

Signs of Spring

Have you noticed that spring is in the air? At least in NW Ohio it is. Warmer temperatures, spring flowers blooming, and of course the robins are back.

Being a country boy, I look for a few different signs of spring than most. I noticed that the vultures are circling road kill again. The ducks and geese are congregating in the flooded fields. Animals are out scrounging for food after a having a harder time of it in the winter. And of course the chorus of frogs in and around this areas ponds and swamp area.

I live on the outer edge of what used to be [the Great Black Swamp](#). To the south and east was the main portion of this swamp that covered most of the area around Toledo and Bowling Green Ohio. I live in an area with more high ground than they have in the areas east. There are still places to find some of the swamp that was NW Ohio.

The acreage around my house is one of those places. Just north, as in a few hundred yards, of my house there is about a 6-10 acre area of swampland. This used to be my parents property. I spent many a day in high school trying to explore it. One very hot and dry summer, I was able to make my way deep into the heavy brush. If I could have gotten my hands on a machete, I would have blazed a good path through it. Even without rain for most of that summer, there were still places in that swamp that held a foot or so of water. From what I could tell the deepest parts of the swampland may only be 3 feet deep. These were little pockets about 3 or 4 feet in diameter. My guess is that there were large trees there at one point, and they were blown over by the wind or fell with age. I really don't know since I don't remember seeing any downed trees.

This small swamp holds a variety of small animals. Mostly

frogs and toads, but there are snakes and salamanders, birds of all sorts, various members of the rodent family (Large rat with bushy tale type), raccoons, possums, fox, rabbits, muskrats, deer and of course the insects, lots and lots of insects. Seeing these animals out and about more than usual is a good sign that spring finally made it to NW Ohio. They tend to be less visible in the winter, and when the leave finally fill the trees, they are harder to spot as well. So spring in the swamp is the time to see the wildlife come to life.

Where can you go to see it? Well there is a new state wildlife area (Williams Co Rd J between Co Rds 8 and 9. This is an old stone quarry that is now a fishing and wildlife area. I have been able to see many animals in the early morning or dusk around here. It is only open during daylight hours. You want to be careful because it is a public hunting area (check local hunting seasons) And of course you don't want to bother the fishermen/women. Other good spots are [Goll Woods](#) in Fulton County, [Independence Dam State Park](#) near Defiance OH, Toledo area Metro Parks. The [Toledo area parks](#) are wonderful. It is worth the time (if you are ever in the area) to check them out.

APB On My Retractable Sharpie!

If I had to name my most useful kitchen tool, I think I would probably choose my retractable Sharpie. Sharpies are those permanent markers with the thin tip – they're very useful, and you can use them without making a mess of everything unlike regular permanent markers. Well, some genius invented a retractable Sharpie – no cap to mess with, just click the end

and it's ready to use – a brilliant invention, really. I used mine in my kitchen multiple times daily for various things – until it up and disappeared! I used it mostly for labeling the date on leftovers, among other things, and I had even grown to love the clicking noise it made... how I miss that!

I have a few suspects; namely three little girls who have been trying to get their hands on my retractable Sharpie since I got it! But I have no real leads, and no idea where to look for it. All I know is that I miss it! Like I said, I used it several times per day, and it's just not the same to have to open the cap on a regular Sharpie. Actually, last night I was physically unable to open the cap on the regular Sharpie – had to have my husband do it – because it was on too tight and I injured my finger. Since I only had one free hand at the time, the retractable Sharpie would have come in handy yet again! In fact, this will have to be a short post since it hurts to type everything with my left pointer finger ever since I sliced the tip off the other night. I told you I was terribly uncoordinated – see my previous post if you don't believe it. Which is why I NEED my retractable Sharpie back! If you've seen it, please contact me ASAP! Tipsters will remain anonymous!

School humor

Today was kind of a blah day. I subbed for a primary ELL teacher and really only taught twice- the rest of the time I helped in classrooms. The lessons I taught weren't even that interesting really- one was on mammals and the other was brainstorming facts about frogs and toads. Sooo... I think I will start something new. I will periodically post some school humor (jokes, etc.). I claim none of them for myself but they

will be pulled off of other sites. Well, here we go...

