

Staycationing fun, Berger cookies, and other wishes that come true (7 Quick Takes)

My sons and I have been staycationing this week, and I don't know how we can ever fit this week into only 7 Quick Takes. Sit back, buckle up, and let's go!

~1~



We kicked off the staycation week by leaving town. Hey, it's our staycation, so we get to make the rules about how much staying is involved. We went to visit my sister Maureen and her four children in New York, so we could see my 10-year-old nephew perform in *The Aristocats*.

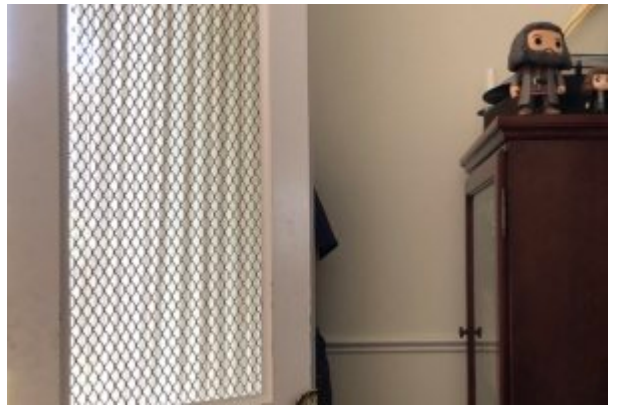
We bought copious boxes of Berger cookies to bring to our cousins who can't find them that far from Baltimore. Then we hit the road to try to get there in time for the show—and we made it.

It turned out that Maureen has served in a key coordinating role with the program, and the director thanked her from the stage. I was so proud. And we all loved the show, especially because the boys' cousin was the kitten Berlioz, and he was on the stage almost the whole time.

It was fantastique. Naturellement.

~2~

The whole visit with our cousins was so much fun. The children played wonderfully intense rounds of hide-and-seek (can you see the hider in the photo?), we ordered in a Chinese food dinner to spare the moms any actual effort in the kitchen, played baseball outside until everyone was tired from the heat, cuddled with the pet rats, and played a few hilarious rounds of Telestrations.



We are excited to see the cousins again in a couple weeks. Better get my hands on another few packages of Berger cookies before then.

~3~

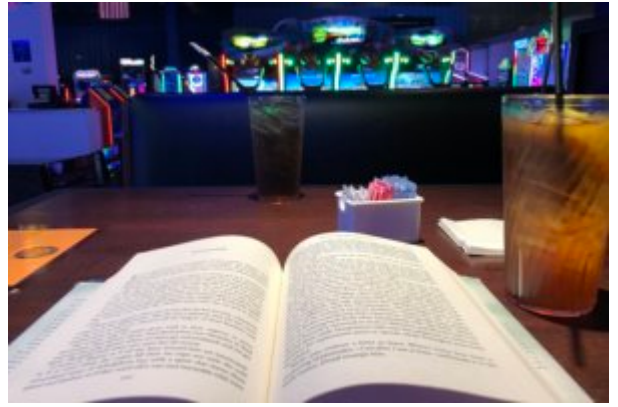


Everyone handled the long drive between here and New York well, and I kept thinking that even though it takes more than three hours to get between our homes, it is so worth it because of the time we had together.

With the exception of that long stretch of the New Jersey Turnpike, there is so much to see! We enjoyed the Manhattan skyline, and we all managed to spot the Statue of Liberty from the road on the way home. Watching planes fly out of the Newark airport is always entertaining, and the bridges along the way are cool and help you pace yourself for the trip. (The bridge photo is obviously not taken by me since I was driving.)

~4~

Our boys have been wanting to go to Dave and Buster's, and a trip there seemed like a decadent way to keep the staycation week going. We found a Groupon that seemed like a good deal, and we were on our way.



I decided that I would bring a book instead of just watching the boys race on motorcycles that don't actually move and marveling at their skills with Crossy Road. Our sons ran off to play, and I found a booth where I could drink a bottomless glass of iced tea, read, and keep an eye on them.

I brought *All the Light We Cannot See*, which turned out to be the perfect book to disappear into in a room full of noise and glaring colored lights. It was easy to lose myself in the writer's words and his beautiful and difficult and compelling story that is woven like a tapestry.

~5~



Our sons have been ice skating, but only one had been roller skating. So, I took our sons roller skating at Sportsman's Hall, in Upperco, Md., and both boys were excited. I stood there and listened to 1980s music and had flashbacks to the birthday parties of my youth.

There is nothing quite like watching your children try something that doesn't come easily, but that they love, and seeing how determined they are to succeed. When we left to head home, they were begging to go back that night to take their father and show him their skating. I couldn't make any promises without talking to him, so I

said we would talk about it later, and we moved on to other topics.

As we were driving home, we saw a white horse in a field.

"There's a white horse!" I said. "You can make a wish."

They didn't tell me their wishes, but I had an idea I knew. When their father got home from work and they were asking him if we could go roller skating, I could tell he was tired.

"Can we go roller skating?" our younger son said. "We saw a white horse on the way home and made a wish!"

How can you say no to that? Their wishes came true. Later that night, as my husband and I stood together watching them work their way around the rink, I thought of how our wishes have, too.

~6~

One afternoon we stopped at a local produce stand and bought corn, peas, cherry tomatoes, red-skinned potatoes, fresh eggs, and some peaches that smell so, so sweet. I can't wait to make them into a peach cake, but if it doesn't happen soon, they'll just get eaten as they are.



I asked the boys to help shell the peas, which were delicious. One of the boys loved them, and the other prefers the peas from the frozen food section at the grocery store. But everyone liked the corn.

~7~



special.

As always happens in any vacation, some of the moments that are the most fun are the ones that are unplanned or somewhat ordinary. The day we went on the Utz Factory Tour, we also stopped by Texas Hot Weiner Lunch in downtown Hanover, and the boys asked if they could sit at the counter for a minute. It cost nothing, and yet it was so

Not every moment of our staycation has been wild and crazy. Some of the time we were just lounging around the house and reading or playing.

Oh, and we registered for summer reading at two different libraries this week—and learned that you just register online now, so we could have done it without leaving home. Who knew?

Have a wonderful weekend. I can't believe it's almost July!