

The end is near...

Tonight I write this as I should be partying instead. Tonight is the end-of-year cast party for the children's drama. Or rather, that is what the schedule says. The party was actually canceled due to lack of interest, plus a general grim outlook on people showing up on Wednesday nights for past rehearsals. If it was going to be anything like last year's get-together then I really won't miss it. It was a low turnout then and pretty unexciting. Some ice cream and drinks, and a little bit of small talk. The kids if I recall did some theatre games. Those theatre games used to be part of the rehearsals, but this year they got cut due to time, though the director did do some one of the nights.

In any event, the end may have arrived for rehearsals, but we have one more weekend to perform- this coming weekend. I suggested we have the show "canceled" and have "extras" carry off pieces of the set as we do the drama. Unfortunately this suggestion was too late and Steve (children's ministry pastor) cringed at the thought of having to take down and put back up the set for each performance. I guess it was also kind of a negative note. The show rather ends more positively by finally discovering the formula my character has been searching for for so long. Of course the formula involves Jesus, the only super human. He is the one who makes super heroes out of all of us who are children of God. At the end we will take our final bows and the mock science show will end.

I *really* hope the performance goes without a hitch. Last week I was the only regular cast member there for my performance time. Another was prepared as a fill-in, but the rest just didn't show up. Steve said he knew a couple wouldn't be there, but my guess is he didn't have much advance notice as we had to scramble to get others to fill in, and needless to say they had to perform with scripts. Something that was

actually quite regular last year, but praise God was not so much of a problem this year. The last episode is supposed to be the most memorable, so I pray that it is memorable in the right way...

Well, this wasn't my regular sub-post, but you already knew I had PE at the one school again. Basically, same thing different students. Softball all day with similar pluses and minuses as the previous days' kickball. Until tomorrow then, when it looks like I will break the middle-school rut with second grade. I will also get to sleep in an extra hour... ☐

A Toast to The Best!

You know, it's not easy to be the best at something... Anything. Sure, you can be good – even great. But to be the best it means there is nobody better. You are IT. The one, the only one. The best.

I am good at a few things... Computers, ummm... Well, computers. I am pretty good with computers. I can probably think of one or two other things I am good at if I try. But the best? Nope. I am “the best” at nothing. But as amazing as it may seem, I do know a few people who truly are the best at what they do – and it amazes me every day.

First is my wife [Lisa](#). She is the BEST wife (for me) possible. Sure, I would be happy with a good wife. I would be thrilled to have a great wife. But how the heck did I land THE BEST wife? It's true. There is no one in this world that would be a better wife for me than her.

She understands me; which is hard to do. She loves me unconditionally; equally hard. And she always complements my

life. **She is the best!** *And if you read her blog you will see she is pretty talented at writing too!*

Then there is my daughter Disney. SHE is the best baby anyone could hope for! She is always smiling, she is super snuggly, she listens well, she is concerned about others, and oooooohhhh soooooo cute! She is the best. There couldn't be a better baby in my life!

Of course there is Samantha. She drives me crazy! She is so unique and has such a strong will and strong spirit that she always keeps me on my toes. Her energy and her unique qualities are just magical to me. She is just the best. She is the best at being the excitement this family needs on a daily basis. There is no other person in our family so uniquely special. She is just wonderful in such a unique (hair-going-gray-fast) kind of way.

There is also our oldest, Taylor. She can always put other's feelings first. I remember when she was 5 and at the annual easter egg hunt. Her and another girl were staring down a big chocolate egg and were off to the races. Taylor got there first and got the egg... And then promptly handed it to the other girl. She likes making others feel good, and in our family, she is the best! She is the best at being sweet and taking care of her sisters!

I have some friends who are the best too. In fact, my friend [Derek](#) is the best at being loyal. I know many loyal people. But Derek's loyalty has spanned much time and much trial. He is simply the best at being loyal (to me). *The guy can also sing like WOW and can sometimes make me look like a computer novice!*

My friend [John](#) is always able to give quality input to any situation. He is the best at it... John has such a vast knowledge of... Well, everything. Whenever I need to know anything about anything, I ask John. You should too. Because

John is the best at this. There is nobody I know better. *Not to mention that he is a friggin genius and darn good actor!*

Then there is [Jamy](#), another blogger here. The guy is just plain nice. All the time, and to everybody. Yes, he has the art of being a nice guy down perfect. He is the best at being nice. Sounds weird to be the best at being nice, but if you meet Jamy you will know what I mean. *But for a nice guy he plays a great bad-guy on stage and is one of the most talented character actors I've had the privilege of working with!*

I just think all the time about how lucky I am to have such an amazing wonderful family and such great friends.

