs one, okay? I let him have his license back to save face with my brother and guess where it was the day we went to the Richard Petty Driving Experience? On the nightstand, in our room. He's lucky he was only doing the ride along.

We hit the POC (Pirates of the Caribbean), HM (Haunted Mansion), IASW (It's a Small World) when everyone started claiming starvation. Beetlebum(14) was looking a little pale and Em (6) was chewing the Mickey mouse doll. We decided to eat at the Liberty Tavern. Really good food. Hey, guess what? There are characters in there. Em(6) could barely handle it, she never has been to these types of meals. Minnie Mouse came over and you would have thought Brittany Spears had just sat down with us. I thought the child was going to faint. She went speechless. She was our little Disney princess for a few minutes,

Then it happened...

We were eating, chatting and really enjoying ourselves when Em(6) squealed "Chuck & Dave! Chuck & Dave!" The entire table of 9 people went silent. We even sat motionless for a second or two. Brother looks at me and says "Who is Chuck & Dave, and where are they going to sit?" Commando Nikki throws her napkin over her face and says, "Please tell me she didn't just call Chip & Dale, Chuck & Dave!" Beetlebum asked "Do we have to leave Disney World now?" Poor Em(6) didn't live that down for the rest of the trip.

As the park started closing, I stopped to take some photos of the castle turning colors. I was doing this for a few minutes and when I turned around.....

All four kids were standing in front of it, in a group hug.

It was a beautiful day and I was very blessed.

The photo I snapped when I turned around

## Part 4 ,The camera bag incident 10/3

I woke up at about 5:30 am. I was choking to death. I had been on antibiotics for three days for bronchitis and I couldn't breathe. I was coughing so much that I had to leave our room and go outside for a while. I walked over to the food court, grabbed a coffee and OJ in my pajama's. The girl behind the counter never batted an eye, so I guess this is normal behavior OR a lot of people in Florida wear blue pants with yellow ducks. What do I know, I'm from Maine.

POR is a very pretty resort. Very quiet. I was sitting outside our rooms, building 18 by the way, and praying that Florida doesn't have any of those gigantic, yellow & black striped grasshopper looking things with wings, because there was nobody awake to save me. 🐞

About a half hour later, I heard a whistle.

*BLAST! BLAST!* "Lets go people! Time to get up!" *BLAST! BLAST!* As I was sitting there thinking to myself, boy, if someone did that to me, I would FEED them the whistle, I realized it was coming from MY room! Oh GOD! I had left DH alone in there! Commando Nikki(17) would show him no mercy! I jumped up, knocked over my coffee, fell into the door because I forgot it locks when you go out, managed to get the key card out, had to swipe it 4 times to get the door open and make my way into the room. In all the commotion of me trying to get into my room, I woke up Brother who opened his door to find out what in the world was going on. *"NO! BROTHER CLOSE YOUR DOOR!"*

Too late.

Commando Nikki(17) was already under his arm and in his room with her stupid whistle, blowing it over there. *BLAST! BLAST!* "Lets go people! Time to get up!" *BLAST! BLAST!* Brother is just standing there looking at me, mouth wide open and I smile and say "Well, at least she's out of my room." and close the door.

Brother was not amused.

After strapping Commando Nikki into a chair and slapping her around a bit, we went off to MGM. This is one of the few times Pigtales and Scruffy joined us. I think my crew scares them. I had the camera bag and was talking with DS as we walked up to the bag check station. I asked DH if he would take it and go through for me because it was heavy and hurting my shoulder. DS and I walked through and waited on the other side. "Let's wait right here." I say to DS.

DH walks up to the bag checking guy with the camera bag. He unzips the main part of the bag, tips it up so he can see everything inside. "Could you open the other zipper sir?"

"Oh, sure, no problem. I don't think there is any....ACK! ARGLE, ACK! NO!!!!"

This is the sound one man makes when he presents a pocket of tampons to another man. DS tells me that is defiantly NOT an okay thing to do to a man, but the girls were rolling on the ground. DH? Oh he's still standing there, frozen, screaming NO with the bag still open. The bag checking guy asks me if I could come collect my DH and I tell him, "I have never seen that man in my life, he's been following trying to show me what is in his bag." The bag



checking guy is laughing and tells me I had better run while I still had a head start. Beetlebum (14) had to go drag him away by his arm. DH, DS and Brother decided I could carry my own stuff from here on out. Well, that certainly backfired on me, didn't it?

We saw the green army men, and got an autograph. Then things turned kinda ugly between Brother and his wife, who decided to fight about eating. It was getting really bad, and I ran over to 50's prime time and begged Susan (I think) if she could please get us in and could she please give us a great server because we were in the middle of a vacation breakdown. The kids hadn't done anything yet, we had been there standing around for over an hour, while they were getting mad at each other. I hate to get into ugly details, I want to keep this happy and funny, so I am skipping their problems.

Susan saved the day! We had Uncle Dave. I highly recommend Uncle Dave and plan on writing a glowing review about him to every Disney address I can find. Uncle Dave needs to know how he personally affected the rest of our vacation. If you have never eaten in the 50's, do it. It is a lot of fun. Uncle Dave would come into our "kitchen" made us set the table and remove hats. When Scruffy started to protest Uncle Dave would say "Let it go". It was Uncle Dave that first called him Scruffy, and we were grateful to have a name to go with the face. When he was leaving to get drinks he would say "Love ya, mean it." For the rest of the vacation, when my crew started to get tense, someone would raise their hand and say "Love ya, mean it". It would fix any problem we had for the rest of our stay. How can you fight with someone who yells that at you?

The food was great, and the girls & I split meals with no problem. I really wanted to try the s'mores I heard so much about, but we didn't have time. We had to be somewhere at 1:00.

So off we went.....

## **Part 5 10/3 Don't scare me and nobody gets hurt \*Photos added\***

I had no idea I was so long winded. I am still telling you about day 2 of our trip and this is part 5! If your enjoying these reports, the good news is that we stayed for nine days. If you are not enjoying these reports the bad news is we stayed for nine days.

We left MGM and crammed into Brothers van and DS's car. We were a group of 11 people at this point, and that is a lot of skin-to-skin contact. I drive. That's the rules. I don't care who owns the car, I'm driving, or I'm not going. Brother understands the rules and squishes into the back. DH is chanting *\*No skin-to-skin!\** You see, Maine-ers aren't used to humidity in October. It is an un-natural state for us to be in. Keep your clammy, sticky skin *over there*.

Oh, where are we going? Yeah, there were a few in our group that didn't know that either.

For anyone who has a NASCAR loving family, or for anyone who has HEARD of NASCAR, this is another event I would highly recommend.

The Richard Petty Driving Experience. It's just outside of the MK parking lot. There were a

couple of them that thought we were heading for the MK, it looks like you are as you drive up. Just bear to the left and \*presto\* there you are. You have to stop at the gate, and a man comes over to the car and says *something* but I couldn't hear him over the hillbilly screams coming from the back. The light turned green and I just went for it. You go in a tunnel that is actually under the track.

When DS & I drive in tunnels, we beep our horns. Don't do that. There are two guys on the other side of the tunnel, sitting in lawn chairs, having a soda, and you WILL scare the sweet heck out of them. I am pretty sure they started off in the lawn chairs, but when we immersed from the tunnels, they were on the ground.

DH is a die-hard NASCAR loving fan. This was the only time during our trip he forgot about the skin-to-skin contact rules. Poor DH was sitting in the wayyyy back of the van too. We all get out and gather together behind the van, except DH. I question Brother and he is giggling.

They locked him in the van.

The van is rocking and banging around and you can hear screams coming out of it, **\*\*Let me out !!\*\***. Brother was holding the power lock button. I slap Brother, collect poor DH, who at this point is purple! He shot out of that van like a roadrunner on speed. He was a blur. *\* Zooooom , Gone \**

The rest of us enter the building and DH is already at the counter, bouncing up and down. He has the full attention of the nascar ride guy, who can't understand DH. He's talking like this:

" Gimmeacar,I'mgoingoutonthetrack,didyouhearthat,its anenginerevingup,whatareyouwaitingfor,getmeinacar, Igottago,ohtheregoesacar,I'mnotinitletsgo."

Left the Xanax back in the room. It should be right next to DH's drivers license, because I let him have it back, remember?

Lucky for him, they were only doing the ride-along. I paid for DH, DS and commando Nikki to go. They looked at DS and gave me a military discount. So, instead of \$89 each it came to \$78. Nice surprise! Brother's entire crew went except for Pigtails. We had to wait about 1/2 hour, and I didn't think they could live that long. So they are standing around chatting with the NASCAR ride guy, and I am not paying attention to anything until everyone stops talking and is now staring at me.

"What??"

Em (6) is pointing at me and starts SCREAMING "She delivers pizza!!"

I point out the window and scream back "Chuck & Dave, Chuck & Dave!!"

What was this all about? Turns out the guy that will be driving them around also delivers pizza at night. They figure anyone who drives 40+ hours a week, can certainly drive in a circle without too much of a problem. The NASCAR drive guy looks at me and asks "Looking for a job?" Man, you and an entire room of people, that I don't know have discovered that I am, in fact, a "pizza dude". Yeah, I'm always looking for a job. What's wrong with you?

So, everyone involved in the ride along gets into the fire-resistant suits. These are not to be

confused with fire-proof suits. This is what the NASCAR ride guy kept telling us and all I keep thinking is if you are in a wreck out there at 165 mph, isn't the type of suit your wearing irrelevant? Shouldn't they invest in impact-resistant suits?

Finally, thank God, they are lined up waiting to get into their harnesses. They have really loud music playing right there, and it gets everyone pumped up. DS & Brother are be-bopping along with the song, while wearing their fire-resistant suits and harnesses. Harnesses restrict your movement and the straps go around between your legs. Should have seen DS's face when he realized that! 🤔 Caught that moment on tape! OWCH! No more dancing for him.

Everyone gets their turn and the last to go is Commando Nikki (17). This was her punishment for the whistle earlier. She gets in and I am screaming "Careful! Fragile cargo!" They go around the track, but I didn't see them finish. The other cars come around again, but still no Nikki. Now, it's over, I am flipping out thinking they hit the wall over on the side I can't see. I grab Beatlebum (14) start shaking her and am yelling "Where is your sister??" Full panic mode. DH comes over and says "She's right there, she got a pit stop." **\*\*BAM\*\*** I punched him. Right in the arm, really hard. In my mind, I reasoned, it was his fault somehow, just give me a minute to work out the details. If I wasn't in tears, I think he might have gotten mad at me. I never hit DH and I am not sure where THAT came from. I was lucky he was still soaring from his ride.

Can you believe this day is still not over, and we have a party to attend?

## **Part 6 Wands of mass destruction 10/3**

Can you believe I am still going on about our second day?

We all cram back into the vehicles, more skin-to-skin contact 🤔 and head back over to POR. Let me just tell you here, POR is a great place, the rooms are a comfortable size for a family of 5, but for the sake of the other resort guests, I think the next time I will get two rooms at the All-Stars. I love the idea of two bathrooms with all these girls too. My crew is just too animated for "normal" people. Brother & his wife are having another problem, but we are *skipping* that stuff, remember?

Brother ran ahead of us to throw Em's (6) surprise in our room. We got to the door, slid the card a bunch of times, (It's me, NOT the door) and she went in first. On the bed was a gift box from Tinkerbell. Princess Em needed proper clothes to wear to the party and brought her a Tinkerbell outfit. Tink must of stopped by while we were out. 😊

Now, I have three older kids. DS Airman(19), Commando Nikki (17) & Beatlebum (14). Could someone explain to me how I could buy a wand for a small child and NOT realize that it is, in fact, a weapon? Stay out of Em's way, she now has a stick and is headed back to the parks. DS had gone to his car and came back wearing a jesters hat. "Chick magnet" He told me. I took notes on this because I felt it was important information for the DIS.

We get over to the monorail, and Em(6) has decided that THIS is the greatest ride ever. She would just stay on it and ride around for hours, if we let her. Even tho there were a few times during our trip I thought this wouldn't be a bad idea, Disney is funny about you taking all your kids with you when you leave the monorail. *Whatever* Commando Nikki was trying to claw her way out.

We head over to the castle because I had dinner PS's. I made them months ago and hadn't planned on the MGM meltdown and the 50's (Yeah Uncle Dave!). DH had a fit. "Why are we eating again? We don't eat this much at home!" That's true. But I tell him we could go in for some dessert and give the kids a chance to see the castle from the inside. I'm in big trouble, he's joining forces with Commando Nikki. He's not a happy camper, so I threaten him with some skin-to-skin contact. 🤨 He agrees to go in, but it had better be fast. "No problem," I say, "quick dessert and we are heading for Buzz Lightyear, I promise."

Good thing I didn't pinky-promise, because Brother's crew decided to have big meal.

Well, my crew couldn't sit still any longer and left me there. I was waiting for the bill. I was thinking I would just go over to the exit of Buzz Lightyear and find them as soon as they got off the ride. I paid our bill (\$70 for 5 desserts) and went out the back side of the castle. There they all were. Just standing there. Apparently, they really can't function without me. I had the warm fuzzies knowing they didn't really want to leave me behind.

The MNSSHP was just great. When you first enter the turnstiles they hand you a plastic bag for your goodies. There are several candy stands set up throughout the park. They also had parades, fireworks, picture spots (photo for each ticket, we got 5!) and dance spots with hula-hoops. Say it with me:

Fun for all!

Brother (poor Brother) and his wife were still at it (how do people get mad at Disney??), and we took their kid (18) with us. This was the beginning of his "Where's Waldo?" title. There are a lot of those family photo spots and he is in our family photos. He is also in our splash mountain photos, Rock 'n Roll rollercoaster photos, you name the photo, and Waldo is in it. This is only the second time we had met him, but he is a very sweet guy and we didn't mind one bit. It was fun having another "newbie" in our group.

I bought Commando Nikki and Beatlebum some silly hats to wear. Nothing as cool as DS's "chick magnet" jesters hat, but they were pleased.

MNSSHP goes from 7-12. We were there at 5:00 and received wristbands when we entered the park. At 10:00 my cell rings and it is Brother. I told him we were going down splash mountain for the fourth time in a row, come on over. My phone works on splash mountain, IN THE RIDE, but not in our hotel room. I wonder if sprint can somehow work that into their commercials. No signal in the rooms. Can't hear you now. Nope.

Brother shows up, and we are all happy because he's going to come play with us. But Brother isn't going to play at all, he's going back to the room.

*\*\*Skipping this part, skipping this part, skipping this part\*\**

I tried to explain that the park hours were shorter this time of year, and when the MK is open, you need to be there. There were two whole hours left! I also attempted to point out

that Disney is giving away candy. Again, Disney is giving away candy. One more time, Disney is giving away candy. When Disney is G-I-V-I-N-G something/anything away, most especially candy, this is the place to be.

Didn't work 😞 Brother's in deep and has to go.

After two hours, we headed for the buses to head back. Em (6) was ticked that we weren't taking the monorail back and took it out on DS (19) by beating him with her wand, chanting "monorail" with each swing. Commando Nikki (17) & Beatlebum (14) were teasing him because he was just ducking her swings. "Oh big trained killer, big military hot-shot, a little girl is attacking you, go on save yourself." He stops cold and says "Okay" grabs them both by the arms, and pushes them in front of the angry, Tinkerbell costume-wearing, wand swinging, monorail screaming, six year old.

Ah, my children are so well behaved.

## Part 7 10/4 Lines in Epcot

Mickey called at 7:30 and woke up Commando Nikki. When the phone rang she bolted straight up out of bed and started looking for her whistle. When I think about it now, maybe she wasn't really sleeping, because she really was out of that bed fast, looking under the bed and in the suitcases. "Touch the whistle, and I'll kill you." I told her. She scowled at me, put her hands on her hips, stomped her size 6 foot and said "That's not a very Disney attitude, Mother." In the next breath, she was smiling and saying "Coffee?" and \*swooooosh\* out the door she went. Yeah, Sybil, I'd love a cup. She was back so fast, I think she had hidden a cup outside the door.

Our crew got up and took turns in the shower. Commando Nikki went first, had a three minute military shower. Then stood next to the door, yelling for the next person to "get on deck" and the one in the shower to "Get out or I will throw a rattlesnake in there". It's a good thing I love this kid. Lets just leave it at that, shall we?

We were ready to go, but Brother's crew is a bit slower than us. They wanted breakfast, so we went down to the food court and got something to eat. It doesn't take long for my crew to start getting out of hand. I can't keep them in one place for long. I went to the gift shop, bought 3 Pal Mickeys (for DD's) and 10 pins for DS. Brother's crew was taking waaaay to long, my crew started acting up, so I told Brother we would be at Epcot, call me when you get there.

We take the bus over to Epcot, where Em (6) sees the monorail. "I want to go on that first!" I am trying to explain to this wacko, that the monorail is not a ride, it's a mode of transportation. At the same time I am handing DH the camera bag. He literally takes a big jump backwards, puts his hands in front of his face and yells slowly, "Noooooooo!!!"

What is his problem?

"Take the bag" I said.

"No" He said.

He is now moving his hands and feet in some type of karate defense moves, trying to block the bag. "No, grasshopper, No!" The kids are in busting with laughter, and I am getting irritated. *Then* I remembered the tampons. I opened every zipper and showed him it was safe, but he still didn't trust me. So I stood up, loud and proud and announced, "If you don't take this bag right now, when we get home I will plant tampons everywhere. In your glove box, pockets, shoes, under the pillows..."

"Give me the bag" He GROWLED at me.

I will never understand a mans fear of feminine hygiene products. Obviously, they are not for *him*.

We got fast passes for Test Track and went over to HISTA (Honey, I Shrunk The Audience). I was so relieved to be back to normal size. Took a few photos of the kids together, then we went to test track to have skin-to-skin contact with strangers. We strolled right on with our fast passes, while Em(6) sang, "We are cutters! We are cutting everyone!" Stood in the small room skin-to-skin, and finally got into our car. This was the first time any of us had ridden this ride. Makes it kind of special. 🤪 Test track makes you into the "crash test dummy" My kids describe it like this:

First there's the 'driving like mom' test (brakes & corners), then there is the 'kidney' test (bumpy roads), followed by the 'how's that sunburn' test (extreme heat) and finishing up with the 'your ninnies are showing' test (extreme cold).

Brother finally showed up at 2:00 pm. 🤪 He wasn't happy. 😞 There was too much tension with that crew, so we split up for a while. Commando Nikki went on Mission Space. She loved it and suffered no ill effects. But with this kid, it doesn't matter what she goes on, she has a cast-iron stomach. All 3 DD's went on body wars while DH & DS went into Innoventions. I sat on a bench, took a break and people watched. I hadn't really noticed a lot of people, the crowds were pretty low. Sadly, that wouldn't last throughout the vacation. If I had known then how sick of people I was going to get, I would have found something else to do.

DD's found me right where they left me. We were going over to Innoventions to collect the guys when we went past the water fountains and a ton of little kids running around in them. Em (6) freaked and I told her she could go over there, but to only get "a little wet".

Yeah, a six year old knows what you mean by "a little wet." 🤪 How did my kids survive me??

She booked it over there, and the fountain started spaying sideways all over her feet. The looked straight down to watch the water on her feet, and the fountain "blowed up". Head to foot, she was soaked. She was wringing out her shirt for 20 minutes.

Her father was pleased with me.

I made a quick restroom stop, and there was a lady standing there holding a little girl. I stood behind her, and she moved to the left. So, I moved to the left. She moved right, I moved right. Finally she turns to me and says, "Uh, I'm not in line." Have you ever POWER

BLUSHED before? Just to make myself look a little more stupid, I say "Oh, I know, I was just *practicing*."

We met back up with Brother around 4:30 (so, how was Epcot Brother?) and took the bus to Wilderness Lodge to eat at the Whispering Canyon Cafe.

Oh GOD! Was that a good time.

## **Part 8 A quite meal at Whispering Canyon. (sure)**

The Wilderness Lodge is so pretty. I want to stay there someday. I will have to go alone, I don't think the people staying here would find Commando Nikki's whistle very funny. I looked around and also noticed there wasn't one person walking around in blue duck pajama's.

DH knew I was really looking forward to eating here and that was making him a nervous wreck. While we were waiting for our table, he was pacing around the lobby, looking at his feet, shaking his head, and mumbling something. Brother went over to find out if he was okay. They were doing that secret guy language again. He tells Brother. "*She's been dying to eat here.*" and Brother becomes very nervous. "I'll keep an eye out, you drop a Xanax in her drink."

HEY! Play fair! 😊 Maybe the food is super-good, it doesn't mean anything is going to happen. 😊

What's *wrong* with them anyway?

We had PS's at 5:00 and were seated very quickly. We were all there, except Pigtails and Scruffy. I have no idea where they wandered off to. Were they with us at all today? I thought I remembered seeing Scruffy over at Epcot. *Hey, if anyone sees Scruffy, could you let him know we are all home? Thanks bunches!*

We were seated in the middle of the room, (hooray!) and I knew some things about WC because of the DIS board. I'll admit it, I was puffed up with pride. Yeah, it's true. I guess it was obvious too, because I told Brother to drop his fork to see what would happen. DH jumped up, in slow motion, slowly saying "*nnnooooo!!!*" put his hand on the table and knocked his own fork onto the floor. Still moving in slow motion, now with both hands over his head slowly waving, looks down on the floor with a horrified look and he starts saying slooowly *WHYY?*

The great part? Our server, Debbie, was standing right behind him, arms crossed, watching him. Oh yes, he was unaware. She tapped him on the shoulder and he sat in his chair really quick. He is looking up at her saying "Look, I dropped my fork, but, I am *really really* sorry about it. Could you just forget about it?" "Oh, surrre" Debbie said as she was spinning around to leave our table, with a big smile on her face. She takes one step away and DH says "Hey, could I have something for free?" Never hurts to ask, right? She stopped cold, turned around and threw a gigantic handful of straws on him and said "Enjoy".

I was in tears. I wonder if she expected all our kids, DH, Waldo, & Brother to start throwing and blowing the straws at each other. They all jumped on DH before the last straw was out of her hand. Our table was out of control in 5 seconds. A new personal record for us. I left the table for a minute, not only because I was beginning to fear for my own personal safety, but I wanted to wash my hands. (There's never a line for that.) I came back and everyone had *thankfully* settled down. DH had a three foot fork in his hand. A gift from Debbie.

DS & DH had the all you care to eat, the girls & I each split meals. We were very happy, eating, chatting, spinning napkins in the air occasionally, and someone comes along and puts a "napkin beanie" on DS's head. DS froze with his fork mid-air. He looks up at me and says "Oh god, mom, what is on my head?" I'm giggling and say "A napkin." He had such a look of relief on his face, I had to ask, what did you think it was? "A diaper!" Why would you think that? "Because you left the table."

At this point, I am beginning to believe, my family doesn't have a very nice opinion of me.

Debbie continues to be a fabulous server, DH continues to give her a hard time, asking for free stuff. We were just about finished up, and Debbie is walking across the restaurant, *with a microphone* saying, "Can I please have your attention over here." DH is giving me bad looks, (he did this on his own) and she comes up behind him. She tells the restaurant about how he wants something for free, and she wanted to share it with everyone.

A free pony ride.

He rode around the restaurant on a wooden stick, singing. He was such a good sport. If you had seen the look on his daughters face, you'd also know, he was her first prince on a white horse.

I saw it in her eyes.

## **Part 9 Poor little kid Day 3, 10/4**

The best piece of advice I can offer to anyone who is traveling with a large group, or just my crew, is to find a few minutes of alone time. When you have so many personalities exploding in your face 24/7 you need to find your own "three feet of personal space".

We left WC (bye Debbie!) and the crew was still in high swing. I was getting somewhat wiped out. (I still had bronchitis) We were heading over to Disney Quest for the rest of the evening. (This is still day 3, 10/4, for those of you who have lost track.) I asked Brother if he was going over with us. "I might be able to for a little while."

What did he just say??

Rather than getting into it with him, I "let it go". (See Uncle Dave, I can do it!) We were all waiting for the bus to go to Downtown Disney, and I just wanted a break, plus I could feel myself getting upset about Brother, so I came up with this brilliant plan. As the bus was headed for us and I grabbed DH. I asked him if he could take the kids and go on without me. I wanted to wait for the next bus. Was he concerned? Did he worry? Nope. He just said



"Okie-dokie, see you there." I do so love this man.

Off they went, and out came my cell.

"Mom! Brother won't play with me!" That's right, I did it, I called MOM. We talked about this whole mess Brother was in, and how we hadn't had any time to spend together and so on. I talked to her from the time they left until my bus arrived at DTD. According to my cell, it was about 1/2 hour. I felt better.

When you go to DTD there are two places they stop. The first is in the marketplace, and the second is at Westside. I knew I needed to get off at the second stop. I still felt like I walk 47 miles from the bus stop to Disney Quest.

Everything about DQ is fun. Even the elevator ride up. When you get off, you are on the third floor. The most important thing you need to know is that the Cheesecake factory is on the fourth floor. Tell them Delswife sent you. I knew just where to start looking for my crew. Build your own rollercoaster. I knew if nobody else was there, Commando Nikki would be.

Yup, there she was.


She was with Beatlebum (14) who was looking a bit, oh how to describe this, *horrified* is a good word, and one that I can spell. I was on the other side of the bars with the camera bag on my shoulder, leaning over talking to them. They told me the general direction of the rest of the crew and I turned to head off, and *bump* knocked this poor little kid (about 5 yrs old) onto his bum with the camera bag.

Oh now, I have *really* done it.

Poor little kid is sitting on the floor staring up at me, with great big eyes, waiting for the next assault from me and my camera bag. I didn't know what to do, I am apologizing like a mad woman, but I am afraid to touch him to pick him up. I am frantically looking around for a parent of some kind, still apologizing to poor little kid.

In today's society, is it acceptable to touch a child that doesn't share your DNA, simply to return them to their original upright standing position?

A mother finally shows up, and hey, I have no right to judge her in anyway. I have been in DQ for about 15 minutes now, and can only locate 2/5ths of my crew. It's a busy place and it would be very easy to lose a poor little kid. At least all she did was lose him, *I* may have just scarred him for life! Apparently, this child has the gift of invisibility, because I never saw him. "Is he bothering you?" She asks. *Lady*, are you kidding me? "No, not at all, actually, I conducted a gravity test with him and found him to be bottom heavy." She looked at me oddly. I continued " No what happened was I forgot I wasn't sixteen yrs old anymore and no longer a size 2. My backside requires more room than it once did..." She picked up her child and left.

