

# These Are The Days...

Volume 5 Edition 4

Royse City, TX

March 2009

Good grief. Here we go again with another four-month newsletter. Sorry folks. We'll have to rewind all the way back to November to start this beast...



On the 1<sup>st</sup> Jared and I were able to go to the Temple to see our good friends the Gausmans be sealed to their four adopted kids. It was wonderful and we are so happy for them! Their older two, Joey and Alyssa were in our Joy School group with Noah. We rode with some friends and we all went to lunch afterwards, it was awesome.

After we got back from the Temple I headed to the church for a baby shower for a gal in the ward. They played some fun games and had some really good food.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> I got to take Tess and Tate to the doctor because they were both acting like they felt crappy, plus they both needed flu shots. They both had ear infections and Tess' had actually

perforated. She pulled an exorcist and we had to hold her down so Dr. Kotas could look in her ears. To this day she freaks out and screams whenever we have touch her ear, though it is totally healed over now. They both ended up on antibiotics...it was great.

I went and stood in line at L3 on the 6<sup>th</sup> to get a flu shot. There were a lot of people there...but that's all I really remember about that.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> Noah was in the Primary Program at church. He did really well and it was really cute to see him up there with all the kids. He says he had a part, I can't for the life of me remember what it was.

I took Noah to the doctor on the 11<sup>th</sup> because he was complaining about not feeling well and his ear was also all goopy and disgusting. He, of course, had an ear infection and it had also perforated. Great. For a few days all three of the kids were on antibiotics, it was hilarious.



Jared spent the evening of the 11<sup>th</sup> driving the missionaries around. They lost their car recently, I don't remember why, so the local wards have been taking turns driving them to their appointments in the evenings.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> Jared and I went to the Mavs game with some friends. He got a call earlier that very day from a lady who works with the E-Club (who he did the website for) and she offered him 6 tickets to the game that night. We took them and hurried to gather up some people so we could go. Sam wasn't up to all the walking and the stairs, since she'd been having bad palpitations, so we took Troy and Jennifer with us. It was a hoot. I spaced what time I was supposed to leave to pick up the babysitter and got there late, so we were late picking up the aforementioned friends. Jared took a wrong turn on the way to the Dart Rail station, which is usually easier and cheaper than parking downtown, so we were late getting there too. We missed the last train going straight to the stadium so we ended up getting off in the club district of downtown Dallas and walking the rest of the way to the game. It was kind of cool, a neat part of town we never would have seen otherwise, and we were all laughing at how late we were. I think we were just hoping we weren't so late that we would miss the train back to the parking lot. Imagine our surprise when we got there at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter! The Mavs were up by a lot at the half, I wanna say 16, but still managed to lose the game. It got really good there at the end and we had a blast. It was nice to go with Jared when he was cheering for the home team and I didn't have to worry that we were going to be shot on the way home...

On the 15<sup>th</sup> I finally got to have my hair done again. I found a new stylist and she is awesome. Yay for Jeana! I made her promise that she wouldn't drop off the face of the earth too.

Jared and I got to go to our first parent teacher conference on the 17<sup>th</sup>. It made me feel really old. Noah is doing well in school, he's really sharp, but



“Sometimes it is kind of hard to get him to take off his silly hat.” Yeah. We have that problem at home too.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> Soni turned one. Poor Sam. Soni is such a cute baby. She'd started scooting around the furniture at that time, and was just starting to get into things. She's still a tank and loves to eat more than just about anything else; as long as you have food you're her very best friend.



On the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> a bunch of us girls got all gathered up and went to dinner and then headed to the theater for the midnight showing of Twilight. We had a ball though I'll admit I was totally disappointed in the movie. We were having a blast and feeling really young and fun until we walked in to the theater and half of the young women from the ward were there, including my old

babysitter hollering “Sister Crookston!” Yeah. Then we just felt old and kind of foolish. Anyways, like I said the movie was lame and I was really, really bummed out about it. I guess I was still holding out hope that it wouldn’t totally suck.

I spent the next couple of days packing and otherwise making ready to fly to Utah on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.