Terrible world history

The following is a "history" collected by teachers throughout the United States, from eighth grade through college level.

Read carefully, and you will learn a lot of incorrect information.

The inhabitants of ancient Egypt were called mummies. They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere, so areas of the dessert are cultivated by irritation. The Egyptians built the Pyramids in the shape of a huge triangular cube. The Pyramids are a range of mountains between France and Spain.

The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, Guinesses, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. On of their children, Cain, once asked, "Am I my brother's son?" God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Montezuma. Jacob, son of Isaac, stole his brother's birth mark. Jacob was a patriarch who brought up his twelve sons to be patriarchs, but they did not take it. One of Jacob's sons, Joseph, gave refuse to the Israelites.

Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Philatelists, a race of people who lived in the Biblical times. Soloman, one of David's sons, had 500 wives and 500 porcupines.

Without the Greeks we wouldn't have history. The Greeks invented three kinds of columns – Corinthian, Doric, and Ironic. They also had myths. A myth is a female moth. One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him in the River Stynx

until he became intollerable. Achilles appears in The Iliad, by Homer. Homer also wrote The Oddity, in which Penelope was the last hardship that Ulysses endured on his journey. Actually, Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name.

Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock.

In the Olympic games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, the threw the java. The reward to the victor was a coral wreath. The government of Athens was democratic because people took the law into their own hands. There were no wars in Greece, as the mountains were so high that they couldn't climb over to see what their neighbors were doing. When they fought with the Persians, the Greeks were outnumbered because the Persians had more men.

Eventually, the Ramons conquered the Greeks. History calls people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlic in their hair. Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Nero was a cruel tyranny who would turture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

Then came the Middle Ages. King Alfred conquered the Dames. King Arthur lived in the Age of Shivery, King Harold mustarded his troops before the Battle of Hastings, Joan of Arc was canonized by Bernard Shaw, and victims of the Black Death grew boobs on their necks. Finally, Magna Carta provided that no free man should be hanged twice for the same offense.

In medevil time most of the people were alliterate. The greatest writer of the time was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and versus and also wrote literature. Another tale tells of William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple while

standing on his son's head.

The Renaissance was an age in which more individuals felt the value of their human being. Martin Luther was nailed to the church door at Wittenberg for selling papal indulgences. He died a horrible death, being excommunicated by a bull. It was the painter Donatello's interest in the female nude that made him the father of the Renaissance. It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented the Bible. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100 foot clipper.

The government of England was a limited mockery. Henry VIII found walking difficult because he had an abcess on his knee. Queen Elizabeth was the "Virgin Queen." As a queen she was a success. When Elizabeth exposed herself before her troops, they all shouted, "hurrah." Then her navy went out and defeated the Spanish Armadillo.

The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William Shakespeare. Shakespeare never made much money and is only famous because of his plays. He lived at Windsor with his merry wives, writing tragedies, comedies and errors. In one of Shakespeare's famous plays, Hamlet rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. In another, Lady Macbeth tried to convince Macbeth to kill the King by attack his manhood. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet. Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote Donkey Hote. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Then his wife died and he wrote Paradise Regained.

During the Renaissance America began. Christopher Columbus was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were called the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Fe. Later, the Pilgrims crossed the Ocean, and this

was known as Pilgrims Progress. When they landed at Plymouth Rock, they were greeted by the Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squabs carried porpoises on their back. Many of the Indian heroes were killed, along with their cabooses, which proved very fatal for them. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many people died and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.

One of the causes of the Revolutionary Wars was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. During the War, the Red Coats and Paul Revere was throwing balls over stone walls. The dogs were barking and the peacocks crowing. Finally, the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxis.

Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm. He invented electricity by rubbing two cats backwards and declared, "A horse devided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

George Washington married Martha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. Then the Constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest president. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was President, he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, "In onion there is strength." Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg address while traveling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope. He also freed the slaves by signing the Emasculation Proclamation, and the Fourteenth Amendment gave the ex-Negroes

citizenship. But the Clue Clux Clan would torcher and lynch the ex-Negroes and other innocent victims. It claimed it represented law and odor. On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assassinator was John Wilkes Booth, a supposingly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

Meanwhile in Europe, the enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltare invented electricity and also wrote a book called Candy. Graity was invented by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the Autumn, when the apples are falling off trees.

