

Wonder of Wonders

While watching one of Tom Hanks' seemingly forgotten movies, I began to think upon the novelty of the one hit wonder (the countless musical groups that have the distinction of having one major song and then disappearing into obscurity). [That Thing You Do](#) dramatizes one such group: The Wonders (catchy name, eh?). The film follows the group and its manager Mr. White (played by Hanks who also wrote and directed the movie) formed during the 1960s at the onset of the British invasion. The cast also includes Tom Everett Scott (who bears an uncanny resemblance to Mr. Hanks) as the drummer Guy, Johnathon Schaech as the moody lead singer Jimmy, and Steve Zahn as the "ladies man" guitarist Lenny. Liv Tyler is also featured as Jimmy's girlfriend Faye. The band records one catchy tune (fittingly entitled, "That Thing You Do"), tours it on the county fair circuit, and eventually hits the big time on an Ed Sullivan-esque variety show. However, Mr. White also gets the group a gig "appearing" in a low budget beach movie as Captain Geech and the Shrimp Shack Shooters.

There have been several groups to have one song make a huge splash only to see that group slip into oblivion soon after. How about "Pac-Man Fever" by Buckner and Garcia? Or "Somebody's Watchin' Me" by Michael Jackson wannabe Rockwell (who just happened to be the son of Motown founder Barry Gordy, Jr.). "Mickey" by Toni Basil; Nena's "99 Red Balloons". OR more recently, "Who Let the Dogs Out" by the marvelous Baha Men. Or "Tubthumping" by that group of groups Chumbawumba. Wow... the most recent examples I can think of are at least 10 years old. OHOH0H0H0H... how could I possibly forget "Ice, Ice Baby?" Now THAT is a one-hit wonder (a wonder anyone ever listened to it). Or my personal favorite "Disco Duck" by DJ turned weekly countdown king, Rick Dees. Surely brought a quick death to the Disco craze. And let us not forget the best group ever to lip-sync a note (or not) Milli Vanilli.

Life Nonetheless

I got to do something so cool today – it really made my day. It's so nice outside, so I was looking for a place to walk with my youngest-for-now, and we decided upon the pet store. Not that we need a specific place to walk, but I always like to have a mission. So anyway, we walked up to the pet store, and they had little baby gerbils. I am talking newborn pinkie gerbils even smaller than a person's pinkie. I asked the worker how old they were, and she said about a week, I couldn't believe how small they were. Some were just beginning to get fur but still had their eyes closed. It was amazing to me how the Mommy gerbils in the cage just ran around, business as usual, kicking up the shavings in the cage right onto the pinkies. I noted this to the worker, and she said yes, they aren't really as fragile as they look. She came over to see them, and she goes, "wait, there are new ones in there that weren't there last night!" So then she took one of the less than 24-hours-old gerbils out and let me hold it!

It was SO cute – well, cute isn't even the right word because it was so teeny. It flipped over onto its side in my hand and just laid there, too exhausted to try to right itself. I loved holding it, but it was SO teeny and fragile-seeming, that I was afraid it was just going to up and die in my hand so I gave it back. But it was amazing to me that life begins so small. Something so small and still so precious – it is life, nonetheless.

I Passed!!!

Yesterday I did something I've never done before – I passed a 3 hour glucose challenge! I haven't had a gestational diabetes-free pregnancy since my first-born 8 ½ years ago! It feels really good to know that I can eat whatever I want for the next few months without having to worry about pairing proteins with carbs and cutting out desserts; I can hardly believe it. I don't have to go and speak with the endocrinologist or the dietician, and I won't be taking non-stress tests at the hospital. Most importantly, I won't have to inject my body with insulin – something with which my husband and I were not very comfortable anyway. And since gestational diabetes often leads to large babies, I am curious to see what this one will weigh. The previous 2 babies were both 8 lbs. 12 oz, and my first baby (no diabetes) was only 7 lbs. 2 oz. Of course, she was a little bit early and is still pretty small for her age to this day. But, I just wanted to share the news because I'm very excited that I have a few less things to worry about, and I know I had people waiting to hear the results of my test.

