

The Laughing Mom

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff



Mommy loses it

I tend to be absentminded. It is not a helpful quality in the business of motherhood. As a consequence, I am constantly losing things. I am highly aware of this problem and strive to manage it. That is why, when I set down Melise's float jacket outside of the local swimming pool so I could buckle little Alina into her car seat, I made a mental note to pick up the bright orange jacket again before we got in the car. But I forgot it anyhow.

In my defense, I was carrying a car seat, purse and swim bag and holding Melise by the hand at the time. And I was in a rush to meet someone at my house. So the fact that I forgot something isn't a shock, right? Except that it was BRIGHT ORANGE and right next to me!

It had been a crazy day and was only half over. I rushed us home where I got us all out of wet swimsuits and into dry clothes for our visitors. We visited and then immediately went back to town for more activities.

This all happened on Independence Day. In the Haxtun Park was a nice barbecue with local entertainment. Melise was eyeing the bounce houses that had been set up next to the playground. It was all I could do to get her to eat before she dragged me in that direction. On the way, I kept stopping to talk to people and Melise would pull and dangle from my hand until I started moving again. It was like taking a pet monkey for a walk!

Finally, at the bounce house, she chickened out. I think it was much more intimidating up close, so we went to the playground for a while. Eventually, we meandered back to the bounce house when fewer kids were inside. Melise dared to enter it, and I sat on the grass with Alina.

The afternoon was hot, but it was the type of weather that makes me sentimental of summers past. I watched lovingly as Alina attempted to sit-up on her own in the grass. Then I looked up to watch Melise tumbling around the bounce house. Every time she fell, some of the older kids in the house would stop to help her up. Life was so very good.

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Then a little girl said, “Did you lose Melise’s floats at the pool?” The question was so out of sync with the moment that I was confused for a second.

The girl explained that she thought she saw it as she left the pool that afternoon.

She said, “Isn’t it orange?”

“Yes,” I said with dismay. It’s bright orange.

The mommy guilt set in immediately. It is a special kind of guilt reserved for the times I fail to follow through on my mommy duties. Melise didn’t even realize that anything was missing, but that didn’t stop me from feeling the pain of my incompetence.

Melise emerged from the bounce house and was ready to go home. We plodded slowly to the car—her from exhaustion and me from melancholy. Before bed, I soothed myself with some chocolate and posted on Facebook about the missing float jacket.

Bright and early the next morning, I had a message on Facebook from the head life guard. They had found Melise’s jacket. Yay! And they had found Alina’s swimsuit, too! Oh dear, I didn’t even know that I had lost it. Goodness, this mom is losing her marbles (and I’d lose my kids’ marbles, too, if they left them in my care)!

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