I turned around and walked straight into BROTHER!! 

"Gravity test?" He chuckles.

Well, yeah. Sounded better than, "Hey lady I knocked your poor little kid off his feet with

my big butt."

Brother was there with just Waldo. It was great. We found the rest of the crew and wondered downstairs. There is a new game down there called Pirates of the Caribbean. It had a huge line, but we decided we had to find out what it was. I'm glad we did. It is a room that looks like the bow of a ship that you and 4 of your closest friends go in, wearing special goggles and shoot cannons at the pirates to steal their gold. The bow rocks like a boat. It was fun.

We all got into Brothers van, and somehow, I ended up in the back. I still don't know how this happened, and just before I could start freaking out, DH leaned forward to ask Waldo, to please open his door. Very calmly, no emergency sound in his voice at all. Waldo turns around and says "Sure, why?" DH says "Because you closed the door on my hand and it's stuck." 🤦 I guess seeing your DH's dented fingers will distract you from freaking out. Could dented fingers replace Xanax? I don't think so.

On the way back to POR we started chanting "We want Pepsi products! I want a Mountain Dew!" Brother drove to the gas station, and guess what. No Pepsi products. I asked the guy if Florida sold Pepsi products anywhere and he said, "Yeah, off Disney property." We didn't know Disney had a gas station! Maybe that's where the monorail gases up?

Back to POR to put my big bum to bed.

## **Part 10, 10/5 day 4 Scruffy speaks! (you won't believe what he said)**

The next morning I woke up to Commando Nikki standing over me with a cup of coffee in her hand, grinning ear-to-ear. "Thought this would be a time saver." She pushes the cup in my hand and runs off to the shower. Love ya, mean it.

I went outside our rooms to have a cigarette, because I don't smoke in tiny rooms with kids. Brother & DH come out and join me. Brother is sitting on the edge of the stoop, where there is no railing. Just a 2 foot drop to the ground. There are some very lovely bushes right around that area, like I said, POR is very nice. We are chatting, and I am thinking, "*Wow, this is so great*" just as the sprinkler turns on.

Nope, nobody got wet. But I think Brother peed a little.

Did you ever notice that when the sprinkler turns on, it sounds *a lot* like a rattlesnake? Brother did.

His arm jumped and rolled the rest of his body across the stoop, almost into DH's lap. At the same time, I jump up, in a high-pitched scream, "*Grasshopper?*"

This ladies and gentlemen was the start of another very long day.

There were a lot of things to do today. Including Brother & SIL's re-hitching ceremony at

the Garden Grill. 🤔 Who are we kidding here? They haven't gotten along for a minute so far and we are 4 days into this vacation. I mention it to Brother, and the look on his face scared me just a little bit.

There was no way he was going to do it. Nope, not going to happen.

I took him into our room and showed him the Mickey and Minnie bride/groom ears I bought them. He wasn't interested.

I told him they were holding my credit card for this. He would pay me back.

I told him DH & I got married here, and look at us. That made him smirk.

I told him *Chuck & Dave* would be there. That sold him.

I gave him the mouse bride/groom ears to take over and surprise SIL. I had the warm fuzzies 🤗 thinking about how I would feel if DH did that.

I wish three things, the first that he hadn't gone through the door connecting our rooms, the second that he had *closed* the door and the third that I could have gotten out of my room faster. It was awful. Poor Brother. 😞

I did manage to get out to DH. I don't think he had heard any of it and I was real uncomfortable. There were too many "crew" members around to tell him what happened. I was mad that she just treated Brother like that. She screamed at him, because she didn't want the mouse ears to mess up her hair. There was name calling, Brother didn't deserve any of that.

Between crew members, I am trying to tell DH the story, Brother comes out of his room. On top of his head are the Mickey groom ears. He is obviously not happy.

Oh, thars' gonna be some trouble!

He leans over and *growls* in my ear, "I don't care what you have to do, set fire to yourself if you have to, but get me out of this."



You bet.

Got a lighter right here.

Scruffy emerges from Brother's room. *That's where you've been??* DH elbow's me, he thinks he's found Scruffy.

Now, I've never been clear on how we all live in the same country, and have such different accents. Brother, on occasion, has had to translate some things SIL or Waldo have said. Brother had to translate EVERYTHING Scruffy said.

Scruffy began talking to DH & myself. It sounded like this:

"dang-durng, tharsa bout ta be some strassin upin har. Looken lika sandy coud putta fixen on it, whadda ya do?"

DH & I are both making this strange squinty-eyed, mouth kinda hanging open look. You know where you tip your head sideways without moving your eyes because the angle helps in the translation.

DH's smiles and says "Ah, yeah."

"Swat! Haren have addit." Scruffy says.

DH's smiles and says "Ah, yep."

Later, I asked DH why he just didn't say he didn't understand him. He felt he had gotten to far into the conversation and couldn't back out.

Scruffy, who is grinning, reaches into his pocket, opens a little box and presents DH with a little pill.

DH looks at Brother, who can't help laughing because he knows DH didn't understand any of their little conversation, and asks him, "What's that?"

Brother says "Xanax." laughing.

DH says "I don't want that. What do I do?" Oh has Scruffy gone deaf, honey?

Brother says, "Just say no, man."

DH looks at me and says, "Did I just commit a crime?" No, honey, not yet. DH looks back at Scruffy and firmly says "No thank you." Scruffy replies "hen yen thars no trable min." DH jumps back and says "I don't know what you just said but I've got to go." and that was the last I saw of him until breakfast. Apparently Scruffy was under the impression that the Xanax in our room was for *DH* and he couldn't go back into our room to get it because of the crazy lady in their room and the doors were still open between them. I guess to Scruffy, DH looked liked he needed them. That was Scruffy's side of the conversation.

Gee, take one little Xanax at the airport, and it will haunt you forever.

Who *are* these people Brother?

## **Part 11 A brief intermission for some photos, relating to events so far.**

From Part 5, A few shots from Richard Petty:

DH, so happy.

DH, with the helmet on, Brother in background.

From Part 6, the crew:

Commando Nikki (17), Em (6), DS with the chick magnet jesters hat (19), and

Beatlebum(14).

From Part 8, WC

He couldn't get over it.

A couple random shots:  
This is what no skin-to-skin contact actually looks like

Beatlebum and Commando Nikki

A nice shot of my well-behaved children on the monorail, notice it is the older ones setting the example for the younger ones:

This is what they think I mean when I say, "Stand there so I can take your picture." Please note the man in the background. I have about 100 of these:

This is DH trying to reason with Em. He didn't like the looks of that beak. DS is in background at a safe distance.

## **Part 12, Day 4, 10/5 Re-hitching**

Princess Jasmine had left Em (6) a package in our room. When it was safe to go in, she ran in and changed into her new costume. Luckily she had no need for Xanax.  
I found DH at the food court with the rest of our crew. I heard him telling DS that no matter what Scruffy says to you, just say no. DS is confused, but agrees. This was going to be DS's day, whatever he wanted to do, because he had to leave us tonight. He wanted to go to Norway in Epcot.

Why?

Have you ever *seen* the girls in Norway?

That's why.

Commando Nikki is thrilled we will be going into the world showcase because there are hot guys in kilts with electric guitars in Canada. "Oh yes, Off-kilter" I say. "They take the kilts off?" She squeals clapping her hands. We could only wish.

It is at this point Brother appears with his wife in their bride/groom ears. Brother is still scowling at me and I am hiding behind DH. Stupid me thought it would be nice for them to

have a re-hitching ceremony because they have only been married 5 months. Anyone want to bet me if they make it to a year?

The crew rides over to Epcot with DS because he is leaving from there and needs his car. DH, myself, Brother and his wife all take the bus. Scruffy is MIA.

We arrive at Epcot and the kids are standing there at the gate, not happy with mother. I have enough on my mind, thinking Brother is going to take me out at any second, how am I suppose to remember they had no tickets to get in. We are only a few minutes behind them.

As we go through the turnstiles, people are congratulating Brother and his wife.

Please stop it. Every time someone congratulated Brother, he jabbed me in the ribs. I had bruises for days. He takes me aside, distracting his wife with yet another pin cart and says "Do something." I go for my lighter, thinking this is the time for me to set myself on fire, but realised at the same time my crew is in Innoventions. "Hey! Consider yourself ditched."

I was outta there.

I met the crew and explained to them the entire mess, and there would be no re-hitching at the garden grill. They were not happy because they liked the ice cream social and wanted to say hi to Chuck & Dale. "That's Chuck & Dale" Em states which just gets them rolling with laughter and makes her mad. The princess is not amused, but has no weapon readily available. "Oh, we are *going* to the ice cream social, make it happen mom." Arrrgh!

Sooo, I call Brother on the cell and say "Hey, guess what, your phone doesn't work and I can't find you."

"That works, because I sat down on a bench took off my groom hat and someone stole it." Translation: I went to the men's room and jammed that sucker into the bottom of the trash.

We never made it to Norway or Canada, (poor hormonal teenagers) we were playing on test track. The sunburn test was becoming a little less funny. When our car would go through, our crew would say "ow,ow,ow,ow".

We finally got to the ice cream social, but had to wait. DH, DS(19) and Waldo(18) went out to have a cigarette.

Uh oh, Waldo's with us.

Waldo, DS, and DH had a very interesting talk. Come to find out, he was planning on ditching Brother and his wife and just blended in with our crew. WE were the group to be with. He was no fool. When they came back in Waldo took my cell phone and without turning it on started yelling into in "MOM, DAD!" Nope, they couldn't hear him either. He was so pleased with himself.

When it was our turn, the lady at the desk asked if we were doing the re-hitching ceremony. Before I can say no, DH pipes up and says yes. He still wanted to marry me again.

All together now, awwwwwww.

Everyone except Beatlebum(14) and myself went to the restroom. We had already taken

care of washing our hands and were sitting in the booth, talking. As we are talking, Mickey plops himself down next to us. We squeal with delight, and Mickey plays with us for a few minutes. It was the *coolest* mother-daughter moment in the history of mankind.

Beatebum realizes the restaurant to moving.

I think she was hoping the rest of the crew wouldn't be able to find us because we weren't in the same place when they left. She looked a bit disappointed when they all showed up.

I think Commando Nikki was getting on her last nerve.

She was on mine.

So, we are served these huge ice cream masterpieces. It is worth \$6.99, easily. I have fudge dripping from my chin when our server, Bobby comes over and tells us it's time.

Bobby also says he's about to embarrass us in front of a room of people.

Bobby hasn't read these trip reports. Bobby is NOT in the "know".

We stand up and take our places, facing each other holding hands, Bobby begins screaming at the top of his lungs to everyone in the restaurant. I am now deaf in that ear, as is DH. He asked me if I take DH *again* and you'd think where I only had one line, I'd get it right. Would you think that of me?

I said yes, I was *suppose* to say "I do". Ah well, thanks for pointing that out Bobby.

He asked DH if he took me *again*. DH looks at the kids, and is squeezing my fingers together. He puts one hand on his chin and tips his head like he is thinking about it. He finally said yes, in which he was immediately corrected by Bobby, "It's 'I do'" and we have to kiss to the count of 100 (by tens). The kids are making all kinds of gagging noises, because they are brats. We are given a lovely paper saying we are re-hitched. I like the idea of getting married every time we go to Disney together. At least this time, I wasn't so nervous.

We were having yet another great Disney day, and had another party to attend. DS decides he can stay for a little while, Hooray! I call Brother and told him it was safe now and we are getting ready to head to the MNSSHP. He said they aren't going. I had some smart comment about when he had time, maybe he could come to Maine and pay us a visit. He saw the humor in it.

We start to head out of the Epcot and EM(6) nearly has a nervous breakdown, because we are finally headed for the monorail.

## **Part 13, still day4, Em's monorail**

As you may recall, the monorail is Em's (6) very favorite ride. While we are strolling up the ramp, Commando Nikki blasts off in front of us. See ya. Waldo & DS each have one of Em's

arms and are beating on her head and butt with their bags. (It had T-shirts in them, I wouldn't actually allow them to injure the child.) She is trying to drag them up the ramp and is getting really mad. She is screaming *MONORAIL!!* when Commando Nikki comes back for the rest of us.

"We have to wait for the next one. We can sit in the front!" This kid has been peeking at the DIS boards, hasn't she?

We have a seat and Em is on fire! She didn't get that the monorail was *driven* by someone, and this was going to be a special treat. Nope, she didn't want to hear any of that.

God love the little children, but have you ever seen that thing they do when they are not getting their own way? Even if you don't have children, you have seen it. We all have. It's that thing they do, like their head suddenly weighs 50 lbs more than it did a second ago, their arms have no use, and their legs become Jello. She had her eyes rolled up in the back of her head and her tongue out to the side of her mouth. Very pretty.

The first monorail comes and Em (6) springs back to life. She grabs DS by the shirt and is trying to drag him on it with her. "*Lets go, lets go, lets go!!!*" She of course, doesn't move him an inch.

Em & DS. You'll never meet two kids that are closer. Where ever DS is, Em is right behind him. While DS was with us, we never really had to keep an eye on her. We knew she was with him. She stands outside the men's room door screaming his name. You just know she wants to bolt in there and get him. He just loves her to pieces.

So, he doesn't move. Em has a total look of *betrayal* on her face. She can't believe her partner in crime just let her down. The monorail starts to pull way, and Em, that sweet angel, swings her foot full back to kick him.....there. He grabs her foot and hangs her upside down by it. When he puts her back on her feet, her costume had slipped a bit down in the back exposing her tushy, just a little bit.

"Auditioning to be a Maine plumber?" DH asked.

I was so unbelievably happy when the next monorail pulled up. I almost hugged the CM (Cast Member) standing there. Commando Nikki (17) surprised me when she said, "I'm riding with you guys so DS, EM, Beatlebum and Waldo can sit in the front." I was proud of her for doing that for the other kids. (She got her chance) Wow, what a sweetheart, so thoughtful, arranging for the other kids to ride in the front.....

Yeah, we got into the monorail and Commando Nikki fell asleep.

Anyone seen that whistle?



## Part 14, 10/5 A painful goodbye

Em(6) emerged from the cabin of the monorail, simply beaming, holding in her hand her Official monorail license. She now owned a piece of the monorail. *Great, you know what she's going to be like to live with now??*

We went through our usual routine of going through the turnstiles, handing me all the tickets (DH blew it) and getting our goody bags.

We were not as bouncy and happy.

We were getting sadder with each step.

We knew soon, DS was going to leave.

We played around on Buzz a few more times, and I bought the ride photo because DS was in it. We went down SM and I bought the ride photo because DS was in it. You get the idea.

DH noticed I was buying all the ride photos and started to, for one split second, question this. One look at me and he knew, if DS was in the photo, I was buying it. I think he was afraid that an innocent passerby might stop and catch DS in their own photos and I would steal their camera.

It was getting late. We went to Paco Bills to grab a bite. I wasn't that hungry. You could feel the tension building in our crew, all except Em. She was still unaware that her super-hero was leaving. It was better that way so she could have some fun with him. I was glad later that we made that decision.

The fireworks started and we all quietly watched. It was about 10:00 pm and DS *really* had to get on the road. It tore my heart out to watch the kids all walking through Adventureland to the front gate, all holding hands. When they were walking down Main St. hand-in-hand I tried to take some photos, but I was crying too hard and they are all blurry.

Did you know the CM's are really special people? Do you realize how special they are? I found out later when Waldo told me. At the time, I didn't realize there were any other people there at all.

We got to the front gate near the turnstiles. The electric light parade was going by.

DS got on his knees and told Em he had to go.

"Why?" She was pulling on his shirt, big fat tears running down her cheeks.

"Because I have to go to work." He was fighting tears.

"Why?" she asked again.

"Because America needs me."

"I need you." She was bawling at this point and she grabbed him around the neck. They were both sobbing. We had to pull her off him. She had weaved her fingers together and wouldn't let go. It broke my heart. We were all crying.

He gave his sisters hugs and kisses, DH a handshake then a big hug, Waldo a handshake...

Then it was my turn.

I thought my heart would rip out through my chest. We hugged a long time, and I told him things in his ear. I am so proud of my son, for where he came from and where he is now. He has done good. He is my only son, my firstborn, my baby. I will love him the rest of my life.

He started walking towards the monorail, and I was watching DH's face. He had tears in his eyes as he followed DS walk up the monorail ramp. I was afraid to look, afraid if I did look, would simply curl up and die.

I looked.

They saw a man, with a military hair-cut in his clean white shirt, with all his muscles and his wdw shopping bag walking into his future and working on F-16 fighter jets.

I saw my baby with his sun bleached blond hair, chubby dimpled cheeks and chocolate on his chin.

I love you Chris. Bye.

I have to stop here, I promise this is the last time I will make you cry.

## **Part 15, Day 4 Quite end of the evening**

*\*\*Shake it off, shake it off.\*\**

We were a mess once DS left. Waldo tells me that a few people stopped to watch and we had about 4 - 5 Cm's kind of "guarding" us. They would politely usher them along, allowing us some privacy. There was one CM that was trying to give Em stickers, but she just kept crying quietly, big tears rolling off her cheeks.

We went back into the MNSSHP, but we were still pretty out of it. DH sat on the sidewalk with the girls waiting for the parade, while I went and called my mom.

I was P-O'd at Brother for not being there.

The headless horsemen came riding down Main street. Em (6) wouldn't move off DH's lap. She was laying across it. Poor little thing was an emotional mess.

We thought about leaving, but the girls insisted they wanted to stay. They got their faces painted, and we rode a few rides. Em was beginning to feel better. She found an American flag pin with all the characters on it she wanted to buy for him.

We left MK just strolling along towards the buses, wandering near the boat dock, just as casual as can be and I noticed something very strange.

Two kids I had never seen before were following DH. They were about 8-9 yrs. old. I thought we had had this talk, we weren't having kids together. I asked DH where he got the extra kids, and when he stopped and turned around, the little girl nearly fainted. Her daddy's backside and DH's backside looked a lot alike. 🤔 We kept an eye on them and relocated their panic-stricken parents.

Nice bus ride back, made some friends with strangers, had some skin-to-skin contact and arrived at POR. Waldo bid us adio and disappeared into his room. The girls went straight to bed, DH & I stepped outside for a final cigarette and to talk about the days events.

Brother was sitting on the stoop, but not too close to the edge.

We got a chance to talk about what was going on with him, why they weren't having a good time. He hadn't gone on any rides except for our first day, seen no shows, fireworks or parades. He was spending his vacation standing outside gift shops waiting. All she wanted to do is shop. I felt so bad for him.

We covered the next days schedule. We were going to Discovery Cove (at SeaWorld) to swim with the dolphins. I was sad DS was going to miss it, and I will take him there someday, but I was excited for Beatlebum. This was right up her alley. This kid was all about the fish. We agreed that we had to be there very early, 8:30 am, so we had to head to bed now.

Commando Nikki would be up first, with her stinking whistle. She's probably laying in there awake now, because she DID arrange a power-nap for herself on the monorail.

Brat.

## **Part 16 Here's Waldo, Scruffy & me \*Photos\***

I will post more photos, I just haven't had time, got to keep writing. 😊

DS, Beatlebum, Commando Nikki & Here's Waldo!

This is me & some guy I picked up on the monorail. 😊 I'm shy, okay?

## Part 17, 10/6 Day 5 Lets go, already!

Our morning started off like the others, with a couple of exceptions. Commando Nikki(17) was standing over me with a cup of coffee, but Beatlebum (14) was awake too. This was her big day. She was going to touch a dolphin, a dream of hers.

Commando Nikki wasn't allowing showers this morning, no way. They have showers at Discovery Cove (DC) and we will be in the water all day. She was throwing herself in front of the bathroom door every time someone made a move near it. She thought she was funny, imitating DH's slow motion karate moves.

I stepped outside & she followed me barking her usual "Let's move, let's go!" pulling on the back of my blue duck pajama's. Yeah, keep bugging me kid, and you'll find out how slow I can really move. While she is harassing me, DH snuck into the shower.

Commando Nikki *tweeked!*

She was all arms and legs running back into our room, *pounding* on the door, screaming. I could tell by the way she was darting her head around, she was looking for that stupid whistle. I still wonder *why* POR didn't kick us out. Nobody else behaves like us.

I got dressed and for some dumb reason I had my camera (Nikon 5700) hanging from one shoulder and the video camera (Canon ZR65, for the camera buffs) on the other. I went outside to take a look at the pictures I had taken. Brother was already sitting out there when I sat down.

**\*\*CRASH\*\***

Both cameras hit the floor when I did. Perfect.

"Gravity test?" Brother asked.

Jerk.

"You DO know you can also *shorten* the straps on those things?" Brother said sarcastically.

Shut up.

"So, the warrantee on those must have just run out?"

I mean it, shut up.

"Did you hear how crisp the sound of that crash was?"

I kicked him. I pointed over the edge of the stoop and screamed "Snake!!!"

He screamed back "Grasshopper!"

DH comes out of our room begging me to do something about Commando Nikki, she was trying to put his sandals on for him.

Beatlebum & Em were wrestling with Waldo, trying to get him to hurry up.

Where's Scruffy with the Xanax?

I unclench my hands long enough to find out the damages to my cameras. Just so you know, they can handle a 3 foot drop. I was shocked the lenses didn't crack, because you know that's how they both landed. *Wheeeew!*

I packed them back up and grabbed the disposable water-proof one. They had been through enough today.

Hey, wouldn't *this* be a good time for Brother & his wife to have a problem? 😊 Scuffy and Pigtails did too. Oh, good!

The kids had all taken off for Brother's van. DH & I were waiting, not caring anymore if they all killed each other, but *we* weren't the ones with the tickets, or the van. Commando Nikki came back, *in tears* pleading with me to do something.

I mooned her.

I did something.

What more *could* I do?

Scruffy was moving into Brothers room. NOW. Pigtails was heading home, NOW. Scruffy and Brother's wife had a fight. DH was looking at me with his eyes wide open, jerking his head to the side, trying to tell, me "Lets go."

But Lassie, I don't have the tickets or a van. Timmy can rot in the well.

I went to the van to check on the kids, and to try to calm down Commando Nikki, who was very close to having a heart attack. I headed back to the room to talk to Brother and met up with Pigtails in the hall.

"Hey, Hi, we about ready to go?" I smiled at her.

Pigtails wasn't smiling, she almost plowed over me.

Note to self: Stay away from Pigtails.

Brother was just standing outside his room while his crew was inside battling to the death. It was getting late! We were suppose to get there for 8:30 and it was almost 9:30. Scruffy was yelling that he wasn't going until...

Are you ready for this?

You sure?

He wasn't going until he washed his hair. At least that's what Brother translated for us. Brother was rolling his eyes, just chuckling on how ridiculous his crew and vacation had become.

Finally, it happened, Commando Nikki snapped. We should have seen it coming. Brother couldn't move fast enough. She jumped on his back and started pulling him back by the forehead. *"I said let's go, I mean let's go!"* Thankfully Brother took pity on the kid and didn't

kill her.

Brother & I thought maybe if we were all sitting in the van, they would come along. They did, 1/2 hour later. I felt so bad for the kids, but I knew once we ever did get there, it would be all good times.

Sure.

## **Part 18 Day 5, 10/6 Scuba Steve**

We are finally underway, I'm driving, brother's wife is sitting in the passenger seat. Everyone else is in the back enjoying the skin-to-skin contact. It was almost 10:30. The kids were disappointed, but Brother & DH were trying to cheer them up.

Brother's wife was mumbling something about killing herself. Was she looking for suggestions? I know that's a terrible thing to say, but at that moment, that's how I felt. Sorry. She knows Brother's first wife died that way, don't play those head-games.

By the time we pulled into Discovery Cove, I was ready to kill someone. This was the first time since Star taxi/Limo,(hissss bad) that I was this upset. We got out of the van, locked it and headed to the front door.

In the brochure for DC it says, "Leave your worries behind" I drove up with a vanload. I am so glad that when we walked into the lobby, the kids were so over-whelmed they had forgotten about everything else.

They were all immediately out of control, and all was right with the world again. Mother was pleased.

You have to have your picture taken in the lobby, then they make I.D. tags that you wear around your neck. Everyone except Brother's wife (and maybe Scruffy, it was hard to tell) made a silly face. Guess how long Em had hers?

A very happy lady came over and explained she was our tour guide. From the lobby she started walking backwards to different locations that were important to know. We stopped for the complementary family photo, and she continued to walk backwards through the park, showing us the gift shop (sorry Brother), cabanas, food court, smoking area, salt and fresh water tanks. She never looked behind her, not once. It was cool. When she was finished her tour, I had to ask her how long the backwards walking training took. Not long when you walk into enough trees, apparently.

We went to the area to choose either a wet suit or vest. I told DH that the water would be cold, so maybe he would be happier in a suit. I got all our girls and myself suits and we went into the changing rooms to get ready.

Em's didn't exactly fit very well. She got it on, but couldn't bring her arms forward (they were straight out, flung back) and Commando Nikki was trying to zip it up the back. I walked out of my dressing room and saw her nearly strangling the poor child. I told her the

suits come in different sizes, just get her a bigger one. One tiny little problem, we now have a child stuck in a suit. The 'going on' part was much easier than the 'coming off' part. Took all three of us to get her out. Commando Nikki holding Em, Beatlebum & I yanking on the suit.

\*pop\* she was free, and Commando Nikki ran out to get her another one.

Inside the dressing rooms they have full length mirrors. Why do they do that? I walked by it and

\*\*erkkk, hit the brakes!\*\*

A suit has interesting bulges and wrinkles. They are all in the wrong places. I don't think so.

I take the suit back off, and decided to get a vest instead. It was a wiser choice. I'm not afraid of a little cold water, I'm afraid of bulges and wrinkles in the wrong places.

So we are all ready to go, my girls and I, walking out of the dressing room singing our songs and there he was....

Scuba Steve.

I can't speak. I am immediately transformed from a wife and mother, into a giggling school girl. Was I really married to him?? Whoa!

"I feel like an idiot." DH says

I giggle.

"I look like an idiot, don't I?"

No you look like a god, but I am a giggling school girl and can't tell you that.

"I'm changing" Oh please don't! You are in the same category as the hot guys in kilts with electric guitars, the sweaty guy wearing a tool belt and the guy in a leather jacket on the back of a motorcycle.

"What's wrong with you , mom?" Commando Nikki asked.

"Del's a hottie." I tell her.

"Okay, well, that's just gross!" she says. That's your opinion, daughter.