Curses... Foiled Again

On Monday in a very small rural community in Ohio (approximately 60 miles west of Toledo), a very intelligent individual attempted to rob a small bank in broad daylight while several people looked on. It seems that the would-be robber got out of his vehicle with a heavy coat, pulled on a ski mask, and got his weapon from the back seat. Some of the employees saw the suspicious gentleman and ran out of the bank. A chase involving townspeople ensued. Apparently, the

perpretator did not know the area very well as he was forced to turn his car around and re-enter the village.

[Residents near Ohio-Ind. line help snag bank robbery suspect](#)

I'm not sure if this is normal behavior for a bank robber. It would look awfully suspicious to me if a man put on a ski-mask, a heavy coat, and produced a gun from the back of his car in the middle of a 60 degree sunny day. Maybe, he was TRYING to make it on a broadcast of "World's Smartest(?) Criminals." At least the man was intelligent enough to attempt the robbery on a Monday. On Friday, the street is generally populated by patrolmen who enjoy lunch at the local steakhouse. OOPS... I hope I did not give any bright ideas.

Bored

One thing about my life is that I don't easily form relational ties, as in friends. This does make it easier to live on a substitute teacher salary since I don't go to social events, but it does make for a boring life. I have strong ties with my church, particularly children's ministry, but outside of that I don't do much. I occasionally visit with friends I have made, particularly those now in Ohio, but making new friends? Really just acquaintances I only see at church and usually nowhere else. Is it any surprise then that I am still unmarried? Anyway, when I'm not teaching I am usually on the internet or watching TV. Tonight I came home, surfed the net, watched a few episodes of [Everybody Hates Chris](#), a hilarious weekly comedy loosely based on the teenage life of Chris Rock, and am using the internet again to write this. Unfortunately this is how just about every night looks. I have filled nights in the past with more schooling and musical theatre,

but it has been awhile since either one so now I am just reflecting. I pray to meet someone I could eventually call my wife, but that requires social work on my part which just doesn't seem to happen. I really should make sure to get out tomorrow night to singles group at my church. It is a prayer and worship night, but it is followed by fellowship. Unfortunately I am in my mid-thirties and still socially-challenged. I often say really stupid things among people I don't know (and sometimes with people I do!). Also, after this month the singles ministry is breaking for a month to revamp the ministry somehow. I do know I filled out a questionnaire on this about a month ago so I guess this shouldn't come as a surprise. Well, enough about this.

Today I had 5th grade again, only this time it was an ELL (English language learner) class. Mostly Hispanic, but other nationalities were represented as well. This was at a school where I have had problems before, so I wasn't expecting it to go as well as in my home district, though I tried to not act as if that were true. Expectations are important. I don't know if this is a true story or not, but in one of my classes in college we learned about a new teacher who was hired to teach a class, and one of the first things she noticed were numbers by their names. These numbers were in the lower to mid 100's, but all starting somewhat above 100 (120 maybe? I don't remember). She assumed these to be IQs of the students, so knowing that smart kids would easily get bored with a standard curriculum she prepared a challenging and engaging curriculum which over the length of the school year tremendously grew her students. She ended up with a very successful class with top grades. After it was over her principal (I think) asked her how she was so successful and she pointed out to him the IQ numbers for the students which made her try hard to keep them challenged so they would better learn. To this the principal replied that he was very happy with her teaching, but those were their locker numbers not their IQs.

Anyway, the day actually did not go as badly as I had feared. Sure, there were a few incidents involving a desk falling on the floor and a couple of boys getting hurt by slapping and punching each other, and also some strong-willed kids, but they did their work and they learned. In the end it wasn't a case where I just wanted to be done with it like some days.