This is a toast to you guys, you are all the best!!

Especially Lisa ☐ Seriously, she is the BEST!!!

Where Have You Gone Joe Dimaggio?

Tonight was my first real rehearsal for *Little Women*. It seems like it has been forever since we had our read through almost 2 weeks ago. The director even commented that it seems like forever since I have been there. The last week has been for the March sisters to meet and discuss. Before rehearsal began, some of us were discussing the current musical [Spring Awakening](#). I know very little about it aside from the fact that it probably would be much too controversial to present in our small community theatre. We then played a game of sorts by connecting the dots between various musicals. For instance,

what do *My Fair Lady* and [The Music Man](#) have in common. Or perhaps, *Gypsy* and *The Sound of Music*. Call it a mini quiz for you hearty souls brave enough to try.

Rehearsal itself was quite interesting. We did manage to sing through five of the seventeen songs in the show. Not bad when you have as many as 5 different parts singing at once. There were even times when two entirely different melodies were supposed to be sung at the same time. Let's just say that "The Weekly Volcano Press" is probably the most challenging piece in the show.

After the songs I was a part of were finished, I was told that I could go if I wanted to. Hmm... Mr. Director not know Morat too well do he? I stuck around, listened, and tried to help those around me when I could which at times was quite interesting. I found myself trying to help the young man playing Theodore Laurence III ("Laurie") by softly humming along as he sang his part in "Five Forever."

I even found myself learning more about my character, the evil stock character villain Braxton Prendergast, by listening to the other songs being sung. I cannot wait to block the scenes I am in. Quite melodramatic (perhaps more popcorn or skittles to be thrown, but I doubt that that would be allowed... maybe some cheers for the villain would be appropriate). But all in all, I thought it was a very rewarding rehearsal.

THEN... I GOT HOME and caught the lowlights of the Yankees and Orioles game. So much for A-Rod's return. Baltimore scored seven runs in the first inning. The final score was Baltimore 12... New York 2?! Which puts the Bronx Bombers record at 20-25. UGH!!!!

Want tickets to a sold out show? [Click here](#)

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Taters of the Lost Ark

My lovely eldest daughter bought me a toy. It was the latest [Mr. Potato Head](#), complete with Indiana Jones Costume. Since I am a big Indy fan, this was a real treat. I'm just waiting to get the "BIG" Lego set, I just don't know where I would put it.

The newest installment of the Indiana Jones series comes out this Thursday. While I would love to be there on Opening night, there may be other things that keep me from the movie house. I'm sure I will see it this weekend, but the exact day is up in the air.

I'd like to say something insightful or thought provoking about the movie, but I'm just making this up as I go along.

Missing Monday

Somewhere along the way I missed Monday. Not really, but today seemed like a carbon copy of yesterday. The problems that came up at work were the typical Monday problems. Seems like people go away from their job for the weekend, and forget where they were on Monday. Today was Tuesday, but it seemed like some of the things I had to deal with were the Monday issues. Maybe people took an extra day for the weekend, and were getting back into the swing of things, I'm not sure. I just know I don't like work weeks with two Mondays. I hope tomorrow is actually Wednesday.

ELS, not ELL- dang acronyms...

Not sure what to write tonight. I was at one of the few schools one district ever calls me for- I am not sure what's going on with that district. I guess it helps that this school is the largest in the district at over 900 students 6th-8th grades. At first when I saw the acronym ELS when I looked up the teacher online, a practice I often do when I'm not told what subject or grade I'm teaching, I confused it with ELL, or English language learners. Middle school ELL as I've posted before can be, well just add an **h** in front of it and you'll know what I'm talking about. Oh, joy. But I should have remembered from another district that ELS stands for *(something) life skills*. I am not sure what the E stands for, but in short this refers to mentally impaired students, whether it be autism, down syndrome, or what-have-you.

