

# **A Weekend Fit for A Kingdom**

**February 18 - 21, 2010**

*Walt Disney World Magic Kingdom  
Contemporary Resort*



*"All it takes is faith and trust. Oh! And something I forgot. Dust!"*

**Peter Pan** from *Peter Pan*

"I'm going to Disney World!" We weren't back from Disneyland for 48 hours when I started checking into a short Magic Kingdom visit for us... well, it actually had been HIS idea! His flippant "We ought to compare the two parks sometime" comment made on our flight home stuck in my head after we returned. After immersing ourselves in the Disneyland Resort courtesy of ABD (and other DISers on-line), I felt I now had an idea what to expect in a Disney vacation. The fear of the 'World of Disney' was receding. Yeah!

What to do next? Recesses, of course! I looked at our options and decided that we would book on-line through Disney this first time. For such a short stay - only 3 nights - we wouldn't get a significant savings anywhere. Also, it was going to be interesting to learn how the cast members worked with us as their guests, not ABD guests. We wanted tickets and a room, so we went with a MYW package. For several reasons, I focused on staying at one of the deluxe hotel options along the Magic Kingdom monorail loop for a weekend in February. I just about fell off my chair! That's some expensive pixie dust! I confess, I mentally shelved the idea of the trip when I saw those prices... who can afford these places?!? Yeah, yeah... I know! I was the one who just returned from an ABD adventure, but these seemed even out of my league!

At this point, I ignored Peter Pan's advice and gave up any faith and hope for one more trip to 'Never-Never-Land' this year. I was thrilled with our ABD adventure, so I put these plans out of my mind for the rest of the night and was content to enjoy my memories from our first visit to Disneyland the month before.

I guess I should've stayed up and looked for shadows that night because this is where the start of the pixie dust begins! Low and behold, I woke up the next morning with a revelation - I recalled that I had received a random PIN code in an e-mail from Disney Destinations months ago. Pretty confident that I don't throw away anything of value electronically, I dug through my personal Inbox and voila! Forty percent off a Deluxe Resort! Now we were talking! **PIXIE DUST!** When I cornered my better half with these new prices, he had a hard time resisting (AKA caving!)

With that complete and only four weeks until we arrive, I dived into those pesky little ADRs I have read horror stories about. Although it is off-season, who wants to take the chance of waiting 30 minutes for a table? My first call to Disney Dining was completely unsuccessful - no Crystal Palace, no Chef Mickey, no O'hanas, no Supercalifragelistic Breakfast, no Tony's Town Square, no nothing! The cast member was kind though and told me to check back often because of all the cancellations. She was absolutely right, of course! I was able eventually find opening for all of those and more. **PIXIE DUST!** I decided to only make four reservations for the weekend, but it turned out to be just the right amount for us! After a quick peek at the food costs we expected to see, I decided that none of the meal plans fit our needs, so we were not going to include a meal plan in our reservations.

Since we were driving there, transportation planning consisted of a tire pressure check and a full tank. Sweet! I had so much extra free time that I decided to look into some behind-the-scenes tour options. It would certainly make the two experiences more comparable, wouldn't it? Most of the money I saved with the hotel PIN code I threw at two morning tours at the park and away we went!

#### **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2010**

We hopped into the car around 1:15PM on Thursday and were on I-75 south in less than 10 minutes! Now only another 400 miles on this highway! Actually, the ride went smoothly - one

stop for a fill up in Florida, a \$2.50 toll on the turnpike, and another \$1.25 on FL-429 - we were turning onto World Drive just as the Magic Kingdom Wishes! fireworks display began. What an awesome entrance! ***PIXIE DUST!***

By 8:15PM, we had self-parked in the Contemporary Resort lot, spot # PI21 up front - more ***PIXIE DUST!*** and were at the check-in desk at the lobby. Although I had already checked in on-line, I was waved over to another cast member, Tyler, who gave us our information packet and explained we had been UPGRADED from the Garden Wing room I booked to a BAY VIEW room in the Contemporary Tower! Awesome! ***PIXIE DUST!***





We stopped by our room, #4208 on the 6th floor, overlooking the dining area and monorail tracks, before grabbing a quick snack at the Contempo Cafe. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.) Stanley was a greeter at the entrance to the quick service facility and graciously explained the process. The place was mostly full, but after Denise checked us out, we still managed to find a small table to enjoy our snacks. **PIXIE DUST!**

It was great to finally stop and absorb the atmosphere. The concourse area is a bit of an eclectic mix: the technology of the monorail, the southwestern Mary Blair mural, the cartoon statue of Chef Mickey sitting above his restaurant, and the modern architecture of the building itself. It is definitely a large and comfortable space, but doesn't seem to flow together as well as the Grand Californian Hotel. That said, I definitely liked the Contemporary Resort much better than the Grand Californian partly for that reason - it wasn't too perfect. It felt more real, if that makes any sense. (The second reason was because I felt like there was actually enough light to see in the CR, which I never did in the GCH!)







