

Trouble spelled C-U-T-E

Disney, our youngest-for-now, got into some trouble today. She went “missing” for about 10 minutes while I was making lunch, so I started thinking to myself, hmmm, she must have fallen asleep somewhere. So, I went to search for her and found this:



I went to the store and bought some toilet paper today. I had it on the stairs waiting to go up, and apparently she found it and thought it would be fun to play with. It was no big deal, as far as how much trouble toddlers usually get into. And, when I think about it now, the fact that I thought she was sleeping when she was “missing” really says a lot about what kind of baby, err, toddler she is. When my middle child was that age, if she went “missing” and the house was actually quiet, we knew there was going to be REAL trouble – and there always was. Our middle child went through a – how

to put this eloquently – a ‘playing with poop’ phase. She would wake up in her crib, take off her diaper, and paint with the contents of her diaper, all while we thought she was still asleep so there was little we could do to intervene before it happened. We even had to postpone opening Christmas presents one year because we had a huge poopie painted mess to clean up before we could see what Santa brought. Good thing big sis was really patient about that one. Our oldest child, Taylor, was kind of like Disney as a baby – never any real trouble. In fact, she also had a toilet paper incident – see flashback photo below, note the stream of toilet paper behind her:



So anyway, Disney is a very sweet and mild-mannered child. In fact, she really likes to play with my glasses and my Chicago Cubs hat, but she will only ask (yes, that’s right, she asks) to play with them when I’m not wearing them. And unrolling toilet paper is her idea of trouble – for now anyway. She is nearing 2, so I am anticipating more trouble from her, but so far, this is it. I just hope kids

don't come in any sort of behavior pattern. Meaning, our first and third have been exceptionally good, our second is a HANDFUL (putting it mildly), so the fourth would be...

I'm not going to jinx us... we're hoping for the best. I don't know if I can handle another poop player!

Important Car Shopping Tip

We bought a new car back in November, and we're very happy with it. But I have to admit, there is a feature I forgot to check when car shopping – how is the reception for WGN radio AM 720? Translation: will I be able to catch the Cubs games being broadcast all the way from Chicago?!?

Luckily for me, the answer is yes! Since baseball season was over when we bought the car, it didn't occur to me to check for this very essential feature in a vehicle. But today, the radio's ability was tested because as the family errand-runner, the only way for me to be able to catch any of the Cubs game was in the car between picking up kids from school, taking them to and from piano lessons, the library, etc. Not only did the Cubs game come in, but it was even better than the lousy reception our old Ford mini-van picked up last year.

So BOOLYAH! Now I am even happier with the new car and also ecstatic that I got to hear the Cubbies avoid a series sweep by the Milwaukee Brewers today. To quote Harry Caray, CUBS WIN! And to quote a friend named Morat, Everyone Wins! Ok, everyone wins who doesn't drive a Ford that is...

□

Strange thinking..

I kind of follow the political news. I try to stay on top of scientific news. I'm very confused when the two of those collide.

The biggest collision of politics and science in my mind is global warming. Governments all over the world, and of course the United Nations are trying to "solve" global warming. Jumping over any science that is actually happening. With this scientists on both sides of the debate are getting very political on their views. Me, I want to talk about the science and leave any political views out of the picture. Feel free to comment on either picture.

Global warming – is it really happening? The best answer science has right now is.. Wait for it.... Maybe! That's right maybe! The past 20 years of weather data shows some warming, the past 10 years has been very stable. Hmm. Global warming simulation programs show that the warming of the planet will be increasing in the next 20 to 40 years. These same simulations can not use past information to determine the global average temperature in past years... Hmm again! There is a lot of science going on here and it all points to maybe. (at least for me)

Global warming – What causes it. Well until you actually determine that it is happening, you can't really say what is causing it can you? This is where the politics really gets going, so I'm not going there. Just for the science background, most of the heat on earth comes from 1 source, the Sun. Yes, there is planetary heat (think radioactive decay and volcanoes), and heat produced by man (burning all sorts of stuff and other things from our mechanical world), but that is

minimal. The thing to determine is how much heat comes from the sun, and how much is released back to space. If the heat in is more than the heat out, you have global warming. If you have more heat out than heat in, you have global cooling. If they are the same, well, you have steady temperatures. This will have to be measured for more than 10 – 15 years to determine if we are warming or cooling. As far as I know, nobody has these measurements. Big world, and it is hard to do, if not impossible with today's technology. So the talk about carbon footprints and greenhouse effect has no bearing on actual science known.