Tomorrow: 7th grade language arts

Alpha Dog

Saw the movie [Alpha Dog](#) last night. It wasn't really my kind of movie, and the only reason I really enjoyed it is because it's based on a true story... and unlike many movies which claim to be based upon true stories, this one was actually pretty accurate.

It's about a spoiled rich kid named Johnny Truelove (based upon the real-life story of Jesse James Hollywood which is his real name, believe it or not) who is a drug dealer but because of his small size and tremendous influence, entices his friends to do his bidding for him. A former childhood friend of his owes him money for drugs, and they are now enemies because of this and some other incidents. So, Johnny happens across his nemesis' younger brother, and he kidnaps him for ransom of the drug money owed. Something goes awry, and the innocent teenager ends up dead, and after four years on the run and a few appearances on America's Most Wanted, Truelove/Hollywood is captured and now awaiting trial.

So-so action movie, lots of violence and graphic language, especially from the mouth of Justin Timberlake who is surprisingly not a bad actor. But I cringe for the little girls and their parents if there are any who watched this

movie just because he was in it because some of the things that came out of his mouth... whew!

And both my husband and I found it hard to believe that there is this kind of culture going on, whether in California or elsewhere, where entire families are caught up in the drug culture, parents and kids alike. At one point in the movie, a teenage girl goes to her mom for help because she is upset about the kidnapped "stolen boy" as they call him, and the mother turns her away, saying that she is x-ing (on the drug ecstasy) right now and can't even understand what she's saying if she wanted to. Does this really happen? Probably... but it's probably not as widespread or as well-masked as this film would have you believe.

Hubby and I agreed that the movie was entertaining, but it wouldn't be a re-watcher for us. And the only reason either one of us really enjoyed it is because it was so closely based on the true crime story what happened to the innocent 15-year-old victim Nick Markowitz.

Hunger and Boredom

Took my 3-hour glucose "challenge" today, and since it was SO fun for me (sarcasm adundant), I thought I would spread some of the 'cheer' by giving you a run-down of what this medical test entails.

First, why do they call it a glucose challenge? To provide extra motivation, maybe? Whatever the reason, I think they should change the name because glucose challenge makes it sound like I was there to run a relay or something. But the glucose challenge is quite the opposite. It requires that you sit at the medical office for 3 hours and do nothing.

Literally. Sure, you can read or sew or Sudoku, but you are not supposed to get out of your chair with the exception of donating a vial of blood every hour. The test is given to pregnant women to determine whether or not they have gestational diabetes, which is when the pregnancy hormones block the body's production of insulin, which will make blood sugar skyrocket and potentially lead to a large baby. Since I've had the condition for 2 of my previous pregnancies, I just might be a glucose challenge expert by now. My husband wanted to know why couldn't I just skip the one hour test and go right for the 3 hour test since we both knew that I would fail it since I am craving sweets and I've failed my last two 1-hour tests. (MAJOR chocolate malt craving the other night, by the way. If I do have the diabetes, it will stink to have to fend off one of those cravings with sugar-free chocolate... somehow it's just not the same.) The Dr. wasn't down with skipping right to the 3 hour test though, so lucky me, I've had to do them both.

Sure enough, I failed my 1 hour, which is why I got to spend my whole day at the doctor's office waiting to get poked with a needle today. And that's not even the funnest part. They make you fast from 10pm the night before until whenever your test is over, which for me wasn't until 1:30 this afternoon! They were a little late on my last blood draw, and I was on the verge of wreaking havoc in the office when they finally called me in. Luckily, my daughter had gone to school with the nurse's daughter a few years ago, so she recognized me and noticed the desperate look in my eyes, otherwise I think they might have forgotten about me. One more minute, and I was going to carry out my plan to go to my car and scavenge for crumbs my kids left behind on the road trip to Illinois. Luckily, it didn't come to that, but asking a pregnant lady to go without food for over 12 hours is a pretty brave thing to do!