DH was happy I found him beautiful and kept the suit on, Hooray! Brother came along and pronounced him, Scuba Steve. We were having a ball. We went down to the fresh water tanks and had a swim. The girls wanted to check out the fish so we went into the salt water tank, burrrr, and that's where we learned....

Scuba Steve is afraid of fish.

## Part 19, 10/6, day5, Brother MIA

Scuba Steve wont come in the water past his ankles. Scuba Steve is originally from a small town waaayy up north Maine, that is very landlocked. Scuba Steve will pass on fish touching him, thank you very much. Scuba Steve used to be in the 82nd Airbourne and will be happy to come in if I parachute from a plane first, without Xanax.

Okay, stand on the shore, but Brother's wife is coming up behind you.

Screaming.

For Brother.

Brother had made his great escape. Brother's wife can't and wont swim. He & Waldo were gone. Brilliant idea because everyone looks the same, face down, yellow suits or vests, snorkeling along. He could have warned the rest of us tho...

I think this is payback for the grasshopper incident.

After about 10 seconds of listening to Brothers wife scream from shore for Brother & Waldo, Scuba Steve decided the fish were a better bet.

He just didn't want anyone to know she was in our group.

Oh, later the entire park will know. This park and the rest of Florida. I'm not sure if we will be allowed back.

Beatlebum(14) was in her glory. You haven't heard much about her because she's shy and she is usually standing this close to me at all times, watching the action. This was her big day. I was so happy for her. She has said for about 3 years now that she wants to be a marine biologist when she grows up. This was the land of paradise for her.

quote:

---

Missing: Brother & Waldo. Last seen by Scuba Steve who is standing behind them in sunglasses.

---

DH would only come in up to his waist. The fish were still swimming too close to him, and he wasn't liking that one bit. Brother's wife was still screaming for Brother & Waldo. People were pointing, staring and whispering behind their hands. I saw them, yup.

DH wanted me to do something, but with the bathing suit and vest on, I couldn't moon him. Why does my family think I possess magic powers and can fix all these stupid problems? You do something, I told him, and he did.

He left.

Love ya, mean it.



So I am stuck with the screaming fool. I went back up to shore to find out what she needed. She needed to eat. That actually sounded like a pretty good idea to me.

Right behind the life guard stand they have a box. It contains life vests and those long, floaty, life-saving, stick things. I am not much of a swimmer, and I felt stupid wearing a life vest, so I grabbed a long, floaty, life-saving, stick thing and ventured out to find my crew, Brother, and Waldo. Brother's wife needed to eat, and sticking something in her mouth might get her to shut up.

Finding my crew was a piece of cake. Brother & Waldo were trickier, they were hiding out and saw me coming so they swam in another direction to avoid me, directly into Commando Nikki.

Ha-ha. Love ya, mean it.

We gathered together in the middle and I told Brother it was time to eat. He said "No, not going back there, I live here now." Waldo nodding his head in agreement. I told him it was *his* wife, not mine and it was time to go eat. I had him by the arm and was trying to drag him to shore and he...

took my long, floaty, life-saving, stick thing.

I started to sink.

Commando Nikki swam down, grabbed my arm, brought me back to the surface and told Brother "We need her! She has all the money!"

Oh, so the truth comes out! They don't wait for me because they can't go on without me, they wait for me because DH isn't allowed any cash! (I refer you back to the drivers license.) Nice family I have here.

I convinced Brother & Waldo to come to shore and eat with us. How? I threatened to call mom. I have a cell phone and am not afraid to use it. Surely mom would be on my side. So he, Waldo, Commando Nikki and I swam back to shore to eat and then....

Things got *really* weird.

## **Part 20, Day 5, 10/6, Joy to the crew**

Discovery Cove gives you lunch for free. For \$230. per person admission, I'm not convinced it's free, but it is very, very good. In case you have lost track, I have, we are a group of nine. My crew of five, Brother's crew of three and Scruffy. It's chow time.

We step into the commissary, and it is a huge buffet table that curves like a horseshoe. Always go left I remind my crew, that is what's recommended on the Dis. Left is for Disney, DC wants you to go right. We started out on the left, then some lady announced that is was empty over on the right, and our crews began to stampede that way. Pushing each other, swinging trays, skin-to-skin contact. Didn't see *that* coming did ya, lady?

"Ever feed these people?" Brother asked me while we stood back at a safe distance, watching them. Not if I can help it, I have Pizza Hut on speed dial.

Brother joined back up with his wife, I joined my crew. Commando Nikki (17), Beatlebum(14) and Em(6) all had a main course and two desserts. "The lady said a main course and two sides, and desserts are sides." Beatlebum told me. Fine, whatever, your on vacation, have at it.

We walked out to find a place to sit. Waldo already had a table and was trying to get us to sit down. It was a table for four people, I don't know how he thought nine of us would fit. Brother, his wife, Scruffy and Waldo all unloaded their trays and sat down. DH said No way, and found us a table for five. Waaaaay over there, around the corner, away from Brother's crew. DH felt badly for abandoning Brother, but he had enough of Brother's wife.

We unload our trays, sit down and begin to enjoy our meals, and around the corner comes, Brother and his crew.

Carrying their food in their hands.

Where are the trays?

Why are *YOU* people smiling?



The sit at the table right next to us, Waldo tried to drag it closer but DH piped up and told him that it wouldn't be necessary. Brother and his wife were both smiling. It was the first time I had seen that, and it was freaking me out some. I looked at Brother, who is still grinning and he winks at me. Hummm, something's up.

DH then knocks over Ems drink into her lap. Not wanting to be outdone, Waldo knocks over his drink into Brother's wife's lap. They really were both accidents, but it was funny that Brother & I each had someone at our table screaming about getting wet.

Uh, didn't you both just get out of the water, and aren't you both wearing wetsuits?

A very nice man came right over to clean up our messes and Brother proudly explained to him that we conducted underwater durability tests and he would be happy to know that the tables both passed.

The man was not amused.

Beatlebum and Commando Nikki decided it would be funny to bet Brother he wouldn't eat a spoonful of Guacamole. (The green stuff, not a squashed up duck). Brother looked at the spoon and acted like he was afraid. He told him if did do it, they would have to stand up in front of everybody and sing "I'm a little teapot" (there was a table of cute boys, right over there) and if he didn't do it, he would get up and sing. Gee, this would be a good time to have a whistle, wouldn't it?

I tried to warn them, I really did. Do they think I just *met* Brother?

So they lost and per agreement with Brother, I am displaying for my 55,000 closest DIS friends the photo I took. Can you see that Em is they only one enjoying this? The cute boys are behind the man walking.

How do you like me now? Love ya, mean it.

So, we continue to eat, Brother & his wife continue to smile and I can't take anymore.

"Brother, can I have a word with you behind my hand please?" We lean over and I asked Brother what all the smiling was about. "She asked me for a divorce" He tells me.

Hooray!

## **Part 21 Day5, 10/6 Watch your head**

The longest relationship you will have is not with your children, parents, or spouses, it's with your siblings. They are the only ones that are there from your birth to your death. Brother is one of the greatest people I know, he can make anyone laugh and be his friend. He is also one of the funniest people I have ever met, and my kids call him "Uncle Funny". Brother has lived through a lot of hard times and he is MY super-hero. When our father was alive he took Brother & I went to Disney 14 times back when the MK was the only park there. This was our first trip together since the other parks opened. It was our "homecoming".

His wife was sucking the life out of it.

From the time they met, until this day they knew each other a total of eight months. Yeah, time to get away from each other. They don't even seem to like each other.

Brothers little announcement surprised me for about a minute and a half. He was trying so hard to please her, but nothing did.

We finished up lunch, Brother, DH & I went to the smoking area to have a cigarette. I had a seat, told DH that the cigarettes were in the locker and gave him the key.

Hand to God, sometimes I think I married Jim Carrey circa Ace Ventura.

DH went to the locker, and a second later he was running back to Brother and I, hands in the air waving over his head shaped like claws, taking gigantic hop-steps. There was some kind of guy language exchange that *I* totally missed, because Brother grabbed the back of my chair and tipped me backwards **\*\*screech!!\*\*** dangerously close to the ground. I wrapped my legs around the legs of the chair and was holding on for dear life. It was after all, a six inch drop. I could have suffered a disfiguring bump to the head.

Brother bent over me holding the chair and stuck his finger in my face. "You have been previously warned!" He bellowed.

*Don't drop me! What did I do?*

"This is your final warning, understand?" He continued.

*Okay, I'll never do it again, just don't drop me!*

Brother put me back where I belong, DH was wiggling around with the *hee-bee gee-bees*. I was trying to recover from my near death experience of a six inch drop to the ground and the risk of a disfiguring bump to the head. What just happened?

There was a tampon in the locker.

For the love of God guys, when you travel with 3 girls over the age of twelve, that's the chance you take, deal with it.

We had some time to kill and Em wanted to swim some more. That kid is part fish. Beatlebum & Commando Nikki wanted to check out the bird aviary, so I told them to head down, I'd be right behind them. DH & I said our "love ya, mean its" and parted ways. When I walked into the aviary Commando Nikki had a bird sitting on her head, trying to make a nest out of her braids. She was chanting "Please don't poop, nice bird, please don't poop." All the birds were very friendly, they kept landing on us, except the Toucan. I went over and *looked* at the Toucan, but I was too chicken to put my hand near it.

Get it? Bird aviary, I was chicken? HA! I crack me up.

Good thing, because some guy DID put his hand near it and it snapped at him. His bill made a loud clap sound, like a knife hitting a cutting board.

Note to self: Avoid Pigtails *and* the Toucan.

Can't you just see the happiness in her eyes?

Our Dolphin swim time was coming around and we gathered the crew into our cabana. They put you into groups of eight, Waldo went with us and two very nice, but Band-Aid covered people. (From here on out to be known as "the Band-Aids, Mr. & Mrs.") Brother, his wife and Scruffy went with 5 other people. We watched a movie about dolphins and what to do or not do. Em (6) kept falling asleep. DH kept shaking her. She would sit up, open her eyes real wide for a second and fall back to sleep. She was a pooped little kid.

I think everyone in that room could feel Beatlebums (14) excitement. It was busting out of her face. I have never seen her more alive. This was a moment she waited for her entire life and when I told her we were taking her, she broke down in sobbing tears. When I looked over at her, she was sitting on the edge of her seat leaning forward and I could tell she was trying to memorize and absorb *everything* the woman said. She was enjoying every second. The expression in her eyes is something I will never forget.

It was a very happy day.

For Beatlebum at least.

## **Part 22, Day 5, 10/6 Swimming lessons**

Brother had been playing in the water with the girls. His wife stood on the shore, watching him. Brother was having *fun*, the girls jumping on him trying to drown him. His wife was about to put an end to that.

As we went into the cabanas to watch our film, she decided they could work things out after all. The smiling came to a screeching halt for both parties.

Oh, ah, good. Glad to hear it?

Just to clarify, Waldo (18) & Scruffy(31) are his wife's(48) kids. Brother(35) met Waldo first and they hit it off. Waldo wanted to keep Brother forever, he loved him so much, so he introduced them.

We now believe Waldo simply wanted protection.

We all wanted protection, later.

Waldo came with our crew, along with Mr. & Mrs. Band-Aids. We had to squat down shoulder-to-shoulder in about 3 feet of freezing, ninnie-hardening water. DH looked down and spoke to himself, uh, down there.. "Look out boys, here we go."

Now, skin-to-skin contact with your family members is one thing, you know about skin-to-skin contact , when you are too close to someone else's sweaty, sticky, clammy skin and when you pull apart, it sort of sticks together.

Ugg, do it with someone who has an odd odor and multiple Band-Aids.

Front to back of the line up was Waldo, Commando Nikki, Beetlebum, Em, DH, me, Mrs. & Mr. Band-Aids. Mrs. Band-Aids was squishing up against me hard, apparently having never been informed of the no skin-to-skin contact rules. I asked DH to please trade places with me.

He did, for a second and a half.

Scuba Steve doesn't like fish *or* Band-Aids touching him. He squat-swam to the front of the line up to get as far away from Mrs. Band-Aids as he could. Ew-ew-ew.

Love ya, mean it.

We let Mr. & Mrs. Band-Aids go first.

She had left a Band-Aid imprint on my shoulder. *Thanks, bunches!*

Next was DH & myself. It hadn't occurred to me until just that second that we had to swim from 3 feet of ninnie-hardening water into 30 feet of it.

Anyone seen my long, floaty, life-saving, stick thing? Sure could use it about now.

DH told me to keep one hand on his shoulder and he would make sure I didn't drown. Part of me believes he didn't want me to drown because he wasn't sure where his license was, and he isn't allowed any money or tickets.

But again I am transformed into giggling school girl. *I'm touching Scuba Steve! I'm touching Scuba Steve!*

I don't know what got into me, okay? I *HAVE* seen this guy naked.

So we get about half way out, I'm drinking most of the water on the way, *Oh God, just HOW many people and dolphins peed in here today?* and the lady waiting for us in the middle notices I am, in fact, drowning. Love ya hon', mean it. Really, I do. Can't you feel me digging into your flesh? She swims to us and said "Can't swim?"

Oh, of course I can swim, I was just very, very thirsty.

I can swim, but this is the most accurate way to test the salt-level content of the tank.

You're a lifeguard, do I *look* like I am swimming to you?

If I could swim, *why* wouldn't I? Wouldn't *this* be a good time to do such a thing?

Now having to put my life into this ladies hands, *literally*, I kept my sarcastic remarks to myself. She took my hand and PULLED me out to where we belonged and in doing so I swallowed a gallon and a half of people/dolphin peed-in water.

Lesson one on how to swim: Shut your mouth.

We were floating in the middle, okay, *THEY* were floating, I was hanging on for dear life. "Jenny" our dolphin swam right up next to us. This is where I quickly discovered that the video tape and lesson in the cabana earlier *was* important need-to-know information. They told us to watch out for that powerful tail. No matter what, stay out of the way of it's powerful tail.

Lesson two on how to swim: People who *CAN* swim aren't sticking their legs STRAIGHT out to the sides.

For some reason, I cannot explain, my legs were sticking straight out to the sides and I got clobbered by Jenny's tail. I can imagine this is what it is like to be hit by a 50lb. bag of cement. I think Jenny was just as surprised as me.

Lesson three on how to swim: People who *CAN* swim, don't want you to come along and try to wrap your legs around them.

The two swimming people had decided that the drowner had to go. That sounded pretty good to me, until I thought about it for a minute. Would Jenny really care if I drown on the way back in? Is it possible that Jenny was *mad* at me for having my legs sticking straight

out to the side?

Talk about being in over your head.

I was instructed to put one hand on Jenny's dorsal fin and the other on her, *wait..*

If the one her back is a dorsal fin, what's the one on her side called?

Lesson four on how to swim: If you are going to have to replace your long, floaty, life-saving, stick thing with a wild animal, pay closer attention to the video tape.

So, I held on to Jenny's dorsal fin and the *mystery* fin sticking out of her side.

Now, already, I had forgotten lesson one on how to swim: Shut your mouth. I had another gallon or so of dolphin/people peed water and...

*Me and Jenny were outta there.*

One small detail, I *still* don't know where to put my legs.

The velocity that Jenny was traveling was sucking my legs under her tail. Jenny beat the heck out of me all the way back. *See! I knew she was mad at me.*

Hey Jenny! Love ya, mean it!

When we arrived back to the safer 3 feet of water, Em dropped a fish in Jenny's mouth and she zipped right back out to DH and the life-saving lady.

I missed seeing his ride, I was watching Beatlebum.

She never took her eyes off Jenny.

I was about to witness a dream come true for my baby.

## **Part 23, Day 5 10/6 Beatlebum's dolphin**

Hind-sight really *is* 20-20. It hadn't occurred to me that I could have stayed in the 3 feet of water, and let Beatlebum take MY turn. As much as I did enjoy it, even with Jenny beating me up all the way back to shore, it would have met *much* more to her. It's the only regret I have.

Looks like we will have to take another trip.

Beatlebum didn't want to go next. No, if she went next, then it would be over, and she didn't want that to happen. She wanted to go with Jenny last.

She never took her eyes off Jenny.

If Jenny submerged, Beatlebum would immediately put her ear in the water and listen for Jenny's "voice" always keeping one eye out for Jenny to surface.

Jenny came over to Beatlebum, brought her head out of the water and "chuckled" at her. Yeah, they connected.

Em and Commando Nikki swam out to the life-saving lady.

Discovery Coves rules are that you must be at least 6 yrs. old to participate in the dolphin swim. Good rule. A much smaller child would have drown.

Em had her swim, came to shore and rewarded Jenny for her hard work.

Commando Nikki had her swim and Jenny hammed it up for the camera.

Finally it was Waldo and Beatlebums turn. Beatlebum is a great swimmer, I never realized she was such a *fast* swimmer. Once she was given the okay to go out to the life-saving lady, she was gone.

She would get to actually talk to the lady about dolphins! She had to get out there.

Was Discovery Cove worth the money? You tell me.

Look at the faces on Em and Beatlebum. In this line up it is DH, Em, Waldo, (hey Waldo!), Commando Nikki, Beatlebum, and me.

Also notice the disturbed look on Scuba Steve. This is the look of a man who just got a face full of "blow hole" water.

Once everyone had their swim, Jenny and her friends preformed a series of breathtaking jumps and flips. It was spectacular. Beatlebum was the first to notice the baby dolphin who had come out to join in the playtime. She never took her eyes off the dolphins, I never took my eyes off her.

I have heard of "perfect" days. This so far was one. We were all so happy, everything was so great. Beatlebum was BEAMING. The very nice people of Discovery Cove knew that our crews were in 2 different groups. They *didn't* have to do what they did next, I see it as a random act of kindness. Too bad Brothers wife couldn't see that.

Just as we started to leave the water, Commando Nikki dragging Beatlebum, one of the lifeguards stood on shore yelling for our two crews to come back into the water. They were allowing us some more time with the dolphins, more touching and rubbing, and a chance for



more photos. They were going out of their way to make us happy, and of course to sell more photos. Beatlebum was ecstatic. She did a happy hop and was smiling so much her eyes glowed. I thought she would float away on her happy cloud.

I think Disney alerted them I was on my way. *Yeah, Hi, DC this is Disney, Delswife is on her way, and if you take pictures of her kids she will buy them, what's that? No, doesn't matter if Mr. & Mrs. Band-Aids are in it, she knows how to use Photoshop.*

Everyone was all smiles, very surprised that we were going to get to go back in, no charge, have a great time.

Everyone except Brother's wife.

Brother's wife was stomping her way, fist clenched full speed up the shore. She was on fire.

This is the last photo of us before all heck broke loose.

## **Part 24, Day 5 10/6 Reading lessons**

Beatlebum bolted for that water. She was a little blond streak. The rest of our crews were right behind her, Brother & I still standing on the shore watching his wife, fist clenched, feet stomping headed back to shore.

Oh, good ANOTHER problem.

Brother, myself and the lifeguard were calling her name, telling her to come back, the dolphins were waiting.

She never turned around. She continued to stomp up to the pathway.

Poor Brother.

Brother let out a big sigh, and we walked back to the water to play with the dolphins a little longer. DC really came through on this one, allowing our families this extra time to enjoy our once in a lifetime experience.

When I first read the price of admission, I was a little leery of doing it.

After the way we were treated, and the way they spent extra time with the kids letting them play with the dolphins for that few more minutes while people were waiting on the shore...

I would have paid double.

But don't tell them that.

Shhhhh.

Our crews gathered around and had a few more photos taken, gave Jenny another quick

kiss and we headed back to shore.

The girls were going to the salt water tank to snorkel.

*Thank you God, for not letting them be around when the bubble burst on our perfect day. Amen.*

Brother was going to go look for his wife. DH & I were following a very nice DC lady, she wanted to show us the photos they had taken. If she had been walking backwards, as they are trained to do, she would have seen the *other* very nice DC lady when she came running over and grabbed my arm.

She was *apologizing* like a mad woman.



She shocked me, I could even imagine why she was apologizing. She **had** to have me mistaken with another family. She obviously wasn't out there, she had missed Beatlebums moment. In my shock, I missed half of what she was saying.

"I will take you to guest services right now, and we will do what we can to rectify the situation."

We had a situation?

*Who* had a situation?

Lady, have you been in Scruffys Xanax?

She saw the confusion on my face and asked me if I was with *her* and pointed over to Brothers wife who was standing up on the pathway, tearing someone a 'new one'.

"Nope" DH said "Have no idea who that is."

I was standing there with my mouth open. People were gathering around, listening to Brothers wife raging about DC being a rip-off, she was going to sue, on and on she went.

*Again, Thank you God, for not letting the girls be around for this. They would have been humiliated.*

It's one thing to act silly in a public place. My crew is willing to embarrass themselves if they think one person will walk away, giggling.

It is quite another thing to scream like a crazy person at people who have gone above and beyond to make you happy.

Brother came over to me and asked me where the keys were to the van. I could tell he wanted the earth to swallow him whole.

"What is that all about?" I asked poor Brother.

"She thought she was getting 1/2 hour of exclusive dolphin time. She's mad that she had to

watch the video, and that she was in a group with other people." He told me.

Why, why, why did she think that? Did she read the lovely full color brochure they sent? It explained the entire experience in full detail, the only thing they had left out was the backwards walking and the special time that they gave our kids.

"Yes, the parts she *wanted* to read. '1/2 hour.....dolphin swim'".



DH likes to act silly, DH likes to make people laugh. DH has no problem with public displays of foolishness. DH was dealing with the very nice apologizing DC lady. DH wanted the earth to swallow him too.

She continued to rage on, pacing back and forth, hands flying in the air. More people gathered. More DC people came over and apologized. They were apologizing to DH, Brother and myself because I think they were afraid of the screaming crazy lady on the pathway.

Chickens belong in the aviary. Beware of the Toucan.

Brother, DH & I make our great escape to the locker to find the keys to the van. They were leaving for Tennessee. I was glad, but I was brokenhearted for Brother, who didn't deserve any of this. Our homecoming was over. We turned the corner of the lockers and...

Hey, look, it's Waldo!

That's were Waldo was hiding.

Poor Waldo. Waldo is a proper, polite, southern gentleman. He is such a sweet guy. When he was with us on our little adventures, he would offer to carry Commando Nikki and Beatlebums bags. They would say no, he would continue to offer until Commando Nikki stopped and yelled at him "Why are you always trying to take my stuff?" Commando Nikki hadn't met to many proper, polite, southern gentlemen.

Brothers wife continued to rage up and down the pathway. People continued to gather and stare. She couldn't find us at the locker.

DH kept his back turned while I searched everything in our locker in case a tampon made an unscheduled appearance. No keys.

I drove, I remembered locking the van, but I was upset about how bad the day started. Where were the keys?

Brothers wife was getting hotter.

I was panicking because I couldn't find the keys.

I was trying to comfort myself thinking that this couldn't get worse. It couldn't right?

Then my cell phone rang.

"Mom, your going to KILL me....."

## Part 25 Day 5, 10/6 Tears of a idiot

They had to pick me up off the floor. The last thing I remember is the swirling yellow birds and the tunnel with the white light.

"WHAT did you just say to me?" I asked my son through clenched teeth.

"The officer clocked me at 112 mph but only wrote the ticket for 103 mph." He told me.

The last thing Brother & DH told DS was don't speed in Georgia. You'll end up on the chain gang, they told him. As I repeated what DS said to DH & Brother, who were completely shocked, they said "Okay, but it wasn't in Georgia, right?"

It was in Georgia.

Of course it was in Georgia, why in the heck wouldn't it be in Georgia?

I don't think either of them ever imagined DS would *try* to drive that fast.

Thanks a lot Richard Petty, Love ya, mean it.

I managed to ask him if he was in jail, but he wasn't. He was more concerned with the fact that the ticket was almost \$700. I started to rant and rave about how he could have been killed or he could have killed someone else. *For Gods sake! I used to be an EMT, I've told you the horror stories!* I still didn't understand why he is not in jail, why is he trying to get himself killed, or trying to kill me, and I was heading for a meltdown. But not yet.

Brothers wife was still flipping out.

DC isn't big enough for two crazy people.

I needed to wait my turn.

By the way, uh, who is watching the girls?

*Scuba Steve & Delswife, parents of the year.*

I told my son I was dealing with yet another Brothers wife problem and he had enough experience to know what I was talking about. We said our "love ya, mean its, but I am not done dealing with you yet, get in line" and hung up.

Brother & I concluded that I did not have the stupid keys.

I offered him a tampon.

I was at my limits of what I could do.

Brother left to see if his wife had the keys without the tampon. Brave, brave Brother. That was the last I saw of him. We didn't even get to say goodbye.

DH & I stopped to have a cigarette. It had never tasted better. We remembered, oh yeah, we still had kids *somewhere*, and went looking for our girls.

*Scuba Steve & Delswife, parents of the year.*

We played in the water with the girls for a little while, when Em decided to climb out, on the rocks. The *forbidden* rocks. Stay off *those* rocks.

Em sure wishes she did.

The lifeguard yelled "Get that little BOY off the rocks!"

Em looked around for the little boy. She was super P-O'ed to find out SHE was the little boy.

Do you think my crew let her live that one down? She became the little boy who loved Chuck & Dave.

DH & I headed back up to get something to drink. I was still a little full from drinking all the dolphin/people peed-in water, but I wanted to call my mom anyway, so I joined him.

Mom brought me back to reality, because she is so very good at that.

"So, how are you guys getting back to Disney?"

Hum, hadn't thought about that yet. We *did* just lose our ride. I had no clue about transportation from DC to Disney, and had no access to the Dis. I could be in trouble here.

"How much money do you have on you?"

14., 15., 16., 16 dollars. Anyone want a Pepsi?

I had a debt card, with a nice little amount of Georges on it, there must have been someone around here that cared about that. I just hadn't withdrawn anything because of that mornings fun and excitement.

While I was on the phone to mom, filing her in on EVERYTHING and her telling me that someday, I would be able to look back and laugh, a very nice DC lady was heading straight at us.

*Please, please, please don't apologize to us, we can't take anymore.*

"I was looking everywhere for you, would you like to see your photos?" Oh! This was the lady we were originally following, who doesn't backwards walk and had missed everything. I wondered how far she had walked talking to herself.

"Do we want to see our photos? Is a frogs bum water tight?" DH jumped up and said.

The scary thing is this lady works at DC and had to think about it.

Guess they don't have frogs.

I followed the very nice DC lady into a cabana with computers. DH's ran off to find the girls and send them to the changing rooms for showers. Cathy was our photographer and began to show me the price list and our photos.

Cathy apologized to me for the problems earlier.

That my friends, was the icing on the cake.

