

Friends, I have found it...

I have found a list of the emoticons used by wordpress. [Check it out](#):



Say, C, any way we can update these smilies to look like the ones on [this page](#)? 😊

Wireless world...almost

It seems that while I am somewhat of a computer geek, I am somewhat outdated somewhat of an computer geek. You see, my home network has been a wired network for a long time now. With this new computer and its wireless capabilities though, it is time to move on. Plus, my nephew has been complaining about my not having a wireless network- not that it will matter to him soon as he will be off to SIU in a couple of weeks.

So, kind and generous as he is, our admin here donated to me an old router he had laying around, a Linksys type G router. I let it sit for all of one day ☐ before finally hooking the thing up. I went through the settings, following the manual as I did so, and thongs seemed to be working, except no internet. Hmm. Oh yes, I seem to remember having to turn the cable modem off and back on after several seconds. Did it, and yes! Internet. I was now in the wireless world- for a short while. After a bit I could no longer access the internet and my computer showed the network as "limited

connectivity" or something like that. Well, the power supply he gave me for it was not the right one, rated at 500mA while the router says it wants 1A. I read that too low of a current rating may cause flakiness, and the power supply seemed abit warm, so I unplugged it and was going to go to Radio Shack for a universal supply. However, I dug around first and turned up a few power bricks. 7.5V- no. 14V- not (both AC too, while I needed DC). 12V- yes. 1000mA. Well, that is one amp, so-double yes! DC and right size plug- yes, yes, yes! Plugged it in, connected everything back up to it, and I was good to go again once I power-cycled the modem.

So, I finish a blog entry and click **publish**. Can't connect-aargh! Tray icon shows limited connection again, and this time I wasn't even using the wireless, opting for the wired connection instead! Sigh. Looks like I may have damaged the router. I hope not. I'll have to do some research, but once I'm working again I may just have to try another one. I am now hooked back up to my old router and everything is working again, so here's my second blog entry for the day. Two days in a row with two entries? Definitely not my normal routine. Don't worry JustJ, you will bump me to fourth in just a couple days now I'm sure, not that this is a competition.

Teaching time again...

Well, teaching in Sunday school that is. Unlike last time I taught a month ago, I felt I did pretty well this time. I was able to do $1\frac{1}{2}$ lessons this weekend. The $\frac{1}{2}$ comes from last night, when I taught only half of the lesson. Why? Well, there was a shortage of leaders due to many taking the night off for this or that reason. In fact, one who had off rearranged his schedule so he could be there after all.

Anyway, it was decided that we would spend most of the night with the younger kids (1st-3rd) as a result and not have small groups. In the end, we did wind up with enough help from last-minute volunteers to do our normal thing, but the wheels were already in motion. I really don't think 4th/5th grades got much out of the younger lesson, but fortunately we had time at the end to do the intended lesson, well half of it anyway. It was an important lesson so we had to fit it in. I taught them the Romans Road to salvation. This is a series of four key verses from the book of Romans. Here's where I get lazy now and cut-n-paste from [another site](#). You may notice that there are five verses here (6:23a and 6:23b are one), but Romans 10:13 is covered by 10:9-10 so as a "repeat" it doesn't count: ☐



The ROMANS ROAD is a pathway you can walk.

It is a group of bible verses from the book of Romans in the New Testament.

If you walk down this road you will end up understanding how to be saved.

Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

We all have sin in our hearts. We all were born with sin. We were born under the power of sin's control.

Admit that you are a sinner.

Romans 6:23a

"...The wages of sin is death..."

Sin has an ending. It results in death. We all face physical death, which is a result of sin.

But a worse death is spiritual death that alienates us from God, and will last for all eternity.

The Bible does plainly teach that there is a place called the Lake of Fire where lost people will be in torment forever.

It is the place where people end up that remain spiritually dead.

Understand that you deserve death for your sin.

Romans 6:23b

"...But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Salvation is a free gift from God to you! We can't earn this gift, but we must reach out and receive it.

Ask God to forgive you and save you.

Romans 5:8

"God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us!"

When Jesus died on the cross He paid sin's penalty. He paid the cosmic price for all sin, and when He took all the sins of the world on Himself on the cross, He bought us out of slavery to sin and death! The only condition is that we believe in Him and what He has done for us, understanding that we are now joined with Him, and that He is our life.

Because He loved us and gave Himself for us!

Give your life to God... His love poured out in Jesus on the cross is your only hope to have forgiveness and change. His love bought you out of being a slave to sin. His love is what saves you. Not religion, or church membership.

God loves you! And reaches you right where you are.

Romans 10:13

"Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved!"

Call out to God in the name of Jesus!

