

# Awful Book Titles

This morning while wiping the last of sandman's dust out of my eyes, I turned on the local news. One of the segments was a live broadcast from the area [Children's Wonderland](#) attraction. This followed a description of last minute book ideas for the last-minute shopper. Well, the remote interviewer decided to get into the act complete with rim shots from a snare drum. Try these titles:

- *Danger* by Luke Out
- *Robots* by Anne Droid
- *You've Got to be Kidding* by Shirley U. Jest

Thank goodness the large display of decorations and exhibits was much more entertaining than the puns and took me back to the number of times the family ventured to the city to walk through the wonderland.

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## Not much movie watching today

My weather day turned into a day to install my new router. This now allows all the computers in the house to access the cell modem at the same time. Yes, this does slow down from the direct connect speed just a bit, but if only one person is on, I didn't notice any difference. But I will be able to work, my daughter will be able to do homework, and I'll finally be able to get to the internet from my linux box.

I also found out that I can IM multiple daughters at once. Could be fun if they are ever online at the same time.

Things just moved fast when I was able to get my high speed

cell modem. And the speeds are getting faster every day, well almost every day.

Then on to a party with the people I work with. It was a fun time.

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## Toy Culling

A few weeks ago, our kids were chronically misbehaving. Our oldest, a tween, was sassing back and saying “no” too much, her younger sister (the “spirited” one) was throwing lots of tantrums and trying to cause trouble with her sisters, and our youngest daughter was constantly upset and insecure about the continuous chaos in the house. Desperate times call for desperate measures, so one day while the oldest kids were at school and the younger ones were sleeping, my husband took off work for an afternoon of “toy culling”. This is a drastic discipline measure we only use in emergency situations. It is time-consuming and intensive labor for the parents, but well worth it, at least in our house.

Toy culling consists of us going into the girls’ room (the three oldest girls share one big room, and our baby boy isn’t yet old enough to cause trouble) and taking out every toy. We leave the tv, computer with educational games, books, and the clothes and board games in the closet. Everything else goes – dressup clothes, doll clothes, dolls, stuffed animals, all the little miscellaneous toys that can really junk up a child’s room quickly, etc. If you have lots of time, you can sort it all by what you want to keep and organize the rest, but we are very busy people and so we just took all their junk and put it in our son’s room for now. He’s a baby who wakes in the night so he’s still in our room. When it’s time to move him into

his room, we'll have to clean it out obviously, but for now it was a means to an end of the horrible behavior of the girls. We leave the board games, and they know that they take one out and put it away when they're done, just like the books that are left. If the rules aren't followed, anything that's left on the floor in subsequent days gets culled. You need to check their room everyday, and it's **imperitive** that you follow through with rule-enforcing. And for some reason, this process really works. I don't know what it is... Perhaps a feng shui effect where the much more pleasant ambience of the room and the *mucho* extra space is what leads to the kids being in better moods and hence, less trouble and more obedient. It could be the fact that there are less toys over which to fight. Maybe they're happier not having it constantly hanging over their heads that they're going to have to clean their room. But I don't care what the reason is, the toy culling has worked wonderfully the 3-5 times we've had to set aside a chunk of time to do it. My kids are now putting their dirty laundry in the hampers that are provided, and their trash is going into garbage cans. Also, their room is staying clean, and I don't have to worry about it staying that way because they don't have anything with which to mess it up! And, as the behavior improves, they can earn their toys back – you don't have to spend money to get them any special reward PLUS the kids feel senses of accomplishment = WIN/WIN. Toy culling proves that less is more, and it helps put a damper on the sense of entitlement that can cloud the good attitude of even a generally well-behaved child.

I think I first read about the method in a parenting column in the newspaper. I'm not sure which expert gets the credit, but I do know that I highly recommend toy culling! And oh yes, early December is a perfect time to do this – makes room for the burst of new things they might receive for the holidays!

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## Self imposed weather day

I decided this morning to take a day off of work instead of trying to travel the snow and ice covered roads. I'm fairly certain that if I took it easy, I would have been able to make it to work, but it didn't make sense to me to risk it.

My truck is covered with about 1/2 inch of ice and snow, mostly ice. This type of precipitation continues to fall even as I type this. I guess I'll build a fire in a bit, sit back with a cup of coffee or cocoa and just relax.

Maybe time for a holiday movie or two. I do have a few versions of "A Christmas Carol" I could watch.

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## Daughter of the Fifth House of Betazed, Holder of the Sacred Chalice of Riix, and Heir to the Holy Rings of Betazed

Perhaps the most enduring fixture in the world of Star Trek was [Majel Barrett-Roddenberry](#). She was in every incarnation of the universe. She played the role of Number One in the original pilot entitled "The Cage." However, the role was scrapped when television censors first viewed the show as the

role was too progressive for a woman (this was the mid 1960s after all). When the series was relaunched, the wife of series creator Gene Roddenberry was given the part of Nurse Christene Chapel who had an unrequited attraction to a certain Vulcan first officer. After the series ended, Mrs. Roddenberry would be heard in the animated series as [Lt. M'ness](#) as well as the voice of the computer in all future Star Trek series and later films including the new movie coming this summer.

