

Welcome back gift

As I said last post, I started working again this past week. What I didn't mention is my welcome back gift. In the past, I have received books at one of the district's workshops. Well, this year I didn't attend their workshop due to not planning on going back to subbing. I found out later that I couldn't have attended it anyway as this year they only allowed new subs. I guess they got tired of paying returning subs who already had the information. That's right, they pay subs to attend the workshop, then also pay for their lunches, materials, and extras like the books I mentioned. Another district workshop also pays subs to attend, but we have to work five days before receiving the pay for the workshop, and they don't give away books or even pay for lunch. Fine by me- I don't have lunch provided throughout the year, so why at the workshop? Anyway, you're probably wondering what gift I received this year since I didn't attend the one workshop? Well, the gift I received was a most unwelcome one- a cold. Colds any time of the year are depressing, but during allergy season when I'm already suffering it's downright oppressive. I kept waking up from the cold last night to a nose that would constantly run. Yes, I took Nyquil before going to sleep, but apparently that only worked for a few hours at best. Now I am a bit miserable which is why I can feel free to pass along some other misery in the form of a little rant about one of the districts.

Yesterday I mentioned problems signing up with this district. They seem to want more information than other districts for people who want to sign up with them. Fortunately, since I was already on file from a few years ago they didn't need transcripts or a new letter of recommendation. Why do they even want them in the first place? It's only subbing, not a permanent position, and as for the transcript that's required by the state to get a sub certificate which is also required.

It doesn't make a lot of sense that the district would want them too. I still had to fill out new forms for taxes, background check, employment eligibility, retirement, etc. I also had to fill out a new application. Well, at least they don't require a cover letter and résumé. In any event, the paperwork isn't even the main focus. What has been keeping me so far from employment there as a sub is fingerprinting. Fingerprinting is required by law for this sort of job. That's not the complaint. It's their execution of this requirement that making me wait. It seems they only do fingerprinting for 30 minutes on any given day, maybe 45. Say what? That's it?? No wonder they couldn't fit me in to do it for a week after I call. Then, when that day comes up, I get a call in the morning- sorry, we have to reschedule you as the people taking the prints are doing something else today. we can reschedule you for a week from now...

So, I am still sitting here with the paper work. I can only hope that I can start working right away after this is done, but they still probably have to wait for the results on that and the background checks. Well, I survived last year on three districts (realistically since the other barely called me) so I can survive another couple of weeks waiting for this one. I guess I can't entirely blame them- I did sign up at the last minute. For all I know they had a couple of full days a month ago for fingerprinting. Oh, well. I will just have to be patient. With this cold as well as with work. I hate colds...

It's official- summer is over

And mostly due to my laziness I am subbing once again, and that is good news for this blog. I have been on hiatus from

this for too long. I still intend to have some posts of my life outside of teaching, but for a while I have just been turned off from writing during the best time those post would have fit. Well, to tell the truth my life outside of teaching really hasn't been too exciting. Remember back in June when I went to camp? Well, I am finally making the DVD I have done for my cabin for the last few years. I have two slideshows and a video finished, along with a video I borrowed from my DVD two years ago in which I just had to modify the end to fit my more recent cabin. I have been using Ulead VideoStudio which I got free with this computer. It really is a nice program, and not ridiculously high-priced like some packages out there. Last year I used a 30-day demo of a \$250 DVD authoring package which was nice, but not worth that price in my opinion. Maybe \$100 like this one, but not \$250. I also used a slightly buggy freeware program to do one of the slideshows, and maybe another one. I haven't decided yet what to do about this last one to make it different enough from the first two. Well, I still have a week to put the DVD together before the next church time. This weekend is the last one of the month, so 4th and 5th grades don't meet.

As for subbing, I was actually able to get three half days during this first full week of many districts. Apparently the special ed meetings started right away. I could have had a fourth, but they called me after 8:00 to arrive there at 8:30. Well, I might have been able to do that if I was ready to go when they called, but since it was 25 minutes away and in fact I was woken up by the phone call, that wasn't going to happen. Besides, I had to take my car in that morning for a new muffler. Anyway, the three days I did have were pretty similar. They were all at different Junior Highs (that district doesn't call them middle schools) and were 8th grade, or a 7th/8th mix. Two of them were 7:15 AM jobs (too early!) but fortunately I got to sleep in for the last which was an "afternoon," starting at 10:45 AM. I didn't have to leave notes for two of them either, which is always nice, since the

teachers came back. Surprisingly one of these times was the “afternoon” job. I guess she came back from her special ed meeting for the weekly school meeting. Since school started last Thursday in this district and the meetings are on Wednesdays after school, this may have been the first one which would probably make it important to attend. As for the other morning job, that teacher only teaches there in the morning, so I she wouldn’t have come back. I would presume she teaches somewhere else in the afternoon.