Romans 10:9,10

"...If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

*If you know that God is knocking on your heart door,
ask Him to come into your heart.*

It was a blessing to get to teach this to not one, but two groups of kids this weekend. Today by the way was a normal day- we played kickball, had worship, lesson, and small groups just as normal. They even got to make "salvation" bracelets to remind them of the message. Only last night was weird. I am happy to say that I will have another chance to teach in two weeks- I normally only get one lesson per month. So, another blog entry about teaching then. In the meantime, more of the movies, retro gaming, and whatever. ☐

Speaking of movies...

Are you board of movies? Yes, that spelling mistake was intentional. You see, this post is related to movies that are about board games. There was an article in the local newspaper a few days ago about this topic (link below). I'm sure we all remember the 1985 movie based on the game [Clue](#), the 1993 chess movie [Searching for Bobby Fischer](#), and of

course the Robin Williams movie based on the fictional game [Jumanji](#) (along with its Williams-less sequel [Zathura](#)). Now Hasbro and Universal apparently now want to bring us Monopoly, Candy Land and Ouija. Needless to say, due to my faith I will not be seeing the last in any form. Depending how the reviews go, I may or may not see the first two either. Candy Land?? I can only guess this will be a feature for children meaning that I know of a certain Ohio couple who will be seeing it as they have four young ones, at least three of which will likely be interested when it is released. Anyway, I tire of writing this entry so soon after the last so just click the link below for the news story: □

[Hasbro rolls the dice on board game movies](#)

Finally happening

The time was 1982. With the popularity of video games and the reality of affordable home computers, this was a natural platform for the plot of a movie. So Disney decides to bring us... Tron. Starring Jeff Bridges and Bruce Boxleitner (side story- my parents apparently knew Bruce's parents), this movie of course is not only about computers and video games, it is set *inside* a computer. Only a moderate success in its time it became a sort of cult classic. It spawned not one but two arcade games: the movie's namesake [Tron](#) in 1982, and [Discs of Tron](#) in 1983. In addition, several Tron games were created for home gaming systems of the time. Today, one can still find Tron games being made including the somewhat popular [GLtron](#), based on the light cycles from the movie, which has been a work in progress for several years.

Moving to 2003, a sequel to the movie had been talked about

for the last few years and it seemed like we were finally going to get something. Tron 2.0 was announced and then released this year. Unfortunately, Tron 2.0 turned out to be yet another video game which I think we were told at the time would be the sequel to Tron. Yippee... For some reason I never bought it- it probably wasn't in the budget as I was still going to school and not working. And when I did start working as a substitute teacher in 2004, I wasn't working nearly enough to be able to afford such delights as games. Anyway, it would seem that the anticipation was over. That is, until just over a week ago. Actually more than a week ago- apparently back in 2005 Disney started working on a new script unbeknownst to me. It was this year's announcement that brought it to light. From Wikipedia since I'm too lazy to summarize it: □

On July 24, 2008 Disney surprised [San Diego Comic Con](#) attendees with test footage from a sequel to Tron. The footage began with an update of the lightcycle duel from the original film, pitting a blue program against a yellow one with the two racing (where the rider is now exposed) through a futuristic landscape. The duel is being observed from a high, cliff-side structure by a human figure – an older, bearded Kevin Flynn played again by Jeff Bridges. One of the duel's participants is revealed to be Clu, with the face of the younger Jeff Bridges. The footage ended with a '2' appearing in the traditional Tron font and the title, TR2N, emerging around it, then fading away to leave the number.

That's right. The *real* sequel to Tron. Hopefully this won't turn out to be one of those bad sequels to a 20+ year-old movie. However, this blurb should be cause for hope:

By now everybody knows that a trailer for [Tron 2](#), aka Tr2n, surprised fans at Comic-Con during Disney's panel for Race to Witch Mountain. Not only was it a surprise considering most people didn't even know it was being made, but it also looked

incredible – and there's a reason for that. [Jim Hill](#) of [Jim Hill Media](#) revealed earlier today that the man behind this latest version of [Tron](#) is none other than Pixar's [John Lasseter](#). Hill goes on to explain that Lasseter has taken over for [Tron](#)'s original director, [Steven Lisberger](#), and replaced him with [Joseph Kosinski](#) (as we mentioned last year) and hired "[Lost](#)'s" [Eddie Kitsis](#) and [Adam Horowitz](#) to write a new script. But that's not all – there is so much more to this story!

([CLICK FOR FULL ARTICLE](#))

I can't wait for 2010!

What is first degree murder?