However, my favorite role portrayed by the actress was as Lwaxana Troi who was the mother of Enterprise councillor Deanna Troi on Star Trek: The Next Generation. Mrs. Troi would make periodic appearances not only to the Enterprise but also on space station Deep Space Nine. Part of the fun of this character was her hilarious flirtatious advances toward Captain Jean-Luc Picard. Unfortunately for the captain, Lwaxana is a full telepath able to read the thoughts of others.

On December 18, 2008 Mrs. Roddenberry lost her short battle with leukemia a disease I know all too well this year. May the great bird of the galaxy watch over her and those she left behind. Total coincidence that two postings in a row have a common theme.

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## **Please Come Home For Christmas**

It's my favorite contemporary classic Christmas tune, yet I can't find the original version that made me fall in love with the song, "Please Come Home for Christmas". I spent much

of yesterday evening downloading different samples of the song; it seems every famous recording artist from the past few decades covered it. The musical acts that were sampled were very diverse: Aaron Neville, Sawyer Brown, Bon Jovi, Vonda Sheperd, Gary Allan, the Drifters, Lonestar, Toby Keith...

Twenty renditions later and I still haven't found the original version I heard – my favorite one to date. I heard it in the 80's or early 90's, and it was the most popular version they would play all the time on the radio; country and easy listening / rock. It's sung by a male artist or group... if anyone has any suggestions of who it might be, I might be up to fishing through a few more versions of the song. That is, unless any of them are as bad as Toby Keith's. And this is coming from a country music fan!

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## **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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## For The Love Of Shat

I am a self-professed game show freak... AND PROUD of it. Maybe that is why I enjoy the semi-weekly game nights. If I had a bucket list, I would put being on a game show high on that list (not number one but high). I very nearly made it on Who Wants to be a Millionaire when it had the phone in game. I

made it to the second round at which point I got a phone call and had to get through another set of questions in order to progress to New York City; unfortunately, I did not pass that test.

Tonight saw the return of [Password](#), hosted by Mr. Regis Philbin. Two celebrities are paired with two contestants. Actress/comedienne [Aisha Tyler](#) and actor/director (maybe not so much... has he directed anything aside from the forgettable Star Trek V?)/author/and now, celebrity interviewer William Shatner were the stars. To say that Shatner was his normal, over-active self would be an understatement. At half-time, the celebrities switch sides, Bill nearly fell over something and almost ended flat on his face. You would have thought he was back on the starship Enterprise being tossed around, holding onto the railing for dear life. His game play was nothing short of memorable... if you take my meaning. But he was in there punching, having a good time, and able to have a good laugh even at his own expense which has been a trademark for his 50 years in entertainment. Unfortunately, I did not find a clip of tonight's episode, but surely the memorable performance will be preserved in cyberspace very soon for all to enjoy over and over. However, here is a clip of a younger Bill playing a solo round of [Pyramid](#).

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## Winter weather...

Happy Birthday to my daughter who loves the snow. We had a good amount of snow. It started early yesterday evening and continued on into the night. Of course the schools the had either delays or closures. This doesn't affect my work schedule, but I sometimes wish it would. I do work in a school building, and the only good thing about no school is no

students. I don't teach or work with the students, so for me they just get in the way.

Anyway my daughter wanted two things for her birthday. One was snow. Well we got that. The other was to be able to swim. We went to our local "Y" last night and got some swimming in. I can't see the thrill in swimming during the middle of a snowstorm, but it was exercise, and I do need that.

Even with the snow, which I do not like, I had two decent days. I'll take all the decent days I can get.

We are scheduled (if the weatherman can do that) to get more winter precipitation later this week. I'm sure hoping it clears up a little on the weekend, mine is booked solid again. I would like to be able to get where I need to go.

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## **5 years ago (part 5)**

Five years ago this evening, my second youngest daughter celebrated her 16th birthday. It was the last birthday dinner with her mother, and our last evening out as a family with her. That dinner was no my daughters pick for a favorite place to eat, but it was close, and we had some gift certificates to go there. Money was tight at that time, with all the bills and extra gas that was used for trips back and forth to Toledo. It was a place we could afford. Not exactly what you want for a sweet 16 birthday, but it was the only thing available. I was sorry at the time, but I couldn't put it into words for my daughter.

Today that same daughter turned 21. The family left at home went out for her birthday again. She brought along her fiance. It was a better dinner, at least it was a restaurant she

chose. With others in the family we went out for Pizza last Sunday, also her choice. I'm hoping the 21st birthday was better than the 16th.

Here is to my latest 21 year old. I hope you had a happy birthday, and wish many more for you. Love you bunches.