Bach was the most famous composer in the world, and so was Handel. Handel was half German, half Italian, and half English. He was very large. Bach died from 1750 to the present. Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

France was in a very serious state. The French Revolution was accomplished before it happened. The Marseillaise was the theme song of the French Revolution, and it catapulted into Napoleon. During the Napoleonic Wars, the crowned heads of Europe were trembling in their shoes. The the Spanish gorillas came down from the hills and nipped at Napoleon's flanks. Napoleon became ill with bladder problems and was very tense and unrestrained. He wanted an heir to inherit his power, but since Josephine was a baroness, she couldn't bear children.

The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West. Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. Her reclining years and finally the end of her life were exemplary of a great personality. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.

The nineteenth century was a time of many great inventions and thoughts. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick reaper, which did the work of hundred men. Samuel Morse invented a code of telegraphy. Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabies. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote the *Origin of the Species*.

Hungry As The Wolf Felt When He Met Red-Riding Hood

In 1949, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II brought to the Broadway stage what would be their third musical blockbuster, [*South Pacific*](#). It tells the tale of Ensign Nellie Forbush, a “Cockeyed Optimist”-ic Naval nurse from Little Rock, stationed on a remote Pacific island, who falls in love with a worldly French planter. This type of interracial pairing was extremely controversial for a show in the 1940s. Even more so was the introduction of Emile de Becque’s two Polynesian children. After learning of the children, Nellie vows to “Wash that Man Right Out of Her Hair.”

A secondary plot revolves around the romance between Lt. Joseph Cable and a mute Polynesian native. The plots are brought together when de Becque and Cable are called upon to go on a dangerous mission which leads to tragedy.

The theme of racial prejudice is explored throughout the show and no more so than in the song “You’ve Got to be Carefully Taught.” Because of its biting commentary on prejudice, Rodgers and Hammerstein were encouraged to take the song out of the show to which they both responded that there would be

no show without it.

South Pacific opened at the Majestic Theatre on Broadway April 7, 1949 (40 years ago, today) and had a run of 1,925 performances. It was the recipient of 9 Tony Awards (including all 4 of the major acting trophies). It also received the prestigious 1950 Pulitzer Prize for Drama (one of only 7 musicals to have done so). Most of the songs have become standards: "Some Enchanted Evening," "Younger than Springtime," "Bali Hai," and "There is Nothing like a Dame" (a rousing chorus number led by the great character Luthor Billis and his chorus of Seabees). The [movie](#) was released in theatres in 1958 as well as a [televised version](#) in 2001 starring an out-of-place Glenn Close who is much too old to play a young, naive Naval nurse. Ironically, it is the only major Rodgers and Hammerstein show to have never been revived on Broadway until it recently opened at the [Vivian Beaumont Theatre](#).

ADDENDUM: Any errors in mathematics are solely the responsibility of the blogger. He takes full responsibility for his ignorance and hopes that his brilliance does not become the topic for a post on another site. Unless it is by his own doing.

Under the weather

Not too hard to do on a day like today. It seems to be just wonderful out. I only know this by looking out the window, and seeing the sky for most of the day. The frogs are still in chorus so it can't be that cold. Me, I'm laid up with a headache, sore throat and slight fever. Mostly lost my voice this morning, but since I've had nobody to talk to today, I really don't know if it is back. I don't feel tempted to try

it either. Since I was feeling OK yesterday, I am wondering how soon this stuff can pop up.

I've been feeling a bit sorry for myself today, because I have to take care of myself during illnesses. It has been that way for many a year now, but I miss the attention I used to get. Even when S. had a job, if I was sick she would always leave me a thermos of hot tea by the bed. I used to do little things like that for her when she let me know she wasn't feeling well (she hid it better than I did, I admit I'm a bit of a whiner when it comes to being sick) The children are good at leaving me alone when I don't feel up to my regular self. Not to say they won't get me things if I ask, but this is all about not having to ask.

