

The Saxonburg Carnival

by

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It was a day where if it could go wrong, it did. So as I crankily came home from work with little sleep the night before, I opened the door to 6 little eyes asking me if I remembered that I would take them to the Saxonburg parade and carnival. “Uh, how about we get ice cream cones” I asked desperately grasping for anything that would get me out of this commitment. “No way, we want to go to the parade Daddy!” came back the response in unison.

I had never been to the Saxonburg carnival and I really didn’t want to go. I was miserable so I pulled out my secret weapon, the sure thing. “I know. Why don’t we get Happy meals and be happy?” I begged enthusiastically. But the surprising answer was “no way, you promised.”

A promise is a promise in our household so I changed clothes, took a couple aspirins and dragged myself to the family vehicle much to the delight of 3 giggling children. “We have to take the shuttle bus at the high school Daddy,” Veronica reminded me. So off we went to Knoch High School.

Our shuttle was a school bus. I hadn’t been on one of those in 100 years. As I slumped into my seat, I noticed seat belts. “Wow, how long have they been doing this,” I wondered. “Is this cool or what Daddy?” Gracie shouted as she got on the seat across from me. Then I thought I heard, no it couldn’t be....yes it was “I’m a believer” from the Monkees. It was playing over the sound system. And as we pulled out, the next song was the Monkees too. Well if there’s one thing that can crack a smile on a grumpy face on a tough day it’s a CD full of silly Monkees music with what seemed to be 100 little kids jumping up & down on a bus.

And so to the parade we went. Children of all shapes and sizes lined the sidewalks patiently waiting for the fun to begin. As I caught my second wind, I marveled as I have many times at what a beautiful town Saxonburg is. If ever there was a classic small town setting for a parade, this was it. When the first fire engine appeared, I noticed my kids were getting in the set position like sprinters in their starting blocks. The customary candy scramble was soon under way.

Between the fire engines, motorcycles and beauty pageant winners marched Knoch’s finest. The band, cheerleaders and drill teams brought back high school memories. “Ah to be a kid again,” I dreamed. But my trance was quickly interrupted by those zany Shriners. I’m all for their wonderful cause but am I the only one who gets nervous when those seasoned citizens swerve all over the place in those little cars? I’m sure it’s all carefully choreographed but it looks like a geriatric game of chicken to me.

Anyhow the parade was perfect. Not too long, just right. We then made our way to the carnival. I was surprised how big it was. It was definitely one of the bigger small town carnivals I've been to. While my kids were having fun on the rides I found myself connecting with an alpaca. I'm no Dr. Doolittle but as we stared at each other for what seemed like an eternity, I could swear she was saying "get me alfalfa.... get me alfalfa". "What's alfalfa," I replied telepathically so no one would think I was bananas. "It's better than this junk I'm eating," said the alpaca. "Dad, what are you doing" asked my son Trevor who had burst onto the scene. "Uh, nothing.... This, son, is an alpaca", I said in my instructional voice. "No that is a baby llama" said the tattooed man who was hidden in a chair not far from the llama pen. "This, son, is a baby llama," I clarified loudly in my instructional voice.

As time march forward, it was time to go and I could tell my exhausted kids had a total blast. After we plunked ourselves back on the bus, my kids shouted "THANK YOU DADDY!" That made it all worthwhile. The Saxonburg Carnival – way better than a happy meal.



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