

The next big league scandal

Normally I just roll my eyes to yet some other scandal happening in sports. Athletes are given god-like status by many fans, so why shouldn't they act like egotistical know-it-alls {sarcasm}? Today, it seems Little League teams are no longer allowed to use the names of actual major league teams due to trademarks. Not just the logos- the names too. That is, unless MLB gets its share of the pie by forcing the Little League to use their "approved" uniform manufacturer. How cold can their greedy hearts get? Now, to be fair, the trademark office requires companies to actively enforce compliance or risk losing their trademarks; and the MLB *could* have been threatened with that from said trademark office, but I really doubt it. I remember when I was in intermediate league one year and was on the Astros. A friend of mine was on the Phillies. Today we would probably be on the Oranges and Greens thanks to this ridiculous enforcement. What happened to just giving a nod and a wink because you support youth sports? It sounds like they support \$\$\$ more. Here's a link to the story:

[Major League Baseball Tells Little Leaguers: We Own Uniform Rights](#)

Well, that's all she wrote...

...for the 5th graders in children's ministry that is. What? Did you think I meant I was done with this blog? Today the 5th graders made their exit from children's ministry. In a couple of weeks they will officially enter student ministries as junior high students. Being Memorial Day weekend didn't

help though as there were a few who didn't make it due to traveling, though fortunately not too many. The Junior high pastor (I think? I don't remember the other one leaving) came in with a couple other leaders and spoke with them about the welcome night, things to expect in junior high, etc. The kids were prayed over and given certificates- a sort of graduation I guess. Of course, some won't really be in junior high/middle school if they go to a public school in the area where 6th grade is still elementary, but at the church 6th grade is junior high even for them.

So, kids I have been working with for the last two years are now gone and in two weeks the third grade moves up to take their place. They should recognize me though, at least Saturday night kids, as I have been in the kid's drama. This is supposed to be the time then to heavily advertise camp, but the early bird discount will be over by then as camp is one short month away, and unless things change significantly, yours truly will be joining them for the week. I have said before that that one week last year was very powerful for me spiritually, and I hope it will be the same for me this year- and for whoever will be in my cabin this time around.

Going back to drama, the headline applies here as well. It is done for the season, not to start again until next fall with a new theme. My usual exit line, to tell the audience to be sure to tune in next week, reflected this as well, instead telling them to be sure to trust Jesus since He's the only one who can make us super human. I also added a line for the third graders- that they would see me ("someone who looks like me") in two weeks. Heh, heh... So at the end, we added cast bows, and on reflection, I should have walked over to the puppet as well, since the puppeteer couldn't very well step out and take a bow too. Oh, well.

Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love you, tomorrow...

No, I am not posting about [Annie](#), but rather when FedEx gets over here tomorrow with my new computer. My old one died last year, hard drive failed again making think there is something wrong with the controller as it ended its life in the same way as the one it replaced. Second hard drive worked all the way through. Fortunately I was able to get a final backup of critical data before it stopped working altogether. I have been using someone else's computer ever since, but it will be good to have my own again. Which reminds me, I will need a wireless router now so I can use the computer anywhere, after all what good is a laptop if I can't surf the net from the bathroom? ☐ Time to join the new millennium, eh? I'll probably pick one up on ebay.

Well, second day of second grade. Different school, different class, different experience. I actually got to do some teaching today, though only in math. They seemed to be a few sections behind the other school interestingly enough. Basic multiplication facts. That can kill the joy of math for many... They did get to draw at least rather than just writing numbers. They would draw arrays, like a 4 by 6 array for the problem $4 \times 6 = 24$. Aside from math I went over answers, did some reading aloud about how a movie is made interjecting my own thoughts as well as getting theirs on the process, and, well, that's about it for the teaching I guess. The rest was more or less babysitting and trying to learn their particular routines. And no specials for this class today by the way. Aside from recess and lunch I was with them constantly, though like the class yesterday they had computer lab time where someone else was at least in charge even if I didn't get to

put my feet up in the lounge.

The lounge- what a tiny room to be crammed so full of teachers. There was just enough room for three long tables pretty close together with just enough room to walk around them. It wouldn't ordinarily be so bad as teachers tend to go out for lunch, but today they had a cookout with grilled steaks and chicken, and baked potatoes. I'm not sure who all was invited to the cookout, but I wasn't the only one who didn't know about it. So instead of going out, they all got their food and came into the lounge crowding around the tables. I felt sort of like this:

It didn't help much that half the table space was taken up by three large cakes (someone's birthday- don't know what the other two were for) as well as a couple of miscellaneous snacks of which I *did* partake. ☐

Well, aside from a 5th grade band concert in the afternoon, it was pretty much a normal day I would say. Good group of kids though a bit talkative and some would move about without permission. And now a long three or four (hoping just three) day weekend. Two districts are off on Tuesday so I may be out of work that day as well as Monday...