I started to cry.

Cathy started to cry.

Mr. & Mrs. Band-Aids started to cry.

I completely and totally unloaded on Cathy. I told her everything. She never saw that coming. I told her I wished they would please, stop apologizing to me. I told her that she was there, didn't she see Beatlebum? She was taking the pictures, didn't she know it wasn't us?

She saw Beatlebum. She knew it wasn't us.

She hugged me. Cathy was my newest best friend.

If we weren't at DC I would have sworn someone just threw pixie dust on me.

It gets better.

I bought a disgusting amount of photos from Cathy, she is really a very talented photographer, if you can get her, do it. I also bought the video, because Beatlebums big day was on it.

I went to the women's changing room and had the longest shower since our arrival. Commando Nikki was no where to be found with her stupid whistle. She & the other two were suppose to be.

I went to the front where you pick up your photos and they showed me a preview of what I had bought. DH had collected the girls and met me there. Not at the changing room where I had told him, but that's fine, failure to communicate, I guess.

Standing there with Commando Nikki looking at the photos to make sure it was indeed my family, I got all choked up.

Had it been *anyone* else, I am sure they would have seen this moment as something special.

I was the one traveling with the crazy lady.

There was a panic.

There was more apologizing.

There were fine gifts and prizes.

I received several free DC screensavers.

I swear there was pixie dust again.

Turned out to be a pretty good day after all.

Until the ATM machine tried to EAT my debit card.

And Brother called.

## **Part 26 Day 5, 10/6 Oops! Pardon me!**

We had been abandoned. I had sixteen dollars in my pocket and no idea how we were going to get back to Disney. The girls had been briefed by DH, there could be a chance that all the walking we had done so far, was going to be small potatoes.

Commando Nikki and Beatlebum were too busy doing the "happy dance" because brother's wife had left the building, they didn't know or care why.

Em was still ticked that she was mistaken for a boy.

DH was very useful in finding an ATM machine. He, however, would have no part of using one. DH doesn't even write checks, they feel too much like permission slips to him. *Yes, heres a note from my wife saying I can buy something, I really, really do have some money. I am just not allowed to HANDLE money. Could I buy something please?* It cash or nothing with him.

I put my ATM card into the slot and it was immediately sucked up. I pushed the buttons, but they didn't move. I hit the okay button, thinking that it would spit my card back out. The machine sounded an *alarmingly* loud beep, notifying everyone in the immediate area that there was a problem.

Commando Nikki's whistle had nothing on this sound.

Oh, good, not enough people have paid attention to *me* today.

A very nice DC lady (walking forward) came over and I threw myself against the ATM machine, trying to get it to shut it up. She informed me the machine was broken and if I just wait, it would time out and I would get my card back.

Why didn't they have a sign on the machine saying it was broken?

Did they feel the need to subject me to further public displays?

She was right, it timed out and I got my card back.

I am never sticking my card into another machine, EVER.

I should have known it was time for me to set off an alarm.

I walked back over to the crew, Beatlebum and Commado Nikki are giggling about something. They were talking about me, giggling behind their hands, pointing at me. I'm thinking they have just gotten a kick out of mom throwing herself against the screaming alarm sounding ATM machine.

Nope. That wasn't it.

Back when we were in the water with Jenny, they had us line up next to her for a family photo. They told us to put one hand on Jenny's back. I had no problem with that.

However..

I was in the back near Jenny's tail. I was still pretty traumatized from the beating I had received earlier I guess, because for some reason I put my other hand *under* her tail.

Do you know where I am going with this?

That's right, I, Delswife, put my other hand directly on the part of Jenny, that makes 'her' Jenny.

I jerked my hand away and apologized to Jenny for the violation. Beatlebum had heard me and was updating Commando Nikki. She must have simply forgotten the part where I said it was a secret.

How many of you can say you have touch a dolphin..uh..there?

I plan on setting fire to my hand as soon as I finish my trip report.

Now, we are in a pickle that I hadn't planned on. Commando Nikki was starting to get jumpy because DC was closing and we had to get back to her first love, Disney. She knew that the world showcase in Epcot would still be open by the time we got back there, and she wasn't going to wait any longer. She demanded to know what the hold up was.

"I have sixteen dollars in my pocket, how far do you think that's going to take us?" I told her, with my hands on my hips.

Beatlebum whipped into action and produced \$40 from her bag.

I sprung back in shock.

You could have saved us a ton of time if you had done that earlier little girl.

We started to go back out to the lobby, when we were stopped by yet another very nice DC lady.

She wanted to know if we had picked up our complementary family photo from this morning.

Why no, we hadn't.



She took us to the front desk and gave them our name. A look of fear came over the person behind the counter.

Then the apologizing began again. "We are so sorry, so very sorry" DH & I just rolled our eyes. "But the angry lady you were with picked up the photo."

Huh?

She stopped by for the free photo?

This was a memory she wanted to cherish?

By the time DH & I got off the floor and were finished laughing Commando Nikki had us a cab at the front door.

We said our good-byes to DC and climbed in the cab, Beatlebum was still beaming from her big day.

We went directly to Epcot from DC. As much excitement as we had had at DC, it felt good to be home.

I missed Brothers phone call, it went directly to my voice mail. I noticed it in Norway.

## **Part 27 Day5 10/6 Strollers and sunburns**

One very important thing for any traveler to remember is if you are going to rely on taxi cabs as a mode of transportation it is very important to make friends with the driver. This is the person who holds the fate of you and your family for the next several miles.

He needs to become your new best friend.

I had no Xanax and had no clue where Scruffy was.

We always make friends with the cab drivers, I never knew some people just get in the cabs and quietly travel to their destination. He seemed a bit nervous that we were chatting so much with him. Our driver was a very nice man with a heavy accent.

I realize I just described many, many cab drivers.

The heavy accented cab driver brought us to the gate of Epcot in a matter of a few minutes for the bargain price of \$22. I handed him \$30, and he told me I gave him too much money.

This was my first and only encounter in the state of Florida where anyone ever tried to give me money back.

He doesn't work for that bad company, you remember the bad company, right? (psss...Star

limo/taxi)

I explained to the very nice cab driver with the heavy accent that it was a tip. I paid for a lot of my vacation with tips and I am a very good tipper in return.

Apparently, tipping is a small town in china to some people.

We were laughing, singing, having a ball and gathered at the turnstiles for our usual routine of ticket exchange when I noticed Em.

Em was still ticked for being mistaken for a boy.

But Em was walking very bowlegged. Big smile on her face, swinging her arms, singing "Hakuna Matata" (sp?) but keeping her feet as far apart as she could. I stopped her to see what the problem was.

"I have a wrash." She calmly says.

This child obviously had no sense of pain. She had more than a rash, the skin between her thighs was completely raw. I was thinking that we should go back to the room and see what could be done about it, but Em wasn't leaving and I really needed *HER* there to solve the problem.

The little boy that loved Chuck & Dave was become a true Disney Commando. By the time she's her sisters age she could easily be Master Gunnery Sargent.

Commando Nikki has the great idea of getting her a stroller to ride around in so the "wrash" doesn't get worse. (I never thought of going to First Aid, not once.)

This was the day I had a whole new respect for people who must push a stroller or wheelchair around Disney. I earn my living from being a driver, you would think a stroller would be a piece of cake.

It's not.

I bloodied some people that day.

We went into the "golf ball" first where we were quickly educated about the 'stroller parking lot'. CM's don't want you to try to stuff the stroller in the ride seat with you. They get 'funny' about it.

We began our journey through the history of communications and I sat back, prepared to enjoy a bit of a rest and some air conditioning.

But it was hot in there and getting hotter.

We get pretty close to the top of the ride, just before the seat turned around and the ride came to a complete stop.

We were getting sweaty.

We were told to remain in the seats that the ride would begin again soon. DH & I were behind the girls who were having trouble maintaining the no skin-to-skin contact rules.

By the time we emerged from the golf ball we had stopped three times. We were all a sticky sweaty mess. This is also the point that I realized...

We all have sunburns.

That is why it was so darned hot in there.

Sunburns to my crew are weapons.

We had forgotten about the stroller, because the 'stroller parking lot' isn't anywhere near the exit. Em had to walk a few bowlegged feet before we remembered.

Tough kid.

DH ran back to collect the stroller when Commando Nikki and Beatlebum had an altercation of some kind, Commando Nikki touched Beatlebum sunburned shoulder and said "Love ya, mean it."

See, a *fun* new weapon.

We wanted to go on Test Track to test the degree of sunburns we had, but the line was out the door and they weren't giving fast passes.

Norway was looking pretty good. Not because of the beautiful people there, but because of the beautiful desserts they sell there.

Our crew thought eating around the world sounded like a fun thing to do, so we stopped in Norway first for our beautiful desserts.

On the way, I took out three innocent bystanders with the stroller.

It has been *years* since I personally pushed a stroller. I have become accustomed to things with motors and *brakes*. Whenever I had to stop short because the one-zillionth person walked in front of me, I nearly went over the top of it.

There were a lot of "Love ya, mean its"

We arrived at the beautiful dessert store in Norway and I thought the stroller would fit seeing where there was no stroller parking lot near by.

It didn't.

I got the stroller and Em stuck sideways in the isle.

Commando Nikki was acting very strange, hiding behind her hand, looking everywhere except where Em & I were trapped. I asked her several times to help me out, but she wouldn't acknowledge me at all. *What's wrong with you?*

Em bailed on me. She took off in a bowlegged run to the display case.

I was on my own, still trapped.

DH came to my rescue, un-wedged me and the stroller from the isle where several people had started to 'bunch up'. He took the stroller away from me, the wisest thing he had done to date.

Commando Nikki was still acting very strange. She had ordered a beautiful strawberry tart thing and another lady came along and took it from her. Just walked in the shop and took it right out of her hand. Normally Commando Nikki isn't one to back down from someone, especially someone who took away her beautiful strawberry tart thing. But she just giggled and looked at the floor.

Normally I would have spoken up to this lady, however, she had two really wild kids in tow and I felt sorry for her. She had enough to deal with.

I paid for all our beautiful desserts and told them we needed them to go. Everyone except Commando Nikki had a lid. I told her to go back in and ask for a lid.

"No." she said

"Why?" I asked

"Can't" she said

"Why?" I asked again. *We can do this all night, love*

She looked at her feet. Her sister, Beatlebum cleared it up for us. "Because of the cute boy in there."

The beautiful Norway boy has now replaced the hot guys in kilts with electric guitars over in Canada.

The World Showcase is for teens after all.

We continued to Japan to the "Yucky-tori" house. It sounded like a good idea at the time, but the only thing we could eat was the rice. I got DS saki.

He has never had saki before.

He didn't like it, or so he said. I never saw him take a drink of it, he seems pretty concerned because it was a hot drink and all he kept doing was smelling it. I took it way from him and *I DONT KNOW WHY* sat it in front of Beatlebum.

She didn't want it either.

We threw out the rest of our meal, because it was really yucky. "That's why it's called the Yucki-tori house" Em explained to me. I know she is still baffled by why we would deliberately go to a place that tells you right up front that it's 'yucky.'

We settled down on the ground in front of America to watch Illuminations and eat our beautiful desserts. I was sad Brother was missing it. I was a mix of emotions, I wanted to get away from *her* but she took Brother with her. DH knew how upset I was, and put his arm on my shoulder.

Right on my sunburn.

Love ya, mean it, Don't touch me.

As the fireworks started and the kids jumped up to watch, I happened to look at my cell phone for the time.

That is when I noticed I had a message.

It was Brother.

I wanted to cry a little, I missed him and was sorry he had to go back to Tennessee.

"Hello, Sister, it is Brother. We have decided to try to stick it out for another day and see how it goes. I thought I'd let you also know that...."

The battery went dead on my cell.

## **Part 28, Day 5, 10/6 Brother's back**

I could have thrown my phone into the lagoon. I didn't know what Brother had to say, I was hoping it was something along the lines of

"It's just me and Waldo now. Lost Scruffy somewhere and the wife left with Pigtails."

It was wishful thinking. She doesn't let him go far on that leash.

We all loved Brother so much, and felt so bad for him that the vacation he waited a year for was going to be spent standing around in waiting gift-shops, not riding rides, seeing fireworks or shows with someone who may or not be slightly mentally unstable.

*Wait we KNOW she's mentally unstable, saw it first hand.*

The way I try to handle my vacation problems is to find humor in it. When Brothers wife was acting like a insane lunatic at DC and pacing up and down the pathway, when she got close to me, I silly-hopped and said "*whoopies-do*" to the side to get out of the way into DH's arms for protection.

She didn't think it was funny, but Scuba Steve did.

I looked at it this way, there were only a couple things that really made me mad so far on this trip, but this was my vacation that I have looked forward to for a long time and NOBODY for any reason was going to take it away from me.

Come on, this is the happiest place on earth. People *worldwide* know that.

When Brother and I were kids, our father brought us to Disney twice a year, every year until he died.

This is the only place we can visit him.

This is where I *know* my kids will visit me when I die.

I will not leave behind "ugly" memories for them.

If my girls had seen how she was acting at DC, I probably would have come *unglued*.

They didn't. Their day so far went by unblemished.

And we were watching Illuminations *together*.

Somebody also gave me back that stupid stroller. Em was standing near the fence and it had no weight in it, so when I leaned back on it I went flying backwards causing to fling my hands wildly in the air over my head, which wouldn't helped me in anyway if I had fallen on my butt.

What were my hands *thinking* anyway?

Great, glad I found another creative way to get people to pay attention to *me* today.

Can never get enough of that.

Someone was faced with having to tell DH the BIG news. So I distracted him with a beer. DH rarely drinks so this was a happy surprise for him. He even did a little jiggy dance when I handed it to him. I told him that Brother hadn't left but there was something that he wanted to tell me, but my stinking phone went dead so we had to get back, quick, as soon as Illuminations ended.

Quick is for someone who *hasn't* rented a stroller.

Quick is for someone who *isn't* traveling with a 75lb. child with a 'wrash'.

I did my best at dodging and weaving people when it was time to go. Stroller pushing is really walk two steps, stop, walk two steps, stop, walk two steps and hit that guy in the ankle. He swears at you, walk two steps.....Band-Aid sales increased. I had to give it up in Mexico. I decided it was better to let this horde of stroller-cutting off people go out first. We caught up on our people watching, observing mostly the black belt stroller pushers. Those are the people with *experience* and we were taking notes. These people believe that putting their child in that thing will make it faster to get around the park. I was thinking it would be faster to buy a blanket in Mexico and drag her around behind me.

Well, it WOULD be.

We returned the stroller to the 'stroller parking garage' and I received a fine prize that I didn't expect.

One Disney dollar.

Beatlebum & Em had never seen one. They gathered around to admire this lovely parting gift. They could get over the fact that it was special Disney money.

You'd have thought the lady handed me a brand new car. There were some 'joy tears'.

We went to the busses with a now *angry* 75lb. child with a 'wrash' because we weren't going on the monorail. Commando Nikki was demanding what our plans were for the next day so she could get us moving. Beatlebum was admiring her new 'dollar'.

When we got to POR Brother was sitting outside with Waldo. I was so happy to see them. I told him I didn't get his entire message. He said "I just wanted you to know that she promises to behave herself. I just had to get her out of there."

*No kidding, ya think?*

"We are just going to go do our own thing. We can just meet up here at the end of the day."

*No kidding, YA THINK?*

I hugged him and Waldo. I really was glad they hadn't left and was going to be happy to at least see him daily. I was still sorry he and Waldo's vacation had to go into the toilet. I was happy to get what I could.

They said there 'goodnights' and went to bed.

DH & I needed to do laundry. I told DH they should have 'loaner' laundry baskets, as I was afraid I might have to carry my dirty underwear around in my hands through POR.

He suggested a shopping bag.

He is the smartest guy I have met.

Good to have around.

I must have been tired.

With a sigh of relief, we loaded up the shopping bag and took our dirty underwear through POR undetected. I think we may have even been tip-toeing, but it felt like we walked 47 miles to the laundry room going around corners, through hallways.

Had we checked the map, we would have known the laundry room was to the left of our door, behind a bush about 15 feet away.

There were two *seeming* nice ladies in there doing there laundry, we joked around with them, there were some good times while we were in there. DH & I went out and sat next to the pool and chatted while we waited for our clothes to dry.

DH & I finally got to bed about 2:00 am.

It wasn't until the next morning I discovered the theft.....

## Part 29, Day 6, 10/7 Charrrrge!

Commando Nikki was great to have around. She was the glue that held our vacation together. Without her, we would probably have not done half the things we did. We will never go to Disney without her. She is a permanent part of our packing list.

Commando Nikki was taking no prisoners this morning. She had been relieved of her duties as far as Brothers crew went, so she only had us to torture with her whistle. Just before Mickey's wake up call, Em, who was sleeping on the trundle bed on the floor, let loose a very loud, honk-like fart.

I heard Commando Nikki giggle. She was already wake, *waiting*.

I asked her "Are we were being invaded by African barking spiders?"

She charged out of her bed and headed for the coffee in her pajamas as is customary in Florida. I had her well trained. Mickey called and woke everyone else up.

Once Commando Nikki had everyone motivated, I had to get showered & dressed. She was becoming impatient with me, I was holding us up now but I couldn't find any of my underwear.

Where was all my underwear?

I retraced our 'incredible' journey back to the laundry room, secretly praying I *wouldn't* find any of it, because who picks up underwear from the ground in a public place and claims it as their own?

I wouldn't have pick it up if I found any of it, there's something creepy about your underwear once it has been re-located with out your knowledge. I just wanted to know where it all went. I didn't even get to say 'good-bye'.

Is it possible the seemingly nice ladies from the laundry room last night STOLE my underwear while DH and I were sitting by the pool?

I *saw* my underwear go into the washing machine. I know I put it in there.

Who goes to Disney and *steals* underwear? If you can't afford your own underwear, how DID you afford Disney?

Why would anybody want used underwear?

Commando Nikki was getting impatient chanting, *Lets go, move, move, move*. I couldn't get dressed without my underwear, it's the key starting point of getting dressed.

I *needed* underwear. Mine was MIA. I took a pair of DH's because I had no other options. Fit pretty good, just a little bunchy right in the front.

I asked my crew if anyone had seen my underwear, but they hadn't. Commando Nikki asked what I was going to do.

"I'm wearing Scuba Steve's tighy-whities." I told her.



She didn't handle this information well. As a matter of fact, she threw her hand up in front of my face and said,

"We have nothing more to say to each other again today."

Okay, fine then.

I needed three feet of personal space, I wanted to blow dry my hair and get ready in piece. I asked DH if her would take the girls down to the gift shop for a little shopping spree while I finished. He readily agreed and put out his hand.

I put a room charge card slash park ticket in his hand. He flipped his hand over to drop it on the floor and again presented me with an open hand. I picked it back up and put it back in his hand.

"What do you expect me to do with this?" He asked.

"Go to the gift shop and take the girls shopping." I told him.

"This is not cash." He said.

"No, I know, it's a room charge card slash park ticket." I explained.

"I am not qualified to use this." He told me.

I assured him that he was, if fact, allowed to use this handy-dandy room charge card slash park ticket in exchange for fine gifts and prizes. He didn't believe me. I showed him the difference between that ONE particular special card and the other ordinary park ticket cards.

There was a wave of awe in our room that morning.

This was the card that Beatlebum and Commando Nikki would beg to use in get into the parks from this minute forward. They learned to love the special room charge slash park ticket card.

It brought joy to the crew. I reassured DH that everything would be fine. Just go to the gift shop, pick out some things you'd like, hand the lady the card and sign the slip, no problem.

Until they went to the gift shop, and I had already maxed it out. Commando Nikki called and told me there was a charging *emergency* down in the gift shop. Hurry, DH was panicking.

On the way to the gift shop I stopped at the front desk and had them charge my REAL credit card so my balance would start over again on the special room charge card slash park ticket.

Don't tell DH. Shhhhh.

I went into the gift shop and took the special room charge card slash park ticket from DH and handed it to the lady who was patiently wanting. She zipped it right through, handed me the slip to sign and we were ready to go. DH stepped back in amazement and made hissing noises at the card. He was doing his slow motion karate moves and doing the sign of the cross with his fingers.

"This is why I have to handle all the money, honey." I rolled my eyes at him, pretending that HE was the problem, not the innocent little card. DH now thinks I have special money powers, but will no longer use anything but cash, ever.

The girls ran back to the room to drop off their fine gifts and prizes. DH & I waited in the smoking area and discussed our plans for the day. I told him we had PS's at Chef Mickey's in the toaster hotel at 11:00 am. It was now 10:40.

Wow! It had gotten late, apparently an underwear theft can louse up your entire morning. I was afraid we wouldn't make it by bus in time to the toaster hotel, but Commando Nikki was already ahead of me and had called Ralph M. from Checker Cab co.

Van #333, ask for him by name.

Ralph showed up very quickly in his big yellow Checker Cab co. van, picked us up and drove by the bus stop where people were still waiting for the bus. Commando Nikki yelled out the window "Love ya, mean it."

I don't think Ralph was prepared for what happened next.

Way back in the beginning, during our drive down the Maine State turnpike, Beatlebum put in a CD from the movie Grease. The girls and I sang "*Your the one that I want*" at the top of our lungs, seat dancing and torturing the Metalica-loving man in the front seat. He had curled himself up in a ball and was actually whimpering. He couldn't wait to be near some men, he was out-numbered.

Ralph had it playing on his radio.

We began singing it at the TOP of our lungs. *I got chills, there multiplying, and I'm loooooosing control* DH tried to get out the door. Ralph turned it up really loud, either because he saw just how much fun we were having seat dancing and singing OR because we sang very off key and he was trying to drown us out. Didn't matter, Ralph started our morning off just right. He was great, so friendly and *fun*. He gave me his card when he dropped us off at the toaster hotel for our breakfast with the mouse.

Ralph M. from Checker Cab co. van #333 didn't know I had 55,000 close DIS friends.

Ralph M. also didn't know that he was one of the highlights of our day.

Ralph M. didn't need to know I was wearing Scuba Steve's tighty-whities did he?

## Part 30, Day 6, 10/7 Chef Mickey's

I made what I believed to be a very graceful and ladylike exit from the back of Ralph M's van. Em was right behind me. She, in front of Ralph, the toaster hotel bellhop guy, the lobby of the toaster hotel and GOD pointed at my backside and announced very loudly:

"She's wearing Daddy's panties."

Thanks kid, was hoping people could start staring at *me* right off the bat today. Love ya, mean it.

"That little boy farted loud enough to scare Chuck & Dave this morning." I pointed back at her.

What is worse? For the entire lobby of the toaster hotel to know that I was wearing Scuba Steve's tightly-whities OR for a child to call her fathers underwear 'panties'?

Points to ponder.

We went into the elevator still singing and dancing '*cuz the poooooer your supplying, it's electra-fing*' when the elevator SPOKE to us. We were singing too loud to hear what it said, we think it said 'shut up'.

So we did.

I loved Chef Mickey's. This is a loud, have a great time, twirl your napkins in the air, good times to be had by all kind of place. We blended right in. They did line us up for a photo, because obviously, it was me and they know I will buy their photos. *Quick get a camera, Delswife is coming, shoot the kids, no the kids, the kids, who cares if their eyes are closed or if Mr. & Mrs. Band-Aids are in it. Get the picture!*

I spent more on photos at Disney than I paid for my car.

We got a great table in the middle, but then again, I don't think there is a bad table anywhere in the place. I *have* only sat at the ONE table, so I am probably not the best judge of that. Our server was right there, very attentive, refilling our juice cups with every sip.

No exaggeration, EVERY sip.

It became a game.

Hey, we like to play.

We each took turns taking a sip from our juice cups and pour, pour, pour she was right there, refilling. We alternated sips and she kept right up with us, pour, pour, pour. We all drank at the same time and she went into pour overload. Being the Disney professional that she was, she never missed a beat. Our juice cups never saw the half-way mark. She really WAS a half-full kind of gal.

We took our plates, (to the left because the DIS recommends that), and took a small sample of everything they had to offer. This is where I discovered the '*ho-my-god*' Mickey

waffles.

Those waffles *are* a religious experience.

I ate six of them and Scuba Steve's tighty-whities were a bit tighter. They also hadn't made their final appearance of the day.

We finished our meals and gathered to the front desk of Chef Mickey's for another photo with Goofy. Things were going along pretty well until....

Em spotted the monorail going through the restaurant.

She had a nervous breakdown.

Em started running back and forth in front of Goofy, slapping the poor guy trying to get him to notice that the monorail just made its way by above her head. She was darting her head around looking everywhere trying to figure out how to get on it and if she could get on it, how was she going to get Goofy to go with her. She was pulling on Goofy's apron, pleading with him to go with her. He didn't budge.

She stopped pulling on Goofy, walked over in front of me, crossed her arms and with tears in her eyes said, "Chris (DS) would have taken me. When is *he* coming back? I want him BACK!"

It dawned on me she was missing DS pretty badly. *Yes, little kid, HE would have taken you, you guys would have been gone on another great super-hero adventure, and I miss him too.* "I hope the next time we come, not this time." I told her fighting tears.

"The next time we come we are staying here, because this is the monorail house." She informed DH & I. DH thought that sounded like a pretty good plan, but they live in that 'bubble' and have no idea that people like us, don't stay in places like this. Those people *need* people like us to stay at the all-stars with Commando Nikki's whistle and my blue duck pajama's. I had to inform DH how much ONE night in the monorail house could cost.

He nearly fainted. He made us walk the rest of the way out of the monorail house with our hands in our pockets. Beatlebum reached for the elevator button and DH jumped in front of it, doing his slow-motion karate moves slowly saying "*Nooooo!*" while batting her hands away. Commando Nikki jumped in doing *her* slow-motion karate moves to protect her sister. Em was standing behind them with her arms crossed *screaming* "Monorail! Monorail!"

Yeah, we will be staying at the All Stars next time.

Your Welcome.

We stepped outside and I phoned Ralph for a ride to the Animal Kingdom. I was too full from my six religious Mickey waffles to sit on a diesel donkey, rocking back and forth, skin-to-skin contact with strangers filled bus.

Ralph was there before I had my cell phone put away. I kid you not. Ralph *knows* that I *know* that tipping is NOT a small town in china. Ralph was the best. He entertained us on the way to AK.....

Where Em became a tree hugger and I became a pin head.

I also got a secret phone call from Brother.

## **Part 31, Day 6, 10/7 Very simple**

Ralph M. from the Checker Cab co. van #333, got us to the Animal Kingdom safe and sound. He was the *last* nice person we had contact with until we *left* the AK. I'm not sure if it's the heat, or the fact that the AK is based on being in the jungle, but people there were uncivilized. We were surrounded by a lot of un-Disney like behavior.