Afterwards, we walked through the gift shops to see how the merchandise compared and it obviously was the same. Good, I won't have to spend any money there! (Can I consider that pixie dusted? Ha!) Although it was a bit chilly that night, I didn't hesitate to drag him outside after that for the nightly *Water Pageant* show on Bay Lake. We watched it from the dock - I snapped a few pictures of course - and then called it a night, so we could be up in time for our ADR in the morning.



### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2010

We woke up an hour before our resses and were on the monorail platform by 7:45AM. The (yellow) monorail arrived just a few minutes later. Since we were the only ones on the platform I asked the driver, John, (even though I knew the answer) if guests were allowed up front. He sadly shook his head and I thanked him as we boarded. Before the doors closed, we were surprised to see him pop his head into our car to give us some 'wings' stickers (for those who used to ride in the front.) **PIXIE DUST!** After a quick stop at the Polynesian Resort, we hopped off the monorail and went searching for our breakfast!

Surprisingly, we arrived at the Grand Floridian a few minutes before 8AM, and had no trouble making our way down to the first floor for our *Supercalifragelistic Breakfast at the Grand Floridian's 1900 Park Fare*. In fact, we wound up opening the restaurant with about 30 others when one of the younger guests exclaimed "*Supercalifragelistic!*" We were seated quickly and our server, Carla, explained to us that our table was the first one the characters visited (since it was right near the character entrance door. Excellent! When I made the reservations, I wasn't sure

we would be able to make it to the opening ceremony at the Magic Kingdom in time, but this would certainly help! **PIXIE DUST!**



We shuffled to get our food and get seated. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.) It wasn't long before we were greeted by Winnie the Pooh and Tigger! Excellent! Mary Poppins arrived shortly afterwards and wished us a good day. The time flew by and more than once, I had to quickly finish with a bite for a quick smile before the characters moved on to the next table. Alice and the Mad Hatter rounded out the visits and we had finished up our first 'experience' by 8:40AM! I spoke briefly with a Cast Member, Tony, who was from New Jersey, and then we were on our way!



Back up one flight of steps to the station, we hopped back onto the (orange) monorail headed to the Magic Kingdom. I was a bit surprised to see the station conductor had to force one door shut on our car, but it worked just the same! The monorail rode about half the length to the Magic Kingdom and then it halted. Huh? The captain came on the speaker to let us know that we were holding until the monorail train in front of us was a safe distance away. Only 3 or 4 minutes later, we were pulling into the station! We walked down the ramp, got my small backpack checked and headed to one of the entrance turnstiles. We slid our tickets through the slot, held our pointer finger over the mesmerizing blue light and voila! We had entered a kingdom!

The entrance was filled with young and old, ready for their magical day to start! The *Magic Kingdom Opening Ceremony* began only a few minutes after we arrived, and was, to describe it in one word, cute! The music was fun and the arrival of the characters on the train was such an awesome photo opportunity! That morning, the train passengers included Mickey, Goofy, Donald, Pluto, Jasmine, Alice, the White Hare, Snow White, Chip and Dale. As the show ended, the crowds started moving toward the two tunnels under the railroad that led to Main Street, USA.



It was a sight - and a bottleneck! It took a few minutes for us to get through the tunnels (and grab a map on the way.) Our first stop was at a Photopass photographer in the center of Town Square - an addition to our Photopass account already! After that, we headed down Main Street, USA and through *Cinderella's Castle* to our first of many Magic Kingdom rides!



After reading a number of blogs and books that warned of long mid-day lines in Fantasyland, I decided we should ride all the attractions there we wanted as soon as we arrived at the park. This decision really paid off! We rode (in this order) *Peter Pan* (on a gold-mast ship), *It's a Small World*, *Snow White's Scary Adventures* (in a Dopey car), and then watched *Philharmagic!* - all without the slightest hint of a line! By 9:40AM, we were heading over to Frontierland to catch the first *TSI Raft* of the day!



We waited in line for about seven to ten minutes and a raft driver showed up to let us board the *TSI Raft* (named Becky Thatcher). Just after we cleared the dock and were heading toward the island, the driver spun the boat around in a 360-degree circle to show us the rafts were not on a rail. The boat was pretty full and I could hear whispers regarding 'paintbrush strategies' taking place several times throughout the very short ride. To no one's surprise, as we docked on the island, the guests sprinted off the boat in search of the morning paintbrushes! We leisurely walked around the island for about forty minutes. After about ten minutes there, we ran across a boy who had found the red paint brush "sitting in some plants" just behind him a minute ago. We congratulated him and moved on to check out all the hidden caves and crannies the island held. We took the same raft back to Frontierland and walked over to Adventureland for our next set of attractions!





Adventureland held most of the other rides we were looking forward to riding, so we knew more fun was in store for us! We rode (in this order) *Pirates in the Caribbean*, *Jungle Cruise* (on the Ganges Gertie with skipper, Matt), and the *Tiki Room: Under New Management*. We were rather surprised to find that we got to ride all these attractions without any lines! I was surprised by the CM as I was boarding the *Pirates in the Caribbean*, when I heard him shout out, "Take cover, she has a Canon!" He looked down at my DSLR and cracked up! I'm sure it wasn't original, but it was still amusing to me! We were extremely disappointed with the *Tiki Room: Under New Management* because we were hoping to hear the original song, but it only ran for about 10 seconds throughout the whole show! We decided that wasn't going to be a repeat ride and we headed off to Tomorrowland to pick up a Fastpass for *Buzz Lightyear: Spaceranger Spin* (around noon) just before our lunch resses were about to begin!