So I arrived and found out about the class, confirmed by the lessons on the plans, and the students arrived one by one. Announcements, attendance, then off some went while others came in- a bit unusual for a middle school where the students start in their first class except for a few schools that have homeroom scheduled at the beginning of the day. So the first class was all the lowest students who could barely read even at a first grade level. Mostly, they repeated what I or the assistant read but some could read a little bit without the help. Second period was quite the opposite. I had the higher level ELS students, and we discussed ancient China and their inventions. Yes, gunpowder was one of them along with paper money, ship rudders, and porcelain. Then there was math. Most students worked out of packets while I worked with some of the lower-level students again, practicing counting to twenty (well, I did say low-level). Actually, before math I had to

relieve another teacher who had a meeting with a parent. That class just colored. Anyway, following math the kids did "vocational education," which today was putting together Hawaiian leis (those flowery things that go around the neck) using construction paper flowers, cut up colored straws, and yarn. The teacher who prepared these actually cut the yarn too short so they wound up more like strange headbands. Oh, well.

Following lunch I got the higher level class again and we worked on list poems. An example similar to one we did together is:

*What I like about summer
Swimming at the local pool,
Playing baseball at the park,
Hanging out with friends all day,
Chasing down the ice cream truck,
Sleeping in until late morning.*

The last period (not counting my off-period) was kind of a laid back period. Some students played a game, others used the computers, and one did some reading. Anyway, that was it. Not exciting, but different.

And I just picked up my job for tomorrow. It looks like I will be back at middle school I was at Monday for... PE again! If that isn't strange enough, it is for a third PE teacher out of the five there. Two to go... ☐

Ignorant Viewpoint of Iron

Man

I've never read a comic book in my life, so why did I go see [Iron Man](#)? Easy – Tuesday is movie night for us, my local movie theater had 3 movies available, and it only cost \$3 for both of us to see one. The choices were [What Happens in Vegas](#), which I wasn't going to touch with a ten foot pole. I don't like [Ashton Kutcher](#), I'm not a big fan of [Cameron Diaz](#), and I heard a reviewer say something about the audience being tortured, not to mention that the premise itself sounded terrible – more like a Saturday Night Live skit than a movie. Another choice was [Prince Caspian](#), which I was somewhat open-minded about watching since I did read the first of the Narnia books way way back when, but my husband wasn't interested in seeing that one at all, and the 2 hour and 20 minute running time kinda turned us away also. So Iron Man it was.

The movie started out interesting enough – it was never boring, so don't let the fact that I fell asleep fool you. That's just what I do when I don't have time to nap during the day and I see a movie too early before I've gotten my second wind that carries me through the evening. So I would say that there was too much of a backstory given, even for people like us who had never really heard of Iron Man before and especially didn't know his backstory. The backstory seemed to go on and on, but my husband liked that, and since I was sleeping through most of it, I can't really fairly say that it was too long. Super hero movies are not even close to being my favorite kind of movie, but I did enjoy this one. It had the perfect amount of action (too much action makes my mind wander), cool special effects, and an interesting story line. The acting wasn't horrible or even bad, but what do you expect with veterans like [Robert Downey Jr.](#) and [Gwyneth Paltrow](#)? They had good chemistry; the love story wasn't too cheesy, and I liked the ending of the movie. I really enjoyed seeing all the technology as Robert Downey Jr. was working in

his “cave” and whatnot, and the huge enemy suit was really fun to watch in the showdown between good and evil. The people behind us came close to ruining things though, since it was a grown woman exclaiming things like, “Cool! That’s awesome! I wish I could do that!” I’m glad she was enjoying herself, but it was distracting to the rest of us.

Since I’m not a comic book fan, I will pose a question to those who are. What percentage of superheros are filthy rich tech geeks who develop their weapons in reclusive mansions? This seems to be a common theme, but maybe it’s just in the superhero movies I’ve seen. But anyway, I liked the movie; it tempted me to possibly check out Dark Knight this summer, unless I’m too busy like, having a baby or something. Iron Man was well worth our \$3. I don’t think I would have said the same for What Happens in Vegas.

Collecting... or Hoarding?