The flight there was entertaining to say the least. It’s the first time that Jared and I have flown since we became outnumbered by children. We borrowed a DVD player from Sam and Cameron and Jared sat with the older kids while I wrangled Tate. Tate managed to pull the cover off of the magazine belonging to the REALLY NICE lady next to us. It had Elmo or something on it that he was squealing about and she chuckled and pulled out the facing page that finished the ad and handed it to him, “Here. You can have this one too.” Tess threw a fit and kicked the seat in front of her as hard as she could, while it was reclined and the guy in it was sleeping. Yeah, we were those people.

The night we got there Jared took Tess to see Aunt Bree in the Nutcracker ballet. Tess had a lot of fun, even though



she didn’t make it all the way through the show. She danced all over the lobby and seemed to really enjoy her date with Daddy.

We went to church with everybody on Sunday. Sacrament meeting with the Sowerbys, and the other two meetings with the Crookstons. It was nice to see all the old faces again as well as a few old friends. I think we had dinner with the Crookstons that night, but I can’t remember...it was a long time ago. I’m doing my best to piece together all the parts I do remember...



The next day we headed up to Logan and met all of the Logan Crookstons at the Hub on campus for lunch. It was pretty dang good.

After that we stopped at the bookstore and bought the kids some appropriately labeled merchandise (after we caught Noah and Grandpa throwing around a BYU football in the backyard. I know, ewwww). We then stopped and had Caleb & Ashli take some pictures for us on the A in front of Old Main. One of

which ended up being our Christmas card picture this year. Thanks again guys!

## See's CANDIES®

We stopped at Sees on our way back from Cache Valley and cashed in all of our gift certificates. Mmmmm...lots and lots of chocolate.

On Tuesday Mom, Megan and I took Grandma Ida to the Greenery for lunch. It was really yummy and we had a nice time visiting and then shopping. I swear, they have the coolest store ever there.

While we were gone Grandpa and Jared took the kids to Chuck E. Cheese (or as Uncle Brian calls it "the seventh circle of..."). He he he. Noah had been dying to go with Grandpa again and Grandpa told him they could go when we came to visit. I was just joking around when I told Jared he and Dad should take the kids, and THEY DID. The kids had fun and we had a nice girlie afternoon too. Plus I got out of going to Chuck E. Cheese.



On Wednesday we helped Mom make nine pies. Dad and I manned the kitchen while Mom was at work and we only sent Jared to the store twice for stuff we

already had... ☺ Not my fault, I don't usually cook here and if you think stuff hasn't moved since I last lived at that house, then you don't know my parents.

We had Thanksgiving dinner at the Sowerby's house with Grandma Ida and then I think we headed over to the Crookstons afterwards, but like I said...it's sketchy. I seem to remember seeing everyone there, and it must have been Thanksgiving day. Anyway, Thanksgiving morning the Sowerby's had a new family picture taken and we got a couple shots of us as well. Mom's new picture turned out really cool and it looks great in the nichey thing above the new stairs.



Friday afternoon we had pictures taken again with the Crookstons. Nate and Ashley couldn't make it down because Drew and Nate were both sick, with pink eye I think...anyways, those pictures turned out pretty cool too.



Friday night my Mom had an awesome after Thanksgiving pie thing. Everybody brought their leftover pie and we all ate waaaay too much dessert. It was really cool and so nice to get to see all the family. It was something I'll have to do here with friends on the years we aren't in Utah for Thanksgiving.

Noah spent that last night at Grandma and Grandpa Crookston's house and we headed home the following morning, after Jared and I overslept. We got there just in time to pick up some "breakfast" at one of the overpriced food stores in the airport and then get on the plane. I honestly can't remember how the flight home was...we were all so tired it's sort of a blur. I think we stopped and picked up McDonalds for lunch after we got home and then we all crashed.



It was a really nice trip and we had a lot of fun. Thanks to Mom and Dad for the tickets, and to Allen and Sherry for the use of their van while we were there. It was great to get to see everybody we did, and we send our apologies to all the people we missed. The renovations Mom and Dad have made to the "old barn" are amazing and it was cool to finally see it all in person. Seriously, the place looks great and we had a ball. Plus, after staying somewhere with an in house

piano we decided we would rather buy a couch with our tax return...less noise.