As we walked back through Main Street, USA, I finally took the time to check out the windows and store fronts. I confess, to a first-timer (at both FL & CA parks), I didn't see much of a difference between the two Main Street, USA lands. The areas at either end differed in size though: The Town Square at Disneyland seemed larger there, but the Central Plaza here at Magic Kingdom was definitely larger here.

We arrived at *Tony's Town Square* about fifteen minutes earlier than our 12:20PM reservations, but were seated within five minutes of checking in. The restaurant was about three-quarters full when we were seated but service was prompt. Our server, Shelley, answered our question about the menu and recommended the spaghetti and meatballs plate. (See '*Feb 2010 Dining Report*' file.) As part of our lunch order, I was finally able to get a Pirate Punch (minus the souvenir kiddie cup, on request) and benevolently allowed him to tease me about my color-changing straw throughout the entire meal! As we paid the check, I noticed a parade happening outside in the Town Square! What was this? I frantically checked my daily schedule as Shelley explained that it would occur several times throughout the day. I breathed a sigh of relief as we finished the transaction and headed out for the next adventure!



As we walked back up Main Street, USA to head back to Tomorrowland, we caught the end of the 12:20PM *Move It! Shake It! Celebrate It! Street Party!* It was a great variety of characters and a lot of fun to watch! The cast members and characters really work hard during the parades! Afterwards, we headed over to *Buzz Lightyear Spacemancer Spin* around 1PM when our Fastpass became valid. We had about a five-minute wait in the Fastpass line and it wasn't long before we were in our space cart and blasting off to fight Emperor Zurg! It took us a few minutes more than expected to get our bearings because we were shocked to find our laser guns were permanently attached to the cars! We were not expecting that! It didn't seem to hurt our scores in the end



though! We went searching for our photos afterwards and were once again surprised to find we didn't have an electronic copy for free! When I realized our scores were not on the pictures, I lost my interest in them and moved on to our next attraction!



How cool is the *TOMORROWLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY*?!? Talk about the most mediocre, most unusual, most FUN ride! It's fabulous! It speeds up, slows down, rides through cheesy (ancient) 'futuristic' dioramas, random section of other attractions, and doesn't really show you anything, but it is such a relaxing ride! This is definitely a repeater!





We walked over to Toontown Fair from there to see what it was like. We headed to *Mickey's Country House* and found the house to be smaller, but the garden was fun! We decided not to wait in the long line to see Mickey Mouse. (Don't worry! the day was young still and we were not about to snub our host!!) Instead, we boarded the *Magic Kingdom Railroad* (steam engine Roy O. Disney) around 2PM, We took the train from Toontown Faire to Frontierland just for the fun of it. The train wasn't very full during the ride and we noticed there were no dioramas to enjoy throughout the visit, as there were on the DLRR route.



From there, were walked to Fantasyland and decided to grab some *Peter Pan* Fastpass tickets around 2:15PM. It doesn't hurt to have a ride waiting for us later, does it?! We walked back to Main Street, USA and grabbed a seat on the sidewalk curb near Casey's Corner to wait for the parade to start. When he realized we had a half hour before it began, he decided to go get something to 'fortify' us. He arrived back about 15 minutes later with some sweet munchies from the Main Street Bakery. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.)



Just after 3PM the *Muppets Volunt-Ears Pre-Parade Show* began and three decorated cars drove slowly down the parade route, filled with Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy, and a number of lucky guests who had donated their volunteer time for a free ticket to Disney this year! It was fun to watch, and shortly afterwards, the *Celebrate A Dream Come True Parade* began!



The parade was definitely the most impressive we had seen - and I wouldn't call the others shabby by any standards. First, the floats in this parade were HUGE! Second, there couldn't have been a character left anywhere else in the park! The character count was maxed out. Whatever characters weren't assigned to a float, they were walking down the street, interacting with the guests on the curbs! Although they were all completely in character and generally amusing, we found Cinderella's stepsisters to be absolutely hilarious! For one thing, their makeup was totally perfect, but nothing could top Drisella's haughty "Welcome to MY parade" comment as she pouted down the street!!! Definitely the most fun!







After the parade headed toward Frontierland, we decided to walk back through Adventureland until the parade ended. On a whim, we decided to check out the *Swiss Family Robinson Treehouse*. Whoa! Talk about crowded! It took us about 15 minutes to get through the maze of steps and walkways. It was an interesting attraction, and must have brought out he 'inner child' because he began to rattle doors along the way. It didn't take long before the tween trailing behind us decided that it looked fun. Sigh! Although I discretely motioned for him to control himself, he managed to rattle every door in the attraction! Boy, was I glad when we finished that attraction! I don't think we'll be repeating that one!