When does a collecting hobby cross the line? I’ve heard of people who collect things and sometimes get kinda crazy about it... Like this one guest on Dr. Phil who collected Star Wars stuff. No problem there, but once he started talking about the details of his obsession, it became obvious he had an unhealthy problem. His wife felt like she came in second place to the Star Wars stuff all the time, and he even had a storm trooper costume he wanted to be buried in. When Dr. Phil pointed out the fact that the guest would never fit into the costume, he insinuated that he would be dismembered or whatever it took to get his body into the costume for burial. I guess it’s easy to say you’ve crossed the line when your spouse or the people you live with start to get annoyed and ask you to give them more room for *their* stuff and to get rid

of the things you collect. Or maybe it's obvious you have an unhealthy addiction when you start to spend more money on your collection than things you should be spending it on to ensure a healthy lifestyle, like food or clothing. Anyway, the reason I'm bringing this up is because my husband and I are developing an extreme board game collecting hobby. It started years ago when we visited a few garage sales and saw some games we both had as kids, so we picked those up. Then we started visiting thrift stores in the area, and we enjoyed doing that so much that we visit often and pick up several games each time we go... it's kind of like treasure hunting – you never know what you'll find. Games are anywhere from 25¢ to \$3 and since they usually have all the pieces, it's a pretty fun hobby to check out all kinds of different games.

Now, we've moved to a bigger house and have allowed ourselves a big game closet. The problem is, we're getting so carried away that we've outgrown the game closet – there are games now stacked on the floor since we've gotten so many that they no longer fit on the shelves. When we go out to thrift stores, I can't even remember what games we have and I'm always tempted to buy more, but my husband says, "we already have that one". It's really not that big of a problem, I guess we just need a bigger closet... we do invite friends over nearly every weekend to play games, so we are getting use out of them; it's not like they just sit on the shelves (or floor!) collecting dust... And the only family member whose living space is getting crowded because of all the games is the parrot. He's been screaming at me while I fold laundry so much lately that I don't mind if he gets crowded out! But I can just tell that it's becoming an addiction because when we're at the thrift stores, I always feel like getting new games, even if we already have them apparently... I don't see an end in sight, but I think it's still in the collecting stage; it hasn't graduated to hoarding yet. After all, the duplicate board games we have are only for spare parts, and the other day, I had a brainstorm: If we knock out one of the walls in our

game closet, we can combine it with another large closet and have more than twice the space for all the games! For some reason, my husband doesn't share my enthusiasm for this idea...

Just a short one

I am very tired so I will make this one quick. Besides, it was PE again, at the same school as Friday, so there isn't much to say about it. Kickball again. The only real difference was I had 8th grade health instead of 6th, so I had the 6th graders for PE instead of the 8th graders. I had to show a video in health class about abstinence. They did some good object lessons on the video involving cups of water contaminated with spit and food and then sharing the cups. Also, using clear packing tape as a lesson by sticking it first to one person's arm, then another, and another, then finally sticking two of these together and comparing it to two pieces of tape never used stuck together. I actually had to show this for only one class as there was an assembly during the other one. Outside. But that was okay even if the temperature was in the mid 50s. It wasn't all that bad. It was about a new solar panel that was installed at the school that they said could provide energy to light one of the rooms 24/7 I think they said. Not much, but apparently worth it. Our village president was there along with the superintendent and even our local US House representative. Each of them, along with a student and the principal, gave a little speech about it. My role? Not much since the entire school was out there which of course included all the regular teachers to keep the kids in line.

Well I'm going to leave the post with that. Hopefully I will be less tired tomorrow when it comes time to blog.

Believe It...Or Not

In almost every film made, there are casting issues. The actors seen in the final product are not necessarily the people originally chosen to fill the roles. Well known to most trivia buffs, Shirley Temple possibly would have been Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* had she not been under contract to MGM rival Fox at the time. Buddy Ebsen was cast as the Tin Man until he discovered that he was allergic to makeup used in the costume.

-Imagine how different *Gone with the Wind* would have been if Lucille Ball had been cast as Scarlett O'Hara or Groucho Marx as Rhett Butler.

-Moving forward a few decades, the Bruce Willis starring action movie [Die Hard](#) was originally planned as a sequel to that fine Arnold Schwarzenegger masterpiece, *Commando*. However, after the Governator turned the role down, the film was changed and eventually starred Mr. Willis after four other casting attempts.

-Speaking of Ah-nuld, could you possibly imagine O.J. Simpson as *The Terminator*? Seriously, it could have happened.

-Bill Murray was considered for the role of [Batman](#)/Bruce Wayne in the 1989 film. Has Mr. Murray ever done a non-comedic movie? Or maybe, the movie was originally supposed to be lighter in tone and closer to the ['60s television show](#). Robin Williams was considered for the role of the Joker in both the original Tim Burton directed movie and also for this summer's *The Dark Knight* (which will be Heath Ledger's swan song).

You can view other possible casting choices for your favorite movies at notstarring.com.

