

Sad sack droopy drawers

This of course comes from the famous [South Pacific](#) by Rodgers and Hammerstein. However, the latter part refers to boys and their shorts (or pants). It would seem that the older or darker the kids are, the lower the shorts. There have been many times I have had to tell them to pull the shorts up. Of course, just like runners in the hall continue when the teacher is out of sight, the shorts will come back down as well- I'm realistic. But I tell 'em anyway. I recall one black student who had his pants down past his buttocks. He had to have a belt buckled tightly or they would have finished the journey down unhindered. I have had another student tell me it was okay to wear his shorts so low because he was black. But of course it isn't just black students, but as I said older students like to do this as well, as I witness in eighth grade especially and some of the high school leaders in church. In fact, during the camp meeting a few weeks ago the camp (and high school) director flatly said the shorts stay up or he will give them a rope to hold them up.

I have gotten softer on this lately and will usually tell them if they want to wear them low, they have to compensate with a long shirt. Basically, as long as I can't see what color their underwear is I'm happy. The problem is when they sit. The amount the shirt covers is a lot less than when they are standing, so I constantly have to say thing like, "I'm pretty sure I'm not supposed to know you are wearing red plaid underwear." They usually take the hint and pull them up.

This fashion I am told started in prisons, where guys would show they are "available," if you know what I mean. How this got out of the prisons and to our youth I have no idea, but sadly it shows why black boys tend to do it more as they are vastly over-represented (by demographics) in jail. It can't be comfortable. I certainly know how uncomfortable it feels when I forget to put on a belt and my pants are just a bit

loose. I suppose they do it for the same reason adolescents do most thing adults don't like- because the adults don't like it ("heh, heh- I have to live in the old man's house following his rules, so I'll get him back by doing stuff he hates!").

Then there are the younger boys. Usually there is no problem with them, but today I ran into the opposite case. I was in a very low LD class today and one of the students had his shorts pulled *up* as high as possible. This is often seen on more, ah, *senior* men (covering up the tire- I have been tempted to do the same, which I resist by picturing what I would look like to others if I did!) but not so much on kids. Perhaps part of what made it look odd was that the shirt was tucked in, another rare occurrence among our youth. In any event, I didn't say anything as no one had a problem with it and at least the shorts pulled in this direction didn't reveal what was underneath.

Another trend I've noticed is age affects the size or length of clothing as well. With the girls the clothes get smaller (see [this picture](#) for an example that is sort of an analogue to this topic- it shows undergarments by year, but the outerwear by age follows the same trend...) and with the boys the shorts get longer. Girls seem to want to reveal more as they get older (and they wonder why teenage sex is a problem) while the boys want to reveal less. I think this was true in the eighties too. Some I know didn't wear shorts at all no matter the heat. My brother was one of them.

Well, I think I will stop here. Some of you are already wondering about me, a guy, writing about something like this. Yes, I'm done. Definitely done.

Transitions

This is a time of transitions. Of course, as you know this is the time school days transition to long vacation time for the kids. They will be transitioning to the next grade, more so of course these days than yesteryear. Once upon a time schools believed that holding back a child who wasn't ready for the next grade was the right thing to do. Parents had to fight the schools to keep their children from this fate. Nowadays, schools have done a 180 and advance just about anyone believing it does more harm than good to hold that child back. This means that a child can do pretty much whatever he or she wants during the year without fear of having to repeat the grade. Parents who actually believe they might help their child by holding him/her back now must fight for this end instead. Is being held back such a bad thing? I don't know- I just know things have really changed in schooling.