I meant to post this a few days ago in response to the conviction of Ralph Lewis in the fatal accident that killed 16-year-old Corey Diamond ([CLICK HERE FOR STORY](#)). Apparently the jury didn't take much time, under three hours in fact, in deciding that yes, he is guilty of first-degree murder. This story made me wonder just what constitutes first-degree murder. I had always thought that first-degree murder was a premeditated killing. The killer planned to kill someone and then carried it out. Maybe the plan wasn't always long and drawn out, but could have been mere seconds ago, "Okay, I've drawn my gun and I'm going to shoot you now." That would cover killing police and vicims in armed robbery.

So what happened in the case of Ralph Lewis killing Corey Diamond? Well, apparently Lewis was trying to get away from police after a botched attempt to make a purchase from a store using false ID. He wove in and out of traffic and through red

lights until finally smashing into the car where Diamond was a passenger. Now, in my mind, first-degree murder in this death would have meant Lewis thought to himself while trying to get away from the police, "Hey, here's a car with some people in it- I think I'll just crash my truck into it and see if I can kill anyone." This of course is not what happened and even the article discussing his conviction doesn't say it happened this way. So it would seem that I am wrong in what constitutes first-degree murder. Here's what [Wikipedia says about the subject](#):

After the Supreme Court placed new requirements on the imposition of the [death penalty](#), most states adopted one of two schemes. In both, third degree murder became the catch-all, while first degree murder was split. The difference was whether some or all first degree murders should be eligible for the most serious penalty (generally death, but sometimes life in prison without the possibility of [parole](#)).

- *The first scheme, used by [Pennsylvania](#) among other states:*

- 1. First Degree Murder: A [premeditated murder](#), and (in some states) murders involving certain especially dangerous felonies, such as [arson](#) or [rape](#), or committed by an [inmate](#) serving a life sentence.*
- 2. Second Degree Murder: Non pre-meditated killing.*
- 3. Third Degree Murder: Any other murder.*

- *The second scheme, used by [New York](#) among other states, as well as the [Model Penal Code](#):*

- 1. First Degree Murder: Murder involving special circumstances, such as murder of a police officer, judge, fireman or witness to a crime; multiple*

murders; and torture or especially heinous murders. Note that a “regular” premeditated murder, absent such special circumstances, is not a first-degree murder; murders by poison or “lying in wait” are not per se first-degree murders. First degree murder is pre-meditated. ^[55] However, the [New York Court of Appeals](#) struck down the [death penalty](#) as [unconstitutional](#) in the case of *People v. Taylor*.^[56]

2. Second Degree Murder: Any premeditated murder or felony murder that does not involve special circumstances.^[57]

The death of Corey Diamond doesn't seem to fit the definition of any of these. But then Wikipedia just has a generalized definition for the entire US. As this happened in Illinois, a look at IL law is necessary. From the [Illinois Criminal Code of 1961](#):

(a) A person who kills an individual without lawful justification commits first degree murder if, in performing the acts which cause the death:

(1) he either intends to kill or do great bodily harm

to that individual or another, or knows that such acts will cause death to that individual or another; or

(2) he knows that such acts create a strong

probability of death or great bodily harm to that individual or another; or

(3) he is attempting or committing a forcible felony

other than second degree murder.

The rest of this section of code is about the death penalty. As far as this case goes, apparently they got Lewis on the second one listed. My own thought on first-degree murder seems to be contained in the first part and so was clearly limited, at least in Illinois law. So it sounds like any time someone does something that they know could lead to “a strong probability of death or great bodily harm” to someone they could be found guilty of first-degree murder. Is it just me or does this seem kind of broad? Say in the classic example of moving a very heavy object like a piano or safe either to or from a second (or higher) story room using a rope and going through the window. Now suppose, also from the classic example, that the rope breaks just as someone is passing under so that the piano/safe kills the person. By Illinois law, the people moving the piano/safe are guilty of first-degree murder since they knew there was a possibility that the rope could break, causing the death of anyone who happens to be passing below at the time!

Am I just being pedantic about all of this, or does this case make you wonder too? I’m not saying that Lewis was completely innocent of everything and should walk away scott-free. Crimes were clearly committed, but should one of them have been counted first-degree murder? Please discuss.

Currently reading...