All in all the three half-days went well. Hopefully I will have more work next week even if there is one day off for labor day. I am signed up again in three of the districts I worked in last year. The last was still on the hired subcaller system and barely called me so I switched them for another district that is computer-based so I have more of a chance for work. That is, I am still working on being signed up there, but that is for a rant in another post...

What does an enterprising entrepreneur do?

He writes an app that does next to nothing called “I am rich.” I kid you not. Someone wrote an app for the iPhone that just sits on the iPhone home screen. If you run it, a picture of a glowing red gem displays on the screen. That’s it. This app was apparently made as a status symbol (hence the name) and costs the maximum allowable price at Apple’s app store: \$999.99. At least it did- Apple has since taken down the application, but not before eight people purchased it. Yep, eight people with nothing better to do with their money. Click the link for the full story.

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.

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!

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.

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?](#) ☐

Movies

Since my blogging friends are big movie buffs, I thought I would mention a couple of movies that I have watched recently. While they likely saw them in the theater when released, I of course watched them on DVD which provide nice extras in the form of deleted scenes and such. Recently I

checked out from the library called [The Transporter](#). This movie was about a professional driver named Frank Martin (played by Jason Statham, someone I had never heard about before this movie), and I don't mean racing. This driver works for whoever needs him, no questions asked. He is organized to a fault and has a strict code, or set of rules he follows. When I say organized to a fault I mean he has spare suits neatly folded and wrapped in the trunk of his car for those occasions where someone tries to off him and messes up his clothes. Of course, he is well versed in the martial arts and can hold his own against over half a dozen opponents at once though with his normal GQ demeanor you would never guess until the first roundhouse.

At the start of this movie you find him making a transaction on the phone and then he is off on business, precisely on time. He stops in front of a bank, the alarms go off, and the clients run out the bank to his car. Only there's a slight problem- the clients have suddenly changed the negotiated terms and that just won't do. No leaving until things are settled, Frank's way of course. Never mind the sirens getting closer and closer as he refuses to leave until the terms are met. Once they are about to be busted, they settle things, Frank starts his car, and they are off on a chase that involves a lot of destruction and closeups of him changing gears. When the dust finally settles, the pursuit has been shaken and his obligation met and paid for (the precise amount- see the movie for what I mean) he heads home, calmly changes the license plates on his car with one of several backups and walks in, eventually joined by an inspector who noticed Frank's car happened to match the description of the getaway vehicle. If only the plates matched...

Anyway, soon he is off on his next assignment. On it, he happens to break one of his own rules and the movie takes off from there. Lots of action in this movie as you can imagine. I recommend it to action buffs.

I didn't realize there was a sequel to this movie until just last week when I saw [Transporter 2](#) at the library (can you tell where I get the majority of movies I watch? ☐) just waiting for me to snatch it up. I just watched it the other day and it was every bit as action-packed and entertaining as the first. This time, however, the transportation job he has is a bit more legit. Once he takes care of some would-be car-jackers at the beginning, he straightens up his clothing, complains about being off schedule, and heads off. Of course he is precisely on time when he arrives, meaning he must have made up for the time on his way. Eventually, he learns the hard way eventually that his clients are the target of someone who is not too happy with the work one of them is doing in cleaning up crime. Long story short, Frank becomes the victim of something more than his own misdeeds and is falsely accused of being involved, a big chase scene occurs, and Frank is left to his own to take care of the real criminals and clear his name. The inspector (played by [François Berléand](#) who has a very long resumé at IMDB) is back, this time on vacation at Frank's place, getting caught up in the middle. In both movies he is an invaluable resource for Frank helping him get things taken care of.

In any event, again I highly recommend these movies for those interested in action flicks. Transporter 3 is due out in November of this year and I will probably be seeing it in the theater instead of waiting for the DVD. For those who know me, that's a recommendation in itself. ☐

I'm curious...

Does anyone view the videos I post? There have been no comments at all on either the Godtube one I posted two weeks

ago, nor on the Archie videos. Are they just uninteresting? No time maybe? I'm thinking of posting more videos, but if no one watches them then there's probably no point.

As for this site, I suspect if I continue it will have to undergo a name change. Now that I am no longer on a track to teach, at least for now, I am not likely to go back to subbing. I usually enjoy it, but it really doesn't pay the bills. If I was capable of running an online business in addition to it I would probably continue, but I have to find a real job, doing what is still to be determined. I still believe God was trying to tell me something those years ago when I was reading an article about teachers. I can only trust that if it wasn't to be a teacher, then that something is still out there waiting for me to determine what it is.