Okay, I have gone way off topic now, so where was I? Ah yes, transitions. I am transitioning from working to looking for work. I will be looking in to a state job possibly, among other things. I mean, besides teaching- there are state jobs in just about every field. There are also transitions in my church as of late. One of the teaching pastors left a couple of months ago after only a short time at my church to head up another college. The new singles group got started a couple of weeks ago. Most kids moved up a grade starting this week (the rest will change over at the end of August). And, there have been some staff rotations. The pastor that had written the curriculum for at least 4th/5th grade, probably the younger grades too, had transitioned to another church campus running both from there, but now he's back and they hired another one to take over at the other campus so now each is dedicated to one campus. However, as duties have changed now a different pastor who previously did mostly the younger grades has officially taken over 4th and 5th grades as well,

meaning he is responsible to get out the emails about the weekend to the leaders, such as what we should be doing, who will be teaching, new rules, etc... Yes, with the transitions come new rules. Just a slight change, but since he didn't get an email out being new to this and all- he didn't let us know until Saturday night. One of us two leaders (yes, only two of us this service) had to take over last minute. Since I work two services, I agreed I would teach Sunday morning so she taught Saturday night. The third service was actually worked out between a couple of the leaders phoning each other when they didn't get an email I found out later, so Sunday went quite smoothly.

This was the first time for the former third-graders, now fourth-graders, so things were completely new to them. They are used to having a drama (which I was part of, of course) but now they have a game time instead. Worship is also different- they have to provide all the singing. Prior to this, they sang to recorded children's songs, with the leader providing motions to do. Now the leader is more like the leader in the main worship service, providing the music via guitar and possibly other instruments depending on who is there. Well, this was how it worked Sunday. We had no worship leader on Saturday night. High school students are a big part of this ministry and we just don't have any serving on Saturday nights (they often provide the music as well as lead). We have had an adult doing worship Saturday nights, but he wasn't there this time for some reason. I hope he didn't transition out, or if so that a replacement takes over quickly.

Anyway, also new to the new kids are small groups divided up by gender. Girls with female leaders, boys with male. The leaders could of course be high-school age, adults, or somewhere in between which is why I don't say "women" or "men." Well, one thing that hasn't changed is my Monday night small group, and I have to do my homework for it, so- later.

Graduation part 3

Just kidding. Thursday I subbed at a middle school again, and eighth grade did have graduation rehearsal most of the day. Fortunate for me, I subbed for seventh grade. The end of year had already come for three of the districts I sub in, but this one district actually finishes next week with a half-day Thursday and a one-hour day Friday. I currently have an assignment for Tuesday, but I am not sure if it will last. I didn't get along well with one of the TAs in that class and even got a call from the principal on the day, but I have a good record with that school so he recognized it as an anomaly. I did skip out on an assignment with this teacher since, but being the end of the year with only one district still in school I can't be too fussy.

So, back to this week, I subbed Thursday for a BD/LD teacher. The classes I had were two small-group reading classes and two tutorials. There were two other classes, but I acted more as an assistant in those. It was mostly self-work, but one class was end-of-year details, i.e. turning in books. Yippee.

Friday was a half-day with the class I was with Wednesday. Good for me as I left my lunch in his fridge... ☐ He never noticed, and I grabbed it Friday. Not much to do here- silent reading, correcting homework, math test, self-science review... The teacher is going to be out all day Monday too. Too bad for me someone else has that assignment.

Sweltering heat those last couple of days I will tell you. With temps in the high 80s (with high humidity!) and no AC in the schools we were all sweating, even with fans going. This district is finally entering the latter half of the 20th century starting next year, but that didn't help much those

two days, or the at least one day I will be working next week. Can I wear shorts please?

Three days, three meetings

No, not *that* kind of meeting. I mean meeting three students from my church. I should add that none of them were in my class but rather I sort of just ran into them. Two of them approached me, and for the other I recognized his name and approached him. It started with graduatin rehearsal the other day. They were going through the names and I heard his. I recognized it immediately. After all, I was his AWANA leader one year in addition to the 4th/5th grade ministry. Okay, that doesn't entirely mean anything as I didn't remember another such student right away who is one year younger than him and helps out in the ministry. Anyway, once I heard it I looked out for him and he was sitting in one of my (well, the teacher I was subbing for anyway) rows. I talked to him a little. I asked about his sister too who is two years younger. Now, sad to say I don't remember a lot of the girls but his sister... let's just say I had a reason to remember her. Something she will grow out of if she hasn't already.