Global Warming – What can we do? Nothing and everything. Most things people come up with to actually combat the global warming are good to do. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle is scientifically a very good choice. There are a limited amount of resources available to us. While this may have effect on global warming, the best thing is using less, wasting less, and getting better value. By carbon credits? Doesn't do much except move your money to someone else. Not much science in that choice. Alternate fuels? That one is still up in the air as far as science goes. There are some good alt-fuels, some bad. We really need to check to see if the energy cost producing the fuel is less than the energy created. The science I see that may make the biggest impact in the next 10-20 years is [algae](#). Another is the new [Volt from GM](#)

One final thought, remember when it comes to weather forecasting: This is one of the few jobs where you can be wrong 50% of the time and still have a job.

Just a laid-back day

I was a substitute today, but hardly a teacher. As middle school science goes, all the classes were the same unlike a subject such as math where there are usually different levels taught or a foreign language where different grades are taught. I pretty much just announced a pending notebook check and then let them continue on their projects which they started yesterday. That is to say, they already knew what they were doing so I didn't even get to go over that. Ah, well. Mostly I just sat and watched them work, periodically cycling around the room to remind them of my presence and to help out if needed. Fortunately so I didn't expire from boredom, some did need my help from time to time.

This went on for six. long. periods. But it could have been worse. At least I was in a district where most of the kids had a work ethic. Some schools I have been in have had a large number of kids with a goof-off-while-the-teacher-is-away ethic instead.

Well, language arts tomorrow at another middle school. Until then.

Will your child graduate?

The answer we all want for this question is of course a resounding yes (I hope :P). However, if you live in an urban environment the statistics show that his or her chances are lower than if they live in the surrounding suburbs, at least for most of the 50 largest cities. Chicago, for example, has a 55.7% graduation rate while the Chicago suburbs are at 84.1%. Two Ohio cities have more drastic statistics with

Cleveland at 42.2% vs. 78.1% and Columbus being 40.9% vs. 82.9%, and Baltimore, Md. has the largest gap at 34.6% vs. 81.5% for its suburbs! However, at the other end of the scale your child is about 10% more likely to graduate in the city of Colorado Springs (83.7%) than its surrounding suburbs (73.5%). Click the link for rest of the 50 largest cities.

['Crisis' graduation gap found between cities, suburbs](#)

Oops...

I saw this on Channel One this morning (news briefs shown at some schools). How important are grades to you? Well, in Indiana they are probably as important as they are elsewhere, but nevertheless they managed to lose a month of grades over spring break due to what they say was a computer glitch. Click link for story:

[Tech error wipes out Ind. school's grades](#)

Finding information

In an extensive lookup, I was finding a lot of information on electric ranges. It seems like my range has a common failure type. I can't believe that the number of stoves that fail by turning on as high as they can go. I'm going to have to do an all out search for an old style stove without any electronic stuff. I'm going to try to find all manual controls. This may mean not having a smooth top cook surface, which I really

like. Maybe I could find one with a safety feature that actually turns the oven off if the temp gets too high. This is really a pain. For now, I have to unplug the elements in the oven, so I can use the cook top. I could probably get by with this for quite some time, but eventually I'll need to cook a pie, cookies, or even a pizza.

Forehand to Forehead – And Then Some

And now for some youtube fun:

VIDEO 1: [Bloody Tennis Tantrum](#)

WHO: Mikhail Youzhny, a professional tennis player

WHAT: Tennis racket vs. forehead

WHEN: Monday, March 31, 2008

WHERE: Sony Ericsson Open – Key Biscayne, FL

WHY: ??????

COMMENTS: If you are bored by tennis, the real fun starts about 30 seconds into the video. Make sure you listen to the announcers' commentary on the incident – hilarious!

VIDEO 2: [Drunk Hamster](#)

WHO: Someone's poor (?) hamster

WHAT: repeatedly doing flips

WHEN: Not important

WHERE: The Hamster's cage

WHY: Is he really drunk?