I forgot to mention that for 3 days prior to the test, they

put you on a special diet. I was like, oh great, here we go, but when I got the diet paper home and looked at it, the diet actually turned out to be the best part! For 3 days, I was under *doctor's orders* to load up on carbs, eat anything I wanted, and to *make sure* that I ate dessert with both lunch and dinner. No problem, mission accomplished!

And a final note, before I take a nap, since they literally drained the energy from my body today in 3 separate installments... they have a new flavor of the glucose drink you have to drink. It used to be just orange, which tasted like orange pop, but today I was offered a cola flavored one also. So I chose the new one because, what the heck, you only live once, and I've had the orange one more than a few times by now. Which brings me to a question I have: if there is 50g of dextrose in these little drinks, why don't they taste better? It's not like they taste bad (the orange ones anyway), but shouldn't something that is basically liquid sugar taste a little better? I can think of probably about 50 things that would taste much better and have lots of sugar in them. Why don't they let me binge on candy and desserts before the glucose test instead of downing that drink? And if I do have gestational diabetes, is it really the best thing for my body to be ingesting all this sugar just for them to test me? And what do they need a whole vial of blood for every hour? I am beginning to feel like someone's science project! I guess doctors know best, even though sometimes it's hard (downright impossible for people like my husband!) to put your trust in them. But back to my point... if you ever have to take this test, I would stay away from the cola flavored glucose drink. It's not very good, and every time I think about drinking it, I feel nauseous! It reminds me of the 'flat cola' remedy my mom recommended one time when I was sick as a kid. I felt like I was going to throw up, even though I hadn't, so she had heard somewhere that I should drink flat cola. We just happened to have some in the house, so I tried it, promptly vomited everything up, and

couldn't look at cola for months. And I still remember it. Sorry Mom... that one just didn't work ☐

Preparing students for middle school?

When subbing for a regular classroom teacher in an elementary school one would expect to have the same class for at least *most* of the day, granting of course switching for math which is common in the intermediate grades. Aside from the start of the day and a very short time in the morning for snack, I did not have the same class until after 2:30 PM! They had a special in the morning so that accounted for part of it, but then they came back, had snack time, and left just 15 minutes later to go to another classroom for science while another class came in for social studies. Following that was math, which of course all four 5th grade classes mixed up according to ability which as mentioned is pretty standard. After lunch they came up, I took afternoon attendance, and then they split for reading- and I don't mean a few students left for resource while the majority stayed. I mean just the opposite: most left while only a few stayed. The students were doing a [Roald Dahl](#) unit and the students who came in were reading [The BFG](#). Other classes were reading different books. Finally, after reading the class came back together again... and promptly left for recess. **Finally** I had the class together, working together for language arts. I don't know why I bothered making a seating chart when I came in. ☐

I have heard of preparing students for middle school, but I have never seen it to this extent. The closest I had seen before was a school where they actually had a set of lockers

which the fifth-graders would take turns using to practice for middle school, but even there I don't think they switched classes so much. I know I never did when I was in fifth grade. At least I don't remember doing so aside from specials. But that was the early eighties we're talking about, somewhat removed from today's teaching methods.

By the way, [The BFG](#) reading assignment included making a comic strip based on the chapters they read. So, to make a connection here I will give you a couple of links for your reading enjoyment. Of course since this blog is primarily about education these won't be your regular comics.com (hah! You thought I would give [a link](#), not just the name! Uh, whoops... ☹) newspaper comics. On both sites they have links to purchase their 'toons, but they are free to view on the web so you don't need to bother. Well, enjoy!

[Cartoons by Randy Glasbergen](#)

[EDUCATION CARTOONS](#)

Another new look

I changed my shorts, erm, **theme** again. I *really* didn't like that last one. I think this one should last awhile, unless I find an annoying bug. I really liked that first theme, even with the no-italics bug, but I couldn't find it again. Well, this one looks pretty good.

