

# Not quite who I'm thinking of...

Hey, I recognize him. Hmm, a bit younger, wearing pink, and in a wheelchair- I guess I didn't recognize her after all. No, I'm not on any sort of drug, illegal, prescription, or otherwise. The class I was in today, a mentally impaired class, had a dead ringer for a boy who was in my cabin last summer and comes to church from time to time. No, he didn't look like a girl, but rather with the short haircut and the familiar face I thought the girl was a boy. Then I saw the pink jacket and shoes, so I actually asked if the student was a boy or girl. I didn't realize at first why the face, not just the haircut but the face, cried "boy" to me, but once I looked closer at her I was like, "Wait a minute, I know that face..." Well, if not the boy I know, then was she his sister? Nope. Completely different last name, and a foreign first name to boot, Preet, unlike *his* very English name of Danny.

To get on with things, this day was extremely easy for me. It seemed like whatever I tried to do I felt like I was just getting in the way more often than not, so the usual best thing to do was in fact nothing at all and let the teaching assistants (there were three of them for the six students, usually eight though two were absent) do their thing. These were primary kids (K-2), so that coupled with their impairments meant they needed the consistency anyway. Their schedule for the day looked something like this: calendar time, which included singing; writing, which was either cutting and pasting words and pictures or inconsistent script for the higher-level students; an assembly which was a band concert by the area junior high; language lab where they put toppings on cookies (one refused to eat his too, saying the icing on it tasted "yucky"); making ziti for the party in the afternoon; lunch; self-selected reading; party with another

class- they had made the dessert to go with the ziti-delicious!; more writing.

Well, I'm about to fall asleep so I will let the post end here. If you see any errors, it's because I couldn't be bothered to fix them. Tomorrow. Until then. Maybe I'll add a picture to the top then too... ☐

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## **Mine is smaller than yours!**

Wait- that's not quite how the saying goes of two boys comparing sizes, is it? Well, in second grade apparently that is quite the appropriate comparison for comparing the lengths of their pencils. Literally speaking of course- how can you even think...! ☐ Oh, never mind. Anyway, the lower grades can prove to be quite interesting as the way a small child thinks is so alien to adults. In the case I mentioned, two boys were in competition to see who could use the shortest stub of a pencil. The clear winner was the one who sharpened his pencil so much only the metal eraser band was left with only a small point at the other end. The next day, there was a boy who would break the point on his pencil on purpose and just use the broken tip. I guess that actually beats the stub from the day before. Including last Wednesday, I kind of just worked my way down the hall from one second grade room to the next. Each room had its own challenges and own interesting characters.

Umm, 'scuse me a minute while I close my window. A skunk just walked by... There. Whew. Where was I? Oh- characters. The latest room had a boy who liked to fight and apparently did so at recess time yesterday. He was supposed to spend lunch with the principal today, but he didn't show up. Did his mom keep

him home? There was also the hearing-impaired girl who required me to wear a microphone. I had to try to remember to take it off when I wasn't talking to the whole class or to her. For some reason I thought it would be a good idea to stuff it in my shirt pocket when not in use. Bad idea of course. Instead of getting me talking to others, she got the scratching of the microphone against the material of my shirt. She never told me. Only during the afternoon today did she tell her one-on-one assistant who told me. Apparently Pokemon is still in fashion, as one boy showed me his small book of cards he would take with him to lunch. And you already read about the pencil boys.

Of course as is normal for primary grades, there was the ever-present "this is how we do things and so you'd better get it exactly right." Okay, it wasn't that bad but small children really aren't as flexible as older ones when it comes to routine. speaking of routine, it was nice how the teachers worked together and had their classes doing a lot of the same things. Some of the stuff I got to teach more than one class, making it easier for the second since I already knew what I was doing. All-in-all, it really wasn't that bad working the five days with second grade. Experience normally has me dreading multiple primary days as so much extra focus is required compared to the older ones, but this wasn't bad at all, perhaps because the teachers were still there (doing testing) and checked in from time to time taking some of the pressure off. I don't know. Tomorrow will be a little different in any event. I have two half-days for music, but I might drop the afternoon because there's a job fair going on at that time that I should attend.

EDIT: I forgot to mention the "does this look like the face of a guilty person" look of innocence one of the boys gave me when I asked him to change his card (behavior system). It reminded me of when a sixth-grader tried this a couple of years ago with another teacher. It failed then too- the

teacher just said (a little sarcastically), “aww- how cute” then gave him his punishment anyway.

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## **I hate going to the wrong place...**

Sigh. If there is one thing that is deficient it is the software that one of the districts I'm in uses. No teacher comments on jobs, and no way to change the school in the case of a traveling teacher. So, it is up to the teacher to contact the sub and let that sub know when a position doesn't start where the system says it does. Needless to say, today I was that sub. Last time I took a social studies position the teacher called me to let me know where I would need to be. Not this time. While I was aware it was likely to be an itinerant position again, I just figured since no one contacted me I would be going right where the system said I would. Silly me. I went there and, you got it “Oh, she doesn't come in until the afternoon. You have to go to this other school...” I was pretty P0ed when I was told this. *Someone* has the responsibility of letting me know, whether it be the teacher or the office. At the other school I actually ran into the teacher in question. She was doing an observation so that was why she needed the sub. I ~~didn't want to be rude~~ played it calm and apologized for not being on time because the system said I was to go to the other school. Whether or not she got the hint I don't know as all she said was it was no problem since I didn't start teaching for another hour.

I'll have to say she did prepare thoroughly for me with all the materials separated by class, detailed plans, and whatnot. Meaning of course that I couldn't blame *her* if things went

wrong. ☐ Okay, I wouldn't anyway, and nothing did go wrong. It was a rather pleasant day. Between the two schools I had four first-grade classes, one second, and three third. The lesson plans unfortunately were not quite the same for each class of the same grade so I was kept on my toes. The one thing I really didn't like having to do was pick one student from each class to get an award for behavior. While I would like to say I was completely objective on the selection I really couldn't keep a constant eye on each student to determine who best earned it. It was inevitably more like picking three or four students to watch who seemed to be behaving themselves and look for reasons to disqualify them, then still winding up picking between two or three at the end, completely subjectively. Oh, well.

Yesterday I was at a local middle school as the industrial tech sub. Tomorrow I will have a half day (oh why do I take these? At least I will get to sleep in!) for IT at another school. I already know what to expect there, so I could write up a comparison of the two, but I will save it for tomorrow anyway, just because I can. ☐

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## **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 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.

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## 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 irrigation. 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, Guinnesses, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One 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 Ionic. They also had myths. A myth is a female moth. One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him in the River Styx 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, and threw the javelin. The reward to the victor was a laurel 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 Romans conquered the Greeks. History calls people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlands 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 tyrant who would torture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

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

In medieval time most of the people were illiterate. The greatest writer of the time was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and romances 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 printing press. 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 write of the Renaissance was William Shakespear. Shakespear 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 Shakespear'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 Kind by attack his manhood. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet. Writing at the same time as Shakespear 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 assinator 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. Gravity 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 telepathy. Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabbiis. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote the Organ of the Species.