We backtracked to Liberty Square and saw the Haunted Mansion line had an hour wait, so we chose to ride the *Mark Twain Paddleboat*, which cut the wait time to five minutes - not bad! As the boat arrived, I noticed that the red pipe attached to the paddleboat house was covered in aluminum fabric insulation. Hmmm, I didn't realize that was available in the 18th century! We boarded on the second level and walked to the front of the boat. We then walked to the back of the boat and overloaded the paddle as it started up. From there, we meandered to the first level, then back up to the third level, but there was no room at the railing for any viewing, so we spent the rest of the ride on the second level. The second half the ride offered several amusing life-size dioramas along the shorelines. It certainly made the trip more interesting, but it was nice just to be able to relax on the boat.

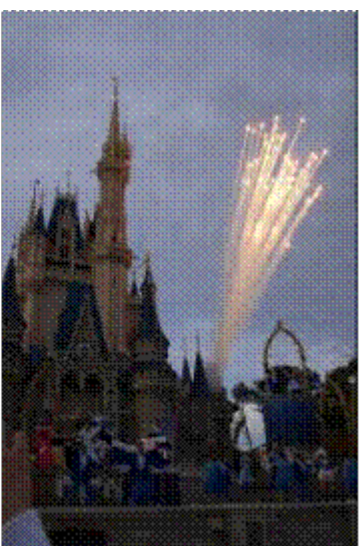
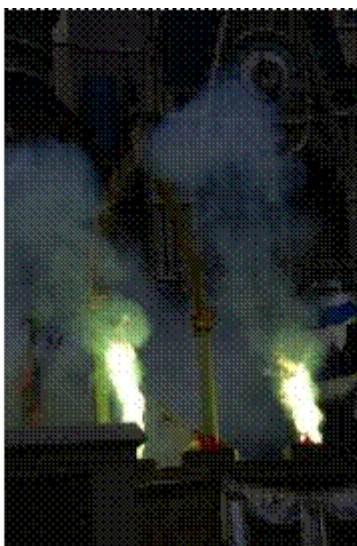




Once again we headed to the Central Plaza and spent another twenty minutes relaxing in front of *Cinderella's Castle*. I noticed a Photopass photographer nearby and dragged my better half over to yet another photo we didn't need! Ha! Promptly, at 5:15PM, the *Dream Along with Mickey* show began. It was an enjoyment show that offered a good variety of characters. It wasn't long and was immediately followed by the *Move It! Shake It! Celebrate It! Street Party Parade* again down Main Street, USA. I was disappointed to see that the floats were missing half (or more) of their characters - were they all at dinner or were we missing something?







We decided not to stay to the end, and headed to Liberty Square to see if we could finally check out the *Haunted Mansion*. The wait time was listed as 10 minutes, so we went for it. As we stepped into line, a cast member handed me a lanyard with a tag on it and asked me to drop it off to the cast member at the entrance. We gladly accepted it. Unfortunately, the line didn't move for fifteen minutes, and then it was only because word got out that it was having some technical difficulties and was down for now. I dropped the lanyard back off to the cast member who handed it to me and we made our way over to the *Hall of Presidents*. The show began around 6:25PM and lasted for about a half an hour. It was interesting, but not one that stood out for us. We decided to head back toward Fantasyland to redeem our now-valid *Peter Pan* Fastpass tickets and wouldn't you know! The *Haunted Mansion* was open! We only had a 5 -minute wait around 7PM at the entrance doors before we were welcomed into the foyer. It was obvious that the stretching room was not an elevator this time, but regardless, we enjoyed the ride immensely!





We then decided to take the last leg of the *Magic Kingdom Railroad* we had missed from Frontierland to Toontown Fair, and then walk from there to Fantasyland, where we finally rode *Peter Pan* (on a gold-mast ship) again. We walked through Liberty Square and stopped just past the bridge next to *Cinderella's Castle* to wait for the *Wishes Nighttime Spectacular* fireworks. The show began at 8PM and was awesome! Tinkerbell was clearly visible and was fun to watch!



I was tempted to make us wait in the Central Plaza for the *Spectromagic Parade* at 9PM after that, but neither of us wanted to wait around in the dark for 40 minutes, so we headed back to Toontown Fair, where I had a hunch (based on excellent blog recommendations!) Mickey Mouse would be available for a meeting! We arrived at *Mickey Mouse's Country House* by 8:30PM and were not surprised to find no one waiting in line for him! Woo hoo! (I'll call this **PIXIE DUST!** from DISers!) We had some awesome pictures taken and we headed back toward Main Street, USA to call it a night.



What! I know, how could I come this far and head out before this one final parade? Well, I knew we had to be up early the next morning for our tour and we still had two more chances tomorrow to see the parade. As we arrived on Main Street, USA, the parade was just beginning, and there was an opening in the crowds on the sidewalk next to the ice cream parlor. We actually were able to watch half of the *Spectromagic Parade* before heading towards the exit. As we approached the tunnels to leave, we noticed Cinderella's coach was about to go by. We would up watching the rest of the parade at the Town Square in front of the *Exhibition Hall* and then were able to quickly exit the park! Lovely!