On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December I redid our Christmas wreath and helped Sam make one in the process. I was thrilled with the way they turned out and of course Sam

and I had a good time putting them together. We found some great little green floral zip ties that made the whole thing a snap.



The elementary school had a family gingerbread house-making

thing for the kindergarteners on the 4<sup>th</sup>. It's nice of them to schedule things for us to do as a family, isn't it? The kids had a good time and we managed to put together a lovely graham cracker mobile home in no time flat...some people we met there (you know who you are ☺) had some issues getting their house



together and ended up with what they decided to call a tribute to hurricane Ike.

After Tess had ballet on the 5<sup>th</sup> she and I, and Tate, went to Marnie's house to make skirts for the girls to wear when they danced at the ward Christmas party. We were there all afternoon, until it was time to pick up Noah, and I felt awful that we left such a mess but we had a good time and the tutu's turned out super cute.



and I think we stopped at the store on the way home to finish up

their shopping for each other.



Tess and I got to go to a Mommy & Me Princess Tea Party on the 6<sup>th</sup>. I know. Don't you wish you'd been invited? It was kind of fun and she had a ball. They made



ornaments and covered the little girls in glitter and danced around and sang

songs...and then they served them tea. Really. Tea. I got a couple good pictures of her while we were there; she loved dancing with all the princesses.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> L-3 had their kids party. The kids and I met Jared there and then I realized that I had forgotten the tickets, which the kids needed to get their gifts. I dropped them off and Jared stood in line with them to get pictures with Santa Claus while I raced home to get the stupid tickets. We found out later that there was someone there to deal with just such a situation. The kids got some neat stuff and had cookies and all that



The ward Christmas party was on the 13<sup>th</sup> this year. The food was good and the program was really cool. They just did a talent show type thing that turned out to be really neat. The little girls did their ballet dance



and were totally adorable. Marnie's husband Kevin (their daughter

Lauren is in Tess' ballet class) did an awesome yo-yo routine. Seriously, it was amazing; Jared was bummed he had already put the video camera away. Tess jumped off of her toy box earlier in the week and had been complaining that her foot hurt a little bit, so when they danced she didn't do any legwork that required standing on one foot. She stepped off of the curb on the way out and screwed up her ankle again so...

On the 15<sup>th</sup> I got to take her to the doctor to have it looked at. She wasn't excited about it even though I kept telling her that she wasn't going to get a shot, they

were just going to take a fancy picture of her foot. "Worst case scenario you'll get a special new shoe." She was a huge pain when Dr. Kotas tried to examine her foot. She screamed until he started carrying on about how bad her feet smelled and then used a magic trick to make her toes squeak. He told her she was the squeakiest little almost four-year-old girl he had ever met.

He sent us down for an x-ray and she totally freaked out. They had to call one of Dr. Kotas' nurses down to come help hold her foot. She was really upset and kept shouting that she wanted her special shoe and she wanted to go home. I was so embarrassed that I told her I would buy her a pair of shoes if she would shut up and hold still. Problem solved. Apparently she can be bribed with shoes.

The films came back and luckily nothing is broken. He told us to keep it wrapped up for a few days and get back to him in ten days...



...and she was thrilled about that.

She did get a pair of shoes out of the deal. We stopped at WalMart on the way home and she picked a pair of pink, knee-high, fur lined, Disney princess boots. And as long as she was wearing them her foot was fine.

While I was at the store with Tess on the way home from the doctor, on my anniversary, I bought some stuff to make Jared and I a freezer-to-fancy dinner to eat after the kids were in bed. We had plans to go out later that weekend.