The CM's working this park are some of the bravest people in the world. Here we were thinking it was the military.

We were heading to the gate, debating on renting a stroller for Em, so we wouldn't awaken the 'wrash' when a potted tree came over and stuck up a conversation with us.

His name was 'Wes Palm'.

When 'Wes Palm' rolled over behind Em and started talking, Em froze cold in her tracks. Eyes wide open she *slowly* turned around, unsure as to what to say to a talking tree.

"HHEEEELLLLLLOOOOO! My goodness thats a pretty dress you are wearing." Em was wearing a dress with big yellow daisies on it.

She stood there and stared at 'Wes Palm' in shock.

"It looks a lot like my family reunion, my aunt petunia was there this year."

Em started smiling. She kept looking over at me to see if I had anything to do with this potted tree that suddenly wanted a new friend.

"Are you skipping school?" Wes inquired.

"Yes!" Em proudly proclaimed.

"I thought so, you have that 'school-skippers smile', it's usually bigger than everyone else's." Wes told her.

Wes came towards me because I had the video camera out, to give me a nice big close-up. "That's very nice of you Mrs. Spielberg, bringing the family to Disney." *That's very nice of you Wes Palm, making that kid smile and not think about missing DS for a minute*

Wes turned to leave and Em was right behind him. He stopped and asked "Are you stalking me? Or did you just want to give me a nice big hug?"

Oh, Em did. She leaned over and gave him a big hug.

"oooohhhh! I KNEW she was a tree-hugger!" Wes bellowed.

That chatted for a couple more minutes, Wes thanking her for stopping by. Em started walking to the gate, but 'Wes' was right behind her. "It's my turn to stalk you, *Emily's my girlfriend, Emily's my girlfriend, Emily's my girlfriend.*." Wes sang.

Another little boy came over to investigate the talking potted tree and 'Wes' told him he would be right back, because he was stalking his girlfriend.

"And don't you go hugging any other trees, because I'll hear it through the grapevine. I don't think she's ever been stalked before, I'll be honest with you." Wes said.

'Wes' spun back around to me. "I'd like to ask you, mom, when you put those collectable metal things on your hat, and you put your hat on your head, is that what they mean by a 'pin-head'? I've heard the expression before, I had never actually seen it."

We were laughing so hard our sides hurt. Ahhh, the magic of Disney.

We got through the turnstiles with Beatlebum and Commando Nikki touching each others sunburns to see who would get to use the special room charge slash park ticket. Commando Nikki won.

We went over to the tree of life to see 'It's Tough to be a Bug'. DH is very familiar with my crazy fear of bugs and he assured me that, yes, there would be bugs, but they would be little ones.

This is what that looked like.

When the doors open for you to go into the theater, there are some very simple instructions saying to move all the way down the aisle and fill all the seats.

Some people simply cannot follow these simple instructions. I guess they are too *CLEAR*. One man refused to move, leaving Em & I with no place to sit.

"Sir, could you move down please, so we can sit down?" I asked.

This man was too close to Commando Nikki when he called me the bad name he called me. He refused to move, I hadn't heard what he called me. I didn't care. The show started, DH gave his seat to Em but we were left *standing* there. "Sir, really, I'd like to sit with my family, couldn't you move down to those empty seats?" He still refused to move. I wiggled my CM getting finger at the closest CM I saw, who was already on his way over, the man called me *another* bad name, much too close to Commando Nikki, and finally moved his stupid 'not able to understand simple instructions' butt down to the empty seats.

I am in Disney World with my family, I am not at work, I don't have a single care in the world. I personally don't care what Mr. 'not able to understand simple instructions' thinks about me. I will never see him again, so he has an opinion. Good for him.

Love ya, mean it.

With the show well underway, and our special bug goggles on we are prepared to be initiated as honorary bugs. Then Hopper came *outta nowhere* to protest this.

I scream "*GRASSHOPPER!!*" as loud as I could.

Nobody but my immediate family gets the joke. I need to travel in packs with DIS'ers. They understand me.

The show concluded and we began to leave the theater, but Commando Nikki was bugged.

Get it? Bugged? I *am* cleaver!

She couldn't get over Mr. 'not able to understand simple instructions' bad name calling toward her mother. She was steaming mad and it was ruining her day, and I couldn't have that. I don't know where this sudden act of bravery came over me but I caught up with Mr. 'not able to understand simple instructions' and tapped him on the shoulder "Sir?".

He ignored me.

I tapped him again. "Sir?"

He ignored me again.

I jammed my fingers really hard into his shoulder. "SIR!"

He stopped and looked at me and said very sarcastically "What?"

*Yeah, what?*

"Did you have something you wanted to say to me, instead of my daughter?" I asked.

Mr. 'not able to understand simple instructions' is also a bit of a coward. He stammered for a minute, looked at his feet and quietly said "No, m'am."

"Okay good, have yourself a Disney day then... Oh and by the way, Love ya, mean it." I smiled and looked at Commando Nikki who was also smiling. She felt better, I felt better....

Mr. 'not able to understand simple instructions' got slugged in the back of his head by, I'm thinking, MRS. 'not able to understand simple instructions' for not standing up to a five foot tall woman who just jabbed him in the shoulder really hard. She was really mad at him.

I'm telling you, there's something wrong with the AK. LOTS of un-Disney like behavior. Maybe it's the heat.

It *had* to be the heat. We decided the raft ride would be a dandy idea, get wet, cool off. On the way over, I was tickled when Brother called.

Really tickled, I had the phone on vibrate.

"Brother! What are you doing?" I was so happy to hear from him.

"Standing outside a gift shop in the Marketplace holding a bag. You?" He said.

"Visiting the KING of grasshoppers." I told him.

"Glad I missed it this time. Just thought I'd give you a quick call, see what you were planning. Pigtails left and Scruffy lives with us now. Great times." He said.

I told him when we left here we were heading to MGM to see Fantamic. He told me he would try to catch up with me later, but he had to go *right now*. She was apparently finished in one gift shop, had plenty more bags for him to hold and was ready to go to the next.

I was left wondering what kind of shoes he was wearing.....

## **Part 32, Day 6, 10/7 MY CAMERAS!!**

After Brothers phone call our crew headed for the Kali River Rapids ride. The raft is pretty big, with two seats, a get in & get out of the raft space, two seats, a get in & get out of the raft space and so on. Our crew of five was joined by a family of three (mom, dad and Jr.) who got into the raft first.

The wierd thing was when they got in, mom & dad sat across from Jr. on the completely opposite side. I thought, well okay, we can adjust to that. DH sat with Em, Beatlebum and Commando Nikki sat together and I sat with Jr. Jr. who was about 8 years old was just smiling ear-to-ear at me. I smiled back at him.

The raft started up the lift and I said to DH that it was great they have that plastic covered center, wouldn't want anything to happen to my cameras.

DH held up the camera bag and said "OH, by the way, they didn't fit."

*Great time to tell me that, love ya, mean it, I'm going to KILL you when my cameras get soaked.*

I was trying to stay calm about my cameras, out there in the OPEN, while DD's BACKPACKS with almost nothing in them stayed dry, and Jr. is still grinning at me. His mom and dad are now in on the grinning. *WHAT??* I almost screamed, but didn't.

"He manages to get completely soaked when we come on this ride, thats why we are over here." They grinned at me.

*Nice, thanks, glad to here that. Could you hold my cameras, pretty please?*

We go down the first drop, and sure enough the raft had spun around enough to soak me and Jr. Everyone else stayed dry.

I glared at DH, how held up my cameras and said "Dry!"

We float along, the raft turning as we go, and down the second drop, it spun around and *again* Jr. & I are soaked. Everyone else stayed dry.

I again glared at DH, who again held up my cameras and said "Looks good!"

We continue to float down through, I guess it's the rainforest, the raft turning in circles, and for the final drop, the stinkin' raft spun around and *AGAIN* well, you know. That time the



wave of water that came over my head nearly drowned me and I had no long, floaty, life-saving, stick thing.

I think the kid had lead in his pockets or something.

With the final wave of water, I heard the girls scream. I didn't want to open my eyes, because surely this time, my cameras.....

*\*Sniff, snort\* my poor little cameras!*

DH has no idea how lucky he was. Standing over me holding my camera bag, smiling. "You okay?" He asked.

No, I'm not, but I am relieved that I won't need to kill YOU today.

As I got off that stupid person-drowning raft I leaned forward to step up to the dock and Em, who was behind me, pointed at my backside and loudly announced to everyone IN Florida "HEY, LOOK! You tucked your shirt into daddy's panties!"

Men's underwear are not designed for a woman's curves. The band slides up your hips and shows the world his fruit of the looms. Often. It is *optional* if you want to tuck your shirt into them.

Em is never allowed to be behind me again, EVER.

We got off the raft and everyone was thirsty, everyone except me, I had AGAIN forgotten rule one on swimming, shut your mouth. We stopped at the frozen lemonade stand and got ourselves some pink and yellow frozen torture devices.

Don't get these if your thirsty, you will end up with an ice-cream headache.

I ate mine too fast with that flat wooden stick thing that looks sort of spoon shaped. I was holding my forehead because of the sharp pain in my head and never saw her coming.

Commando Nikki did, she even gave me a sunburn slap to get me to move.

I was holding my head in my hand dealing with the sharp pain when suddenly the pain was re-located to the back of my ankle. The crazy stroller lady was in a BIG hurry. She of course, hit my right ankle, my primary holding me up ankle and I nearly SAT on her child. My arms went straight up in the air and that was the last time I saw my flat wooden stick thing that looks sort of spoon shaped.

"CAN YOU GET THE (insert very filthy word here) OUT OF MY WAY?" She bellowed at me. Very un-disney like. *I almost sat on your kid lady, and by the way, your a potty mouth.*

In my best game show host voice I responded "Why, yes, yes I can as a matter of fact." Trying to not let Commando Nikki know that she made have broken my ankle. I was really trying to make light of the situation, I wanted to smack the lady, but I don't want ugly memories for my kids. *I can shake this off.* I take a step to the side *gently* and let her and her WEAPON go by.

I think crazy stroller lady is friends with Mr. 'can't understand simple instructions' but I'm not completely sure.

Being green to stroller-pushing myself, I am willing to bet, *THATS* not how it done.

My ankle was really hurting and I was really mad. What was wrong with the people here?

## **Part 33, Day 6, 10/7 Suddenly**

My ankle hurt, but at least I had forgotten all about my ice-cream headache so I *guess* she did me a favor.

Love ya, mean it.

We were stopped by a photographer who offered to take our picture in front of the Tree of Life. They take your picture, hand you a slip and in two hours you pick it up. Must have known *I* was in the park. *AH yeah, Mickey? This is Donald over at AK, just spotted Delswife and have sent out the troops. I know, I know shoot the kids.* He took our picture and said "I can take one with yours, if you'd like."

Was he kidding? Was I actually going to score a free picture? "Yes, I 'd like!" I smiled at him and handed him my camera to which he looked at and groaned. "You didn't think I was going to hand you a disposable camera, did you?" I winked at him.

Guess he didn't get the memo. I didn't need to buy the picture now.

I thought a good idea would be to go watch Tarzan Rocks and get off my ankle for a minute to survey the damage. I steered the crew in that direction and we were told we had to hurry because the show was 'just about to start' according to the CM directing people traffic.

'Just about to start' means something *totally* different here in Maine.

We gathered into the bleachers with the show due to start in 4 minutes. I checked the damage to my ankle which wasn't bad after all. I couldn't tell if I was bleeding because my *everything* was still soaked. I decided I was being a huge baby and ignored my ankle the rest of the day.

I also decided I was *really* going to pay more attention to the stroller drivers to check and see if that was proper stroller-pushing etiquette.

The girls were whining because their shoes got wet. I could only imagine their discomfort. I was sitting there thinking *Gee, men's underwear are a whole lotta fun when there wet. They feel pretty droopy, the band is all clammy and they weigh 5 lbs. more than the did before.*

How *do* men stand these things? They absorb water at an alarmingly fast rate, there bunchy in the front, they don't stay put and pop out when ever they feel like giving the world a quick "Hey, how are ya?" *Wait! Is that why guys grab themselves, to fix the underwear?*

The bleachers are under an enormous hot tent and on each end they have big wind-blowing fans. "I think the big-wind blowing fans are there to circulate the body odor." DH said and

he was right because they definitely weren't cooling anything or anybody.

We were instructed to squeeze together on the bleachers so there would be room for everyone. *Oh! Isn't THAT just a lovely idea?* Commando Nikki & Beatlebum started teasing Em about being a tree-hugger and having a 'boyfriend'. *Emily's got a boyfriend..* Em didn't like being teased and started a sunburn slapping party, which turned into a pinching fight.

*Maybe you want these kids a little closer? Do you KNOW what comes AFTER the pinching fight??*

We were pleased at another opportunity to have skin-to-skin contact because you can never have enough of that in the heat. The CM came out 10 very *long* minutes later to say 'the show was going to be delayed but for everyone's safety please remain seated, if you need assistance a CM will assist you out'.

NOTE TO DISNEY: If I am *NOT* on a ride, DO NOT come out and say something like that.

You can say: Tarzan is still on the toilet and he is the main part of the show and we can't go on without him OR one of the monkey people just passed out from the heat and body odor that the big wind blowing fans have pushed back here.

Never say: 'For everyone's safety please remain seated'.

This made me nervous because I didn't have Scruffy OR Xanax. *Why did I need to remain seated and how was I going to affect other peoples safety? Was there about to be a group of angry stroller pushing drivers coming through there?*

On a ride I can understand instructions like that. A ride could SUDDENLY start moving. What was going to be SUDDENLY happening here? I really didn't want to affect other peoples safety, and I do understand simple directions, but...

I really wanted to get out of there. So did DH. It was hot, getting hotter, and there was a lot of clammy skin exposed around us. They were really jamming us in there tight. Em was done with the pinching fight and had moved onto the 'noogie' fight.

Another 15 *stifling* minutes later and Tarzan and his bunch were singing, swinging and dancing for our entertainment.

*NOW* I understood the instructions. They *were* necessary after all. There were people skating up & down the isle, swinging from branches and trees, lots of flashing lights and loud music. The entire place had SUDDENLY become very active.

But I still wanted out. So did a lot of other people too. They started going up to the top of the bleachers and escaping that way. We received the "okie-dokie" thumbs up from the CM standing at the top and made our escape too. I really felt awful about leaving in the middle of the show, I know the performers saw us leave. It was just to MUCH 'togetherness' for us.

I don't think fresh air had ever felt better. We were so happy we broke out in song and dance ourselves.

SUDDENLY.

We had had enough of the Animal Kingdom. There were two more rides we wanted to hit

before we left. Primevil Whirl was the first and we walked right on that. Somehow, we got separated and DH, Em and Commando Nikki went in one car. DH & Commando Nikki were having a pinching fight while they waited their turn. I didn't see who started it, but when they got off the ride, I pinched them both right behind the arm, below the shoulder where it really hurts.

I win.

There were a lot of random acts of violence that day.

Beatlebum and I were in a car with a man that spoke no English. He kept talking to her and she kept telling him she couldn't understand him. She started speaking gibberish to him, and he kept right on talking to her. The man who spoke no English scared Beatlebum so I sat in the middle. I wonder what he thought when it was time to get out of the car and there was a big soggy spot from my heavy man-panties had been.

We got Fastpasses for Dinosaur, but never had to use them. We walked on 3-4 times in a row. There was a couple who dragged a screaming, scared child onto the ride and sat in the rows behind us. Do some people want to go on a ride *so badly* that they are willing to listen to a kid screech bloody murder? Em was trying to make this kid feel better, but he was well into FULL blown scream mode. The CM tried to intervene, but the father almost took his head off.

He had calmed down in the ride, up until the dinosaur tried to eat us. I bet that kid is still having nightmares. Once the ride was over Em said to little kid "My daddy's not mean." I hope the parents felt bad when they heard that.

I went to the smoking area while the rest of the crew went into the gift shop. While I was sitting there, a lady pushing a man in a wheelchair stopped and sat on the opposite bench.

I figured if anyone knew about pushing things around the parks, they would be the ones to ask. His chair was a lot bigger than a stroller.

But, thanks to Mr. 'can't understand simple instructions' & the crazy stroller lady, I was a little afraid of people in this park so I started off slowly.

I made some small talk and they turned out to be very friendly. They had no advice for me because they were having the same problems as I was. She said it seems the pathways in AK are smaller and harder to manage. I hadn't noticed THAT but I wasn't pushing anybody either.

My crew came slapping and pinching out of the gift shop. DH trying to fight off all three girls. I said good-bye to my new friends and told them about Ralph M. #333 because they needed a ride.

So, we gave away our ride.

We were having several transportation problems, I'm renting a car next time.

*Hear that Dreams Unlimited? I need two rooms at the all stars, connected and a rental car. I'm thinking after Thanksgiving and before Christmas 2004. Just my crew and Brother. Leaving the rest of them behind. I promise to write a glowing review of you. I have quite a growing fan club. THANK YOU! Love ya, mean it!*

HUGE DIS MEET!

So anyway, we went to the bus stop because we were headed for MGM and Brother might be able to meet us there. I HOPED.

## **Part 34, Day 6, 10/7 My boyfriend**

We were happy to leave the AK. The heat was killing us and we were sick of the crabby people. We were headed for MGM to watch Fantasmic. It was the third year Scuba Steve & I had come to Disney and still hadn't seen this 'must not be missed event'. The more I read about it on the DIS, the worse I wanted to see it.

But as we got to the gate of MGM it started to sprinkle.

I told the crew that we probably wouldn't be seeing Fantasmic tonight. "Afraid of getting wet?" Commando Nikki asked me.

No, I was still wearing soggy, heavy man panties. I'm afraid of what happens after it starts sprinkling in FLORIDA. This is the state that has those huge LIGHTNING storms.

We got to the turnstiles with Commando Nikki & Beatlebum sunburn slapping to see who would get the special room charge park ticket. Beatlebum won it that time.

The sprinkling turned to rain.

We walked down towards the Rock N Roll Rollercoaster. This was another new ride for us, and let me tell you NOW, I am so glad that they built this on inside for two reasons.

One: Even in the rain, you can ride it.

Two: You don't know what you are in for until you are ON the ride.

The crew and I walked right on. Commando Nikki was giddy with excitement, bouncing up & down and it was making Scuba Steve a nervous wreck. It can never be a GOOD thing if Commando Nikki is excited about a ride. There hasn't been a ride built that she wouldn't go on.

And Scuba Steve knew that.

Scuba Steve started to get sweaty. When we were in the first room and Steven Tyler was arranging our ride, Scuba Steve was hanging on to Em by the shoulders. "Daddy, your breaking my arm!" She said.

They opened the doors and we waited while everyone else went into the caged room for the line up. We hate all that bunching up with people and we don't want to break-up any families.

Scuba Steve was now hanging onto my arm and cutting off the circulation to my hand. "What does this ride do?"

Well, if I told him that the only thing I knew was it went up-side down, he would have divorced me on the spot. So I just smiled and said "This is my first ride on it."

That was TRUE. But it didn't make Scuba Steve feel any better. He was squeezing my arm harder.

We stepped into the caged part and saw for the first time how the limo takes off. It's hard to describe it to someone who has never been on it, it takes off from zero to *BLUR* is the best way, I guess. Beatlebum quickly said "I claim mom!" like there was something I could do to protect her from this ride.

They had to pry Scuba Steve off my arm. He and Em were going to be riding behind Beatlebum and me, and Commando Nikki headed straight for the front. Em looked at the CM and said "My daddy's scared, I gotta stay with him."

Scuba Steve is afraid of fish AND blurry cars but everything was going to be fine because the little boy was going to protect him.

I guess I was a little nervous too because when it came time to get into the car Beatlebum went in first then I sort of tripped in behind her. "MOM!" she yelled at me when I half landed on her. The CM giggled and I wasn't sure if it was because of my graceful entry in to limo OR if my heavy man panties had popped out to say "Hiya!"

Anyway, we were all seated and prepared for take off. I took off my hat and stuck it under my leg because I was afraid it would fall off. It didn't but one of my pins DID and I couldn't lean forward to get it before take off.

I couldn't do anything before take off. We shot out of there with our lungs jammed into our backs and in the first loop Beatlebum yelled "Scuba Steves gonna *KILL* you!"

*Not if this ride didn't first!*

Just as we were headed for the corkscrew I heard Em scream "I want to do this again!" Thank you Em!

Because of the boy who loved chuck & dave and had a boyfriend who was a bit of a sap, I would NOT be getting a divorce.

If a six year old liked this ride Scuba Steve *HAD* to.

The pin from my hat was still on the floor when the limo stopped if that gives you any idea on the G-forces of this ride that went upside-down *three* times.

The crew and I climbed out and I turned back to look at Scuba Steve. He had a funny plastic smile on his face. I asked him if he liked it and he said "Are you kidding me, I'm puckered at both ends."

I think he liked it.

When we walked out the door it was pouring. Lightning, thunder, the whole nine yards. Nope,

no Fantasmic tonight. Commando Nikki wanted to go on TOT. Scuba Steve HAD to go with her, because I do not find falling to be any fun, ever. I took Beatlebum and Em back on RnR.

Then I met MY new boyfriend.

There was very few people in the park and we were strolling back on RnR (*Rock 'n Rollercoaster*) like we owned it. The girls and I hanging back in the Steven Tyler room to let the other people in and there was this man who was riding alone.

He was an off-duty CM and my new 'boyfriend'. Em was not happy about *him*.

I failed to notice.

We were chatting about the parks and he was also talking to the other Cm's running the ride. He decided to ride with me while the girls rode together. It was because of him that I heard the music they are piping in right behind your head at full blast.

Who hears anything when your busy being 'puckered?'

We sang 'Love in an elevator' together. The ride came to an end and we got out and said our "See ya's"

Commando Nikki & Scuba Steve were not waiting at the exit for us, so we went on it again.

So did my new boyfriend.

We sang 'Rag Doll' (I think?) and again said our "see ya's."

Commando Nikki and Scuba Steve were *still* not there waiting at the exit.

*Hey, I have an idea, why don't we do RnR AGAIN?*

Sounded dandy to us, AND my new boyfriend.

When we walked back on Beatlebum wanted to ride with me. This would have left the child, who I really *do* love like my own, BUT she isn't, riding with a stranger. I explained to him that I knew he was a CM, but I thought it would be best if she stuck with someone she wasn't afraid to fart in front of.

He understood perfectly. Em DID NOT.

We rode one more time, we sang *something* and for the final time, said our "See ya's"

We decided to go to the exit of TOT to recover Scuba Steve & Commando Nikki. Em was doing a 'bowlegged' march with her hands clenched into fist.

*Oh, poor little kid, the wrash is back.*

I stopped her to look at her legs and THATS when I noticed she was in tears. "Oh, does it hurt a lot?" I asked her.

"NO! I don't want you to leave daddy!" she yelled at me in tears.

I froze and looked at Beatlebum who was just as surprised as I was. Why was I leaving daddy? Where was I going? Will there be ladies panties there?

"You sang songs with that man. He's your *new* boyfriend now." She told us.

"No, they are just both old and know all the words." Beatlebum told Em.

*Uh, thanks for the help?*

Beatlebum reassured Em that I wasn't going anywhere except to TOT exit to collect the rest of the crew, who at the time, was MIA.

"So it's okay to tell daddy you have a new boyfriend?" She asked.

*"Wobin has a boyfriend, wobin has a boyfriend, wobin has a boyfriend...."* she and Beatlebum sang, skipping and dancing in the rain to the exit of the TOT.

Scuba Steve was filled in on the whole story.

"Boxers or briefs?" He asked.

## **Part 35, Day 6, 10/7 Buses**

If you haven't figured it out yet, Scuba Steve is a tiny bit younger than me, making him a tiny bit older than my kids. I know it's difficult for people who don't know us to understand how we are related to each other. I am 36 and sometimes mistaken for my DS(19) girlfriend. Scuba Steve(29) is sometimes mistaken for Commando Nikki's(17) boyfriend.

It's creepy for everyone involved, okay?

It would help if we looked our ages, NO if we ACTED our ages, but we don't....Especially in Disney.

We were playing in the rain, jumping in every puddle headed for the buses and watching the very few people in the park pulling out their yellow slickers and umbrellas.

We live in the state of Maine, where if you don't like the weather, wait a minute and it will change.

Bring it on.

I still had on soggy man-panties. (They never dry out, do they?) I didn't care.

A sad couple with two small sad kids in tow were headed for the same bus as us. We stepped back to let them on first, because they didn't have on their happy faces. With Scuba Steve, arms spread wide saying "Welcome aboard Dis....OUCH!"



Commando Nikki started the pinching fight, I saw it THAT time.

Beetlebum HAD to get involved in that while Em was still happily singing "Wobin's got a boyfriend.."

They started to step on each others feet, there was a lot of pushing, pinching and singing. The sad couple with their sad little kids became the giggling couple with the scared little kids and were STARING at us.

THEY like an audience.

We got on the bus behind them and the driver was grateful to have us. "Thank God, people, I'm sick of sitting here." I heard him say when we got on.

I wondered just how long he was going to be grateful to our holy creator, the crew was totally out of MY control and in full swing.

I *really* tried to control them, it was Scuba Steve that provoked them. They are all, except Em, bigger & stronger than me.

There's only so much I can do.

All Stars, rental car, promise.

So the bus began to pull away from the MGM parking lot and turned off the interior lights. I couldn't see what was going on because they were all behind me, but I could hear it.

"Ouch"

"Quit it"

"Ouch"

"You started it"

"Ouch, your a tree-hugger."

I was looking at the staring lady, mouthing "I'm sorry." to her. Her kids were quietly sitting, watching my crew. I think she slipped them some Xanax.

My crew went from pinching to sunburn slapping. I went from mouthing the words "I'm sorry" to saying them out loud.

They decided to push each other out of the seats with their feet and onto the floor. Scuba Steve landed with a loud "GACK!" sound.

Now, the bus driver was staring. I HAD to do something before we got kicked off the bus. They were ROCKING the bus with their foolishness.

I stood up in the aisle next to the staring people and said loudly to my crew "This is what NORMAL people look like, observe the quite and well behaved children. Also take notes of the fact that THEY are *guaranteed* to have a ride ALL THE WAY to POR, unlike you freaks. If this continues, I will be passing out tampons for you to carry on our walk back and through

the lobby of POR. Sit down and SHUT UP!" To which I reached into the top of my jeans and showed them the top of Scuba Steve's tighty-whities.