I wonder how many married or coupled people see the little things that are part of their lives together. I will be the first to admit that I didn't see all of them when my wife was alive. I only started seeing them in the things that were missing after she was gone. Four years later, I still see the missing little things. Things that she did for me, and things I did for her. Things done just because of who we were alone and together. Making a cup of tea when sleep was hard to come by. Picking up a single rose for no reason. Letting her sleep in while I took care of the girls, or the other way around. That thermos of tea when I wasn't feeling well. That little hug (or big one) when I came home from work. The hand on my shoulder when I was making dinner. Little things in life that can be very important to our lives.

In the future, and in the recent past, I've been noticing the little things in all my dealings with other people. Those little things put together make the big things in life happen.

Have a good day looking and giving the little things.

Veining Victory

All my life I've had to deal with a less than optimal anatomy. In Kindergarten, my teacher wrote on my report card, "lacks hand-eye coordination." Not *lacking in* hand-eye coordination, she definitely wrote LACKS – as if I didn't have any at all. My vision hasn't been the best and neither has my hearing for that matter; due to the multiple ear infections I suffered as a toddler. The LACK of hand-eye coordination followed me all throughout school. There were all those skill tests we would have to take every year in gym class... you know, the mile run, flexed arm hang, shuttle run, 50 yard dash, long jump (the long jump was only a clever name for when people like me tried to take that test and could barely get off the ground, much less produce a long jump), etc. The weeks we did those tests were the most dreaded weeks of the year for me. Not only would I look pretty stupid trying to do them, but I would always fail miserably. They actually based your grades for those tests upon your scores and not upon how hard you tried. Mine were always off the scale F's. Luckily, they weren't enough to bring my gym grade down too low because I was always a pretty good student and to have that ruined because I LACKED hand-eye coordination, now that just wouldn't be right.

Now, as an adult, it doesn't really matter how fast I can run back and forth between 2 lines on the floor while stopping to stoop and touch them. Not that I've tried, which only proves how unimportant something like that is... but it seems that all those years of falling physically behind my peers has been made up for me by a "gift" my adult body has bestowed upon me: huge, viable veins! Every time the lab people at the Dr.'s office have to draw my blood, they are **extremely** impressed by

my veins. In fact, I am often the talk of the lab – *hey, Karen, come over here, look what I've got to work with!*

Today I had a student drawing my blood (oh, great, just what I wanted to see, someone about to pierce my skin with a needle who is **in training to do so!** I realize they have to learn somewhere, but why do they have to learn on me?), and the nurse jokingly told her, wow, you could draw that one in the dark! Haha, hehe, but please, let's not try that!

Anyway, I don't mean to brag to anyone who is less endowed in the vein department, but it's just nice to finally get my due after falling so far behind physically in every other way for so long. And it may seem unimportant to you, but I make a lot of friends at the lab this way, and also, my veinly gifts are very useful in my life. Having had four pregnancies and 2 cases (hopefully only 2; I will find out soon if there will be 3) of gestational diabetes, that means there is lots of blood being drawn from me! I get poked and prodded so often that I'm starting to think that my veins are actually *fun* for the lab people to draw from... or maybe it was no coincidence that the student lab technician had me as a patient to draw from today – maybe they've secretly made me the lab student assignment for the hospital!

Rambling

I should probably introduce myself, but right now I want to talk about something else. I might introduce myself next time. Anyway, I have a friend who at the moment is having a big decision to make. Her brother and sister-in-law have invited her down to Texas to be a live-in-nanny. Her brother is going over seas and her sister-in-law, I guess doesn't want to come

up here, like originally planned. I have a feeling that it might have something to do with me. I was friends once with my friend's sister-in-law, but as seeing as she married my ex, she feels like I still want him back. If she comes up here, I believe that she is worrying about running into me after all she has said about me. I have been willing to forgive her, but she doesn't want me to talk to her, so I have just let it slide right now.

Now, where was I? I seemed to have digressed. My friend doesn't know what she wants to do. She has so many friends up here, plus her family, but jobs seem to be scarce up here and she needs money to keep going to school. School is expensive and she needs to continue to make money. I have been searching for a job for awhile now, but nothing seems to be available for me. Well, except if we both want to be truck drivers. ☹️ So, hopefully something will help her with her decision and we will still stay close while she is away.

Trying new theme again.

Why you ask? Well, why not I say! Just trying something new; I don't know why I didn't notice this theme before titled "Rubric." It's just the thing for a school-related blog. Maybe.