The next meeting was the next day when I subbed for a librarian, who also helped out in the computer lab. There were four classes to come in that day, pared down to three when one of the teachers canceled. I sorted books when I wasn't helping students at the computers. Now aren't you glad I didn't actually write about this assignment yesterday? The three of you who still read this blog would have gone down to zero! ☐ So, in the afternoon a third grader asked me if I played the doctor in the drama at church. Of course I told her I did, and not only that, but I would see her in fourth

grade this weekend, even though she will still be in third grade for another week at school.

Finally, just today I ran into yet another one. She was in one of the four fifth grade classes I was not subbing in (five total at that school! ☐). She saw me in the hall and asked if I worked in 4th/5th grade at my church. When I said yes, I of course told her I *wouldn't* be seeing her there this weekend since she is no longer a fifth grader there, but a part of the junior high ministry. She was a little disappointed in this- I know I would, knowing I would have to attend regular worship from then on! True, now I willingly go and enjoy the service but I know at age eleven I wouldn't and didn't when I served as an acolyte once in awhile at the church I grew up in. And that was only an hour-long service. At my church now the service is half again as long.

Three students in three days- who would have guessed? Of course this doesn't beat the three students in one **day** a month ago, but still. As for my day today, as I said it was fifth grade. I corrected work with them, watched over their work on some projects in the morning, did some teaching in the afternoon, etc. The principal and I watched a few students play *Rock Band* in music. They were pretty good. Then he came and watched *me* teach science. About a topic I knew little about (cold/warm fronts, high/low pressure zones). Sigh. I hope he wasn't too disappointed, but then I'm sure he understands a sub will not necessarily be an expert in anything taught during the day. The students were pretty good. A few had their minds on other things during silent reading, but hey, summer's almost here.

Graduation part 2½ as promised

Okay, now that I'm back I will finish up the rest of yesterday. I mentioned that they had gone through one time practicing picking up diplomas (at least eight Patels by the way ☐). Once finished, they all had to stand up one last time ("and now presenting the class of 2008") and then practice filing out and back in again. By now, we were getting hungry so he finally dismissed us, but not without having a little fun with it. They had to practice standing and turning in unison as their rows were called at random. Those that did it well got to go. Those who didn't had to sit back down and wait to try again. About half made it out the first time. The first row took about four tries to get it right. As staff, we of course had to wait until the end, but I didn't mind. We got a free lunch out of it too, all students and staff. Not a very nutritious one mind you (pizza or hot dog, chips, ice cream) but still- free is free. We then had about 45 minutes to eat. Everyone ate outside, though I did go to the lounge for a short time to supplement my free lunch with something I had brought.

The afternoon started with- drum roll please- awards. Yep, third time now. Fortunately it was just 8th grade this time, and fewer categories than the last 7th/8th grade one. Then a few students performed songs. I wonder if they did that at the actual ceremony? Finally, we returned to practicing-filing out and in one last time then going through one by one with the diploma practice. They were actually handed something this time- a folder that turned out to have some instructions for the night in it. It went faster this time, but there were still a few name mispronunciations. They of course promised it would be slower during the actual ceremony, which I am glad I did not have to attend. Can you imagine the

sub note? "Must return at 7:30 to the graduation ceremony- half-day pay provided."

Well, that was pretty much it. They were able to go home then for the final time- the 8th grade was done in that building. Coming up in a few hours (hopefully)- a post about today. Not too exciting, so I may just skip it. We'll see.