By the way, 100th post for me!

From 8th to 8

Going back to elementary was quite a difference from the last several days, in more than one way. First, going from age 12-14 to age 8. There is a world of difference between teens and second-graders. Second, going from the specials to the academics. The last week has been dominated with Industrial Tech and PE, with a short break in ELS (also quite different from second grade even though some of the material is similar...). Finally, working with a single group of kids all day instead of over a hundred.

I didn't actually do much teaching today. They really have a routine down with language arts centers so all I had to do there was introduce what they would be doing and then help here and there when some didn't understand something or other. Math was just an end-of-year assessment (didn't need to be reminded of this- the lean season known as "summer" is nigh upon me). They had a handwriting worksheet I only needed to introduce, again, and computer lab in the afternoon where

someone else pretty much ran the show while I helped. I did get to start a book for read aloud, a Mexican Cinderella. They are on a unit apparently about Mexico, including learning some Spanish. Across the room were their attempts at making the Mexican flag which I had to duck under every time I crossed the room. The teacher I subbed for must be much shorter.

Well, it was fun and I did at least get to work with a class I have worked with once before so there were less surprises- I'll tell you subbing in an elementary classroom requires a lot more work than in a middle school classroom. Breaking routine can be difficult with younger students, whereas older ones just take in stride and adapt. Therefore, studying the routine from the plans takes up some time. Well, enough of this blathering on. On to bed and then a different second-grade class tomorrow.

Prayer power

Some will undoubtedly write this off as coincidence, but those in Christ know better ☐ . There are far, far too many of this type of story out there to be anything but divine intervention. Just recently, two Christian pilots (in one airplane) in New Zealand ran out of fuel in their plane. The engine died and they couldn't see a place to land, so they did what came natural to them being Christians and prayed that somewhere to land would present itself to them just over the ridge in front of them. They found an actual airstrip just beyond the ridge just then which they hadn't known about before, and get this- Once they landed they found themselves right next to a 20-foot sign that read, "Jesus is the Lord."

Here is a link to the original story: [Pilots run out of fuel, pray, land near Jesus sign](#)

The end is near...

Tonight I write this as I should be partying instead. Tonight is the end-of-year cast party for the children's drama. Or rather, that is what the schedule says. The party was actually canceled due to lack of interest, plus a general grim outlook on people showing up on Wednesday nights for past rehearsals. If it was going to be anything like last year's get-together then I really won't miss it. It was a low turnout then and pretty unexciting. Some ice cream and drinks, and a little bit of small talk. The kids if I recall did some theatre games. Those theatre games used to be part of the rehearsals, but this year they got cut due to time, though the director did do some one of the nights.

In any event, the end may have arrived for rehearsals, but we have one more weekend to perform- this coming weekend. I suggested we have the show "canceled" and have "extras" carry off pieces of the set as we do the drama. Unfortunately this suggestion was too late and Steve (children's ministry pastor) cringed at the thought of having to take down and put back up the set for each performance. I guess it was also kind of a negative note. The show rather ends more positively by finally discovering the formula my character has been searching for for so long. Of course the formula involves Jesus, the only super human. He is the one who makes super heroes out of all of us who are children of God. At the end we will take our final bows and the mock science show will end.

I *really* hope the performance goes without a hitch. Last week I was the only regular cast member there for my performance time. Another was prepared as a fill-in, but the rest just didn't show up. Steve said he knew a couple wouldn't be there, but my guess is he didn't have much advance notice as we had to scramble to get others to fill in, and needless to say they had to perform with scripts. Something that was actually quite regular last year, but praise God was not so much of a problem this year. The last episode is supposed to be the most memorable, so I pray that it is memorable in the right way...

Well, this wasn't my regular sub-post, but you already knew I had PE at the one school again. Basically, same thing different students. Softball all day with similar pluses and minuses as the previous days' kickball. Until tomorrow then, when it looks like I will break the middle-school rut with second grade. I will also get to sleep in an extra hour... ☐

ELS, not ELL- dang acronyms...

Not sure what to write tonight. I was at one of the few schools one district ever calls me for- I am not sure what's going on with that district. I guess it helps that this school is the largest in the district at over 900 students 6th-8th grades. At first when I saw the acronym ELS when I looked up the teacher online, a practice I often do when I'm not told what subject or grade I'm teaching, I confused it with ELL, or English language learners. Middle school ELL as I've posted before can be, well just add an **h** in front of it and you'll know what I'm talking about. Oh, joy. But I should have remembered from another district that ELS stands for (*something*) *life skills*. I am not sure what the E stands for,

but in short this refers to mentally impaired students, whether it be autism, down syndrome, or what-have-you.