Munk-ey See, Munk-ey Do

In 1958, a struggling songwriter experimented with a recording device by speeding up the audio-track of a recording producing a squeaky, high-pitched, comical tone. Thus, Ross Bagdasarian created David Seville and the Chipmunks with the song "Witch Doctor." The unique sound was an instant sensation and led to multiple Grammy award winning albums, several cartoon series, and the 2007 live-action/CGI feature [*Alvin and the Chipmunks*](#).

In the film, Jason Lee plays Dave whose life is turned completely upside down when he becomes the reluctant guardian of the trio of talking, singing rodents (call me mean if you must but yes indeed they are rodents). Alvin (Justin Long) is the mischievous leader of the three. Simon (Matthew Gray Gubler) is the intellectual, bespecaled middle sibling. Rounding out the threesome, Theodore (pop singer Jesse McCartney) is the chubby, emotional young one. In one day, the brothers cause Dave to lose his job at an ad agency, wreck his house, and ruin his date with his ex-girlfriend. Yet, when he hears the chipmunks sing Dave thinks that his dreams of becoming a successful songwriter just fell into his lap. He writes for the group "The Chipmunk Song (Please Christmas Don't Be Late)."

Upon hearing the novelty piece, a greedy, selfish record company owner sets out to control the group. "Uncle" Ian (David Cross) lavishes the boys with fancy toys, video games, cool clothes, and almost more food than Theodore can stuff into his enormous cheeks. Eventually, the villain drives a wedge between the chipmunks and Dave which leads the brothers to walk out and move in with the slimeball. Eventually, Ian's true motivation emerges as he leads the group on a taxing tour schedule, leaving no time to be boys.

The live-action *Alvin and the Chipmunks* is fun for children and mildly entertaining for older people. Personally, I would

rather enjoy the animated adventures of Alvin, Simon, and Theodore. Also, the hip-hop version of "Witch Doctor" was just not good. However, I did enjoy the up-tempo version of "The Chipmunk Song."

**(Drama × 2) + Teacher +
(Leader × 2) = Full Weekend**

Definitely a full weekend this time around. My normal schedule is fairly busy as is, which is one drama and kid's leader for two services (one same service as drama). Then I go to the worship service during the first Sunday service. This weekend was also a teaching weekend for me and I filled in for another drama member as well. What's the difference between teaching and leading? Well, in a given service there are 30-40 kids in 4th/5th grades. That means several leaders are needed, at least one for every ten kids but the lower the ratio the better. These leaders lead discussion during small group time and of course all are on hand to assist whenever needed whether it be to take care of someone injured during game time, redirect wavering attention, whatever. There is only one teacher though who teaches the actual lesson during lesson time. Today that was me- I do it once a month typically. Today was actually probably the shortest lesson I've given in a long time, meaning more time for small groups. If only I could keep it short all the time that would be ideal. Moving through the Old Testament we focused on King Saul, and why he didn't have a true heart for God. Next week will be focused on King David and how his heart **was** for God. King Solomon will follow the week after. Of course today the lesson started with how Israel wrongly wanted a King in the first place so God gave them the

type of king they thought they wanted- tall and handsome. Just like the idols thrust before us today. Unfortunately good looks on the outside don't equate to a good heart on the inside. Yes he did lead Israel to some victories, but he showed himself as one who shifted blame to others, was jealous, and was disobedient. Eventually God just removed his right to rule and selected a king for them that they **should have** wanted. I would bet that David would have been completely happy with just being a leader while God remained king, but since the precedent was set David would inherit the title of king once Saul was finally killed. This last thought is my opinion of course, so if it is wrong then don't blame the Bible please.

The drama was about doing the right thing, in this case my role was typical of my real self- procrastination. My character knew he had to clean up the lab after a failed experiment, but let it sit instead for three days without doing anything about it, so now it's showtime (remember, imaginary TV studio with live audience) and the place still isn't clean! He almost gets fired when the studio owner calls and asks what's up...

Anyway, now I'm home and three hours later writing this up. Now if you'll excuse me I have some of [The Office](#) to watch- it is due today and I am not even finished with half the season! Good show, but it took a few episodes to get into it.