Tess' ballet class had their Christmas party on the 19<sup>th</sup>, the same day that Noah's class had their party. Not only the same day but a mere hour and fifteen minutes apart. Jared took the day off and came with us to Tess' party, we stayed just long enough afterwards for Tess and Tate to grab a cookie and juice boxes and then raced home so I could go to Noah's party. I was a teeny bit late but managed to make it before I had pulled all of my hair out. The kids all exchanged treats and they had cookies and punch and stuff. It was kind of cute. They let the kids out of school at 12:30. Though if I remember right Sam and I signed he and Andi out around 11:45 when the parties were over.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> Jared and I went to dinner and a movie and did a little shopping for our anniversary date. We went to Panda Express and had yummy Chinese food. Jared had gotten some movie passes from the E-Club people and we decided that we would rather go see a couple movies than take the kids. He was super sweet and took me to see Twilight again (a friend assured me it was better the second time...) rather than going to the James Bond movie, which we were

planning on seeing the next time we went out. Mostly I wanted him to be able to sit there and laugh at it with me, he did not disappoint. Thanks honey...xoxo

We were both totally bummed, and I felt like a schmuck, when the James Bond movie was out of theaters the next weekend...sorry honey. Really sorry.

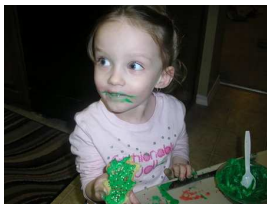


We spent the next day being sick. Seriously, everyone but Noah was barfing so we opted out of going to church. Just

thinking about it makes me shudder...



We had our usual cookie making fiasco on Christmas Eve, complete with over colored icing and sprinkles.



After the disaster last year I refused to try and make sugar cookies and we bought a tube of dough, I swear this year I am going to figure that



out...anyways, I made a bunch of

stars and the kids each picked a couple cookie cutters. They covered themselves and almost everything else in the kitchen with green icing and sprinkles and managed to give Santa heartburn.



They also got their new jammies on Christmas Eve. Tess was beyond thrilled with her Princess jammies, Tate got some new Batman ones

and Noah got Star Wars PJs.



We got up at the crack of dawn on Christmas morning to see that Santa had brought the kids a tent that was waaay too big. The oaf. The kids got a lot of really cool stuff and Jared got me a beautiful pink pearl pendant necklace. He got pants. Sorry again, honey. The racetrack thing Jared and I got Tate never worked and we ended up having take it back. But, all in all it was really nice...



We had a pretty low-key week after that. Jared had eleven days off of work and we spent a lot of time just hanging out at home. We did have to go hunt down the smaller tent that Santa lost somewhere along the way, we ended up ordering it straight from the North Pole and it arrived a couple of days later. The kids slept in it for several nights, while it was set up in Tess' room.

One night during the break Sam and Heather and I went to dinner and a movie. I can't remember what we ate or where else we may have gone but we saw Marley & Me, which was super cute and totally not what I was expecting it to be.

Andi turned 6 on the 26<sup>th</sup>. I know we had cake and ice cream and stuff but I don't remember if there was anything else...Happy Birthday Andi!

We found an awesome puzzle that had a picture of Neuschwanstein Castle on it for Sherry for her birthday on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Happy Birthday!



On the 2<sup>nd</sup> we finally caved in and got some bunk beds for the boys room. They've enjoyed them I think, Noah's already sleeping in the top bunk and we're working on getting Tate to sleep

on the bottom. He slept there the first night we had them up, after refusing to sleep in the crib. He fell out about six times and has totally lost interest in the big boy bed. Noah had a bit of trouble with the ladder the first couple of times. His mean mother shoved him up there and told him he'd have to figure a way down on his own. He does it ALL THE TIME at the Carter's house so I knew that he knew how. Tess went up and talked him down. ☺ We sold the little racecar bed and were both a bit sad to see it go :( and then used the money to take the kids to dinner!



I don't think that we did much else. It was nice to have a break from life and of course we were all bummed when it was time for Daddy to go back to work on the 5<sup>th</sup> and then Noah went back to school on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Jared and I took Tess with us to clean the church on the 10<sup>th</sup>. It was the first time we had done it that each of the four families actually showed up. We were all done in about an hour! Awesome. Tess was a big helper too, she dusted all of the chair rails she could find. It was pretty dang cute.