We rode the (coral) monorail back to the Contemporary Resort, and stopped back in our room only to realize we were hungry. We found the Contempo Café to be quite empty around 9:30PM so we grabbed a quick snack to satisfy us there. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.)

By the time we got back to the room to relax, we heard the familiar music of the nightly *Water Pageant* begin! Yes! I ran out to the balcony and enjoyed the view from above! It was an excellent way to end our 'magical' day!

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2010

We started out pretty early on Saturday morning. He grabbed a quick breakfast from Contempo Café at 6:45AM. I am usually not hungry at that time in the morning, so I just grabbed a granola bar and off we went to the Magic Kingdom! I had booked this resort for JUST this reason - if we were going on a 7:30AM tour, I wanted to be able to get to it with the least amount of hassle! The walkway was great - clearly marked and less than ten minutes before we were through bag check and walking up to the rest of our tour group at 7:10AM. (See 'Feb 2010 Steam Train Tour Report' files.)



When the tour ended at 10:30AM, we headed over to Adventureland and decided to FINALLY get our first Dole Whip. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.) I had heard that the pineapple one is too sweet so I ordered a vanilla and it had a very nice flavor to it. He joked that it couldn't have been a real one if it wasn't a pineapple one, but it didn't stop him from enjoying his fair share! Splitting it helped us finish it by the time we had meandered over to the *Pirates of the Caribbean*! One more boat journey through the pirate town and off we went to Liberty Square, where we once again rode *Haunted Mansion* with less than a five minute wait at 11:10AM! Awesome! I made sure we grabbed a Fastpass ticket for *Peter Pan* as we made our way through Fantasyland and back to Crystal Palace for our 11:55AM lunch reservations.





We checked in about 15 minutes beforehand and waited outside with a dozen other families! I was surprised to see so many people, but then it was a Saturday, and the park definitely was more crowded than it was the previous day! Our name was called at our exact reservation time, and we were led into the western side of the restaurant, where our server, Melanie, introduced herself and explained the menu and the character rotations. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.)

We waited a few minutes to get our meal because Piglet was just about to walk up to the table. After we got some awesome souvenir shots, we headed to buffets. The selection was good and I even had to try out some of the childrens' buffet meatballs! Yum! The characters participated in a handkerchief song and dance about 12:05PM, and Eeyore accidentally passed our table without stopping, in the process! Oops! I kindly asked Melanie if he was coming back and wouldn't you know, there he was! **PIXIE DUST!** from a cast member! Wonderful! The dessert selection was awesome and we left very full!





We caught the end of the 12:20PM *Move It! Shake It! Celebrate It! Street Party* again as we headed to Tomorrowland. As we passed *Stitch's Great Escape*, I noticed there was no line, even though this was a Fastpass ride. Although we were on our way to check out the *Carousel of Progress*, I convinced him we might as well check this ride out (because I knew there wouldn't be a line for the other ride!) *Stitch's Great Escape* was not nearly as bad as the reviews I had seen on-line. That said, it was just about the same caliber of our next ride, *Carousel of Progress*. Both rides were shows, and both had animatronics. *Stitch's Great Escape* offered a few more interactive bells and whistles (and squirts of water). The *Carousel of Progress* offered the cheesiest song, *It's A Great Big World Out There!* It's bad, but by the last rotation, you can't help but sing-a-long!

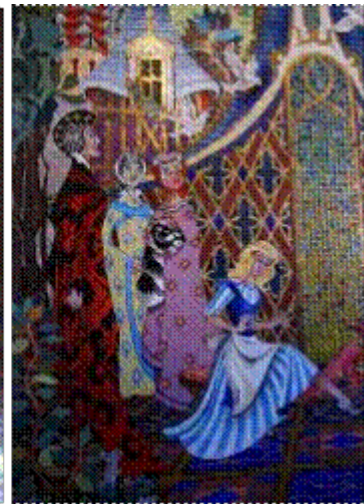


We stopped by Fantasyland to pick up Fastpasses for the *Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* at 2PM and wound up with an extra Fastpass for *Philharmagic! PIXIE DUST!* Our *Peter Pan* Fastpass ticket was valid by that time so we rode it at 1:15PM (on a blue-mast boat) and then tried out *Cinderella's Golden Carousel*. It was smaller than the carousel at Disneyland and the ride seemed shorter, but it might not have been! With the *Philharmagic!* Fastpass ticket burning a hole in our pockets, we decided to check it out one more time. We were able to use the Fastpass ticket line, so we entered in a shorter line and were able to line up outside the theater door before the rest of the guests were ushered in. The show began at 2:15PM, and was, once again, one of the most enjoyable attractions there!





