

Comic books

The comic book. When people today think of comic books, usually superheroes come to mind. With the introduction of Superman in 1938, this trend grew through the golden years and later with dozens of superheroes created. Big names like Stan Lee come to mind, who has become so big he was given his own reality show, [Who Wants to be a Superhero?](#) which lasted for two seasons. Many comic-book heroes have made their way to the TV screen in the form of cartoons and live-action shows, and have been making it big in movies as well. Within the last few months we have had Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, and the much-anticipated soon-to-be-released Dark Knight (Batman).

However, superheroes are just one of many genres of comic books. Among the years westerns, war, sci-fi and fantasy, detective, horror, and many others have had some big hits and long-running series over the years. While I have read several different genres as a kid, one really stuck with me, or maybe they are a couple different ones. Harvey comics, which brought us the likes of Casper the Friendly Ghost and Richie Rich are of a genre which you might call funny comics. I don't know the true genre name for these but they were close to my heart growing up. Another series I have always enjoyed was kind of a genre unto itself, though others have tried to duplicate its success. Like many superhero comics, this series has been going strong since the golden age of comics. It has spawned some cartoons, at least one live TV series (plus a pilot that never got off the ground), and even a movie. The series I'm talking about is the Archie comic book series. Since 1941, readers have been able to follow the high-school antics of Archie and his gang, which has periodically changed to fit the times. The most recent incarnation made the characters more anime-like.

Recently, while at the library I encountered two DVD collections of the old cartoon series. One set was for

[Sabrina the Teenage Witch](#) from the early 70s, which unlike the later cartoons and TV series actually resembled the Sabrina I know from the comic books. It was actually not shown on its own originally, but part of [The Archie Comedy Hour](#). I also found a DVD collection for the original cartoon, [The Archie Show](#). The latter was apparently a smash hit 40 years ago in 1968, before I was born. Each cartoon contained a new dance move and a new song from The Archies, a band that was put together for the show not unlike The Monkees, but instead of becoming a band unto themselves they hid behind the cartoon faces of Archie and friends. This one show apparently cornered a whopping 55% of the viewership when it was on. In any event, I wound up checking both of them out and just finished watching the Archie DVDs (and not too soon, as it is on reserve and not able to be renewed- it's due today) and two of the three Sabrina DVDs. As typical for cartoon series of the time they were done on the cheap with static backgrounds that when made to move like when a character is walking or running will repeat, and a few voice actors doing all of the voices. Okay, these sort of things are *still* done, even with the voice actors in hits like The Simpsons, but they are still done to keep the costs down. Some of the voices the actors came up with left something to be desired in my opinion. I really didn't like Jughead's or Veronica's voices. A couple others, like Archie and Mr. Weatherbee grew on me as I watched, and still others I had no problem with at all.

Now that I am nearly finished with these two collections I look forward to being able to watch other series, except maybe the recent Sabrina cartoons which were actually a spinoff of the 90s TV series, which in turn was a modern remake. I haven't read the recent anime-style comics for the same reason I didn't enjoy the TV series, and for that matter don't enjoy the modern Battlestar Galactica- nostalgia. They are simply not the same characters I grew up with. The ones I do want to watch range from Archie's TV Funnies, US of Archie, and Archie's Fun House from the same company that brought us the

two I watched (Filmation); to later incarnations like the New Archies and Archie's Weird Mysteries which may or may not be relevant to my nostalgia. I also would like to pick up any Richie Rich cartoons I might find, and any other Harveytoons which are like the comics I read, and any comic collections that are released on computer similar to MAD's CD set from about ten years ago. I understand there is one for Archie now that can be had at archiecomics.com. When I have some income again I will have to pick it up.

Movies

Well, yesterday I finally had a chance to see Indiana Jones 4. Since all who read this blog have already seen it I won't say too much about it and I may also feel free to mention possible spoilers. Anyway, it's been a long time since I saw the first three but I had no trouble at all getting into this one. I had to remind myself that this whole series is meant to be a parody of old time action serials and all of their improbable problems and solutions. A couple of my favorite parts were first when Indy and company have just escaped the commie's camp thanks to a quick action by Mutt (the bait to get the younger crowd to see the movie if they didn't already want to see it) and Indy and Marion get trapped in the sand (not quicksand- what did they call it?) pit. Mutt gets sent to find a rope or something and the confused Ox goes to get help. Mutt comes back, throws what he found, Marion climbs out. He throws it again and we then see that whoops! It's not a rope... Once Indy finds his nerve and allows himself to be rescued, here comes Ox back with, um, help... Well just where did Indy think Ox would find the help anyway?

Another favorite part was when they were on the amphibious

vehicles and they run off the cliff into... a really long tree branch sticking out from the cliff. Down, down, down goes the branch from the weight until gravity takes over and the vehicle slides off and into the water. The branch of course does what a branch does when it's pulled and suddenly released, causing a really bad day for some of Col. Dr. Spalko's militia who have been climbing down said cliff.