COMMENTS: I don't condone cruelty to animals, of course, but this is so funny... And he seems to be doing it because he really LIKES doing it. He doesn't seem to be getting hurt. The theme song works well with the action.

Video 3: [The Price is Right April Fool's Day Joke](#)

WHO: Drew Carey and Rich Fields vs. a contestant named Lisa

WHAT: A contestant bids on a fake showcase

WHEN: April Fool's Day 2008

WHERE: Los Angeles, CA

WHY: April Fool's Day prank

COMMENTS: I can't believe the contestant didn't get the joke earlier... guess she was distracted by being on tv, that happens. Wish I could hear what the audience was saying during the prank! Were they giving her bids, telling her it was a joke, what?

Great day today!

Today was possibly one of the best days I have had in a long time. It really reminded me why I am most comfortable with kids in 4th-6th grades. The class really went well. Remember the one fifth grade class I talked about in my music entry a few days ago? This was pretty much opposite, more like the two 4th grade classes I had that day. It is really unfortunate I am not so comfortable teaching things like reading and writing. What other career can place me with this age group but not involve standard teaching? Coaching is out of course as I am definitely not sports oriented- speaking of which, did you hear about what boys are doing now for sport in Missouri? Put it this way: it is *illegal* in most states. [Check it out at this link \(click\)](#). Actually, once I saw the video (there is a video at that link, but I'm not sure it's the same one I saw) it didn't seem so bad, which is why I am not telling you what it is and making you go to the link instead. ☐ The only reservations I have is that they are teaching this to boys as young as six.

Anyway, back to today. I didn't do much teaching this

morning, what with computer lab time and art taking up an hour and a half, but what teaching I did I really enjoyed. Following art, they had spelling (still no teaching, but some preparation and study time for their test Friday) and reading. I got to read aloud a book that was actually pretty good, though I didn't like the ending **at all**. It was called [My Brother Sam is Dead](#). With what happened in the chapter I read to the class, one would hope for a miracle to happen in the next chapter, but what happens is really quite sad. I'll leave it a little mysterious in case you want to read it- hopefully I didn't say too much. I don't think I did.

This led us to lunch. After lunch there was just math and science left. For math I got the advanced group with only around 15 students. This group was in the 6th grade book. I actually almost got through what the teacher expected me to get through. I only needed about five minutes more instead of the typical 15-30 minutes more... For science we talked about energy sources. They had read about fossil fuels and hydropower yesterday, and we picked up with solar, nuclear, and other forms of energy today. It was a good read and discussion. By the time we finished, I was a little disappointed it was time to go home, it was such a good day. Oh well, it couldn't last forever. And tomorrow I've got 7th grade... Well, 7th grade science! I just hope I don't have to show another video like that Al Gore one I showed at this school last time. That was not fun, though not as bad as 7th grade sex-ed I had to do at another school around that same time. □

Even More Of A Great Thing?

Fans of the popular NBC comedy *The Office* will have even more to love in [2009](#). The network has just greenlit a spinoff series which will have its debut in February in the highly coveted post Super Bowl XLIII timeslot (sounds like another party to me). Little has been revealed about the series, but one possible plot seems to be giving Dwight his own series to head. Hey, it worked for [Frasier](#).

Spinoff series are either hit or miss. The earliest example I can think of would be *The Danny Thomas Show* giving birth to *The Andy Griffith Show*. *Happy Days* (which was a spinoff of *Love, American Style*) begat *Laverne & Shirley*, and [Mork and Mindy](#). Today, it seems nearly impossible to find a show whose title does not include *Law & Order* or *CSI*. So, there are times when spinoff series are a good thing.

However, there have been failures to the genre. Although [Happy Days](#) did give way to two very popular shows, there was also the dreadful attempt to give Joanie and Chachi their own timeslot. While [Cheers](#) gave Kelsey Grammer's character Frasier Crane his own series, there was also the show known as [The Tortellis](#).

So whatever path the new series based upon the successful show takes, here's hoping that it is another *Frasier* and not *Joanie Loves Chachi*.

Anyone have a favorite spinoff series?