We stopped by *Sir Mickey's Shoppe* to catch the Giant peeking inside - he was amused - and then we walked back to Main Street, USA through *Cinderella's Castle* walk-through. It was one of the few times we had seen it open in the last few days. It is closed off for the *Dream Along with Mickey Show* and for the *Wishes Nighttime Spectacular* fireworks, so I was glad to finally be able to get a good look at the mosaic inside. We laughed at the two stepsisters faces, 'red with rage' and 'green with envy' and I took a few pictures. We headed down Main Street, USA just as the 3PM *Celebrate A Dream Come True Parade*.



began. We waited for a few minutes and decided to keep walking. He was actually someone interested in this parade since he saw it yesterday... well, he was actually just interested in watching Cinderella's stepsisters act immature! About halfway down Main Street, USA we saw



them coming, so we actually got to enjoy their antics a second time - and boy, was it worth it! They stopped across the street from us to talk to some guests and then out of nowhere they both started to fight with each other and slap each others hands. The Wicked Stepmother had to jump in and separate them before they all moved on their way.



Well, he just about lost it! It was one of the funniest things he had ever seen! What man doesn't like a good catfight, right? (Although it is not what anyone might expect to be a highlight of a vacation, it is one of the few things he actually still brings up about the vacation!) Who else could get away with that at a Disney park? The cast members REALLY get kudos from us!

We decided to head out of the park for a short time to catch another 'ride': the monorail! We were looking forward to riding the monorail to EPCOT, just to enjoy the train and take a nice relaxing break in the middle of the day! It turned out to be a good idea, too. As we left the Magic Kingdom, we could see the 'bag check' line before the turnstiles was about a 20 minute wait! Whoa! This isn't even the summertime!

We took the (red) Resort monorail through the Contemporary Resort to the TTC. From there we switched over to the EPCOT monorail. We only waited a few minutes for a train to show up and the ride over to the other park was about 10 minutes, but we had a neat view of the Contemporary Resort, and we also got to see the most of the visitor parking lots weren't even half full! Wow! When the *Spaceship Earth* came into view, it really was fascinating! I snapped a lot of pictures! The train stopped for about 4 minutes just before it reached the station, and I didn't hesitate to use that time wisely: snap, snap! I am sure we weren't the only ones who were taking the trip for fun, but the train felt pretty empty as everyone else exited our car. The ride back was just as nice, and we once again had to change platforms to get back to the Magic Kingdom. We attempted to take the Express monorail back this time, but it was delayed due to a car change on the rail, so we (a large crowd by this time) were all shuffled into a (coral) Resort monorail to get back to the park.



It was a tight fit but we made it back to the park at 4PM, where there was actually no line at the 'bag check' tables. Cool! We headed straight to the *Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* with our now-valid Fastpass ticket! I confess, there are not many things I preferred in the Magic Kingdom over the Disneyland park, but this ride was a lot more fun than *Mr. Toad's Wild Ride* with the 'bouncing' and 'floating' honey pots!



We walked through Liberty Square to Frontierland. Just on a whim, we decided to pick up Fastpass tickets for *Big Thunder Mountain*. Ha! Return at 9PM?!? Those guidebooks were serious about these crowds! We caught the end of the Hoedown Parade there and then as we were leaving, we passed Pecos Bill's Wild Inn and decided that was as good a place as any for dinner! We placed an order at the automatic kiosk around 5:10PM, and probably had to wait 10 minutes for our food to be ready. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.)



We decided to stroll through Frontierland one more time and as we came to the Country Bear Jamboree, we decided to give it a try. I already ready how unpopular it was, so I my expectations weren't high. In hindsight, that probably helped, because regardless of how corny it was, we were highly amused - and somewhat taken aback – by the show! When one of the characters mentioned "shooting" someone in his song, I heard a man behind me say "Wha....?!?" He must have managed to catch himself during the 'Puddles of Blood' song, but I barely could! Wha....?!? The best part had to be the female bear singing a sad love song, holding a glass of very cheap looking 'chablis'. Ha! I thought Disney did not allow alcohol in the Magic Kingdom! How many years has she been sippin' that stuff? Ha! We definitely enjoyed that show - I am glad we had to wait until the end of it to take pictures (as requested by the CM) or I probably wouldn't have enjoyed it half as much!! We should have tried to see it again, because I'm sure we still missed a bunch more hilarious nuisances!



We walked back to the Frontierland station and took the Magic Kingdom Railroad to Main Street, USA (Walt E. Disney steam engine). On our way to Tomorrowland from there, we stopped in the Main Street Confectionery at 5:30PM for a snack. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.) We had to wait in line about 10 minutes at the back counter, but I was not complaining! The sweets in the display case were just divine looking! You could tell everyone was just drooling over the case!





