

# Down Home: Go down to the sea and be refreshed

June 13, 2013

You can plan a vacation, but you can't control the weather.

You already knew that, didn't you? Our family experienced it firsthand when we met at the beach early this month.

The way I see it, early June isn't the ideal time for a vacation, especially if you live in a place where the average summer temperature is the same as, uh, let's see ... Gehenna. The vacation is great, but then you come home to the possibility—nay, the prospect—of 100-degree days for weeks on end.

But that was the only week all summer when Joanna and I and our daughters and their husbands, Lindsay and Aaron and Molly and David, were free at the same time.

Our 2-year-old grandson, Ezra, can take a vacation any week of the year.

From a meteorological standpoint, the earlier a beach vacation falls in the summer, the better. Hurricane season begins around Memorial Day and builds across the coming months.

## **Tropical Storm Andrea**

But this year may be a doozy, because Tropical Storm Andrea took a little trip through the Gulf of Mexico and across Florida while we were vacationing in a house about a quarter-mile from the beach.

Ironically, we didn't know the storm was on us until we started getting text messages from friends and family, asking if we were about to get blown away. Shoot, we were on vacation. That means talking and reading books

and maybe watching a movie, but not keeping up with news from the “real world.” So, we’d never heard of Andrea until she was, quite literally, breathing down our necks.

And even then, she wasn’t so bad. She landed to the east of us overnight, when wind and rain blew up from the Gulf, lashed the beach and pounded our roof.

The next day, the Walton County sheriff told everybody to get out of the water, but we weren’t crazy enough to try swimming in crashing waves and rip current, anyway.

But we all walked down to the seashore and enjoyed the gift Andrea left us. The storm surge flattened and widened the beach. The waves created ankle-deep tide pools. And crabs, apparently disoriented by how Mother Nature remodeled their homes, scurried across the sand.

Ezra, who still can’t quite handle even mild waves lapping on the shore, absolutely loved his wide, flat seaside playground. He splashed through the tide pools like a miniature banshee. He watched in amazement at skittering crabs. He ran and ran and ran across the smooth expanse of sand.

### **Ezra had a blast**

Ezra had a blast. And his Mama and Daddy, Auntie M and Uncle David, and Jody and Marvo had at least as much fun—watching him play and learn to love one of our favorite places on God’s amazing, beautiful and ever-changing Earth.

Our serendipitous seaside escapade reminded me the best times aren’t planned. They just happened. Besides this, my favorite times of vacation were blowing bubbles on the porch with Ezra; sitting around a meal table with our daughters and their guys, yakking and laughing about anything and everything; and sitting by the sea, a breeze in my face and the crash of

waves in my ears.

God built bountiful blessings in this ol' world. Family and the beach are two of the best.