So I arrived and found out about the class, confirmed by the lessons on the plans, and the students arrived one by one. Announcements, attendance, then off some went while others came in- a bit unusual for a middle school where the students start in their first class except for a few schools that have homeroom scheduled at the beginning of the day. So the first class was all the lowest students who could barely read even at a first grade level. Mostly, they repeated what I or the assistant read but some could read a little bit without the help. Second period was quite the opposite. I had the higher level ELS students, and we discussed ancient China and their inventions. Yes, gunpowder was one of them along with paper money, ship rudders, and porcelain. Then there was math. Most students worked out of packets while I worked with some of the lower-level students again, practicing counting to twenty (well, I did say low-level). Actually, before math I had to relieve another teacher who had a meeting with a parent. That class just colored. Anyway, following math the kids did "vocational education," which today was putting together Hawaiian leis (those flowery things that go around the neck) using construction paper flowers, cut up colored straws, and yarn. The teacher who prepared these actually cut the yarn too short so they wound up more like strange headbands. Oh, well.

Following lunch I got the higher level class again and we worked on list poems. An example similar to one we did together is:

*What I like about summer
Swimming at the local pool,
Playing baseball at the park,
Hanging out with friends all day,
Chasing down the ice cream truck,
Sleeping in until late morning.*

The last period (not counting my off-period) was kind of a laid back period. Some students played a game, others used the computers, and one did some reading. Anyway, that was it. Not exciting, but different.

And I just picked up my job for tomorrow. It looks like I will be back at middle school I was at Monday for... PE again! If that isn't strange enough, it is for a third PE teacher out of the five there. Two to go... ☐

Just a short one

I am very tired so I will make this one quick. Besides, it was PE again, at the same school as Friday, so there isn't much to say about it. Kickball again. The only real difference was I had 8th grade health instead of 6th, so I had the 6th graders for PE instead of the 8th graders. I had to show a video in health class about abstinence. They did some good object lessons on the video involving cups of water contaminated with spit and food and then sharing the cups. Also, using clear packing tape as a lesson by sticking it first to one person's arm, then another, and another, then finally sticking two of these together and comparing it to two pieces of tape never used stuck together. I actually had to show this for only one class as there was an assembly during the other one. Outside. But that was okay even if the temperature was in the mid 50s. It wasn't all that bad. It was about a new solar panel that was installed at the school that they said could provide energy to light one of the rooms 24/7 I think they said. Not much, but apparently worth it. Our village president was there along with the superintendent and even our local US House representative. Each of them, along with a student and the principal, gave a little speech

about it. My role? Not much since the entire school was out there which of course included all the regular teachers to keep the kids in line.

Well I'm going to leave the post with that. Hopefully I will be less tired tomorrow when it comes time to blog.

One boy for sale

Or rather, just over 100 boys and girls in the production of [Oliver!](#) I saw last night. There was a boy, a former student in the 4th/5th grade class at my church who invited me to come. His older brother, also a former student, helped out by running a spotlight. How could I say no? Even though *they* never saw *me* when *I* was in *Oliver!* just two years ago... I was so disappointed then that not a single student from my church came, or at least told me they came if they did. I advertised this to them for a few weekends, but nothing. Oh, well.

This rather large production is apparently typical of [Christian Youth Theater](#). This organization started out west, but became a reality around here when someone move to my wonderful state and received permission to branch out here. Now there are many branches just in the Chicago area, all under the [CYT-Chicago](#) umbrella. This isn't ordinary community theatre though. In order to allowed to audition for a show the kids are required to take one of several theatre classes through this organization. Obviously not a deterrent at all judging by the size of these shows, and even in the number of CYT shows some of them have been in according to the program. The quality wasn't bad at all. The characters for the most part were very convincing and if there were any slipups I didn't notice. I did have a couple of issues with their

Fagin, but of course since I played the part myself this is only natural. I wish I could remember what those issues were now. Anyway, the boy who I came to see, Brian, played an orphan at the beginning of the show, then appeared twice more later during chorus numbers. During [Food Glorious Food](#) he nearly slipped up when he saw me in the audience, front and center. Interesting spot they sold me- I guess it pays to come by yourself and get those prime spots when groups fail to completely fill up a row!