This isn't to say these were the only good parts- I thoroughly enjoyed the entire movie. All the action parodies from the bullets that never hit Indy and co., the nuclear bomb test, the giant ants (which made me think of those evil little bugs from the Mummy), the Soviet's path making machine which strangely seemed to create long paths *ahead* of it which they all used after the machine was destroyed. etc.

Speaking of movies, there is this really cool science film I found from another site. The narrator could use some lessons on how not to speak in monotone, but the visuals are really cool. They actually make visible magnetic fields. My description is pretty poor I know- just watch it, you'll see.

[Magnetic Movie](#)

Bureaucracy at its finest...

I have read some pretty scary stories of how politically correct and bureaucratic the UK has become. A recent story had some Muslims completely outraged at an advertisement for the police because it had a dog in it, which is considered unclean to them. The proper response would have been something to the effect of "don't be ridiculous- it's just a dog." Instead the police apologized and said they would offer an alternative. I guess it's not surprising as the PC climate

there is such that, if I heard correctly, the police aren't even allowed to carry a gun with them- they must keep them in the trunks of their cars.

Anyway, the story I'm posting about leaves me shaking my head at where this world is going. This couple has a teenage son who is epileptic (and has cerebral palsy) and often travels to school by means of a taxi. Only mom and dad know how to use some special equipment they have if the boy goes into a seizure. When driving their son to school, there is absolutely no problem whatsoever. However, he usually has to take a cab due to the car not being available. Mom has to go with him in case he has a fit, but get this, she isn't allowed to because *she hasn't had a Criminal Records Bureau check*. Say what? She's the mom! Apparently since the cab is provided for them, they have to follow the rules precisely-being mom doesn't get her a waiver. How ridiculous is that? Of course, she's going through the process, but really, why should she have to? Anyway, here's the link to the story:

[Mother stopped from travelling with son in taxi to school](#)

Oops...

First school news post in a while. ☐ Apparently a top-rated school district was trying to share the good news in a press conference. I stress *trying* as most people watching could only focus on the ironically misspelled sign in the background. Spellchecker, anyone? ☐ Click the picture for the story.



Hiatus?

My life is so uninteresting I am seriously considering a hiatus right now. I am a bit depressed that there is such little interest in my blog. True, I don't exactly advertise it outside of a link in my signature at a site I don't post much at, but I would have thought some would post here outside of the three regulars (and one irregular). I am also disappointed in myself at not going after a new job. Subbing has barely paid the bills, and now I am one month into no income. At one time I had hoped to supplement subbing with some sort of computer-based business like an ebook or computer repair, but it's looking like that end is not only dead but rotting away..

Maybe I can think of something to post every now and then, or maybe something will happen that will give me something to post about, but until then it doesn't look good for this blog. However, I know my mood is down right now so I won't make any decisions until it improves.

I know I used to post school news, but all I have really read in the last few months was so-and-so teacher has improper relations with his or her students and so-and-so gets in trouble for showing their Christianity. In other words, nothing worth posting, at least here. This kind of stuff is just too common and too sickening. Maybe retrogaming news? There was a new release of [Gamebase Amiga](#) recently. Get this package, [WinUAE](#), and a few Kickstart ROMS and you're all set to go with playing old amiga games. Another package for Amiga if you want to do more than play games is [AmigaSys 4](#).

So, until later.

EDIT: Hm, this new post seems to have broken the embedded video from Friday. Even though no one showed any interest in it anyway here's the direct link: [I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb](#)

EDIT 2: Video looks to be working again.

The end (of subbing)

Well, it is truly the end for the year. All districts have officially finished (well, one has a 50-minute day tomorrow, but that's beside the point). My last day of work, and only day this week, was Tuesday. I was a little stressed from my organic chemistry class the first time I subbed in that classroom and because of that had one of the TAs complain about me, but Tuesday actually went fine. I just let the TAs do the teaching- nothing I agreed on, but the one just automatically did the lessons. The lessons were only in the morning mind you. The afternoon was a rescheduled picnic. When I arrived, I saw that last Wednesday was the scheduled field day with the picnic scheduled the following day. When I read over the plans I found out the picnic was that day since it rained Thursday (and Friday, and Saturday, and... well you get the point). Besides the picnic, with a regular fourth grade class- the class I was in was a self-contained special ed class with six students- with games all afternoon, the class watched a movie off of hulu.com, [Fudge-a-Mania](#), based off of [Judy Blume's](#) book, which was a sequel (published nearly 20 years later, and it's not even the most recent one!) to her popular [Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing](#) book. Interestingly enough, [Florence Henderson](#) and [Eve Plumb](#) played mom and daughter in this movie. Of course, the movie was from 1995 so Eve's character had her own children who were the focus of the

movie. Nope, none of the rest of the bunch were in it.

So, what do I write about now? Well, at the moment it's kind of up in the air. I do want to write a longer piece on my new computer, which will probably appear on its own page so another site can link directly to it. Aside from that, I don't know. I will probably do at least a couple of camp writeups as well at the end of the month, and maybe some preview from my last few years before I leave. Well, enough for now. Good night.

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.

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 graduation 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.