After we were done with the building we headed to the ballet studio so Tess could model for some pictures. Lauren's dad, Kevin, knows a gal

from Korea who is launching a new line of ballet clothing and stuff and she wanted to have the little girls model it all for some pictures...so Tess will be in a catalog somewhere in Korea! The pictures turned out great and we got a disc of the ones she was in.

Jared dropped me off to get my hair done and then headed to the Carters to pick up Noah and Tate. After he got the kids fed, and got himself all cleaned up, he picked me up and we went grocery shopping...I think. I do remember sitting outside the hair place reading Eragon, really good books by the way, and waiting for him to pick me up.

Noah's school had a program on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The kids played various percussion type instruments while their teachers read different books. It was kind of cute and Noah liked playing his "barraca."

Noah had a four-day weekend the 16-19 of January and I got to spend the weekend reminding him that it is boring here, and that's why he's glad he gets to go to school.

Dad's birthday was on the 17<sup>th</sup>. I have no idea what we sent him...Happy Birthday anyways!

On the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Jared and I got to go to a baptism for the daughter of some of our friends. It was really nice. We stopped and got some lunch while we were out and I had the best French Onion Soup ever at La Madeline.

After we came back we gathered up the kids and headed out to have an afternoon full of birthday fun. We took the kids to Build A Bear and Chuck E. Cheese to celebrate Tess and Tate's birthdays.



We had initially planned on getting Tate a bear for his birthday and when we explained to Tess what the plan was she wanted one for hers too. Poor Noah, it's kind of rough for him to have all of his siblings celebrating without him. Anyways, the kids had a ball at Build A Bear and they picked cute animals. Tate's elephant makes elephant noise and is sporting a Dallas Mavericks warm up ensemble, it's pretty dang cute. Tess made a pink bear, surprise surprise, wearing a pink shirt, with a pink jacket. It sings a birthday pop song...she absolutely loves it. We headed to Chuck E. Cheese for dinner after that and had

some dinner and spent way too much money. All in all it was kind of fun and it sure beats the heck out of having six four year old girls at my house for a party.



We had cake and ice cream for Tate on the 18<sup>th</sup>. I made a really cute Elmo cake and some yummy cup cakes with homemade coconut pecan frosting...mm mm. They were killer. We had a bunch of people over and Tate got a lot of neat

stuff. I can't believe my baby is two already.

Sam had her heart cath on the 20<sup>th</sup>. It went well and they got all the pictures they needed to and told her the next step would be to schedule the surgery.

We had a really cool enrichment thing on the 21<sup>st</sup>. They had a guy, I think from the ward—though I am not positive, who works for the FBI come and give a demonstration on self-defense and personal safety. It actually started out as a Young Women activity and they decided to invited the Relief Society too, so we got to haul the kids to the church while Jared had scouts and I had enrichment. Noah had a lot of fun playing with Jace, until Jace threw him into a table. He was fine when we took

him home so it must not have been much of a throw.



Tess turned four on the 25<sup>th</sup>. I made a really ugly castle cake that just kept getting uglier despite my efforts to save it. I was so mad I tossed the cake and started over. She ended up with a really cute Minnie Mouse cake, which, after Jared chatted

with her, was just what she wanted. I also made some cupcakes with strawberry cream cheese icing on them...we had the same group of people from Tate's party over and had a nice visit again. Tess got a lot of cute stuff with a lot of little pieces...

We had a "snow" day here in Texas on the 28<sup>th</sup>; it was the second one of the year so far. Texans have a tendency to panic and shut everything down as soon as the forecast says the precipitation has a small chance of freezing. Once again Noah stayed home and complained about how bored he was and the roads were clear by noon.

We took Tess and Tate to Penney's to get birthday pictures on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Tess did great; smiled and posed right from the get go. Tate was a huge dork and the girl taking the pictures was starting to get



frustrated with him when the guy who runs the studio came in and took over, thank heaven. He started making fart noises at Tate, which of course made him smile. “I got it. It’s a guy thing,” he, the photographer, said.