Last couple days

My last post on my actual experiences with the kids was last week, so I guess it's past time to write about it again. I finished last week as a traveling social studies teacher on Friday. That's right, this district has a separate teacher do social studies for 1st-3rd grades. I'm not sure why. To get started, when I accepted the job online it showed what school the teacher works at of course. The school is located at the far end of one of the further districts from me (read: at least a half hour drive), but this was the school one of the kids in my church group attends so I thought I might see him, and so I accepted it. As it turned out, the system I believe lists the school at which a traveling teacher works at the beginning of the week. However, this was Friday so all bets were off. I actually wasn't aware it was a traveling job when I signed up, so I didn't think anything about it. Now, I was at my Thursday job when I accepted this job (no, I wasn't looking when I was supposed to be teaching so just take those fingers off the keyboard and read on! ☐). By the time I got home there was a message waiting for me from the teacher telling me that I would be at a different school in the morning, and yet a *third* school in the afternoon. I wouldn't be at the listed school at all. I am glad I listened to the message and didn't go to the original school. We all know I have gone to the wrong school before...

To make things short to move on to this week, the day went okay. Second grade was working on tourist booklets for their town, with an attractive front, facts about the town on the first inside flap, and pictures on the rest. Being second grade, they needed help on the spelling of course. Also ideas for facts and pictures. Being the town that had the first store ever in a major restaurant chain, that was prominent on several projects. 1st grade listened to a story on safety. Dinosaur boys and girls were featured in this story. Hmm- so

that's why dinosaurs became extinct- they broke all of the safety rules! ☐ 3rd grade were learning about Chicago history and we worked on a timeline of major events in Chicago history.

Monday was one of those days of subbing for a teacher who was still in the building. She is a resource teacher for grades 1-4. Of course this was just one day so for all I know she may have 5th and 6th grade students on other days. She had to do some testing so that's why I was subbing for her. There was one first grader who was pulled out three times for this teacher, and apparently at least once more for another. It would seem he doesn't spend much time in his classroom, at least on Mondays. He was pretty unhappy when I pulled him once right after the other teacher brought him back. I really hope this level of disruption is actually helping him. The morning was spent with three reading groups of different grades, and a push-in where I went to the classroom and worked with small groups of students. They were reading plays (leveled for their reading level of course). Drama can often be favorite moments in teaching and today was no different. In the afternoon I had one pull-out (the first-grader) for math and other than that I was helping out in classrooms as needed. They started the fourth-graders on algebra, using hands-on equations. This is a program using manipulatives on a "scale" to solve equations by balancing the two sides. I didn't have any algebra until I was in junior high...

Today as I mentioned last post was a half day for me. Fortunately it gave me time to get assignments for later in the week in my downtime. I had PE at a school that I have had many problems at. It's an all-year school that actually has classes from 8AM to 4PM. This long day probably contributes to the problems I have had. The first two classes were 4th/5th grade classes. The first class had a new teacher. Actually, the teacher started the year as a first grade teacher (had been one for at least the few years I have known

of her). Apparently the 4th/5th grade teacher moved a couple months ago and the school switched the 1st grade teacher and hired a student teacher to replace the 1st grade teacher. I compared two class lists, and it looked like two of the more "lively" students were gone as well, but they might have been moved to another class for all I know. We played speedball in the three classes I had (40 min classes by the way, not 30 min). The two 4th/5th grade classes did very well. The 3rd grade class was a different story. They played like everyone wanted the ball rather than just wanting to play to win. Once one student had possession of the ball, most of the rest of the class surrounded him or her, pretty much preventing the student from doing anything other than handing the ball off to a teammate. After awhile some students just quit playing- this wasn't a game of good sportsmanship. I actually had to stop the game and have the kids spend the last five minutes sitting down. The nurse came in and yelled at them too (one of the students had run out of the gym to her office toward the end- he had pulled a girl's hair and then she tried to get him back. Sigh. When I told the gym teacher about the morning (he arrived before I left) he knew right away who that student was...

So, that was my last few days. If you're still awake, now is the time to leave comments (hint, hint!). Until tomorrow then.