They all looked at me in horror, including the staring people.

I did this for two reasons, Scuba Steve's fear of feminine hygiene products and our girls are repulsed by the fact that we can share underwear with each other.

I win.

They shut up for the rest of the ride home. Until the bus driver turned ON the interior lights, then they all screamed *Bright lights, bright lights!* and held their hands over their eyes.

We got to POR and traveled another great journey back to our rooms. It wasn't until the last day I think that we ever looked at the map they gave us at the front desk. *They give that to you for a reason. Look at it.*

Brother was sitting outside on the stoop not too close to the edge. We sent the girls off to bed.

"Sorry I missed you guys today." He said

I was sorry too. I wanted to play with Brother.

Scruffy came out of their room and said "Your'n bake!"

DH leaned over to me and whispered, "Did he just say urine?"

I think he did or he was excited to see us. I couldn't tell.

Scruffy headed off to find himself a soda machine. Brother asked what our plans were for the next day. I told him we were going back to MGM because we didn't do that the first day like I had scheduled because of the eating fight and Uncle Dave. I also told him about RnR.

He wanted on that ride and TOT. He thought they'd be able to join us. MGM must have a TON of gift shops right?

Now I was a mix of emotions, I desperately wanted Brother to come play with us, but I don't think I could handle anymore of his wife's negativity. I told him I'd love him to come along under one condition.

Don't leave me alone with your wife.

I told Scuba Steve, "If you leave me alone with her, I WILL divorce you and run off with my new boyfriend."

My darling husband who I love more than anything in the world, put his arm on my sunburn, looked into my eyes and said "I would never do that to you, I love you too much."

Awwww..

At the same time Brother's wife came out of their room, moaning and groaning and sat down right next to Scuba Steve.

She started complaining.

Scuba Steve jumped up and told Brother "You HAVE to see this pin Em bought for Chris."  
And zooom, POW.

He was gone.

Love ya, mean it.

She continued to complain about *something* I missed because I was planning how I was going to kill Scuba Steve.

"I have to go help him, he is easily distracted." I told Brother and his wife.

Just as I got up to save myself, hide in our room until she went back into theirs, Scuba Steve came out with a bag of M&M's.

See easily distracted. Where's the pin?

Blew my big escape...Love ya, mean it.

So we sat there listening to her *hating* Disney and blessing our plans for tomorrow, thinking our ears were going to burn off the sides of our heads from this unholy talk and *thankfully* she went back in their room for our big day at MGM.

Ugg! Poor Disney-loving Brother. Stuck with that.

Brother was looking forward to playing in MGM with us. I was excited about it too. We were like two kids before Christmas.

Scruffy came back with his soda, grinning "Your'n all havetin a gid nite." And went into their room.

"Is Scruffy's looking for the out-house? Why does he keep talking about urine?" DH asked Brother.

We went in to shower and put on DRY clothes. I was so excited about the next day...

Then Brother's wife burst our bubble.

## Part 36, Day 7 Day 10/8 Chomper

Before we left Maine, Beatlebum and Commando Nikki had their hair braided into cornrows so they wouldn't have to waste a lot of time in the morning. I took my allotted three minute military shower, stole another pair of Scuba Steve's tighty-whities, blasted a blow dryer through my hair quick and plopped on my pin-filled Mickey mouse baseball hat.

Total time for my crew of five to get ready for a Disney day = 1 hour from wake up to bus stop.

Total time for Brothers crew of four to get ready for a Disney day = 4 hours from wake up to rented van.

Commando Nikki had perfected the art of moving us out the door in a quick and organized matter. She knew Brother and his crew would be joining us at MGM and she knew Brother's wife had a very bad knee from a car accident.

NOBODY was slowing HER down today.

Commando Nikki went to the lobby and borrowed a wheelchair for Brothers wife. She knocked on Brothers door, Waldo answered and she push it in under his arm. I sat there watching this *praying* she didn't whip out her whistle.

Thank God she didn't.

Brother came out to say they weren't ready. I said "Call me when you get there!" and we headed off for the buses.

We had gone on RnR, TOT, Muppets 4D, traded pins with several dozen CM's and had a sunburn slapping disagreement about hot dogs vs. turkey legs before Brother finally called.

This is the picture I took while we waited for them, check out Em:

Doesn't everyone's family break out in air guitar in front of this thing?

We were waiting by the entrance of RnR when Brother arrived smiling, pushing his wife (who was not smiling) with Waldo and Scruffy right behind them. The heat was getting to me, because my hot dog was making re-appearance threats. I was sitting on the cement wall with my head on my knees when the rotten people I was traveling with did it...

They pushed her wheelchair right next to ME and RAN to the TOT.

They were saying 'Love ya, mean it.' as they ran down the pathway.

I wasn't convinced.

*Uncomfortable? Who? Me?*

They could have faced her wheelchair out instead of facing into the cement wall. She wasn't

really facing me, she was at a funny angle. She was swinging her head back and forth saying "I want something sweet."

*Good for you, I just want to keep my lunch down.*

She was complaining about how much money she had spent.

*Try staying OUT of the gift shops*

She was complaining about DC.

*How did that picture look, anyway?*

She was again complaining about the money she had spent in Disney.

*Don't you guys earn in a month what it takes us a year to earn?*

She WANTED something sweet NOW.

I told her there was an ice cream stand right behind her. She just looked at me and said "And what do they have?"

*Ice cream would be my FIRST guess.*

I kept my head on my knees until she got mad and went to the ice cream stand ALONE. I'm not sure, but I think she was waiting for me to go get it.

*Yeah, I don't think so.*

I was trying very hard to stay calm. I went and bought one of those mister fans. Best \$17 I ever spent. I felt better right away.

The rotten people who abandoned me returned. I sprayed them with my fan in the face when they opened their mouths to tell me about TOT (Tower of Terror).

Brothers wife sat in her wheelchair with her head in her hands. Still groaning and complaining.

The whole bunch of us made our way over to Who Wants to be a Millionaire. We only had to wait a few minutes to go in and I was so grateful for that. Five more minutes, and I might have blown up.

Then a some scrawny-punk teenage boy chewing gum with his mouth open, that I didn't like the looks of came over and asked me "Yeah *chomp, chomp* can she sit with me or what? *chomp, chomp*". "Sure." I said "Hope you have enough seats because we are all coming, Chomper."

Chomper was just too arrogant for us.

Brother piped in and slapped Chomper in the shoulder, I believe looking for his sunburn "Oh, look our new best friend!" Then leaned in and whispered "If your eyes leave her face one more time, I will sit ON you, okay?"

You invite one of us, you've invited ALL of us.

We are seated and given *the simple instructions* basically telling us to NOT yell the answer out to the contestant.

Brother's wife is another person who can't understand simple instructions. She was sitting behind us saying the *wrong* answers to the questions, like the people in the hot seat were the DUMB ones.

*No, that's not embarrassing in anyway and if you don't shut-up I believe that CM is coming over here to shut you up.*

Chomper wasn't keeping his eyes on Commando Nikki's face like the *simple* instructions he was given earlier clearly stated. Brother was sitting behind them and stuck his big, size 13 bare foot on Chompers shoulder. The same foot that had been walking around in the heat in socks and sneakers.

It was *quite* unpleasant.

Chomper thought it would be best if he moved several seats down from Commando Nikki and away from Brothers hairy foot. We all said "Bye-bye to you" to Chomper.

Brothers wife was still having problems with the 'simple instructions' but the show ended. Chomper left in a big hurry and without saying good-bye.

We were okay with that.

Scruffy *really* enjoyed WWTBAM. Ok, I don't really KNOW if he enjoyed it, but when we stepped outside he was pretty loud and ran back to the entrance to get back in.

I assumed he liked it OR he was going back because he left his Xanax inside.

Hard to say.

Brother's wife was complaining about NOT being in a gift shop.

Oh, we were *going* to a gift shop.

## Part 37 Picture time

This is why you SHOULD wear the proper shoes. I have directed Commando Nikki to Zurg's website [www.badshoe.com](http://www.badshoe.com)

This was Em's reaction when she saw the monorail.

This is another good way to attempt to soak your digital camera.

## Part 38, Day 7, 10/8 Look out!

The Indiana Jones Stunt Spectacular was due to start when we came out of WWTBAM. I have seen this show a few times, but it always leaves me sitting on the edge of my seat, praying that this wouldn't be the time when Indy got run over by the big rock. Waldo had heard the explosions earlier and was very eager to check this show out. Commando Nikki & I wanted to hurry over, hoping we could get Brother picked as an extra.

*Hurry* is not part of Brothers wife's vocabulary.

If I was pushing the wheelchair, she probably would have had her arms broken off. As Brother was steering her towards Indy, she'd reach her arms out saying "Stop, I want to look at this, stop, I want to look at that..." in a whinny complaining voice. Commando Nikki was getting impatient and bouncing up and down, pulling on Brothers arm telling him it was *going to start, we had to go.*

I HATE it when my teenage daughter bounces, just for the record.

Waldo had been introduced to 'pinch-fighting' by Beatlebum on the slow walk over to Indy. There was a disagreement between them about which was better, being a princess or a prince, both stating pros and cons of both rolls.

"Ow! Why did you pinch me?" Waldo asked rubbing his arm.

"It's a pinching fight, now you have to pinch me." Beatlebum explained.

"*Why* would I do *that*?" Waldo asked still rubbing his arm.

"Because it's fun!" She told him and she pinched him again.

"OUCH! This is *FUN*? I am NEVER going up north!" Waldo told her while giving her a little sissy pinch.

The proper southern gentleman that Waldo is, lost the pinching fight.

Waldo tried staying closer to Scuba Steve in the hopes that he would help save him. He was trying to explain to Scuba Steve this bizarre ritual of 'pinch-fighting.'

Waldo didn't know Scuba Steve very well and I don't think he wanted an education on sunburn slapping either.

After what felt like *days* later, we arrived at Indy as the 'extras' were taking the stage. Scuba Steve tried to tell Brother and his crew as they parked the wheelchair in the stroller parking lot that sitting half way in the stands was a much better view and a safe distance from the heat which is important when you have a sunburn.

Brother's wife wanted front and center. Waldo was torn. He wanted to sit with our crew, but felt like he should sit with his crew. He was in the aisle walking down two steps, back up two steps looking back and forth before he gave it up and sat with Brother & his mother.

The show started and Indy was again chased by the big rock. Em was wide-eyed pointing at the rock yelling "*Indy look out! Big rock, right behind you!*" Indy was run over by the big rock and Em sat back in the seat, shaking her head saying "*He didn't listen, he needs to learn to listen.*" Just as Indy jumped back up safe and sound, Em was emotionally drained.

As the show continued, Brother kept looking back at me, giving me a wiggle finger wave and winking. *Oh, have a plan Brother?*

Indy had his hands full battling the sword-swinging ninja's. A truck pulled around and grabbed his girlfriend. "*Indy, they have your girlfriend, BE-HIND YOU INDY!! They are taking her!*" Em was yelling through cupped hands.

By the time the show ended, Em looked like she had been through the wringer. She was a wiped out kid.

We all gathered together at the stroller parking lot to collect the wheelchair. Brother's wife was power-complaining now. The show was too loud, too hot, too busy, too blah, blah blah....

I was wishing they had grabbed Brother's wife in the back of the truck, but I continued to keep my mouth SHUT.

Brother wanted to go on RnR. We were walking past the 50's prime time (Hiya uncle Dave! LY,MI) and we stopped by the fountain so Commando Nikki & Em could watch the street performers.

Something in the bottom of the fountain caught Brother's wife's eye. It was a pin.

She wanted it.

BAD.

She started instructing people to get her something magnetic and for Beatlebum to give her the bottle strap around her neck, the one she had her pal Mickey hanging from.



Nobody moved. I think we were all stunned that she would even consider taking something OUT of a fountain.

Beatlebum is shy and sweet. She didn't know what was happening and started to hand Brothers wife her bottle strap with her pal Mickey hanging from it. From the look on Beatlebums face, I think she was afraid ol' Mick was going for a swim.

"Take the stupid rat doll off, I just need the strap." she snidely said to Beatlebum.

**GROWL!!!**"NO! Beatlebum, keep your doll and come with me." I snarled at Brothers wife.

It was the look on Beatlebums face that set me off. That sad teary eye look, thinking she was going to lose her little buddy, then being told that her little buddy was a stupid rat doll and the hurt look on her face.

No, if I didn't walk away right then and there, I'd have thrown Brothers wife in the fountain. I was hot!

*That's one.*

"Where are we going mom?" Beatlebum asked me hanging onto my arm and smiling that I had saved her and Pal Mickey from the evil grips of (fill in the blank).

*I have no idea, just away from her.*

The best thing about Disney is you don't have to walk far to distract you from an ugly situation. We found Commando Nikki & Em watching the street performers. As she watched I filled in Commando Nikki on what was going on over at the fountain.

"She can't take something OUT of the fountain, you throw things IN a fountain. What's wrong with her?" Commando Nikki asked "What if it represented something special to someone? Like they tossed it in as a memory to someone or something. What RIGHT does she have to try to take it out?"

I wished I had kept my mouth shut. I wished I hadn't upset Commando Nikki. But it was boiling inside me and getting harder to contain. I also knew that she would see Brothers wife hanging over the rail then trying to squeeze through the bars.

Commando Nikki spun around on one foot, hands clenched into fist, and headed back to the fountain. She was full steam. I could almost see it coming out her ears.

I grabbed her arm when I caught up with her. "Don't." I said "I promise you she will not take anything out of the fountain, but please don't do this. Let it go."

*That's two.*

The girls and I went back to the fountain. Scuba Steve and Brother were sitting on the bench with Waldo standing behind them trying to decide which one of them were going to toss her over.

Brothers wife was still trying to squeeze through the bars. "Little girl, come here. Come on little girl, quickly." She was waving at Em. *Her name is EM. Do you even KNOW that??*

**GROWL!!!**"No! Em get in the wheelchair and I'll give you a ride." Commando Nikki jumped in. Em hopped right up in the wheelchair and flopped over to the side like a rag doll.

*That's three.*

I was fuming. But I keep looking at my kids. *No ugly memories. I will not leave them ugly memories.* I kept my mouth shut.

If I could just keep my mouth shut, something else would happen, because this IS Disney and something was always happening and they would forget this. If I said anything, past experience has shown that this person can become totally uncontrollable and that is something that would scare Beatlebum and Em.

I stood behind Brother and nudged him. He looked at me and winked. "Ready?" He asked.

## **Part 39, Day 7, 10/8 Shhhh....**

I was trying to figure out a way to get my crew to leave so I could grab her by the feet and toss her over the rail. Probably would have CM's all over me, tossing me out of the park and I didn't want to risk that.

Brother calmly got up, looked over the rail and said "Hey! I know where I saw that pin! Isn't it in the gift-shop over at RnR? I'm pretty sure that's the only place that sells it."

*Toss her in! Toss her in Brother!*

Brother had a plan. Brother *HAD better* have had a plan I was thinking to myself. "Okay, we're out of here! She has got to have that pin." Brother said.

*COME ON! Please toss her in! Just grab her feet and flip! PLEASE!*

"But there's one right there for free!" Brothers wife started whining, pointing into the fountain. Commando Nikki got as far as opening her mouth and putting her finger in the air before Scuba Steve sunburn slapped her.

Scuba Steve instantly went into the slow motion karate moves, keeping eye contact with Commando Nikki shaking his head *NO. Don't do it kid, you don't know how FAST this can get really UGLY.*

Commando Nikki had missed the performance at Discovery Cove. Scuba Steve knew what could happen. He had seen the rage first hand. I think Scuba Steve saved Commando Nikki's neck that day.

He was my hero.

Brother explained to his wife that there was no way to get that pin, give it up. He convinced

her to get into the wheelchair so they could go buy it and started walking in the direction of RnR while his wife continued to whine about that stupid pin.

I was trying to find my happy place, *must find happy place* . I had listened to nothing but negativity all day, I was in Disney, this was not the place for that.

That is what a JOB is for, not a vacation.

So we all start over to RnR and I was walking just behind Brother. '*Get ready*' he mouthed to me.

I was getting giddy. He was going to do something and I was more than ready.

Our crew was all over the place, some behind, some ahead. '*Get them behind me*'. Brother mouthed.

*YES SIR!*

So I had everyone stop for a picture on the street with the TOT right behind them. As soon as I took the picture I looked at the back of my camera and started laughing really loud "Oh look at Em, she's so funny!" as Brother wheeled his wife away. In doing this I knew Beatlebum and Commando Nikki would come running over to see what was so funny and Brothers wife would be less than interested. I whispered to them to stay behind Brother and his wife. I told them to help me get the rest of the crew behind them.

They understood their simple instructions and Commando Nikki went for Scuba Steve pinching him like a mad woman in the back of the arms where it really hurts and Beatlebum was sunburn slapping the heck out of Waldo. This was an unprovoked attack and stopped both of them in their tracks. Em got mixed up in the middle of everyone. This gave Commando Nikki a chance to fill in Scuba Steve that there was a 'plan'.

There, the crew was in their place.

caught back up with Brother who was making small talk with me as we rounded the corner of RnR. As we started heading for the exit where the gift shop, Brother looked back at Scuba Steve.

Brother motioned his head toward the entrance. Scuba Steve and the rest of our crew almost blew it. Okay, I almost blew it, but it was their fault.

They all put up their arms in a limp-wristed position and took those long tippy-toe steps. They were putting their fingers on their lips saying 'shhhhh' and keeping an eye on Brothers wife.

It was Em that made me laugh out loud. She was having trouble with the long tippy-toe steps and opted for bunny hops instead.

*Darn it! I laughed!*

Now I only had a split-second to think of what to do to keep Brothers wife from turning her head and seeing the crew tippy-toeing like that and Em bunny-hopping. We were going to get busted.

So, I tripped over my feet falling forward, swinging my arms trying to catch my balance for about 5 feet. I nearly took out a family of four who were exiting the gift shop.

"Grasshopper in the pathway sis?" Brother asked.

Brother, his wife and I walked up the ramp into the gift shop of RnR. As we went into the entrance, with his wife still complaining, Brother mouthed '*Stay here*'.


*Yes sir!*

Brother and his wife disappeared around the corner with her continuing her power-complaining. I was jumpy from excitement. I knew what he was doing...

*He was escaping!*

Brother came back around the corner alone, walking very fast, looking behind him and punched me in the arm. "It will 20 minutes before she notices we are gone! Run!"

We did, we ran out of the gift shop like the place was on fire. We got yelled at by a CM when we were running for the entrance.

Just like when we were kids! 

Brother stopped and thanked the CM for yelling at us. Brother understood that controlling people traffic was a thankless job and told the CM that.

We did a stiff arm and stiff leg really fast walk, not really running so we didn't get yelled at again, around the corner and up the ramp to the door of RnR.

When we walked in the door my crew and Waldo jumped up and let out a round of applause and whistles, Brother did some deep waist bows. The rest of the people standing there waiting for the doors to open must have thought two celebrities just walked in. We joined the crew and they all gathered around Brother to find out what he did.

"Inside the gift shop there is a place to line up between bars to buy the ride photos. I wedged her in there sideways like sis did to Em in Norway with the stroller. Jammed her in there tight." Brother proudly told them.

***HE DID NOT! HE JUST PARKED HER IN FRONT OF SOMETHING SHINY AND EXPENSIVE THEN RAN!***

Scuba Steve stood there with his mouth wide open in shock staring at Brother. He KNEW because of my history of ride photo purchasing that WE would end up in that line.

"Can you almost HEAR the dial tone coming out his mouth, sis?" Brother asked me while looking at Scuba Steve.

*Brother came to play, Brother came to play!*

We went into the Steven Tyler room so he could arrange for our limo. In here Brother & I saw a lady that looked like our 77 year old mom. Scuba Steve did a double-take.

"You do know this isn't the line for the bathroom, right?" Brother asked her "Or does your family often make attempts on your life?"

The lady giggled, but we could tell she was very nervous. "They don't know it yet, but I have cut them all out of the will." She informed us.

Scuba Steve warned her that there was a crazy lady trapped in the ride photo purchasing line that we didn't know but SHE was scarier than the ride. "Beware the photo purchasing line!" He told her making his best scary faces and putting his fingers in his mouth like he was chewing his fingernails, knocking his knees together.

*I really, really wished brother had trapped her somewhere, but he didn't.*

The kids were pinch-fighting over who was going to sit with Brother. I wasn't involved because I have had past experiences on rides with Brother and he tries to throw you OUT of the ride.

Remember waaayy back when two people sat on top of each other in the car in Space Mountain? I sure do. I'm SURE we are the reason it's one person to a car now.

They *needed* to add to the 'simple instructions' of keeping your arms and legs inside the ride to include FAMILY members.

Brother wanted to ride with me. He asked Scuba Steve if my life-insurance was up-to-date.

HA! Showed him, I don't HAVE life insurance. But even so, it did make me nervous to sit next to him in a fast ride.

Brother has a very bizarre sense of humor.

Beatlebum, Waldo and Commado Nikki shared one car. Brother, myself, Scuba Steve and Em were in another. I stepped in behind brother successfully without tripping.

Yeah, then I put the shoulder harness down.

I grabbed that shoulder harness and pulled it down as hard as I could. This was a very dumb thing to do because I couldn't breath. When those harnesses lock, they aren't moving.

No matter what.

The CM came over to check the bar and I was bugged-eyed. "A little tight?" He asked.

*No, no, not at all, my eyes always stick out this far.*

*No, the harness isn't too tight, Scuba Steve's man-panties just took a twist for the worst.*

The Cm looked over at the other CM and did some sort of CM sign-language. The other CM acknowledged this secret signal and did something that I couldn't see because I was busy being squashed firmly in my seat.

Everyone else's shoulder harness went up but mine.

Terrific, I broke the RnR.

Yet another fun and creative way to have people pay attention to you.

The CM tried the secret sign-language again. It still didn't work.

Don't EVER pull that shoulder harness down too hard. The only way they seemed to be able to unlock it is to *push down harder* on it.

"Are you almost finished creating a scene, sis?" Brother asked.

Yup, just about.

We took off with Brother & I not singing, but SCREAMING 'Love in an elevator'. Brother didn't try to throw me out, but this was his first ride on RnR and I think he was busy with his 'pucker-factor.'

His wife was sitting right there at the exit when we stopped.

## **Part 40, Day 7, 10/8 Stop!**

Brothers wife was less than amused with us. However, Brothers wife really had no clue how long we were gone because the gift shop kept her properly occupied. When the ride stopped we all formed a single-line behind Brother hanging sunburn to sunburn, squatting down trying to hide from the....wife.

Brother is a loving and forgiving person. I don't believe he ever got over the loss of his first wife and he was having a lousy time because he was trying so hard to make this wife happy. There is no way to make her happy, unless she is in a gift shop.

To Brothers wife Disney is nothing more than one big shopping spree and nobody else matters.

The girls and Waldo took off out the door and I was heading for the photo purchasing line. Scuba Steve stayed with me for about a second. He had time to say "Ya know, he *could* have wedged her in here pretty tight." when Brother and his wife showed up behind me. Scuba Steve turned and looked at them, let out an 'EKKK!' noise, jumped backwards and bolted out the door to find the rest of the crew. Brother giggled.

Love ya, mean it.

I had no idea how long I was going to stand in that line. I had completely lost track of the time and Fantasmic was going to start. When I got to the counter for my photos I wanted the special frames to go with them. The CM lady was putting them in their frames when I looked at the time.

1/2 hour before Fantasmic was going to start! *Oh No!*

I told the CM lady to just leave them the way they were, I would take care of it later, I had to go see if we could still get into the show. She told me I had plenty of time to make it to Fantasmic, no problem. No, I kept telling her, the DIS says two hours ahead, you MUST be there two hours ahead of time.

She looked over her glasses at me and asked me if *I* was going to tell *her* if I would make it to the show or not. She was here daily, I was not. She obviously knew more about it than myself and whatever a 'Dis' was and continued to put my frames together, slooowly.

Behind me I could hear Brothers wife saying bad things to Brother. MY BROTHER!

The CM lady *finally* stopped farting around with my pictures and gave me my bag. Brother got his copies very quickly from the other side of the counter, which by the way, WAS to the left and turned out to be much faster.

See, CM lady, the DIS does know!

I was getting pretty wiped out from all this anger-holding-in that I had been doing all day. I was hurrying to catch up with my crew and Brother was right behind me pushing his wife. Scuba Steve and the rest were standing just outside the gift shop and we all started walking stiff-armed and stiff-legged very quickly to the entrance of Fantasmic.

Didn't want to get yelled at by the people traffic controlling CM's.

There, of course, was a rope across the entrance and two CM's directing people-traffic elsewhere.

Brothers wife was sitting in her wheelchair with her head in her hands, moaning and complaining, Brother was dealing with his wife's rotten remarks trying to comfort her, the girls were sunburn-slapping Waldo....

Scuba Steve was the only one who wasn't busy doing something, so I let HIM have it. Scuba Steve and I aren't the kind of people who fight in public. We speak to each other through clenched teeth in a very low tone, using the eye contact to emphasize certain points. Nobody around us was aware we were in the middle of a problem.

The CM people traffic-controller came over to us and asked us when we would be leaving. We smiled and told her, not letting on that we were getting PO'd with each other. She told us her name, (I'm sorry I can't remember, I'll carry a notebook next time) and said she would arrange for us to have special seating for the 9:00 show the following night.

There's a big shot of pixie dust for you.

Scuba Steve and I went back to our clenched-teeth, low-talking, eye-threatening discussion.

Brother was still taking it from his wife.

The girls came over and started to try to play with Scuba Steve. We were still eye-threatening each other and I didn't want to be interrupted so I yelled at the girls to *'Please, go over there and stay there, leave us alone for ONE MINUTE!'*

I *STILL* feel so bad about that.

It took me by surprise too, I had been trying so hard to not blow-up about anything that when I finally DID, it was on the LAST people who had anything to do with any of the problems than had been going on.

*I'm still so SORRY, guys! I really do love you, I really do mean it.*

Enter guilt.

We started walking for the exit and went by the 'Tigger' store. I was feeling so bad about yelling at the girls, (guilt right there slapping me in the forehead) and I tried to get them in for some shopping. Commando Nikki wouldn't go in. Her feelings got hurt pretty bad. *Sorry, sweetie*

Beatlebum, Em and I went in while Scuba Steve stayed outside with Commando Nikki. Brother was heading over to find Scruffy, who was STILL at WWTBAM and head his crew back to POR. Waldo stayed with us.