I was a bit disappointed at a couple of things though. First off, the show was shortened quite a bit. The running time was about 1:55, and that included a 20 minute intermission, making the actual running time 1:35. Since the original show has a running time of well over two hour you can see a lot was not there. I Shall Scream and [Oom-Pah-Pah](#) were two full songs that were cut, and were probably the most obvious to go considering the group. Bill Sykes's song, My Name, was cut in half for some reason too though the one who played him did a fine job. Many scenes were abbreviated as well. Ones I noticed most (again having been *in* them before) were some scenes in Fagin's Lair. However, these weren't the only places shortened. The scene where Noah Claypole is introduced was snipped (Oliver just leaves right after [Where is Love?](#)). The scene at the end where everything goes south for Sykes and Fagin's gang was shortened to the point where Sykes doesn't even get killed (Nancy still does though), and the scene at the end of Act I where Oliver goes out with Dodger to pickpocket, then gets falsely accused was missing entirely! Well, that whole thing aside I was also disappointed that for a production so well done they for some reason chose not to have a live orchestra. Everything was sung to recorded music. I'm sure they must have had a reason for this, but even so this took something away from the show. Outside of this, and I should stress that shortening the show sounded much worse in writing than it actually was, it was a very good production. Christian Youth Theater is something that should

be considered for many other areas.

In any event, if you want to know why I didn't post yesterday this was why. ☐ Interesting thing: according to Brian he was considered for the role of Oliver, but at 12 years old he was a little tall in comparison to their pick for the Artful Dodger. Instead they cast an 8-year-old who did a fabulous job considering his age. This brought my thoughts back to a certain [Little Shop of Horrors](#) production where their original pick for Orin, who later dropped out, was actually shorter than me so when considering who would play Seymour they went with someone smaller and I got stuck with being the understudy. However, I should be happy with that because had the show not been sabotaged by a distraught producer who though he should have been director I wouldn't have been considered at all as I was still kind of a weak actor at that point. Did I get all of that right, O great admin who directed this show? ☐

Two of a kind

I keep meaning to mention this bit of info. Or maybe I already did but don't remember. In any event, I was at a middle school doing PE, but you already knew that. Unlike Thursday's PE, we actually got to go outside. Well, there were two periods of sixth grade health, but that's why I specified PE, didn't I? ☐ So, for PE 8th grade played kickball and 7th grade played soccer. We used the baseball diamonds to play kickball. The first class went fairly well. They chose to play boys versus girls which worked out about as well as you would expect, being the girls at that age are more, well, feminine than a few years ago. This of course is not meant to be sexist as there *are* many female athletes,

most, if not all, of which can wipe the floor with me as I am a non-sports guy. However, when talking about eighteen girls, most of them react to sports like kickball as one might expect. It should be noted that they **wanted** to do boys versus girls. I was skeptical about it, but if even the girls wanted it than I wasn't going to stand in the way. They outnumbered the boys too, so I figured it wouldn't hurt. Except the boys still issued the girls a major defeat. The second class I didn't even let get to the point of suggesting boys vs girls. As soon as we were on the field I randomly picked two students as captains and had them pick teams, alternating boys and girls as long as possible. This class was the goofiest of the day, though not matching the two classes I mentioned Thursday. They just didn't take the game seriously. Well, I guess if I was going to be in high school in just a few weeks I might take advantage of a nice day outside with a sub too. I didn't let it bother me- I just wrote it down for the gym teacher to read when he gets back.

But where does the title come in? Well, it has to do with 7th grade soccer, which went quite well by the way, excepting the fact that the goals were not placed across from each other which I only noticed after a student informed me that the point I was about to place the ball wasn't center. I looked back at the goal I was using to center the ball and it was centered as best as I could tell. I looked at the other goal and I was putting the ball at a point that wasn't even between the two goal cones. What the...? Unfortunately I couldn't move the goal because the teacher this morning had drawn goalie boxes . Oh well. There were no sidelines anyway so no big deal. The second 7th grade class is where the title *finally* comes into play. How often is it one finds two students at the same school, in the same grade, and on the same team with the same name? And by this I mean first and last name. I actually noticed this issue weeks ago. It was when in one class I noticed there was a boy named Peter who sounded like a student I knew from church. Once class started I looked at

him and he wasn't the one. Another day I noticed the name again, and found it was attached to a different boy. Huh? This boy did look familiar. It took another couple times subbing for this grade before I realized the two were on the same team though rarely in the same class for some reason. At least the classes I subbed in. My guess is they were purposely given different schedules to aid the teachers. However, when it came to PE, there was only one time available per team so both Peters were in the same gym class, though different teachers. Well, for soccer the two classes combined and I took the boys out on one field while she took the girls out on another field. So, you guessed it: Peter vs Peter. They aren't really two of a kind other than their name. They look different, and in soccer one defended while the other played on offense.

Oh, and only one was the Peter I knew. He goes to a different church now, but he did attend mine a few years ago. ☐