On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February we went to dinner at the home of some

friends of ours, the Bushmans (their son Jace was the one who threw Noah into a table...). It was really good and we had a nice time visiting with them. The kids had a lot of fun playing together; we’ve been meaning to have them out for dinner here but haven’t quite gotten to it yet.

Tess and Tate went to the doctor for well child visits on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Tess weighed in at 30 lbs. and was 39 inches tall. She got four shots, and it was very traumatic. Seriously. She was crying on Jared’s shoulder before the nurse even came in with the shots, “Please don’t let me get shots.” When they laid her down to stick her it became full blown hysteria, I’ll bet the kids in the waiting room heard her screaming. Tate was 23 lbs. and 35 inches tall. He only had to get one shot and cried a little bit, but compared to his sister is was nothing.

Noah’s school had another program on the 5<sup>th</sup> and this one was pretty cool. It was a bedtime stories themed thing so

the kids all went in jammies. My biggest complaint is that they made us all sit on the floor in the gym. Comfy. The teachers put on a really cute skit of the monkeys jumping on the bed story and took turns reading their favorite bedtime stories. It was part of their latest ‘get lazy parents to read to their kids’ thing and the kids who attended got credit towards their tickets to six flags. Hooray. Can’t wait for that.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> Noah went to a birthday party for his friend Stephen. The party went until noon and he hassled me all the way there about what they were going to have for lunch, until I finally told him not to worry about it. He would get fed. We could eat when we got home. They



had pizza for lunch but Noah told them that I had told him he was not allowed to eat. I know. Great. “I was

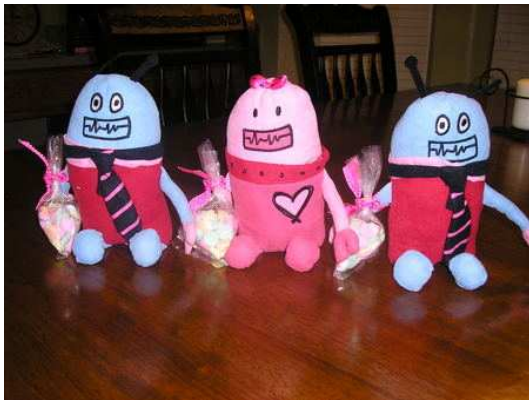
really hungry and I wanted pizza. But you told me not to eat.” I felt awful, so he and I picked up some pizza for lunch on the way home. Big nerd. I swear that’s the only time in his whole life he has even sort of listened to me.

Later that night we headed up to the church for the combined Blue & Gold Banquet and Pinewood Derby for the scouts. The food was okay and the race was cool. They got a really neat new track, since someone stole ours when we moved into our new building. It was all computerized and fancy...very cool.

Somewhere right in here was when Sam finally got a hold of someone in her cardiologist’s office who had a clue and

they got her all scheduled for surgery. She goes in on the 9<sup>th</sup> and, barring any complications, should be home in a week. She's got a lot of people coming in to help her out, and of course we'll be here. She'll be up and around in six weeks and should be back to normal (or hopefully better) in three months. If you could throw a prayer or two her way we'd all appreciate it.

Since somebody was having a dance on Valentine's Day our sitter was unavailable on the 14<sup>th</sup>, so we went out on the 13<sup>th</sup> this year instead. I can't remember where we had dinner...probably Chipotle. ☺ Then we went and saw a movie. Of course the food was good and the movie wasn't bad either, we saw Taken. We stopped on the way home and picked up some last minute valentines for the kids too.



They were thrilled with their valentine robots when they got up in the morning. We had a romantic day full of grocery shopping and errand running, and then made something fancy for dinner after the kids were in bed. Jared bought me a cake plate for Valentine's Day and I made him a red velvet cake with cream cheese icing...it was pretty dang tasty. We watched a Netflix movie that night too, though I have no idea which one.

Around the beginning of the month we finally decided we were going to have to do something to improve the toy storage situation in the kids' rooms. So many of the toys they have now are not really suitable for open pit storage. It took a couple weeks but we finally broke down



and listed the toy boxes in the e-trader (classified type paper at L-3—same place we sold the racecar bed) and some one bought both of them the next day.