Waldo found people who only clenched-teeth, low-talked, eye-threaten each other easier to be around.

I found a stuffed Tigger I thought Commando Nikki might like. I handed it to Beatlebum and asked her if she thought Commando Nikki would like it. She said "I don't know, hang on."

Then ran out the door with it to show her sister.

I ran to the door and yelled 'Wait! I have to pay for that!' and the CM just smiled at me. She came right back with Commando Nikki who had thought it funny that her sister 'stole' for her. They found the *cutest* Tigger backpacks that they wanted which guilt was ready to pay for, but Em wanted a one-foot tall Tigger PEZ dispenser. "Can I have it? Can I, can I? *Pleasepleaseplease?*" she asked while bouncing up and down hugging the one-foot tall Tigger Pez dispenser to her cheek.

Guilt told her "Well, if your going to be so cute about it. Yes."

Then she ran out the door to show her father.

I ran back to the door and yelled "You guys do know this isn't the *free* store, right?" The CM was still smiling at me. I told him they all failed shoplifting class in school.

He told me most people there failed shoplifting class.

I collected the girls new fine prizes and gifts and guilt PAID for them. The girls were happy, singing "It's a small world" and pinch-fighting their way back to the exit. Scuba Steve and I were still upset with each other, but nobody needed to know that.

On the bus Commando Nikki decided she wanted to go to Pleasure Island and check out the Comedy Connection. She was feeling like having a laugh or two and thought that would be a good place for that. Waldo and Beatlebum agreed.

Sounded good to guilt, even though I was exhausted but Scuba Steve decided he was going to take Em to the room for the night.

He really didn't have anything to feel guilty about, he was just standing there when I lost it.



When we arrived back at POR Brother was outside and he had a gift for me...

## **Part 41, Day 7, 10/8 Duck!**

Scuba Steve and I were getting bored with the clenched-teeth, low-talking, eye-threatening discussion we were having and decided it would be best to have a 'time-out.' He and Em headed back to the room for the night, Beatlebum and Commando Nikki went back to drop the newest of their fine prizes and gifts, and I stayed outside to talk to Brother.

Brother was holding something in his hand. He told me to open my hand and he put the first pin in it. He explained it like this.

"The first pin is the pin of It's a Small World. Dads favorite ride. This is where we will always be closest to him. Whenever you hear the song or ride the ride, remember back to when we were kids riding it with dad and the way he sang it loud all the way through it."

I laughed and cried at the same time. Dad did sing that song a lot, but pretty loud and off-key. It's a Small World was always the first ride we *had* to go on when we were kids, because 'dad said so.' He would sing the song quite loud and Brother and I would try to lay flat inside the boat because singing out loud wasn't 'cool' back then.

Must be 'cool' now because I tend to do it as an adult, a lot.

He put the second pin in my hand.

"The second pin is the State of Maine with Mickey on it. The State of Maine is where we are from, but Mickey will always be our 'home'. Forever and always." I hugged him as hard as I could. I realized that this would always be my kids 'home' too. Disney will always *change* but it will always be here. Forever. Just like so many of our memories from when my dad was alive down to my kids today and maybe someday my grandkids.

I spent my childhood here and I will spend my golden years here too.

I just don't think I will be as brave as the older lady that looked like my mom at the RnR earlier.

No, on second thought, yeah when I'm old and grey you'll find me singing 'Love in an elevator' at the top of my lungs on RnR with Brother. I hope to have the shoulder harness mastered by then.

Waldo came out of their room and saw the pins in my hand. "Are those the 'blow-up pins'?" He asked Brother.

I flipped them over but didn't find anyway to inflate them or how to detonate them. How do they blow-up? Should I be holding them in my bare hand?

"Yeah, got to go in the room and do some damage control now." Brother said.

Why, had they already blown up? They were in great shape for something so destructive.

Brother disappeared into his room while Commando Nikki, Beatlebum, Waldo and myself headed for the boat dock. I was still concerned about the 'blow-up pins' and what was going to happen. Waldo was watching me pin them to my hat.

"Yeah, my mom sure had herself a fit over those. She didn't like dad buying gifts for another woman. She ranted like a crazed lunatic for quite a while, too. Nope, she's the only woman dad should be buying gifts for according to her. " Waldo told me.

Oh! Brothers WIFE blew up, NOT the pins. Thank goodness that mystery was solved.

Uh,...*huh?* Wait a second.

I'm the 'other woman'?

Ah, she does *KNOW* I am his *SISTER*, right?

I wasn't sure how to handle this new information. I was definitely wishing I didn't *have* this new information. There was just something so *weird* about it.

I pinned my new gifts from my BROTHER right in the front of my hat, so the whole world could see them.

Okay, I pinned my new gifts from my BROTHER to the front of my hat to bug his *confused* wife.

Commando Nikki had beaten us to the boat dock where she was making friends with the Captain of the boat. She knows that is important to be friends with the person driving you over water in Florida because of Florida's history with alligators. Waldo & Beatlebum ran ahead of me to catch up with her to ensure none of us would be eaten that night.

I was cut off by a duck.

I could see the rest of the crew from where I was being held by said duck, I even called over and said "Duck!" but they just kept squatting down looking confused.

They were no help AT ALL.

Now in the State of Maine some people use geese as attack dogs. If you have ever been bitten by a goose, you'd have no idea why this duck was able to prevent me from joining the crew at the dock with their new friend.

I was unsure if ducks bite. Geese bite pretty hard and it's like an atomic pinch from heck when they do. It's not something you easily get over.

I tried to reason with the duck, but he continued to hold me hostage. I told the duck that those kids were about to get on a boat and head to Pleasure Island, I had to go. The duck didn't care. He just stood in front of me wiggling his tail.

I offered the duck cash, threw a nickel over to the side of the path thinking he would follow it. The duck must have known Donald and didn't need any cash or scoffed at me because he

didn't have any pockets.

The kids were getting bouncy again (ugg! I HATE that!) and wanted to know what the hold up was. Just for the record, it's not TOTALLY humiliating to have to yell back "I can't get around this duck! He won't let me pass!"

Waldo saved me, because he is a proper, polite, southern gentlemen. He put up his arms and stomped his feet back to me to scare away the stupid hostage-holding duck.

Dumb terrorist duck.

We all boarded the boat with only one other couple. The Captain announced that we would arrive at the Marketplace in about 25 minutes if we didn't run into any alligators.

*What? Don't run into them! Would we sink if we did run into one and is the duck following us and oh, yeah by the way, I can't swim, what exactly am I doing on a boat?*

Commando Nikki put her elbow on the rail of the boat. "Arms in! Arms in!" I yelled at her and moved over to her side of the boat to pulled her arm in almost yanking her to the floor.

I thought I had seen a show once that had alligators jumping up in the air for meat dangling from a rope. They could have been crocodiles, I don't know what the difference is but I am from Maine and we don't have ANYTHING that is considered a people eater.

Except mosquitoes.

The boat ride turned into a full-time job of protecting these ding-a-lings from having their limbs bitten off and way too much fun teasing me about this unproven fear of jumping gators or crocs.

"Don't make me pull this boat over!" the smiling Captain told us.

I almost fainted at the thought.

We arrived at the Marketplace with everyone's limbs still intact. I was so happy to be on solid land and farrrr away from the terrorist duck that I hugged the Captain.

I was taking the bus back.

We walked forever to the turnstile of Pleasure Island. The kids received a hand stamp on the inside of their wrist. I was carded even though I wasn't drinking. I was not allowed a wrist-stamp, old folk like myself MUST have a hand stamp and wrist band. It's really a good plan, keeps the minors from 'accidentally' being served.

When I was a minor I was 'accidentally' served quite a bit. Got it out of my system then.

I was tired and missing Scuba Steve. I felt bad NOW, which did me no good because he was across that duck/gator/croc river which I had previously dubbed unsafe. Yeah, I really showed him, I was going to have my tired butt dragged over Pleasure Island..

By teenagers who have never been 'clubbing'. That's what they said anyway.

We picked up a few things on the way to the Comedy Connection, some t-shirts, key chains, magnets, pretty girls...

Well Waldo picked up the pretty girls.

During the 10 minutes we waited outside for the next show to start, there was a band playing on stage and lots of 'merry people'. I was suddenly very grateful to Waldo for being a proper southern gentleman and escorting the girls and I for the evening.

We stayed this close at all times to Waldo. This scared off his pretty girls, but he was okay about it. He's such a great guy.

We enjoyed the Comedy Connection, the kids had some sodas and pretzels I had a virgin raspberry daiquiri with whipped cream.

Have you ever picked up a cup you thought was a lot lighter than it really is? I wasn't paying attention and the cup slipped from my hand, hit the table and sprayed whipped cream all over me and Beatlebum, who screamed.

*Okay, the comedians are over there. Nothing to see here.*

After the show, I was dragged over to the Surf club. Waldo & I air-guitared with pool sticks the Metallica song 'Enter Sandman' to the embarrassment to the girls. Waldo was impressed that I knew the song, you know, someone MY age knew a Metallica song.

No, Scuba Steve knew the Metallica song, I had only heard it 10,000 times over the years.

We headed outside for the new years party, and missed it. There was a very pretty nurse walking around with syringes filled with Jello shots and for some reason the kids wanted me to drink one *really* bad. Waldo kept trying to put \$5.00 in my hand to buy one. Beatlebum and Commando Nikki, who was holding a camera, were on each side of me begging me to drink one.

Seriously, peer pressure? Are you kidding me?

I apologized to the pretty nurse and sent her on her way explaining to her I was afraid of needles and would have no use for her services.

I had to *drag* those kids to the bus. They didn't want to leave the big-time fun we were having clubbing. I was ready to go back and kick the heck out of the terrorist duck and find out what Scuba Steve did with his evening.

He spent it sleeping. Yep, I really showed him, I did.

It wasn't until the next morning that I found out about the separation.

## Part 42, Day 8, 10/9 More lessons to learn

I had only seen Commando Nikki sleep once and that was on the monorail five days ago. She's just always wide awake in Disney, ready to go, blowing that stinking whistle.

Scuba Steve and Em were up early. They had gotten plenty of sleep the night before while I was being trapped by a terrorist duck and peer pressured in Pleasure Island by the other ones. Beatlebum and I were the 'difficult ones' to get up, moaning and groaning making the death threats.

My arms were soar from *dragging* Commando Nikki and Waldo to the bus stop by their arms the night before. They weren't finished 'clubbing' and fought me all the way to the bus. Beatlebum will just follow me anywhere, she loves her mom.

While I was receiving my mandatory morning cup of coffee from Commando Nikki, Scuba Steve looked me and asked, "Do you know where my lighter is?"

Translation: "Are we still mad at each other, because I don't want to be."

My answer was, "Yeah, in your hand, wolf boy. You need to shave."

Translation: "We're good, I'm over it and I'm sorry."

Scuba Steve and I went to sit outside to think about what we are were going to do that day, while the girls were getting showered and ready. Commando Nikki was not pleased with us because we should have had that figured out last night.

Scuba Steve and I were having an eye-fight last night; we weren't planning anything except ways to torture each other.

Epcot was out because it was closing early for a media event and we weren't invited. That was going to push people into MK. I knew it would, I did my research on the DIS before I left Maine. So, MK was out. I wanted to try again to see Fantasmic so we were going to go to MGM later in the day.

Brother came out of his room to join us. He asked us what our plans were for the day. Typhoon Lagoon was looking pretty good. "Perfect!" He said, "She wants to go sunbathing today, we'll met you there."

Great see you in four hours. You and the *confused* wife of yours.

Commando Nikki came outside to finalize the day's events. Scuba Steve and I knew she wasn't happy that valuable time had been wasted with the showers and getting dressed to go to a water park.

There are showers at the water park according to her; you can even go in your pajamas as an extra time saver.

Ah, it's one thing to go to the food court in blue duck pajamas, it is quite another thing to board a bus in them.

We were inside our room packing supplies for Typhoon Lagoon when Brother knocked at the

door. "You forgot something out here." He said to me and tried to hand me some kind of strange praying-mantis looking florescent green bug. The color threw me off because I started to put my hand out for it to examine it closer and in a split second realized what it was because it wiggled.

*ACK!! It wiggled!!*

I was trying to slam the door on him to get away from him and his creepy, crawly wiggling friend when I tripped backwards over the trundle bed, took out Em on the way, and landed on my butt. I was using my feet to try to close the door screaming to Scuba Steve to save me.

He didn't.

He loves me, he means it.

I threatened Brother with tampons to get him and his wiggly friend out of my room and I returned Em to her original upright standing position. Em wanted to know what a tampon was and that caused Scuba Steve to run from the room, screaming.

Remember guys, you have to FIND bugs; I can BUY tampons by the truckload. I win.

We successfully made it the bus stop without any terrorist duck interference which I was grateful for. When we boarded the bus, Commando Nikki pointed out the fact that the driver was wearing his pajamas, 'why couldn't we? Think of the time we would save'.

Uh, no dear, the drivers' uniforms are purple pants. Those are not his pajamas.

After some lovely skin-to-skin contact with strangers we arrived at Typhoon Lagoon. The selling points of Typhoon Lagoon for us were the shark-swimming tanks and the wave pool.

We really like the wave pool.

One odd thing I noticed was each time the wave pool made that big whoosh sound to start the wave, lots of people scream like they are on TOT.

It's just a whoosh sound. I ask you, why do people scream at that? The wave barely started. And they do it every time.

Pay attention the next time you go. It's really weird.

I didn't go above my waist. Well, I couldn't go above my waist, I'd have drowned. There were some interesting lessons learned that day. The only real lesson learned is one learned the HARD way.

Lesson one of Typhoon Lagoon: If you can't go underwater without holding your nose, do not stand directly in front of an oncoming wave. Gallons of water will be driven forcefully up your nostrils.

Lesson two of Typhoon Lagoon: It is funny to have your crew stand up to their waist with their backs to the on coming wave to take a picture when you first arrive. The picture you get of their screaming faces is one you will cherish a life time. (\*pending photo\*)

Lesson three of Typhoon Lagoon: It is not a good idea to face your spouse and have your head directly in front of your spouses head during an oncoming wave. Your heads will knock together.

Lesson four of Typhoon Lagoon: Attempting to throw a six year old into an oncoming wave *will* get you kicked in the head.

Lesson five of Typhoon Lagoon: Beware! Park photographers everywhere with waterproof photo id bands so you buy the photos later!

Lesson six of Typhoon Lagoon: If you weigh over 100 lbs. your butt is going to drag on the ground when the family raft ride comes to an end.

Lesson seven of Typhoon Lagoon: The only way to keep your bathing suit from wedging into your bum is to stay *off* the slide.

After learning our lessons we had worked up quite an appetite and went to the sandwich shack place for food. The only thing we ate the day before was hot dogs or turkey legs, depending on who you asked, at MGM and pretzels at Pleasure Island.

Ah, because my children require less food the closer to the equator that they get.

While we were eating I checked my cell phone to see if Brother called and he hadn't. I filled Scuba Steve in on Brother's *confused* wife.

Then Scuba Steve was confused. He thought it was a joke and sat waiting for the punch line. The girls went for a float around the lazy river and I got sick of waiting for Brother to call me so I called him.

He wasn't coming because she changed her mind about sunbathing and decided to go back to the Marketplace instead. He was busy standing outside holding bags. He was thinking he might be holding bags at the MK gift shops a little later.

*What a coincidence, we were going to the MK as soon as we left Typhoon Lagoon.*

We said our love ya, mean it's and hung up. I told Scuba Steve we were going to MK as soon as we left here. He thought we were going to MGM for Fantasmic, just shows he doesn't pay attention.

The girls came back and we walked over to the shark tanks. Commando Nikki dropped me and Scuba Steve off in the smoking area where we found lounge chairs and had a nap.

Commando Nikki reported back that during the shark swim Em panicked half way across when she saw the sharks and was screaming through her snorkel.

Have you ever heard a snorkel scream? It makes the life guards jump in with you.

We finished up our Typhoon Lagoon day by spending ½ hour in the photo purchasing line. We ended up with a lot of waterproof photo id bands. I bought 2 packages and frames that Scuba Steve had to carry. We were leaving the next day, no more sending them back to the room. That's a horrible feeling when you can't do that anymore.

We rode the bus back to POR to drop off and pick up stuff. The girls knew we were going to

MK and when we stepped off the bus at POR they started begging us to let them go ahead to MK. I was reluctant but Commando Nikki is almost 18 and a very responsible girl. So I let them go with the understanding that we would meet at the exit of Buzz Light-year.

Scuba Steve and I ran to the room to drop everything off and pick up the other 10 pounds of stuff we feel we MUST always carry and caught the next bus. On the way over I called Brother to let him know we were on our way to MK. We met up with the girls at the exit of Buzz light-year and waited for Brother to call and let me know he arrived.

Ah, yeah, Brothers *confused* wife changed her mind again. She was heading for MGM instead.

## **Part 43, Day 8, 10/9 Bunching up with strangers**

When Scuba Steve and I arrived at MK and went through the turnstiles, I told him he needed to rent a stroller for Em. I saw how Em was bowlegged walking behind Commando Nikki when they got on their bus. There was a small souvenir shop next to the stroller rental and I was headed in there.

Scuba Steve was following me. I stopped and told him again that he needed a stroller for Em. He continued to follow me. "What are you doing? Go get a stroller." I told him. He didn't think we should be pushing an empty stroller around, because what would people think?

*What would people think? Ah, that you have a child that requires a stroller maybe?*

I told him I would put the camera bag in the stroller and he could push that around.

He got *funny* about that. It was somehow worse to be pushing around a camera bag in a stroller than to be pushing an empty stroller. Now people would either think we lost our child, OR that we were *SO* lazy that we had to rent a stroller to push around a camera bag.

I told him if it made him feel better, I would be happy to squeeze my butt in the stroller with the camera bag and he could push me. He thought that was a pretty good plan; however HE wanted to be the one in the stroller.

The scary thing is I actually thought that sounded pretty funny and was thinking about DOING it.

I think I had too much water driven up my nostrils at Typhoon Lagoon.

He did finally go rent his poor 'wrashy' daughter a stroller while I went and made friends with the souvenir shop CM. He asked me if we were there to see the premier of 'Wishes.'

Oh, forgot about that! I knew Epcot closed early for a media event that they didn't invite US to, and that because of that people would be driven to MK. I had completely forgotten about 'Wishes' and that had to quadruple the amount of people I thought were going to be in MK.



I was so right. There were people everywhere. I personally have been to Disney 17 times over my lifetime, but I had never seen so many people in MK in my life. There were people in huge bunches around the map stands, crowding into city hall, jammed around pin carts, squashed into gift shops, mobs of people in the streets, just everywhere.

The really great thing, nobody seemed to have a sad face on. On our walk to the exit of Buzz I saw kids smiling at their dads for buying them a balloon, couples with their arms around each other to have their photos in front of the castle, grandparents holding hands walking down Main Street, people licking ice cream as it melted down the cone, parents resting on a bench while their kids visited the characters, laughing, smiling, happy people every place I looked.

Tinkerbelle must have been working overtime.

Scuba Steve & I found the girls right away at the exit of Buzz and we weren't expecting that. They hadn't gone on any rides because of the lines for every ride was unbelievable and my kids have barely ever stood in a line. They weren't sure of the line standing procedure.

We don't stand in lines, we just don't. I could never keep the crew under control for that long. I can barely keep them calm on a bus, never mind standing in a line.

I called Brother and told him to avoid MK, head for MGM. That's when I found out they were already headed to MGM so he could stand outside gift shops and hold bags there.

I let it go. I kept my mouth shut.

The crew and I gave up any hope for MK. I told them in a few hours as soon as 'wishes' ended all these people would be heading to the same buses we were.

That's a lot of skin-to-skin contact. *The horror!*

The girls were whining about being hungry again, even though I fed them a meal earlier that day. We really wanted to go to Paco Bills but the crowd fighting with a stroller is just too far out of our league so we went to the closest place to Buzz, Cosmic Rays.

Cosmic Rays was packed with happy people.

Commando Nikki Beatlebum and I stood in line to order food while Em and Scuba Steve parked the stroller in the stroller parking lot. I really didn't think we had a chance of getting a table with all the people in there and was preparing the crew for the possibility of eating standing up. We figured if we only bought one drink, we could pass it around the circle while we took turns eating. Kind of a chew & hold, take a drink, pass & bite.

I could have worked.

But, it happened to be a very 'happy people' day in Disney. As we started walking into the dining room near the piano-playing alien ah,....thing there was an older gentleman and his family who stopped us and offered us their table. He was even using his napkin to wipe it up for us.

This was very Disney-like behavior.

Commando Nikki was pleased. Disney-like behavior is very important to her. She was

constantly pointing out different people and if they were conducting themselves in the proper Disney-like behavior. Commando doesn't mean just sucking every second that the parks are open, it means behaving with a live-out-loud, play nice and have fun attitude.

We finished eating, sitting down with own personal beverages, returned the table offer to another family and thought we'd try to go on the Haunted Mansion. Commando Nikki, Beatlebum and I waited outside the door while Scuba Steve & Em went to gather the stroller from the stroller parking lot.

He was gone so long; I thought he went back to Maine without us.

When they finally did appear I asked Scuba Steve what happened, because I KNEW something happened. Apparently there was a pile up in the stroller parking lot and it was quite a struggle first finding it because they all look alike then getting it out around the pile up. There were a lot of staring people, but no helping people.

I was glad I missed it.

On the very long and slow walk to the HM we stopped and took some silly photos. The kind of photos you take of your kids standing in front of signs, rides and other stuff. There were a lot of people doing the same thing and everyone was being great about taking turns. My girls decided to make a game out of it by assuming the leaning forward, crooked arms, ready position to wait for other people to get their pictures.

As soon as other people got their pictures and it was our turn Commando Nikki would hop up, swing her arm forward yelling 'GO, GO, GO!' to Beatlebum and Em who would run in front of what ever it was, assume an odd position, yelling 'POSE, POSE, POSE!' while I took the picture and *OUT! OUT! OUT!* then run back to me.

The entire process takes about 5 seconds.

We had a lot of people doing the same thing after that. It was fun.

Your going to do it now, aren't you?

It was taking us forever to get across the park through Fantasyland. Fantasyland seems to have a gigantic stroller magnet under it because that's where they all were. We saw even more strollers being drawn to it.

At one point Scuba Steve and Em got ahead of the rest of us and when Commando Nikki spotted him she would run up to him arms and legs swinging, screaming '*Daddy, daddy I found you!*' That turned out to be a good way to keep Scuba Steve from wandering off.

We got lucky when we finally got to HM. The line went from 30 minutes to nothing just as we were walking over to it. Em isn't a big fan of HM because at the end of the ride there was a ghost in our car and he was always sitting on her. It really made her mad.

We were pleased that we got on HM and figured it was time to get to MGM. It was tricky staying together heading down Main Street and one lady said something nasty to us about having such a big kid in a stroller. Beatlebum heard it and was a little upset about it. I told her the lady didn't know about the 'wrash' and if she did she probably would have been more understanding.

One person said something nasty in a park packed with 10,000 people. Pretty good Disney day, I think.

There was some trouble with the monorail on the way to TTC (Ticket & Transportation Center). Not a people problem, an Em problem. There were still zillions of people packing into the park for 'wishes' and very few leaving. Commando Nikki was holding Em's hand on the way down the ramp towards the buses and suddenly Em ripped away, nearly knocking Commando Nikki over backwards and ran back up to the monorail. She was trying to hide behind people to get back on.

I honestly was stunned. This is not something Em would do, ever. I didn't realize how much that kid loved the monorail. Scuba Steve yelled for her to come back and she did for a second then changed her mind and ran back up the ramp. He had to chase after her to get her to come back.

It was not like her at all.

I think she had too much water driven up her nostrils at Typhoon Lagoon.

I didn't call Brother until we got to the turnstiles at MGM.

## **Part 44, Day 8, 10/9 Brother, where are you?**

If Brother's *confused* wife felt she had to keep Brother & I apart, she was in a lot worse shape than I thought. It was hard not to give Brother a hard time about his life, but it was HIS life and if he wanted to try to make her happy then it's really none of my business. It wasn't me she was making mad, it was Brother.

I was willing to follow him all over the 47 square miles of Disney World. It was the world largest game of hide and seek.

I called Brother as soon as we stepped off the bus at MGM. I wasn't giving his confused wife a head start again. By the time the crew & I got through the turnstiles Brother and Waldo were standing there waiting. They were so happy to see us that I thought they would drop to their knees and cry. Brother hugged me hard enough to crack a rib.

Apparently there had been a great deal of un-Disney-like power-complaining and they needed a break.

Waldo greeted Beatlebum with a pinch, and then held out his arm for his return pinch because he is a polite southern gentleman. Beatlebum rolled her eyes at him because she had to explain the rules of 'pinch-fighting' again to Waldo. Beatlebum power-pinched Waldo as a lesson *NOT* to LET someone pinch him.

He's a fast learner.

That bruises easily.

Brother was pushing an empty wheelchair because his confused wife decided she needed to go in the gift shop on their way over to meet us. I guess she thought if Brother didn't have her in the chair he wouldn't leave the gift shop and he'd wait for her.

She was not only mistaken, she was pretty mad when we went back to get her. I was pretty sure I heard her growl when she got back in the wheelchair. I nudged Brother and asked him why we came back to get her and he said;

"Three people to the left."

'Three people to the left' was something we used to say when we were teenagers and wanted to lose our parents in MK. You wait until your family is in the middle of a fairly good crowd and just step three people to the left. Presto! You're free.

\*\* Note to teenagers: Don't try this at home; you WILL make your parents very mad. This could earn you the *mother* of all sunburn slaps. \*\*

We were doing it to Brother's confused wife so we could get on RnR without having to listen to her complain on the way. She thought we were heading for another gift shop.

Isn't it always better to avoid the complaining if you can?

When we got to the intersection of RnR & TOT, found a good sized crowd forming for Fantasmic, Brother pointed his wife's wheelchair back down the street towards the bright lights of a gift shops and we all stepped three people to the left.

If you do the math it was really more like 21 people to the left, but you get the idea.

Brother and I just had to ride RnR one more time before we left. We knew it was the last time we would be in MGM so it was now or never. We all walked very quickly stiff-legged and stiffed-armed to the entrance of RnR so to not upset any CM's. When we got into the holding room before Steven Tyler's studio we were told there would be a small wait before we could go in.

I knew what happened, someone else pulled the shoulder harness down too hard like I did and the CM's were doing their secret hand code calling him an idiot.

