

# How we are squeezing every last ounce of summer out of this vacation (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

Summer vacation is ending. It's time I acknowledged that. I like to take off the last week of August to help get our sons ready for the school year. But somehow, with school starting on Tuesday, I realize that our school supplies are only 95 percent together, the summer writing assignments are not complete, and the boys are still going to bed



at 10 p.m. We did get haircuts and sneak a peek at their seats at school. But, although we started the week with a “to-do” list and a “to have fun as time allows” list, it would be fair to say we have done much, much better with the latter list.

What we have done well is make the most of our vacation time! And let's be honest, that makes for a much more interesting quick takes. So if you wanted to read, “I labeled every pencil,” or “I figured out how to write ‘Math’ on a solid black folder,” you're going to be disappointed.

This is what we did instead....

~2~



We picked the hottest day we could find and went to the Maryland State Fair! I wanted to see the animals, and the boys wanted to play games and ride rides. So we did a little of everything, stopping by a dog show, ducking into air-conditioned buildings when we could, drinking too many slurpies, and letting each boy pick one game to play.

For the first time this year I bought the wristbands that give you unlimited rides. Financially it seemed like a good idea. But as the sun climbed higher in the sky, I regretted it.

Child: "Could I ride the roller coaster? Oh, we probably don't want to spend the money on that."

Mother: "Well, we *have* already paid for it."

Child: "OK!"

They rode and rode as I sweated and sweated. But they had a blast, and we got our recommended annual dosage of state fair.

~3~

This week when we should have been doing summer writing projects, I introduced our rising third grader to latch hooking. I remember latch hooking as a child, and I thought it would be like riding a bicycle. Once we got the kit home, however, I realized I had only a vague memory of how to do it, and I was struggling even with the instructions.



So I called over our resident fifth grader, who mastered it on his own in five minutes and taught his younger brother.

Now they're both happily latch hooking when we should be finishing summer writing. I love it.

~4~



We have done a little of everything this week. We went to Skyzone, and the boys ran up walls and played dodge ball and drank blue slushies.

We went to Redzone, where our 8-year-old cashed in all the arcade tickets he has been saving and came home with a red lava lamp. We went swimming at a friend's pool.

We went to the Ravens game and sat in a suite, which was absolutely amazing and needs its very own blog—coming soon! And we went to the store to grab a few more school supplies, while still getting to school for “Sneak-a-Peek” yesterday and realizing we don't have enough or the right ones.

~5~

We went out to dinner with friends on a double date we scheduled at the last minute last weekend, an astonishing and rare occurrence. It was delightful. I ordered Chinese food for our sons and the sitter, and they had a great evening.

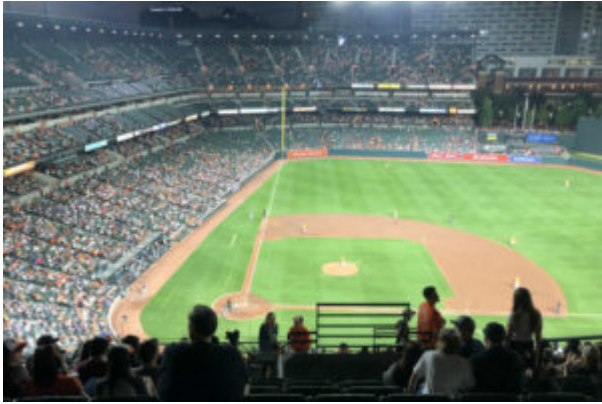


The next day when I went to heat up the leftover lo mein, our younger son said, “Why do you always get lo mein? Why don't you ever get high mein?”

“We can’t afford high mein,” I said. “It’s much more expensive.”

Next time maybe I’ll order the “high mein” as an extra-special treat?

~6~



While some of our out-of-town cousins were visiting last week, we went to an Orioles game. Eddie Murray was there and got a special shout-out during the game.

A Yankees fan in front of us didn’t know who he was. “The actor?” she said.

Clearly she isn’t much of a baseball fan if she doesn’t know Eddie Murray.

When we were growing up, Eddie was my sister Treasa’s favorite player. My Uncle Steve would go to games and bring home Orioles-related gifts to Treasa and tell her they were from Eddie Murray. Naturally, I never questioned why a future Hall of Famer would send gifts to a little girl in Rodgers Forge. But I’ve always figured Eddie was a friend of the family, and it was fun to see him at the game—from afar, of course.

~7~

Tomorrow is Brothers Day! Brothers Day is a very special celebration in our family, even though we’re never quite clear on how we’re celebrating it. It’s the anniversary of the day when our sons met for the first time.



It's amazing to me how well Leo remembers the night he met his little brother. He recalls details you might not expect him to—such as how his new brother threw a toy across the room. We have a busy day tomorrow, so I told the boys we might pick a Brothers Day activity to do today.

It will be the cherry on top of a very full, wonderful week. I just hope what they choose is finishing their summer reading/writing assignments.

Or...maybe not.

***Read more quick takes on Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend!***