So we headed for Target on the 18<sup>th</sup> and picked up some new shelves and bins for all the kids junk. It's been much easier for them to put stuff away now that it all has a very specific place. We even had enough room, after cleaning out and organizing, to bring a bunch of Tate's stuff from the living room back to his bedroom. I am one step closer to getting my living room back.



Sometime around now was when we found out that due to all the contract work Jared had done last year the government would be taking a sizeable portion of our tax return. I had

my heart set on getting new living room furniture, to finally replace the hand me downs we got when we got married that our children have since destroyed. Instead we could pay off one old loan and still have enough to replace our crappy TV. So that's good. Freaking blood-sucking government (sounded a little like my Dad there didn't I).

Sam, Heather and I had a girls night out on the 20<sup>th</sup>. It'll be our last one for a while. We had dinner at Carino's and helped Sam shop for linens for her new bedroom. She found a duvet she liked but ended up ordering the rest of it online. We also went and saw He's Just Not That Into You. It was pretty dang cute...we were out WAY TOO late but of course had a ball.

The Elders Quorum had their annual social on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Jared talked to Hayden right after they started announcing the activity back in January so we had no problems finding a sitter. The food was awesome and the company was great. We played Mafia, which I had not played before, and it was more than a little entertaining. I was glad that we hadn't made any other plans this year so we got to stay the whole time.

Brandon celebrated his birthday on the 21<sup>st</sup> as well. Happy birthday you old fart!



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I got the mother of all head colds a few days after that and spent several days in a major fog. I am finally starting to get over it. On the morning

of the 26<sup>th</sup> I put Tate back to bed after breakfast and turned on computer games and cartoons for Tess and told her I was going to take a nap and if she touched any of my stuff or helped herself to anything I was probably going to have to kill her. She promised to be good and I had a two-hour nap. I felt much better when I got up and wandered down the hall to get Tate out of the crib. Tess was playing in her room when I passed by and I asked her what she was doing. She replied, "I didn't touch anything. The lights went out. The TV is broken and I didn't touch anything." Crap. Yeah, we had a power surge that pushed our sucky TV right over the edge. It was so sad. Lucky for us our tax return showed up that very afternoon so we ordered a fancy new 37-inch flat screen, for a fabulous deal online, and an entertainment center. Then we all cried when we found out they would take over a week to get here...

I don't think the kids have ever been so bored, it's kind of funny. "Here's an idea for you. **Go play with your toys!**" Sam was kind enough to loan us their old crappy TV, which is better than our old crappy TV in that it has picture and sound. Granted it looks like you're watching though a sheet of waxed paper but at least there is something to see. Also, thanks to our Netflix membership we can watch all the online movies we want to on the computer. The new TV should be here by the 6<sup>th</sup>. WOO HOO!



# Exciting Noah News

Noah celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> day of school a few weeks ago. He came home with these really cute glasses and a necklace with 100 fruit loops, which he insisted on hanging outside for the birds.



Who apparently don't like fruit loops.

After discovering that I had thrown away some of his school "treasures" Noah found himself a box and labeled it "Noah's stuff made from school and from my friends. Do not play with it!" Guess he told me...



Here's a funny story Jared wrote up on Noah's blog...

*February 22, 2009*

## Blackmail

On Saturday, Aubrey had already left to pick up our babysitter while the kids and

I were hurriedly cleaning up the house. I asked Noah to pick up the few things in his room while I cleaned up the kitchen and the entry. He wandered back towards his room, but wouldn't clean up. Rather he was calling for me to come and clean up his room with him. I told him I had enough other things to clean to keep me busy, and that he needed to clean his room himself.

He was pretty upset with this suggestion, and let me know that he would NOT be cleaning up his room alone. Then he let me in on exactly how clever he is. He said, "If you don't come in here and clean up my room, I'll tell Mom that while she was gone you were playing computer games instead of cleaning up!"