I am a reader. I have been a reader since I was a child, especially of science fiction and fantasy. I remember back when I was around ten, reading a book series about an alien called a “Martinean” who everyone called Martin E. Ann, assuming that was his name. Except for the boy who knew he was an alien of course. I don’t remember anything about that

series aside from that, but it shows that I have been reading for awhile. I have read some Isaac Asimov, Ben Bova, Piers Anthony, Terry Goodkind, Terry Brooks, Terry Pratchett, Alan Dean Foster, Robert Jordan, and more. Currently I picked up a new book at the library from Timothy Zahn, called [The Third Lynx](#). Noting this was the second book in a series, I also picked up [Night Train to Rigel](#) from the non-recent stacks and read it first. Now before I continue, I should say that there are a few types of books. There are those that you take one look at and then leave on the shelf. Then there are those that you read for a bit and then realize that reading that book is just a waste of time, so you either force your way through it just so you can say you finished it or you stop reading it. I actually had a book of this type recently, a Star Trek Titan book part of a post-Nemesis movie about Captain Riker and his starship, Titan. I read one by a homosexual author who put a scene in the book that served no purpose other than to say that he believes in homosexual relationships. In fact, you could remove those pages entirely and no one would ever realize it was missing as it had no bearing on the plot. Anyway, I digress. After finishing that one, part of the third category I have yet to mention, I checked out another one where they found entire groups of the giant sentient "spaceships" Captain Picard and company encountered at Farpoint way, way back in the very first Next Generation episode. After getting about halfway through I realized that the book was just not my type of book so I stopped reading it.

The third category included those books that you read and finish, but are just not memorable. You finish the last page, close the book, and go, "meh- whatever." The last category is the book you just can't put down. Timothy Zahn is one author who writes books like these, at least in my view. Star Wars fans might find his name familiar as he had the first books out in the newly approved-for-writing post-episode-VI universe. This first trilogy consisted of the books [Heir to](#)

[the Empire, Dark Force Rising, and The Last Command](#). Leia and Han Solo are now married and give birth to twins Jacen and Jaina, and later Anakin (you know who he's named after...). Luke starts taking on students who would become new Jedi. I read this series about ten or so years ago and thoroughly enjoyed it. When he wrote a couple more Star Wars books I was quick to read those as well. He introduces a new enemy known as Grand Admiral Thrawn. He was an extremely brilliant alien strategist bent on keeping the Empire alive after Palpatine was gone.

His new books star a character who bears some resemblance to Thrawn in that he is quite brilliant in his own trade, as an investigator, or spy. Once employed by a government agency, Frank Compton had a falling out and was fired, though not for lack of competence. He has just taken on a job for someone when another one falls in his lap in the form of someone who dies just as he finds Frank. Frank picks from his pocket a quadrail (futuristic train that travels interstellar distances) ticket in his name, and leaves immediately to discover an answer to this mystery and is led to the one who would hire him, leaving the first job on the backburner- or did he? The employer for the first job is only revealed later in the book, and the job he was hired to do not until the very end. There are some imperfections in the books, but overall they are also books that I can't put down. I will definitely be adding Zahn to the list of authors I will be keeping an eye out for, and I will have to read the other books he's written as well.

Rubik's Cube for the tech-savvy

How does a techie solve a Rubik's Cube? Simple, he builds a machine to do it! Even geekier is the fact that the machine is made out of Legos. Check it out:

Youngest graduate from the academy...

Maybe not, but this 11-year old has the makings of a civil servant one day. Upset about speeders, he decided to do something about it. He dressed up in a helmet and reflective vest, armed himself with a toy radar gun, and stood off to the side of the road measuring the speed of drivers coming down the road. Let me just post the article for you. It's short, but to see a picture click on the link below. It's also almost a week old, so you may have already read it. I just discovered it today, so tough. ☐

[Boy, 11, tracks speeders with toy radar gun](#)

Wed Jul 16, 7:59 PM ET

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Police can't be everywhere, so 11-year-old Landon Wilburn is on patrol in the Stone Lakes subdivision in Louisville. Landon told The Courier-Journal he used to shout at speeders to slow down – then had a better idea.

Dressed in a reflective vest, wearing a bicycle helmet and armed with a Hot Wheels brand radar gun, he points and records the speed of passing traffic.

The boy also carries a flashlight with a built-in siren.

Subdivision resident George Ayers said he has seen drivers lock up their brakes when they saw Landon clocking them.

Officials say the city will install speed humps in the

neighborhood if 70 percent of residents agree and are willing to put up half the money.

The fun side of campaigning

If you haven't seen it yet, do yourself a favor and get on down to jibjab.com to see the video they have for this year, then go ahead and put yerself into it! I was going to but in the end decided not to. I was also going to post a Youtube video but their recompression doesn't do it justice- just go to jibjab.com and get campaignin'! Still reading? Well let me just say that I thought this was every bit as good as their original four years ago. I was disappointed in their second one that seemed to have a leaning toward the Democratic side, but they seem to be back in the original non-partisan comedy routine. Now would you do yourself a favor and just [see it already?](#) ☐