

B-I-N-G-O, and Bingo was our game-o

If I had been paying attention, I would have noticed the burning smell as I was driving to pick up the boys. It wasn't until I reached the school and got out of the car that I saw smoke coming from the hood.

That couldn't be good.

I called my husband, who was at least 45 minutes away, and my mother, who lives about 15 minutes away. I spent the next half-hour calling for a tow truck while our sons dangled precariously off the preschool playground equipment, trying desperately—and understandably—to get my attention after a long day.

By the time I confirmed that a truck was coming, my mother had arrived and was keeping an eye on the boys. But they were ready to go home.

Then I remembered that inside our car was a Bingo game my mother had given to me earlier in the day.



"You know, I do have that Bingo game," I said, "but we don't have any markers."

"There are stones," my mother said. I looked at her blankly and then realized she meant we could use the pebbles on the ground to mark the cards.

We had no idea how long we would be waiting for the tow truck, and the boys were running out of entertainment. I went to get the game.

Now Leo had been asking about Bingo since I went to a Bingo evening on Saturday. It was Bingo time. The boys jumped into seats at the playground's picnic table, and my mother started calling numbers.



When John arrived, we were sitting at a picnic table playing Bingo, and Leo, who's 5, was proudly calling numbers.



I was thinking today of all the places the car could have overheated. And it occurred to me that it could have happened minutes later while we were driving the Baltimore beltway together. I can't even think about getting our sons out of a smoking car while on a highway.

I could have been like this man who decided to pull out his drum set while he was stranded on the Baltimore beltway this morning. But a Bingo game is a bit more

portable.



After paying the mechanic's bill, I wouldn't say handling this car problem felt like hitting the jackpot. And I'm not sure I'm ready to recommend keeping a Bingo game in every car.



But last night I was quite happy to have it on hand.