I got to turn the tables on him tonight though. Aubrey was out visiting teaching while I was getting the kids bathed and put to bed. I had asked Noah to stop playing on his Leapster and get changed into his pajamas at least a dozen times. As I carried Tate out of the tub, I found Noah and told him in no uncertain terms that I would tell Mom that instead of sorting the laundry and getting changed into his pajamas, he was playing video games. "You wouldn't do that! You're a liar!" "It's not a lie, Noah. You're there, playing video games on your Leapster." "Dad, if it doesn't hurt somebody and it's not your business you don't tell Mom." "That means I'm a tattletail, not a liar. Now go get changed into your pajamas."

We signed Noah up for T-ball this season. He's practiced once so far and seemed to be enjoying it, he was doing a pretty good job too, until they started taking turns fielding and batting and the

ball never came to him. Then he was in tears and ready to be done...yeah. That's my boy. He's going to have cute little baseball pants and everything.

## Tess is Terriffic!



We finally got to see Tess' costume for her ballet recital, which will be in May, a couple of weeks ago and it's pretty dang

cute. They had to send it back because it was missing some ribbon but at least it fit her skinny little butt.



She's been a HUGE pain about napping lately. I know, I know...she's four...yada yada yada. Would you give up naptime without a fight? If you would, you're stupid. She's taken to laying all of her toys down for a nap and then ~~making a huge mess~~ playing in her room instead.

Other than that she is still the adorable little diva that we all know and love. Apparently she and I are very much alike, I swear I hear all the time how she's a miniature Aubrey. Not sure what I think about that...

## Talkin' Bout' Tate

Tate has really started talking; in real, understandable sentences. At Noah's practice the other day he stood up and shouted, "I need to go potty!" at me. It was great. And no, we are sure as heck not playing that game with him yet. He's as much of a chatterbox as Tess ever was though.



We've started the process of pacifier weaning. Ugggg. He keeps losing them and I am getting really tired of buying new ones. So, he only gets to

have it when he is sleeping now. Hopefully soon we'll have him totally broken of the habit and then we can start working on sleeping in the bunk bed.

A while ago I made the mistake of buying a box of tissues that had Wall-E on them. By the way, if you are looking for a way to get your kids to be fanatical about nose blowing buy tissues with Disney characters on the box. After the kids used them all, I swear two days

after I opened them, Jared cut the box top thing off of the bottom and we tossed the empty box. Tate pulled it out of the can and played with it like it was a camera, making cute clicking noise and everything. He loved it and of course Noah, who has a real camera, was insanely jealous and cried that he wanted to trade Tate cameras. Seriously. Jared joked that he hoped Noah grew out of this before he traded someone his house for a refrigerator box.



For our recipe section this time around we're going to go with one that I got from my sister-in-law Ashley, not Ashli, more than a year ago and tweaked just a bit...

### Fire Beef

- 1 lb. Beef, diced (I use kitchen scissors)
- 1/4 c. onion, diced
- 1 t. garlic, minced
- 1/4 c. soy sauce
- 1 t. black pepper
- 2 T. sesame seeds
- 2 T. sesame seed oil\*

- 2 T. sugar
- 1-1 1/2 t. chili powder\*\*

Saute onion, garlic and beef in oil. Add remaining ingredients and simmer until beef is cooked through and to desired thickness. Wrap in romaine lettuce with rice. Eat and enjoy!!

\*You can use regular veggie oil but the sesame oil really adds to Asian foodness of it.

\*\*The original recipe called for red chili, which was too spicy and provided the wrong heat for me. The chili powder provides a really nice heat that we like around here...

This is also fabulous tossed in a salad with mandarin oranges, crunchy wonton strips, green onions and some Asian Toasted Sesame dressing. Mmmmmm...absolutely fabulous.

You'll be pleased to know that the editor has realized that there should be pictures with our recipes...we'll make that adjustment in the future issues.

# What's Noah Lookin' At?

And finally, here are some of Noah's new pictures...



*Here's Tess coloring in a book. Let's hope it was a coloring book.*



*Tater*



*Here's our artist with his dream camera.*

Holy cow. I think that about does it. Consider yourselves up to date. Hopefully we'll do better about getting these out in time in the future, but I'm not making any promises.

We love you all! Till next time...