As we walked past *Cinderella's Castle*, we stopped for a night show with a Photopass photographer. (I thought that was cool.) As we walked away, I overheard the two photographers there discussing a request made by one of the guests standing nearby. The photographers were planning to take photos of him and his (soon-to-be) fiancé when he proposed during the *Wishes Nighttime Spectacular* fireworks. Now if that is not the coolest thing I've ever seen at a Disney park, then I don't know what is! I was really impressed at how the photographers were willing to do that so easily. Sure, it probably has been done before. Sure, he probably tried to tip them. Regardless of all the excuses that could be offered to make this random event I barely observed much less important than it already isn't, it was just so totally awesome to know how happy someone was going to be in a few minutes. **THIS** moment was definitely going to be some woman's 'Magical Moment' that night, but it was also mine for this trip: a small, inexpensive event that creates unexpected or extra magic the way no money can! *PIXIE DUST!*



Okay, back to Tomorrowland and what the heck, a *Buzz Lightyear Spaceranger Spin* Fastpass ticket! He wasn't really interested, but I knew I could change his mind in the hour until it was valid! For now, we jumped on the Tomorrowland Transportation Authority again, and enjoyed the ride! We exited the ride and looked around for a way to spend 20 more minutes... *Monsters, Inc. Laugh Floor*! Okay, so most of the shows around here have been amusing... why not? We waited about 3 minutes in line before we were corralled into watching two different short videos. Not a bad way wait in line. We walked into the show room and randomly took some seats in the second row.



The fun immediately began. The Monsters 'on-stage' started to interact with the audience. It was hilarious. The audience interacted really well and just enjoyed it as the show progressed. We enjoyed an unexpected moment in the 'pre-show' footage where they flashed guests pictures on the side screen and added funny captions. My picture actually showed up and under it was the caption "kissed a monster". It got better, because the camera panned out and then showed my better half with me! **PIXIE DUST!**



As we left that attraction, we could see the end of the *Wishes Nighttime Spectacular* fireworks. Cool! We finally headed over to 'cash in' our Fastpass tickets for another round against Emperor Zurg! As we were boarding the car, I finally tipped him off: I shared my knowledge of the 1,000,000 point targets and off we went! For our third time ever, and our second time at this location, I would say two video-game challenged adults didn't do too shabby!





High from our victory over Emperor Zurg, we backtracked to Toontown Fair for one more visit with the Mouse! On our way out through Fantasyland, where we reminded ourselves that *It's a Small World* after all, and then decided to call it a night! We had been at the park since 7AM, and the *Spectromagic Parade* was about to begin! We watched the end of it again from the Town Square, and took a leisurely stroll along the walkway back to the Contemporary Resort. Since we couldn't have slept through the Water Pageant music, we stayed up long enough to watch it again from the balcony, and we called it a night!



