

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!

Morat Strikes Back

HELLO EVERY PEOPLE!!!!!! I a return to this town in OHHO country to a see this strange person at the food shop. I a see this woman who a tell me she a like Morat when he was at the school in Edgertown, OHHO when he read a the Liswathistani stories of The Three Woolly Sheep and Morat and the Three Bears to the little people for the "PTO Family Night." The woman say she enjoy very much the accent of Morat and say he a very funny person. Strange man person he just stood ans hook his head. Why he do that I not know.

As I a cover for news next owner America country, I a still not get to speak to the woman who I do not think will be new owner. I try and try but every time Morat get close to her, these funny looking man persons with things sticking out of there ears come and chase Morat away. I a not understand this at all. I a just humble person who come to find America country. I a come close to speaking to Medulla Oblongata, but he no speak to Morat, too. So I say, V0tE For MORAT. What was

a that crazy movie I saw Vote For Pedro... *Bonaparte TNT?* AH... *Napoleon Dynamite*. OK... I like Liswathistan name better. Very big in Liswathistan right now... number one movie for 2 days.

I also watch final of America Idol show. Two Davids? Only one Morat. Little David lose to old David. I think Simon helped vote for old David when he said young David won before vote. Morat sill say he should be America Idol. I sing the Livin' Viva Loca better than anyone. **EVERYONE WINS!!!**

Get tickets to the American Idol Tour at [TicketsNow Homepage](#)

Watching the Indiana Jones Series – Backwards

Before last night, I had never seen an Indiana Jones movie. So when the opportunity presented itself to view [Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull](#) on its opening day rather inexpensively via email coupons from [Fandango.com](#), I couldn't resist the temptation to see what all the fuss was about.

I walked away entertained, but still a little bewildered about why the character is SO popular. The people I saw the movie with (both have seen all of the movies in the series) said this was not the best of the Indiana Jones movies. Not that it was a bad movie, but I would have chopped off about an hour of it. A few of the chase scenes ran a little long, and there was a little too much hokeyness in my opinion. Before I went, I was hearing critics talk about the Indiana Jones movies and how they are a throwback to the adventure movies of the 1930's and 40's. I thought this might be a good explanation for some of the cheesy action; for example, characters swinging through the air and falling exactly where they need to in order to

avoid certain death or to land the perfect punch, etc. I can deal with hokey action sequences. What was a little hard to swallow however, was the origin of the movie's namesake, the crystal skull. Since I'm at risk of spilling some major spoilers here – and don't read any further if you're worried about learning anything about the movie you don't want to – it will suffice to say that I did not appreciate the supernatural element they gave the fourth Indiana Jones movie.

The acting wasn't anything Oscar worthy, but that is to be expected in this type of movie. I didn't see [Shia LeBeouf](#) as the kid from [Disturbia](#), so he must have some diversity in his acting. [Cate Blanchett](#) was really good as the villainess, and I found it funny when I read that when people heard she was in the movie, they just assumed she was [Harrison Ford](#)'s love interest. People were so critical that an older man's love interest was going to be a much younger woman, then they had to eat their words when it was leaked that she was playing the part of the evil enemy. Indiana Jones' actual love interest in the movie was a character played by [Karen Allen](#) that had been in some of the previous movies, which I liked. What I didn't like is that there were 2 characters in the movie who were supposed to be former friends of Indiana Jones, however, my Indy experts tell me that neither of them were in the previous movies.

I was entertained throughout the entire movie, and there were funny jokes and interesting characters. Also a few plot twists anyone with half a brain could see coming from a mile away. During most of the action sequences, I couldn't help but feel like I was watching a video game. I was really appreciating the components of the quest to obtain the crystal skull, at least until the supernatural element came into play. Parts of the movie also made me envision a Universal Studios ride – it would probably be really cool, maybe a splashdown ending... I didn't fall asleep during this movie, but as you just read, my mind did wander a bit, probably

because of the lengthy action sequences. Overall, I'd say the movie was exactly what I was expecting, perhaps even a wee bit better. And hearing from 2 experienced Indiana Jones viewers that this was not the best movie makes me willing to give the others a try – providing they are not over 2 hours each, of course – that's just too long to sit through an action movie in my opinion!

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.

Giddy As A School Boy?

I was giddy as a school boy (inside) all day after I received two phone calls at work from a great friend informing me that he and his wife wanted to go and see THE MOVIE with me this afternoon. I was soooo excited... work just dragged by until 3.30 when I was allowed to leave a half hour early to make the 5pm showing. I cannot believe that it has been 19 years since Indiana Jones last graced the big screen and it really did look as if it were going to be the last time as Indy and his companions rode off into the sunset in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. From what I gathered on screen, I believe that Spielberg, Lucas, Ford, and company wanted to tie up some loose ends.