Graduation part 2

Well, I was up a little early to find a job for the day, and I find myself with a little time so I will try to write this before I leave. So why a part two? Simply put, I subbed for 8th grade yesterday. Actually, the teacher does both 7th and 8th, but she was part of the 8th grade graduation. Why, oh why could she not be part of the 7th grade field day instead? □ 7th grade was either doing field day or a field trip. But 8th grade had graduation practice. All day. Oh the things I get paid for- did I really need to be there, especially since another teacher seemed to be filling in anyway? Well, it's their money. □

The morning was simple. Announcements followed by the students being called to their respective places. Once in the gym, the principal announced how the day would go, then we went into the rehearsal. They started with something simple- standing on cue. "Row one stand up. Row one sit down. Row two stand up..." Then random rows called after all fifteen rows practiced. Next they added the turn to face the outside to the standing. "Stand..1..2..Turn." Again, practice for all the rows. Next up was filing in and out. Or rather, out and in since they were already in their seats. They had to master the art of the square turn. Okay, so they were

told how to do the square turn, and practiced it leaving, but there wouldn't be enough time to actually master it. Once we were out, the need for the teachers became significantly more apparent. Ever deal with 350 restless eighth graders? Fortunately there were enough of us to handle things. Finally, once we entered again they were ready to actually line up and practice taking their diplomas. One by one, name by name just like Sunday's real performance. Only they had to stop for name corrections. At this time, they also had to practice sitting down on cue as well as listening for their cue to stand up, which was when a particular student's name was read.

Well, I am out of time for now so I will just post this first part of the day for now. Part 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ this afternoon when I return.

Graduation part 1

Okay, thanks to today this will be a two-part post. See my next post for the reason. ☐ Yesterday I had the privilege of attending my nephew's high school graduation. He actually attended two of the same schools as I did growing up. One of those schools I have subbed at several times. The other one was the high school.

We arrived at my brother's house shortly before 11AM. We then waited for the other invited guests to arrive, Alex's grandparents (mother's side) and half-brother. It's a sad thing to mention that Alex's mother died when he was just six. His mother's other son was rejected by his father (not my brother) and so was raised by his grandfather instead. There were other issues at the time, but it would be

inappropriate for me to mention them here as they are private family issues that have since been resolved. So, there were seven of us in total not including Alex. These days, at most graduations it is unusual to get more than four tickets. I suppose since they used an auditorium in addition to the gym there was more room for guests.

So, at about 11:20 or so we were off, with a short stop at my home to put some ribs in the oven because my brother's oven took just this time to stop working. Ours is electric and so was pretty safe to use unoccupied for a couple of hours. When we arrived the entire front parking lot was filled of course, as by now it was 11:45, just 15 minutes until commencement began. There were people parking across the street and down one of the connecting streets. Fortunately for us not everyone knew about the lot *behind* the school, where the faculty parks (the front lot is student parking and, if they still use it, a practice "field" for the marching band in the fall). We found a few spots still open and we were set. We got out of the car and headed in. Nine minutes to go. We headed right into the gym, the three women (my mother, Alex's grandmother, and his Aunt) heading for the auditorium instead. Actually, my mother had been dropped off and headed immediately in. The other two unfortunately had to wait since the graduates were now lined up in the hall. We just made it. They were about to close the gym doors. We went in, then waited by the entrance for the procession. At noon they started coming in- some teachers in black gowns first, followed by a few students in yellow gowns I later found out were not part of the graduating class, just there to take charge of getting the rows of students standing up and lining up in turn. They were probably juniors. Behind them were the graduates in purple gowns. They headed up the aisle, passing between the teachers who had positioned themselves every few rows on either side. They took their places starting in the front and working their way back, 24 chairs at a time, 21 rows. Well over 400 students (many seats were taken by the

teachers or yellow-gowns). Behind all of them were several rows of chairs for older guests. To the sides- bleachers. Once my nephew passed, we started to work our way to the bleachers, where we found some seats about 10 rows up. It was pretty tight. Unfortunately, throughout the time I kneed the one in front of me a few times...