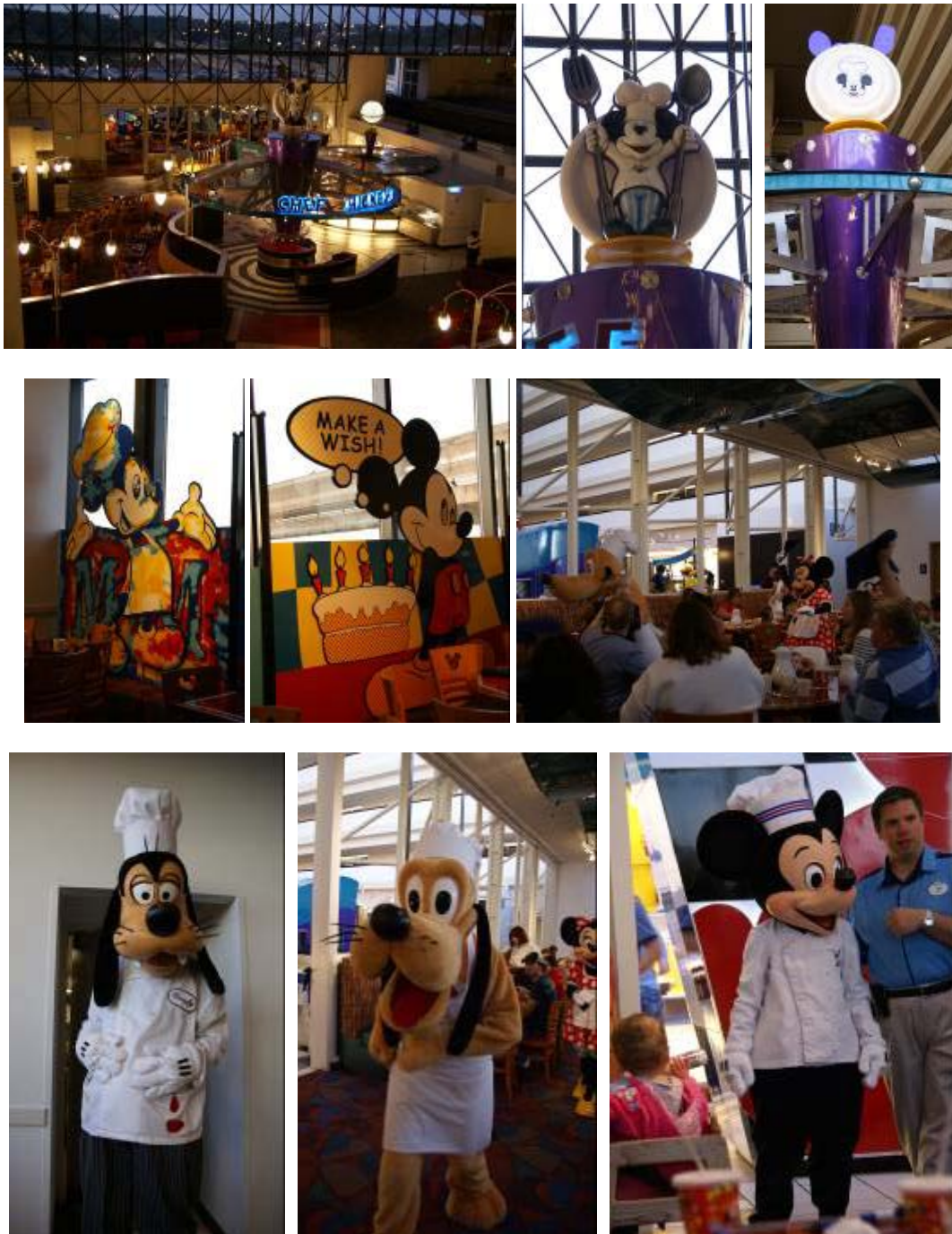




### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2010

We began a little earlier than necessary on Sunday, but I wanted to make sure we didn't miss the start of our second tour. We had reservations for *Chef Mickey at the Contemporary Resort* at 7AM, so we headed down about 10 minutes early, and were there with four other families when they opened. We checked in and they escorted us over to a statue of Mickey where they took our photo and promised us a chance to order it before the meal was up. We would have skipped it if we could, but it didn't slow us down. Once again we were seated at the table next to the character entrance door! **PIXIE DUST!** William was our server for the meal, and was excellent about refilling our beverages! Over the next forty minutes, we had some fun photos taken with (in this order) Goofy, Mickey, Donald, Minnie, & Pluto. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.) Toward the end of our meal, they all grabbed handkerchiefs and danced around the room, similar to the lunch song at *Crystal Palace*!





We headed back to our room to pack our bags, drop them off to the car so we wouldn't have to check-out later, and then decided to use the walkway over to the Magic Kingdom. After getting my bag checked, we headed over to 'early reservations' line to enter the park before it opened. It was about 8:15AM by that time, so we headed straight for the Tours building next to City Hall on the Town Square. We checked in and were given headphones, a badge, and a nametag. We also gave them our lunch request from *Columbia Harbor House*, which we would visit in the afternoon. (See 'Feb 2010 Dining Report' file.)



Our tour actually started at 9AM (no one told me) but it gave me an opportunity to get some more pictures of an empty Main Street, USA, as well as a few of the crowds rushing the park as it opened! Claire, our guide, called our group together just before 9AM to get the tour started. (See 'Feb 2010 KTTK Tour Report' file.)



Since Claire mentioned during the tour that the cartoons at *Exhibition Hall* would be removed in the near future, I suggested we check it out before hitting the road. It certainly turned out to be a great idea! The front of the building was a store, and just behind it was a Photopass session area, but behind that was a bunch of camera memorabilia and some awesome cartoon cutouts that were such awesome photo opportunities! In the center of it all was this relaxing little theater, hardly state of the art, but maybe fifty to sixty seats, that all offered an excellent view of the old Disney cartoons being played repeatedly on the screen in front of them. We sat through three of them - including Steamboat Willie, of course - and then casually worked our way around the room, having fun getting photos with the cutouts!



Enough was enough, we headed out of the park and walked back to the Contemporary Resort, where we stopped to check our bill and use the restroom. We hopped in the car around 2:45PM and turned on the GPS. "Take us home!", we said! Interesting enough, the GPS led us north on World Drive, where we passed the train shop, Disney Institute, and cast member parking lot, before taking a winding drive north for a few miles to FL-429. We paid only a \$0.50 toll to drive two miles on it before merging onto the Florida Turnpike again. One more \$2.50 toll a few miles later and another 450 miles, we were back home by 9:45PM.





Although there were no specific extraordinary events or one-of-a-kind experiences throughout our weekend vacation, we were fortunate enough to enjoy every moment of our magical trip! Each '**PIXIE DUST!**' moment we experienced was a just little unexpected extra that might not impress others, but was added to the fun for us! As for a conclusion, it is best to quote the narrator in *Peter Pan*, who says, 'All of this has happened before, and all of it will happen again!'

Additional resort information can be found at:  
<http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/>

**Rich's Top 10**

- 10) riding the People Mover
- 9) riding the Monorail
- 8) seeing the tunnels
- 7) riding Haunted Mansion a bunch
- 6) character breakfast
- 5) riding other rides
- 4) train tour
- 3) Contemporary Resort
- 2) tours, in general
- 1) Wicked Stepsisters' parade cat fights

**Wendy's Top 10**

- 10) People Mover (TTA)
- 9) Monorail
- 8) Monsters, Inc. Laugh Floor
- 7) Behind the Steam Train tour
- 6) seeing the tunnels
- 5) Wicked Stepsisters' parade cat fights
- 4) riding Haunted Mansion a bunch
- 3) Buzz Lightyear Spaceranger Spin
- 2) Philharmagic!
- 1) Contemporary Resort