Without giving away too much, Kingdom of the Crystal Skull was an entertaining movie but at times it was a bit too hokey... even for someone who still watches the three movies at least once a year (and when and why did *Raiders of the Lost Ark* become *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*?). The

year is 1957, 20+ years after World War II and Nazis. This time, the enemies are the Russians and seeds of McCarthyism are seen in the beginning of the movie. We learn a little about what Dr. Jones has been up to since that time.

All of the elements of the previous films are here: the quest to find the MacGuffin, keeping it away from the villains, the creepy crawly creatures... yes there is at least one snake involved, the big action pieces, and above all Harrison Ford's unflappable portrayal with all the dry wit one comes to expect from the action star. The most pleasant surprise is Karen Allen's return to the fold as Marion Ravenwood from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The chemistry and magic between the two leads was unmistakable from the moment they resumed their bickering which was a highlight of the first film.

After the movie, we discussed one scene that would make a fantastic water ride at an amusement park. I have often thought that the mine car chase/battle in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* would be the basis for a great rollercoaster.

There were more times in this film that the action was slowed down and you kept wanting something to happen. It was very slow to get going but once it did, it kept us entertained. As we discussed, it may be that we might just be revisiting something from our youth and not being as captivated by it as adults. I admit that seeing the newest *Star Wars* trilogy kind of had me feeling that way, but there was just something missing in this Indy adventure.

The supporting cast of new friends for the archaeologist were unfamiliar. Gone were Marcus Brody and Sallah. In their place were a teenage James Dean type school drop out, a kidnapped colleague of Indy's, and a greedy man who apparently had adventures with Indy following *The Last Crusade*.

So, while not as memorable as the three previous chapters, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* is an

entertaining film that any fan of the original blockbusters should see. By the way, be sure to look for one of the treasures Dr. Jones uncovered in the previous movies in the warehouse segment at the beginning of the movie... blink and you may miss it. And anyone who can tell me where the shooting star seen in all Spielberg movies is, will be rewarded handsomely.

Overall, I give it 3 out of 5.

[Indiana Jones](#) tickets on sale now!

Trading Parrots

I've always wanted an African Grey parrot; it all started when I was a kid and I read the wonderful book ["Harry's Mad" by Dick King-Smith](#), the guy who wrote the book-turned-movie, [The Water Horse](#). African Greys are not nearly as "beautiful" (colorful) as other parrots, but they sure can talk and even use logic to demonstrate an intelligence level equivalent to that of a 4-year-old human child. We did end up with a parrot, but we got the eye-candy version instead, a Scarlet Macaw. Here is a picture of Squawky – he was molting at the time, which is why his chest is gray:



At the time we got him, it was an opportunity we couldn't pass up: he was a previously owned bird who was still very young and inexpensive, and gorgeous, of course. We've had him for 6 years now, and he is part of the family. He has quite a personality, and I get a kick out of most of the things he does. He's in my laundry room, so it's an especially nice break in my daily routine when I open the door and he bursts forth with a very enthusiastic "HI!". But there are days when I still long for my African Grey, mostly because Squawky is my husband's bird, which means that no one else is allowed to touch him since birds tend to bond to one person. I think Squawky loves me and the kids, but we are not allowed to touch him under any circumstances. We can talk to him, and he'll even talk back. He can be quite entertaining with his vocabulary of about 20 words, more if you count the human and animal sounds he likes to imitate. He especially likes to laugh. He likes to pick up toys and drop them, then he'll laugh. But sometimes, and it's especially horrible when he's molting, sometimes he screams so horribly loud, you cannot hear yourself talk or even think. I've had to threaten numerous times that my laundry duties will be forfeited to the owner of the parrot if I keep getting screamed at in the

laundry room, but somehow, he always stops before it comes to that. So anyway, there was a recent article in the news about an amazing African Grey parrot named Yosuke Nakamura – he lives in Japan – who got lost and then found. He aided in his own rescue, even though he wouldn't talk to the police! Read the article here:

TOKYO, Japan (AP) – *When Yosuke the parrot flew out of his cage and got lost, he did exactly what he had been taught – recite his name and address to a stranger willing to help.*

Lost in Tokyo, Yosuke the parrot was able to give his name and address to get taken home.