Once the graduates were seated, the speeches started. One teacher tried to entertain us with his speech, starting with, "This entire speech is plagiarized...". The principal had a speech about how he started with the current class four years ago, and then some standard words of inspiration for the young adults. The valedictorian's speech was a pretty normal well-prepared speech, and then another student, a cancer survivor (one of two in the graduating class ☐) performed a song he wrote on the piano/singing. He received a standing ovation. Finally, it was time for the long, drawn out process of the students coming forward to receive their diplomas. As their names were called off one by one, they showed a picture (of most) on the overhead screen. There were a couple of slipups, and I think there was a slide accidentally left in of a student who was not there for whatever reason. At first, people applauded after hearing their young one's (or sibling's) name, but that turned into just a single clap. I think the graduates got us started on that, I'm not sure. Several shouted out or whistled. One (only one thankfully) had an air horn. My nephew had his turn, as did a former neighbor I remember- I had forgotten their youngest was Alex's age. As they got to "P" I noticed there were seven Patels, a very common last name for Indian families. They were probably all unrelated too. I'm sure it means something, but I'm too lazy to look it up.

A final congratulation when they were all finished, and then we were done. We were supposed to wait until all the now-former students recessed before getting up, but that didn't quite work out. Once half had left, the bleachers started

emptying. We met up with Alex and the three women outside, a few (more) pictures were taken, and then we left. Alex's brother hopped into the car with him, and the rest of us got in our vehicles in back. When we got to the front of the building, we were just in time to see Alex peeling out in front of the school by a police officer. Nice. The car had no plates either... Should have meant problems for him, but the police were too busy with the traffic. Lucky him.

Well, we finally got back, my brother fed us ribs (which we had picked up, now done cooking), pheasant, venison, corn, and some sides. We talked a little, the relatives left, then I left. Day over. I should have gotten to this blog yesterday but somehow never got around to it. Now, you will have to wait until tomorrow for part two which should have come today..

What? Again?

If one awards ceremony wasn't enough, the school I was at today had its own awards show. Knowing that elementary students are far more impatient than older ones, this ceremony was much shorter fortunately. **And** I got to sit down... Actually, the entire thing was one hour, but the presentations were only about 20 minutes. The rest of the time was raffling off various prizes. The entire event was based on reading. The class I subbed for, a fifth grade class, actually came out on top with more than 1600 books read. At least I *think* it was the number of books. But they also mentioned last month, and that is a huge number for just one month, even among 25 students. If it was for the entire year, then yes, 1600+ books. Anyway, the kids also received raffle tickets based on the number of "miles" they went. Come to think of it, it

would have to be books, and therefore over the entire year. Or, if in a month, then I would guess a book carries a certain number of points like in the accelerated reader program found at many schools. Yes, that could be it. Anyway, each student in my class had anywhere from 50 to over a hundred of these miles, earning them two to four tickets. There were a lot of prizes, so that means a lot of chances to win. Some kids won more than once. I was holding a ticket for an absent student. Unfortunately, she didn't win at all.

After the assembly, the weather which had been rainy with a tornado watch all day had cleared up and the sun came out and dried the blacktop, so there was a 5th grade versus teachers kickball game. Yes, I got to play... ☐ After missing an easy catch, I did manage to score a few runs on our turns up to bat. So, it was a fun end of the day.

What? You want to know about the rest of the day, before the awards? Well, it was supposed to be a field day, meaning play time outside with special events. Remember the weather I mentioned above? Yeah, no field day. ☐ So, they did PE and music at the start of the day (yes! breaktime...) followed by some writing, and finally math games in the computer lab. I got a chance to try a game they loved called Lemonade Stand. I used to play a game by this name back when I was in school, only that game was for the Apple][instead of Java in the web browser. Oops, did I just date myself? ☐ So, after that came lunch and free pizza. Not the best, but I doubt the kids cared. ☐ Yes, I had some too. This was supposed to be a part of the field day, but unlike field day they couldn't postpone the pizzas, so when they have their field day next Monday they will have to do their lunches the ordinary way.

Crazy days at the end of the year, I'll tell ya. If I manage to find work next week I'm sure I'll have some more interesting tales.

EDIT: Why don't all the smileys/emoticons render? Oh, well. Editing once got **one** of the four to work in any event.

Moving day

Hey, watch out- will ya? Get that house outa' the middle of the road! Er- house? In the road? It must be Mount Prospect's Central School. Today was the day they moved the 1896 schoolhouse to its new location by the Mount Prospect Historical Society. This building was saved recently when funds were raised to move it from its old location, where it would have been torn down to make way for progress. Unfortunately, the schoolhouse still has to wait for the new foundation to set. Once it does, they will have to lift it again off it's temporary spot and plop it down where it will hopefully stay for awhile. Next, they will need to raise some money to renovate it and finally will hopefully open it for tours (just a guess), at a reasonable cost of course. You can find the story by clicking the picture below. Oh, I hope the driver didn't speed with his 105,000 pound load...



Another story link is: [Mount Prospect Historical Society moves Central School](#)

Assembly may be required

What a snooze... No, not me last night which was anything but- I think I may have gotten about five hours of sleep if I'm lucky. I'm referring of course to the assemblies that happen sometimes at schools. Especially those that totally mess up the schedule. For me, it was pretty much irrelevant too. Not to the kids or staff, just to me and any other sub that might have been there. You see, it was an awards ceremony. For the entire school. All, or at least many, sports and academic clubs. As a sub I knew pretty much zero of the names, hence why it was kind of a snooze to me. It was a snooze to probably nearly all the students as well because it lasted for more. Than. Two. Hours... For nearly all of the awards, they handed out certificates to every student involved, name by name, and then gave awards to high achievers. I would guess well over 300 names were read over those 2 hours 20 minutes. There was one sport I couldn't believe they had, let alone the number of students involved. Bocce-Ball. I kid you not. Nearly a hundred kids involved too by my estimate. Wow. Only track compared to that with four teams, 7th and 8th grades, boys and girls. There were probably 60-80 students involved there. The only other sport I remember was girls volleyball- I'm guessing there was no boys volleyball team because one of the students was a boy. The teacher was careful to not refer to that particular team (7th or 8th, I don't remember) as "the girls."

The academic teams and clubs consisted of a math team, geography team, and science olympiad. Probably more- I don't remember. Interesting to note the math team was entirely Indian (or similar) or East Asian. Hmm. Perhaps our schools really are failing the children in the math field. Band, orchestra, and drama were part of the other extracurricular activities. And finally, there were also service clubs. One club helped the mentally-challenged kids, and another- well

club doesn't really apply here (you'll see why in a sec)- recognized students who did some sort of community work. Thankfully they did not recognize these students individually as a good 90% of the students raised their hands when the principal asked who has done some community work or project! Was this part of a class assignment or were they really this outward-thinking?

Well, after some 25 teams, clubs, and organizations they wrapped up, had a drawing for some Pepsi T-shirts, and then were dismissed. The scheduled ending time was 9:45. The actual ending time was 10:35. Oops. Reminds me of television networks and sports for some reason...

So, we skipped two of the periods and I went on break. Finally I could get off my feet. Oh, did I mention that I had to stand for the entire assembly because there were no chairs provided for the teachers? Some plopped down with the students, other stood right along beside me. Now, I have an injured foot so I did a lot of leaning, walking, and a little bit of sitting on the floor in addition to the standing. So, all good and well now. Unfortunately I had about twenty minutes and I had to start eating my lunch as the teacher I was in for had no scheduled lunch. Instead, she had a study hall period. So, I had a panini during 4th period, an orange and a Mountain Dew 6th during study hall, and the rest of my lunch last period. Well, an interesting day for sure.