We enjoyed our last ride on RnR, looping under the Hollywood sign with Brother & I singing at the top of our lungs, Em screaming 'ya-hoo' and Scuba Steve puckering.

I bought the ride photos but I did it quickly, I didn't want to miss Fantasmic again. This was the last chance we had to see it. We were lucky that there were two shows that night and the CM outside directing people-traffic told me the first show didn't fill up and he was positive that this one wouldn't either.

Yeah, that's because everyone was bunched up in MK for the premier of 'Wishes'. I bet there wasn't one stroller left in the stroller garage.

People began group-lining up for the next show. There were small groups of people in a nice line heading down the street. That makes one very wide line and very easy to step 'three people to the left', which Waldo did and we lost him. He apparently never went further than 'three people to the left' because he just showed up later and knew everything that had happened.

Sometimes Waldo just doesn't understand our little games.

Brother's wife got out of the wheelchair and was looking around for something sweet. We were standing 10 feet from an ice cream cart, but that wasn't good enough; she needed something 'sweeter.' She knew of a chocolate shop not far and tried to convince Brother to go with her to buy some candy. Brother got upset and tried to get her to see the group-line forming behind us.

Brother ended up following her to the chocolate shop to keep her from throwing a temper tantrum in front of the kids. He was getting a little LOUD himself because I think he had enough of her games.

The group-line started moving about 10 minutes after they left and we had the empty wheelchair. This was freaking me out because we had never pushed a wheelchair around Disney and I was terrified that we would be ushered to the wheelchair reserved area and take up room from someone else and their family that needed the area. I had no idea if they had a stroller parking lot that we could dump it in and was thinking about leaving it right there in the street. I went down the group-line up a little bit and found a family that was pushing a stroller to find out if there was a stroller parking lot ahead.

There is. They really need to mark that on the maps.

Em got in the wheelchair because her 'wrash' was acting up and we can't be pushing an empty stroller never mind a whole wheelchair. She rode in it until we were down the pathway and in the stroller-parking lot. I called Brother thinking they had to be right behind us, not far.

They were in the candy store that is at the END of the street. Brother was standing outside watching the end of the group-line go in the entrance.

Well, thank *God* she got her candy.

The crew and I were heading to the stadium and stopped at the soda & beer stand which is located right next to the light up toys stand. I got the girls a soda and Scuba Steve a beer and we were chatting with the CM's working the stands. They were very nice and telling Commando Nikki about the college programs offered at Disney. We were talking for a few minutes when someone came up behind me and pushed me over sideways.

I looked at the soda & beer stand CM and told him I had just been assaulted by someone I didn't recognize. He looked similar to someone I grew up with but I just couldn't place him.

Brother shoved me sideways again harder and almost knocked me over.

Love ya, mean it.

Scuba Steve had made a break for the smoking area with the girls. Brother, his confused wife and I followed them over. While Brother, Scuba Steve & I were talking the girls were running for a trash can to spit something out.

Problem girls?

Brother's wife had given them some bizarre chocolate and they hated it. She got upset with

them for spitting it out. Commando Nikki got upset with her because they didn't want it in the first place. The girls took it because Brother's wife was getting mad at them and *forced* them to take it.

That's what peer-pressure will get you, a bad taste in your mouth every time.

We decided to get into our seats for the show with Commando Nikki leading the way. We were pretty close to the front and center when we turned around and saw Brother and his wife were gone.

That was fine; at least we were finally in the same park.

Fantasmic was outstanding with great music, the walls of water with movies playing on them, the wall of fire from the dragon, the character boat with the signing and dancing. I missed most of it because I went down the bleachers a few seats ahead of us, turned back around and took pictures of the girls' wide-eyed open mouthed faces.

I'll catch it the next time we go.

The show ended and we made our way up the bleachers. At the top we found a very angry Brother. I tried to shrug it off for his sake, but he was really irritated with his wife at that point.

Yeah, know how you feel.

The girls had wanted to buy charm bracelets since the first day. I was afraid if we didn't do that then, they wouldn't get them at all because we were leaving the following day.

Another terrible feeling right behind not being able to send your packages back to your room is awful feeling knowing it's time to tie up your loose end stuff while you still have the chance.

We were heading to the gift shops right on the corner heading to the exit to get the girls their bracelets. Much to everyone's surprise Brother's wife finally had enough shopping and wanted to go straight back to the room.

"Raise your hand if you did not see that coming." Scuba Steve said to the crew loud enough for Brother's wife to hear it. Nobody did.

Brother and I said our 'Love ya, mean it's, see you back at the room' and they left.

Scuba Steve found himself a bench to sit on in front of the gift shop. Waldo appeared out of nowhere and sat down next to him. Scuba Steve did that raised eyebrows, eyes wide open shocked look at him.

Brother and his wife forgot something. Waldo!

"Where have you been?" Scuba Steve asked him. His answer was "'Three people to the left' until it was safe."

Waldo was a very bright boy.

The girls were picking out the charms for their bracelets. Em wanted a monorail charm but

we couldn't find one. Em also had about 20 charms at \$3.00 each and I had to get her to put a lot of them back. I let her spell out her name and put on a few princesses.

I hope who ever found her bracelet that she lost on the way back to POR was also named Emily.

We were in the gift shop for so long they started closing the store around us. Commando Nikki was stalling because she knew when we left to go back to POR we had to pack. She stood around talking to the CM's in there for another 15 minutes about the college program.

Commando Nikki was deep into packers' denial.

Scuba Steve and I had to drag her by each arm out of MGM. She kept trying to sit down on her butt because she didn't want to leave and she sure as heck didn't want to pack. Waldo was busy fighting off Em who was swinging her bag at him because she wanted to go back to POR by the monorail.

Em fell asleep on the bus ride back leaning on Waldo. Bag swinging takes a lot out of a kid.

When we got back to POR, Brother was outside waiting. He had the same surprised look on his face as Scuba Steve did when Waldo came walking up with us. Brother looked at his door and back at Waldo like he could have sworn he just saw him or something.

"Lose someone Brother?" I asked him. Waldo was always so quite and cooperative that he would be easy to overlook with all that complaining going on. I believe if we were driving back to Maine instead of flying Waldo would have popped out of our backseat around Pennsylvania.

Brother knew that the MK was the plans for our last day. We start and finish our vacation in MK. It's our hello and good-bye to Disney World. We made plans to have our pictures taken in the wooden shackles in liberty square and for our last ride on IASW.

Then we all went into our rooms to pack and prepare for Brothers wife's grand finale.

## **Part 45, Day 9, 10/10 Brother's wife's final performance**

The final morning of our vacation I know we were all laying there awake before Mickey called us. There was another round of African barking spider attacks from Em's side of the room, Em's a bit gassy early in the morning, which caused Commando Nikki to start stifling a giggle that was shaking their bed. The more she shook the bed, the more that Beatlebum would say *'shhhhh'*.

I heard Commando Nikki whisper to Beatlebum, "The second wave has been launched Captain."

The phone rang and nobody would move to answer it. It was kind of sad to hear it ring for the last time and I think that Commando Nikki wanted to believe if we didn't answer it we wouldn't have to leave. Commando Nikki was also irritated that we were leaving earlier than

we ever had. Normally we stay at least 10 days in Disney and 2 days in Universal.

I made the plans around what Brother and his wife could do, which was nine days in October instead of twelve days in December that I had originally planned. Scuba Steve was really upset about it, my mistake, it will never happen again. He was even more upset when he figured out it was only Friday and we were leaving while we still had two days still off from work.

*Sorry, sorry, sorry.*

The girls were getting ready and finishing their packing while Scuba Steve and I went outside to visit Brother. Brother, Waldo and Scruffy were loading the rented van. Scruffy had bought 4 tires from the Richard Petty Driving Experience while Brother and Waldo had taken out not six, not seven, *BUT EIGHT* double wide wheelchair-bag filled loads of stuff to re-sell back home to the van *plus* luggage for four people.

Well, if I had seen how much stuff his wife was buying I could have told them that Disney is happy to mail stuff to your home for you. Brother told me that they were all going to have to ride home with a ton of stuff piled in their laps. Well, everyone except Brother who would be going the driving.

That could make for an uncomfortable ride. Guess they should have spent less time shopping.

Brother and I had a good giggle over that one.

They were still trying to figure out a way to get everything in the van, saying it was too bad they couldn't tie things to the roof. I volunteered the bungee cords from my truck and started to walk off. Brother asked me how I got my truck on the plane.

I stopped dead in my tracks and thought, [/I]Oh, yeah. I forgot the State of New Hampshire owned my truck now because I sure couldn't remember where I parked it.[/I]

Gee, I wonder how far I would have walked before I remember that.

Ah, where *was* I going?

Scuba Steve & I went back to our room to finish our moving out. While we were packing and celebrating the suitcase with the suitcase in it we could hear the muffled argument next door. I turned up the TV that was playing the Disney channel to drown it out because it started to get real loud.

Scuba Steve was rearranging things into different suitcases and pulled out a brand new 4 pack of ladies panties that I had bought the morning of our trip.

Now I had to explain to my darling husband why I had been wearing his 'panties' when I had my own. The problem was that I couldn't explain it. I had no idea why HE could find them but I couldn't. That had NEVER happened before. When he found them he said they weren't in the underwear compartment of the suitcase so I told him he better check and see if the cordless phone from the house was in there.

You can never tell.



The muffled argument was back in full swing next door while we were finishing up. I heard the door slam and what ever the problem was then was at least over.

The girls decided it was safe to take their luggage outside the door and wait. I could hear Commando Nikki outside mad over something, but figured I'd deal with that as soon as I was done. Scuba Steve gathered up the rest of the luggage and took it outside while I checked the room to see if anything got left behind. I checked everything in the room, between the sheets, inside the pillowcases, in all the drawers, EVERYTHING several times. I was on my third round of 'under the beds check' when Brother came in the room.

I could tell by the look on his face there was a BIG problem. I asked him if they were about ready to go to MK. We had to go say our good-bye to Disney, ride IASW and have our picture taken in the Liberty Square shackles. I have one from when we were kids and I needed this one as adults to go with it.

Brother wouldn't be going to MK. Seems his *confused* wife had other plans. Brothers' wife wanted to spend one precious day with Waldo and Scruffy and go to the marketplace to pick up a few things she overlooked. She had also decided they would be spending the weekend in Florida after all.

THAT'S what Commando Nikki was outside yelling about, that we arranged our vacation to accommodate them and now they were talking about staying. I figured she was just out there having a sister problem.

That could've gotten very ugly.

Brother said that HE decided that they would be spending some quality time with Waldo and Scruffy, you bet. In a van headed for Tennessee. He knew with the way she was behaving she would ruin our last day for everyone. He didn't want to do that to the kids. I didn't want that either and I knew how mad Brother was that he had to go. There was no way he was spending another minute with her in Florida and was at the point that he wouldn't even plan to go to the grocery store with her back home, never mind the Marketplace.

I was heartbroken, I wasn't supposed to be saying good-bye to him for several hours, and we had things to do. I thought they all lived in the same state, why couldn't they get together and spend time when they got back home?

That was what had make Brother so mad, they not only lived in the same state, they lived in the same house.

*OH!*

Yeah, GOOD PLAN put your confused wife in the van; pile a bunch of really heavy stuff nice and high on her, and go back home NOW. I couldn't deal with it anymore, wouldn't deal with it anymore and I wasn't putting my family though that on their last day.

I didn't want their finally memory of Disney World to be their mother being thrown out of MK because she finally snapped and beat the selfish out of someone sitting in a wheelchair.

Brother and I were sitting on the bed when we heard his wife calling for him. My stomach hurt from holding in tears because I really didn't want to make it harder for Brother than it already was. We talked about coming back to Disney next year, minus the wife, if the wife was even around then which was unlikely. My instructions were to call the day before we

left Maine, Brother and Waldo would step 'three people to the left' and meet us here.

Brother and I went out to where everyone else was; the girls were hugging Waldo and saying their good-byes while Brothers' wife stood there with her arms crossed. Brother shook Scuba Steve's hand and turned to hug me.

We hugged and cried, but we had a plan and this wouldn't be our last trip to Disney. This was our test run. Everything was going to be okay, but I still hurt for Brother.

Brother just glared at his wife who walked over to me and said "I bought you something." and put a pin in my hand.

Scuba Steve, Brother and I almost *died* from shock. It was a 'best friends' pin. I didn't know what to say without being hateful, so I kept my mouth shut. Brother helped me out and said "Hey, now *YOU* have a pin to trade." She handed a second pin to Scuba Steve; it was a V pin, for the first initial of his first name.

Ah, that's Del, not Vel. Nice to meet you.

So, what do you say to that, 'Oh, thanks that makes up for everything?'

Scuba Steve and I were afraid of causing a scene right there in front of the girls if we tried to hand them back to her, I think it was because we are little unsure of her instability so we just smiled and said 'Ah, Thanks?' and left it at that.

Brother's wife marched off to the van, I think because she was upset we didn't give her something. Who knows or cares? Bye-bye for her.

Pack her in the van good and tight with the five figures worth of stuff she just *had* to buy.

Scruffy came over to shake our hands, said something that we were afraid to respond to, but still did our squinty-eyed, mouth opened, head tilting, translation faces. Scruffy smiled and went in the opposite direction of the van.

I still have no idea what became of Scruffy, never saw him again.

Waldo was doing the '*I don't know which direction I need to go in*' dance stepping back and forth between Scuba Steve and I and the direction of the van where his mother went stomping off to. Waldo wanted to stay with us and we wanted him to stay, but that couldn't happen. I felt so bad for Waldo. He ran to me, hugged me very hard saying "*Thank you, thank you*", turned around and disappeared around the corner to the van.

Don't worry Waldo, 'Three people to the left' in one year.

Bye sweetie.

Brother hugged me again and we said our good-byes. The girls had tears running down their faces because they didn't want him to leave. He hugged them and told them he loved them.

He stood up and said to me 'Love ya, mean it' and walked off around the corner whistling the song 'It's a small world', from dads' favorite ride in Disney.

Bye Brother, Love ya, mean it, 'Three people to the left' in one year.

## **Part 46, The final day.**

I was trying NOT to cry when Brother left as we dragged our ¼ ton of stuff to the lobby, but I wasn't doing a very good job of it. Em rubbed my leg and said "I know Wobin, I miss my brother too." When she said that, I *really* started to cry. Scuba Steve hugged me and told me we would just start over saving again and come back next year.

And stay as long as we want to and NOT leave on a Friday when we still had two days off from work. He thought we were leaving early because I had to work on Saturday.

Ah, yeah, I'd leave Disney a day early to go home and deliver pizza. Could let people go hungry, could I? I sunburn slapped Scuba Steve just for being that numb.

Commando Nikki, Beatlebum & I went to the front desk to check out while Scuba Steve and Em sat in front of the TV in the lobby with the luggage. Chuck & Dave were on TV and Em was very excited about that. She tried to get some other kids in the lobby to come over and see Chuck & Dave in action.

Beatlebum buried her head in my shoulder and asked me to please buy some Chip & Dale videos for Em before we ended up banned from Disney forever.

After I checked us out and paid the bill, (*ho-my-gawd, how many ride photos did I buy?!?*) we dropped our luggage off in the luggage holding room. Commando Nikki didn't want to waste what little time we had left riding a bus so she had already called for a cab and was holding the door open when I turned around.

Did you know you can save 4-5 valuable minutes by cab?

We climbed into our waiting cab and Em started shivering. "B-b-boy, it's-s p-pretty c-c-chilly in here." The driver had the air conditioner on full-blast and it was cold. For the first time the girls didn't scream about skin-to-skin contact.

When I had spoken to my mom back in Maine earlier that morning, she was scrapping frost off her windshield. I was more than happy to be in a chilly cab.

We arrived at TTC for our final monorail ride. Em wasn't happy to hear that it was the last ride and started to cry. I told her it wasn't her last ride *forever*, we'd be back. When we stopped to get off she hugged the center bar inside the car and said "I love you monorail, I'll see you again soon. Wobins' bringing me back at Christmas next year."

Yep, you bet.

Santa's got a lot of over-time to work this year.

Scuba Steve loves the train ride around the park and we hadn't done that yet so that's the

first place we went. He wasn't happy when we got off at the first stop in frontier land, but we needed to get fast passes for splash mountain and the girls were '*starving to death and wasting away to nothing*' according to them so we were going to Paco Bills too.

I don't think we ever ate so fast in our lives. Commando Nikki inhaled her food and started throwing stuff away before we were even finished. Scuba Steve had his sandwich half way into his mouth when she started grabbing for it to throw it away because *OBVIOUSLY* he was finished and we had to go.

Scuba Steve gave her the power-pinch of a lifetime. You just don't take food out of a mans mouth. EVER!

I wanted the girls to see the Country Bears Jamboree and we had time before our fast passes for Splash Mountain were due. This is where I discovered either I or Scuba Steve were in the beginning stages of Alzheimer's. He asked me what this ride was going to do.

*What are you talking about? This is a show, not a ride and we have been here before. I see the bears every time I come to Disney. You have been to Disney with me before; we got married here, so I know we saw the bears.*

It was Scuba Steve I married here, wasn't it?

While I was insisting he had been here before and he had gone crazy, and he was insisting that he hadn't and I was the crazy one, I could see out of the corner of my eye a little girl about 7 yrs. old and her brother about 5 yrs. old were standing at the pressed penny machine begging their mom for some quarters. Mom was fresh out of quarters.

Commando Nikki taught me something that day.

She went into the camera bag and took out enough quarters for both of them to get all three pressed pennies. Commando Nikki leaned over and said something into the little girls' ear. The little girl ran back to her mom, all excited jumping up and down, saying "Mommy, that girl loves me and it's Disney day today!" The mother tried to give Commando Nikki the dollars in exchange for the quarters and Commando Nikki said "Nope, enjoy the pixie dust."

I learned that if you're not looking, Commando Nikki will rob your camera bag and give away all your quarters.

No, I'm kidding.

I learned that I have the coolest kid in the world. She said to the little girl "Love ya, mean it and have a Disney day."

"Got to drill it in them while their young." She told me.

When we went inside to visit the bears, the girls were stomping their feet and clapping their hands and Scuba Steve suddenly remembered Max the moose head on the wall.

He was the crazy one not me.

I already knew that and am relieved that it was Scuba Steve I married after all.

We left the bears and went on Splash Mountain because it is always a good idea to get your

jean shorts soaked before you get on a plane and fly to a state that is scrapping frost off their windshields.

Why ease yourself back into the cold weather if you don't have to?

We made one more trip on HM just to make Em mad by having the ghost sit on her, because that was as close as I was going to get to IASW and then it was time to go.

**\*\*SOB\*\***

Commando Nikki & Beatlebum stood in front of the partners' statue looking back down into Main Street. They just stood there with their eyes closed, holding hands listening to the music and smelling the sweet smells that always linger on Main Street.

They were going to cry, so I was going to cry and Scuba Steve hates to be around a lot of crying, emotional girls, it makes him nervous so I had to do something.

Standing in front of the partner's statue, looking down into Main Street to the left on the corner is the Hershey ice cream store. I personally have proven that it is impossible to cry and walk while eating a hot fudge sundae waffle cone.

While we were walking to the buses for the last time, Em stopped, turned around and yelled back to the MK "Good-bye Tinkerbelle! I'll miss you!"

Commando Nikki & Beatlebum both yelled back "Love ya, Mean it!"

Okay, you can cry while walking and eating a hot fudge sundae waffle cone, but at least you have a napkin handy and can hide behind the cone.

This was the only time during the entire trip my crew sat quietly and behaved while we were on the bus heading to POR for the last time.

Where the magic was definitely over.

## Part 47 The humor in it

The crew and I arrived via bus back at POR at 4:30 pm. We wanted to be sure not be late for our limo that was going to be there at 4:45 pm sharp. That's what they told me, be there on time because THEY would be and that's what I believed.

*I AM an idiot, remember?*

At 5:00 pm I had taken a Xanax because I had to get on another plane and I was starting to get stressed-out because our limo still hadn't shown up. Commando Nikki wasn't very upset about it this time because it was okay with her if we missed our plane.

Until I informed her that we would be sleeping in the airport until there was another plane headed north and that could be the next day. There was no possible way for us to spend another day in Disney. Then she became unglued, stuttering & stammering like a drunken person, pacing up and down the sidewalk like the limo could be there next to the empty sidewalk and somehow we had over looked it.

I handed her over to Scuba Steve to deal with while I called Star Taxi/ Limo. The lady on the other end of the phone said, "Yeah, got your reservation right here, what's the problem?"

*Ah, the fact that I don't have of a limo, maybe? Why else would I call? Just to say Hi?*

The girl on the phone decided *I* was crazy, there*had to be* a limo there and put me on hold, where I stayed for 15 more minutes.

Scuba Steve started to get nervous about missing our plane. He was trying to talk me into just paying for another cab and getting to the airport while the girls sat on the sidewalk with the ¼ ton of luggage.

Scuba Steve wasn't aware that I had just gotten a Xanax bravery going. I wasn't spending more money for a ride I had already paid for. No way.

Then I went from being on hold to being hung up on.

My response to THAT was to drop to my knees with the phone held up in the air and scream at the top of my lungs 'NOOOOO!' into it.

Xanax, okay?

That response attracts CM's very quickly if you should ever need one.

A very sweet CM girl came to my rescue and said she would be happy to call Star Limo/Taxi and get our ride there right away.

She didn't have a special hot-line phone either because they put her on hold for another 15 minutes too. It was then 5:30 pm and our plane was leaving at 7:00 pm. I was just about to tell the very sweet CM girl to call ANYBODY with a car that could give us a ride when she started pointing at a Star Limo/Taxi driver that had showed up.

He was there for a completely different family that wasn't leaving for another half hour.

Commando Nikki went straight from being a live-out-loud, Disney-loving, pixie dust spreading sweetheart into a charging bull who just saw a red cape. She stood there ready to blow up when Scuba Steve stepped in, pushed her aside, told the driver our situation and asked him if he had any clue where our driver was.

The driver didn't but assured us we were probably going to miss our plane.

*No kidding, ya think?*

Seeing where this driver had a ½ to kill and I had already paid for the services maybe HE could take us?

I told him if he could get us to the airport I would make it worth his while. He drove like the RnR limo, brought us directly to the curbside check in and had our ¼ ton of luggage on the sidewalk in about 10 minutes.

He earned himself a \$20 tip, and I suggested to him that he start working for ANY OTHER car service because I was telling 55,000 of my closest friends about this one.

*And I did!*

Love ya, mean it. How do you like me now?

The flight to our next layover was a bit crowded for me because Commando Nikki & Beatlebum had to spread out all over my folding table to do their homework. Beatlebum wanted to sit by the window and Commando Nikki was on the isle on terrorist alert. I was stuck in the middle.

I was also on terrorist alert but was checking the inside of my eyelids for leaks. There isn't enough Xanax in this world to knock me out that much.

We arrived in Cincinnati for our layover. My crew kept asking me why we were in Cincinnati and I had no idea, but maybe it was because that was where they decided to land the plane.

They wouldn't let me fly it, so I just went where they wanted to take me.

Scuba Steve took the girls to Cinnabons for a snack. I went and sat in the smoking area and took out my cell phone. I was running my thumb over the buttons thinking about calling my mom, when I noticed I had a voice mail.

It was from Brothers wife.

She had a lovely time, wanted me to know they arrived safely in Tennessee and couldn't WAIT to see us again.

I thank God she DIDN'T say 'Love ya, mean it.' and spoil it for everyone.

I was still sitting there with my mouth open when Scuba Steve came back with the girls and their treats. I played the message for the crew and they were in as much shock as I was.

She had obviously thought she called Disney merchandise; it couldn't have been for us.

When I spoke to Brother a few days later he told me they rode back to Tennessee packed in the van nice and tight without speaking one word to each other. Not one. No matter what she tried to say to him, he wouldn't respond. Her phone call to me was her way of getting Brother to talk to her. 'See, I called your sister. Everything is fine.'

She's okay with my voice mail. She didn't talk to me. My voice mail can be very forgiving.

We boarded our next plane for New Hampshire where I was hoping to find my truck that I had left there nine days earlier. I had no clue where I left it; I hadn't planned on ever seeing it again.

I am glad I brought an adult with me, because Commando Nikki at least knew which lot it was in. After we got off our plane at 1:00 am and collected our ¼ ton of luggage, we boarded the bus that takes you to the different lots around Manchester Airport. Each one of the crew was looking out a different window with their faces pushed up against the glass while I kept pushing the power-lock button to make the headlights flash so we could spot it.

Next time you see a parked vehicle with its headlights flashing, you'll know the vehicle is lost. It's probably mine. We are probably on a bus looking all over town for it.

The adult we brought along also knew enough to pack our sweatshirts for easy access once we found the truck. Commando Nikki had one ready for everyone while Scuba Steve & I walked around the truck in damp shorts and scraped frost off the windows.

Commando Nikki is handy everywhere. That one is always thinking. I need her to adopt me.

The following morning my mom came over to see the girls and their fine gifts and prizes. We showed her all the ride photos, Discovery Cove photos, and the 87 miles of video we took.

I was going through Disney depression. I felt like the entire vacation was a bust and I was a little disappointed. I had made all kinds of plans to do different things and for one reason or another they kept falling through. I felt like the kids didn't get to do certain things, there were so many problems with Brother's wife, and I felt so bad for Brother. It helped to know we would be planning another trip, and with luck Chris would be able to go too.

But I really felt like this trip was a one shot thing. Chris is in the service and can get deployed at anytime. Commando Nikki will be starting college somewhere in the fall. I am really going to be lucky if we can all get together again, all six of us.

But I believe in the magic of Disney and I have since my dad was alive. That's why I kept my mouth shut on so many different occasions. Kids don't remember what they got on whatever birthday or from whom they got it from on any Christmas. They always remember a trip to Disney. Ask anyone who is an adult now that went to Disney as a kid.

They all remember it. Loved it or hated it, good and bad, they remember it.

Somehow it will happen, the six of us will be together again pinch-fighting, sunburn slapping and stiff-armed, stiffed-leg fast walking to the monorail in Disney again to have breakfast with Chuck & Dave.



*I believe.*

It was my mother who told me, "One day, you will look back on all of it and laugh. Try to find the humor in it." It was because of her I went back through my photos and looked at the faces of my kids and the videos of them being foolish. She was right; the trip was a huge success even with all its problems.

We have some great lifetime memories.

So with my mothers' advice I sat down at my computer to find the humor in it.

I had 55,000 close friends that needed to know what I found out.

Love ya, mean it.