Police rescued the African grey parrot two weeks ago from a neighbor's roof in the city of Nagareyama, near Tokyo. After spending a night at the station, he was transferred to a nearby veterinary hospital while police searched for clues, local policeman Shinjiro Uemura said.

He kept mum with the cops, but began chatting after a few days with the vet.

"I'm Mr. Yosuke Nakamura," the bird told the veterinarian, according to Uemura. The parrot also provided his full home address, down to the street number, and even entertained the hospital staff by singing songs.

"We checked the address, and what do you know, a Nakamura family really lived there. So we told them we've found Yosuke," Uemura said.

The Nakamura family told police they had been teaching the bird its name and address for about two years.

But Yosuke apparently wasn't keen on opening up to police officials.

"I tried to be friendly and talked to him, but he completely

ignored me," Uemura said.

If it weren't for the expense and especially the screaming, I would definitely have my African Grey by now!

Johnny Be Good

There are several things that go into the making of any movie: acting, directing, writing, set design, etc. I feel that some of the best movies are defined not only visually but aurally. There is one man who in the past 40+ years has become the master of film scores. He has composed the music for at least 6 of the top box office movies of all time and has become the right hand man of Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. In every movie he has ever composed the music for, John Williams creates several characters (or at least enhances those on stage) along with the London Symphony Orchestra. Where would Darth Vader be without the ominous, thunderous "Imperial March?" Elliot and E.T. could not have flown on the bicycle without the wondrous theme. Christopher Reeve would not be nearly as super without the triumphant strains of the "Superman March." Bruce the Shark would have been a guppy without the haunting motif from *Jaws*. I do not believe there has been a recent film directed by Steven Spielberg that Maestro Williams has not composed the score to. Whether it be blockbusters like *Jurassic Park* or more serious, thought-provoking movies like *Schindler's List*, Mr. Williams has been the musical Force (pun intended) behind all of them. Several DVDs produced have the option of viewing the film with music only... just see how little empty space there is without the dialog. If it is a John Williams scored film there would not be much. If there is one thing I am a guilty collector of it is the breathtaking, awe inspiring beauty of the music of John

Williams. I challenge anyone to name any movie that he has composed the music for that would be better without it. I anxiously await not only the crack of Indiana Jones' whip but also the majesty that is the opening bars of the "Raiders March."

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Japanese "Inventions"

When I was talking about the best reality show ever, The Mole, the other day, it made me think of my second favorite: American Inventor. It was a show where people brought their inventions in front of a panel of judges, and the "good" ones advanced until a winner was chosen. This show was fun to watch because some of the inventions were horrible ideas, and when the inventor pitched them, it was hilarious to see their inventions and the judges' reactions to them. It was also heartbreaking at times because there were people who put up everything they had to pursue the development of their invention – and some were so bad, they never had a chance. Take Bulletball, for instance. It was a game invented one night while the inventor and his wife sipped wine and batted a cat's toy ball back and forth across a table. So the inventor proceeded to invest everything he had, even living in his car, to develop the "high caliber" tabletop game of bulletball. One of the judges asks, "So if you invested everything, what do you have?" His reply? "I have Bulletball." Oh my. His segment on the show was very memorable (and sad – you had to feel sorry for someone who was so determined, yet his idea was SO bad, all 4 judges said no and broke his heart) that we were talking about it the other day and decided to look it up on youtube. So, I will share his clip with you. I admire his

determination, but even I wouldn't get Bulletball if I spotted it at the thrift store... see below.

I wonder if American Inventor is going to return? It was a good show, but the problem with it was that the inventions that end up winning aren't realistic. Both of the winning inventions were born out of tragedy, one was a special protective car seat thought up by a guy who lost his daughter in a car accident. The other was a Christmas tree that extinguished itself if it caught on fire. Both good ideas, but not really practical when you take cost and other factors into consideration. But anyway, I'd like to see the show again, even if they keep choosing winners based on emotional reasons.

While we were looking up American Inventor on youtube, we came across this wacky video from Japan. They call these "inventions", and they are contraptions that make a series – random objects falling, hitting other objects, etc. in order to cause the next reaction until there's a whole chain of them. Think of the game Mousetrap (found that one a few weeks ago, by the way, but it's missing the big ball!) or dominoes without the dominoes. Check it out below. You'll notice that after each series of reactions, there's a cute little Japanese song that plays – it's actually quite catchy. There are a bunch of these on the video, it's over 9 minutes long in case you're wondering while you watch if it'll ever end. I wonder if these "inventions" are shorts that aired on Japanese tv, maybe before or after some weekly show or something? Who knows, but it's fun to see the different things they came up with: