

Site update

I *finally* added a link to Mare-Mare's site under **friends** on the right, and she's right at the top of the list too (nothing to do with alphabetical order or any such nonsense like that now... ☹). Maybe now I will remember to visit her site more often. ☹

More of last week's news...

When mentioning costumes for the 5th grade class I subbed for last week, I forgot to mention one other costume. Or two, rather, though only one of them was in my class. It is strange it slipped my mind because this boy was wearing a video-game-related costume which was very good. He came as Mario, complete in the right colors with hat, large white cartoon gloves, and of course, mustache (though this piece kept falling off). I mentioned to him that with his build he might have made a good Luigi too, but his costume did have the extra padding to make him pudgy ala Mario. During the costume show, who walked across the stage with (I think) a third-grade class but Luigi, which from a distance also looked pretty good. When our Mario waved to him I figured they were brothers, but when I asked him about it the only fraternal relationship was in the characters, so this just made for a cool coincidence.

I said I would mention Friday night, so I am finally getting around to it. Friday night was our second annual movie night for 4th and 5th grade. Last year we saw the excellent [Meet the Robinsons](#). This year was [Bolt](#). Having never seen this movie before I was looking forward to it even if I wouldn't

really get to see if I had to keep too much of a watchful eye on the kids (as it happily turns out, my fears here were unfounded and I was able to watch the whole thing). Before the movie, however, there was game and pizza time. This year they separated the boys and the girls so one group was playing games while the other ate. We started out in the gym. There was a fun game set up called "the gauntlet" but before we did that we warmed up with another game, link tag. No, this has nothing to do with:

[collegehumor]<https://www.collegehumor.com/video:1923420>[/collegehumor]

though that's a hilarious Family Guy-esque video (click to see it in a larger size). It is a game with one (or a few) runner(s) and one (or a few) tagger(s) with the rest spread out, standing linked in pairs. At any time the runner can link up with one pair and the person on the opposite side would become a new runner so the pair doesn't become a trio. If the tagger tags the runner, the runner becomes the tagger and the former tagger links up with a pair and a new person becomes the runner. I think we had played this before a couple of years ago, calling it squirrel tag. After this game came- The Gauntlet. This is just as insidious as it sounds. The kids have to run through a course, going over or under as the course dictates, while trying to avoid getting hit by balls thrown by us leaders (heh, heh...). If hit, they would have to go back to the beginning. For those of you crying "aww, no fair for the kids," don't worry- they got their turn getting back at us. I didn't make it very far...

So for food time, we had pizza. I was expecting the variety made in our church's kitchen, but it turned out they ordered from Little Caesars. The parents had to pay for this event, so why not? This was the time where we leaders got to hang out with a few boys sitting together, thereby selecting our small groups for the end of the night. After the boys grabbed their dinner, I waited a minute or so before grabbing my own

and sitting down with four boys. There were almost a dozen guy leaders, so the small groups were quite small. There were more girls and fewer girl leaders present, so their groups I understand were a bit larger. Did I mention this was an outreach event? The kids were encouraged to invite friends who didn't normally come to our church, so it turned out that two of these boys were such invitees. In fact, both were invited by one of the other boys, but all four actually knew each other from school. After a brief time in conversation with them, it was time for the movie. We cleaned up and headed to the learning center where the movie was shown on two screens. We were supposed to sit with our groups, but the boys kind of crowded together, so I sat in the row right in front of them instead. Don't worry, the seating was tiered and the screens high up besides so I didn't block their view.

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As I wrote, we were able to enjoy the whole movie with no more distraction than some kids going to the bathroom now and again. They even provided popcorn for the whole movie experience. Now, I typically say I don't like popcorn all that much, but it is strange that I typically find myself eating it anyway, and this night was no exception. While not in the same class as Meet the Robinsons IMHO, I still enjoyed this movie about a dog raised thinking his "human" was a spy constantly threatened by the evil Dr. Calico (with his evil cats of course) and that he was a superhero- managing to escape from his trailer, he heads out on a mission to save his human whom he thought was captured (they ended the day's shooting on this cliffhanger) but in fact headed home as this was after all just a TV show no matter what Bolt was raised to believe.

Finally, Pastor Steve came out and talked a little, focusing on superheroes and how God is the only superhero. It was just a bit more exciting than what I just wrote, but you get the idea. We then broke into our small groups and talked some

more about it, ending with handing out Gospel tracts that folds in several ways to reveal the message. I actually picked up a fifth boy who hadn't been selected already by another leader so I may have ended up with the largest boy's group of the night. I felt the discussion went very well. The two visitors actually attended different churches, so they weren't as green as expected in an outreach event, but that was okay as I'm sure everyone still picked up something from the small group, especially on sharing Christ with others if they had already had a relationship with Him.

It was a great night- I can't wait for Winterblast in a few months- the overnighter at the church. The only disappointing time was seeing another fifth-grade boy at the church with his mom for a single-parents meeting who chose to not attend movie night because the ones he wanted to invite were not in 4th or 5th grade, which I learned was sort of a limit in this event though not strictly enforced.

The Drama...

I'm going on my third month as a youth group leader, and while I always enjoy myself at church on Wednesday nights, in recent weeks I've also felt a strange kind of dread. I couldn't put my finger on it until last night. There was a huge drama in our small group of 7th grade girls involving a friendship between two of the girls. The situation made for a lot of tension and was also a huge distraction from our lesson. After group, I mentioned this to the other 7th grade girls leader and the youth pastor, and neither seemed surprised, especially given the dramatic nature of a specific girl in my group – their words, not mine. I came home around 9 pm last night with 4 of my own little kids to put to bed while feeling

entirely emotionally drained. I realized that even though I enjoy being a youth group leader for the most part, that strange sense of dread that I feel in the beginning of the week has to do with bracing myself for the weekly Wednesday night drama. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that the other 7th grade girls leader's attitude has greatly improved since the beginning of the year. Also, a few weeks ago, two students were transferred into my group because their friends were in my group – so now I have the entire clique in my group, and I get to oversee and facilitate all of their various factions. Wonderful. I have a theory that the other leader was very discouraged and emotionally drained by these girls and their drama by the end of last year, and so when I showed up, I was given the clique and their dramatics for my group. Ah, the joys of being the newbie. I'm happy to help, and I'm glad the other leader seems much happier, but I really need to find a way to encourage these girls to shift their priorities a little bit.

Complicating the matter is the fact that we meet in the youth pastor's office, so it's really hard to supervise everyone at once, especially when there is drama. I have girls wanting to poke through his drawers, lie under his computer desk, read his post-it notes and memos, and to sit on his desk. I'm starting to feel more like a babysitter than a small group leader, and the girls in my group are turning 13; it's not like they're little kids (which is what I'm dealing with all day and at night AFTER youth group).

Don't get me wrong; I do enjoy it; I'm just really frustrated right now. I really like the fact that it's something I get to do with my husband (the small group part is only about 40 minutes. For the rest of the two hours, we get to do things together), and I like hanging out with the other leaders and the girls when they're not acting crazy. I'm just saying that those times are getting few and far between. I need to find a way to focus the kids and also to get our group back to

concentrating on the weekly lessons. We can still have fun while we do that, but step #1 will probably be to get us out of the pastor's office – I don't even know where to start if not there.

When I signed up for this gig, I failed to realize that aside from the long-shot of the Chicago Cubs making the World Series, my two favorite yearly live televised events – the Country Music Awards and the Academy of Country Music Awards – air on Wednesday nights. I cannot express how much I enjoy watching these shows, and it's kind of like an athletic event – it's not really the same to watch them after the fact. One year, I even did a live blog while watching one of these awards shows, and it was hectic, but a lot of fun. Tempted as I am to call in sick to youth group next week, I could not look seven 7th graders in the eyes and tell them that I missed our group to stay home and watch the Country Music Awards, especially after the major drama that was this week. So next week, I will actually be avoiding cnn.com and the media from late Wednesday night until whenever I will get a chance to watch the recorded CMAs – which might not be until the weekend!!! Yes, I'm pouting, but I'm going to put my best face forward and just do it. But I reserve the right to complain about it all I want on my blog!!!!

Our Poor Baby

One of my babies is sick. It's not one of the four children, thank goodness, but it's still someone who is a part of our family and means the world to us – our beloved almost 12-year-old dog Charity.



Charity has an aural hematoma, which is basically when a cavity within the ear fills with blood. It's very painful for the dog, and poor Charity has been slowly sauntering around the house in a daze; I can't stand it. The good news is that we have a vet appointment tomorrow, and the really bad news is that it will cost a minimum of \$150, more likely upwards of \$300-500 to fix. But how much money is too much to help our baby? We adopted Charity as a puppy 11 years ago before we had any kids, and she's been with our family through countless moves and other episodes in life, both good and bad. I guess we're all going to have to be a little patient while my husband picks up some extra work hours so we can pay the vet to fix all of her old dog ailments.

Please pray for Charity to get well. She is an older dog, and I can't stand the thought of putting her through surgery. I really hope she feels better soon! She's been sleeping all the time, and there is no one to clean up all the food that the kids drop – the house is getting so messy! And believe it or not, I actually miss her constant barking... ☐

START SPREADIN THE NEWS!!!!!!!

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP NUMBER 27!!!!!!! I TOLD YOU YANKEES IN SIX!!!!!! FIRST TIME SINCE 2000 (yes, I know some have never or have not had the feeling for many years). Last night, I saw a picture of a past World Series ring on a friends Facebook profile that positively made me drool. Apparently Molly has a connection in the offices of the **NEW YORK YANKEES!** **She was allowed to wear the ring for a day!** Tonight's hero... **Hideki Matsui**...Godzilla himself. Nearly became the first player in history to hit for the cycle in World Series play. A two run home run, a two run single, a double... just missing the triple. The most uttered phrase in sport's history... "The Yankees are world champions!"

Ol' Blue Eyes is singin now!

MVP.... HIDEKI MATSUI!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Fans in Japan are celebrating at 1.07PM. 6 of the seven RBIs! Not too bad for a DHer whose contracts expires this year and is questionable?

I was even at work through the first three innings with my cell phone giving updates!

Winning pitcher... Andy Pettite!

Game 5 was a fluke... just getting it back to NYC... and deservedly so to christen the new cathedral right!

Great series... great games... great season! Ok... maybe this will be the end of my Yankee's posts for the next 5-6 months.

And the OTHER fab four: Pettite, Mariano RIVERA... BIG MO, Jorge Posada, **AAAAAND CAPTAIN JETER!!!!!! OK... SO MAYBE THE PARADE ON FRIDAY!!!** No thanks to the brilliant (HA!!!) COMMENTARY OF JOE SCHMO BUCK!

So... until spring training begins.... **THE YANKEES WIN!**
THAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA YANKEES WIN!

FINAL SCORE.... PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES 3, WORLD CHAMPION NEW YORK YANKEES 7!!!!!!

Taylhis' Most Wanted

During visits to the zoo, most kids will fantasize about which animal they would like to take home and have as a pet. There are many reasons why exotic and wild animals should not be kept as pets, but being an animal lover, I guess I never grew out of the mindset of a kid at the zoo – I still think about which ones I would like as pets. Well, actually, I'd like **all** of them as pets, but here are the top 10. Since this is purely fantasy, of course I did not take rational things into consideration like cost or cleaning up after or housing the animals, where's the fun in that? While you're at it, try putting your top few fantasy pets in the comments box below...

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Taylhis Most Wanted:

African Grey parrot – Ugh, another large bird? Do I really want more bird screaming to rile up the kids? But this is a fantasy list, so I'm going to build a huge tropical aviary with a little river for my birds, no problem. Members of this particular breed of parrot are incredibly smart, and their ability for exact mimicry is hilarious! I once posted a video of a little African Grey character named Silvia who did an awesome impression of Desi Arnaz (*Lucy, you got some 'splainin to do!*) as well as sarcastically (and hilariously) delivering

the line, *"Well loddy-frickin'-dah!"*

Manatee – My favorite animal; manatees are gentle and intelligent. I find the manatee's graceful movements relaxing and therapeutic. Watching my manatee swim would be a great way to unwind after a stressful day!

Gorilla – Humans have much in common with these intelligent primates. It'd be incredible to get to know one on a personal basis.

Sea Horse – Well, these guys mate for life, so I'd like a pair of seahorses, which would then turn into hundreds ☐ But many of their behaviors are truly fascinating to watch!



Sea Lion – Like an aquatic dog, sea lions are intelligent, trainable, and beautiful swimmers. And so cute!

Goat – I've always loved goats; now that we live nearby many farms, this might be a possibility some day!

Huge Dog – Dogs are the greatest, and sometimes it seems like the larger the dog, the friendlier. So for a dog-lover without limitations on house size, wouldn't it be great to have a beautiful 150lb+ lap dog? I was thinking St. Bernard, Great Dane or Mastiff type dogs.

Octopus – A somewhat mysterious animal, though to be intelligent based in part upon its ability to manipulate items like jars and toys for food rewards.

Alligator – Huge reptiles with a bad rap; I would love the time to hand-raise and train a gator.

Tortoise – I really like tortoises, and it'd be really neat to create an exhibit to house one of those super-huge tortoises.

Honorable mention:

Marmoset – a cute furry little primate. Cute as he is, smaller primates are known for being temperamental, so this guy is a runner-up.



So there you have it. My husband commented on my list's lack of felines. True, I always blog about how much I would like a cat, but in the real world, all that's stopping me from getting a cat or two or ten is my cat allergy, so that's not really the point of the list – it's more about forbidden animals. Big cats would be too scary to play with – I had a little cat who passed away, but after watching how suddenly and completely her moods could change, I gained a whole new respect for big cats, so no thanks!

And why should we trust the politicians?

Since today is election day, I thought I would do a rare political post.

The great state of Ohio gave us the following laws

In Ohio it is illegal to fish for whales on Sunday, however, no one can be arrested on a Sunday or the 4th of July....

It is illegal to get a fish drunk.

In Canton Ohio it is illegal to play any game in the public parks without the Superintendent's permission.

In Cleveland it is illegal to catch mice without a hunting license.

In Youngstown it is illegal to run out of gas.

Now that is just a few dumb laws for more in Ohio and other states [Click Here](#).

After reading just a few of these laws I wonder if anyone would trust a politician to make laws that really matter. They are the one who made these laws. As far as I know there still are no wild whales in Ohio.

A New Site For \$6,000,000...

Or Probably \$48,000,000 By Now

For a few years now, there has been a site dedicated to the **ORIGINAL** [Bionic Woman](#) (not the so called reboot that was a victim of the writer's strike two years ago... that was definitely HORRIBLE). I have been a frequent fan of the site. Last week, a new site dedicated to the father (or should I be bold and say... husband) series, [The Six Million Dollar Man](#), was started. You know... (or maybe you don't know depending on your age and maybe afternoon rerun viewing of the 80s) the one about "Col. Steve Austin, astronaut... a man barely alive." They rebuilt him following a tragic piloting accident making him "better than he was before. Better... Stronger... Faster." The reluctant hero was endowed with a bionic arm, two bionic legs, and a bionic eye (although Lee Major's now pitches an add for a "Bionic ear.") I fondly remember playing in the yard with my brother and friends. Orders were given by "Oscar Goldman" for the mission of the week. Bionic action complete with the awesomely cheesy sound effects battling evil terrorists, fembots, and other evil doers. Although guess who ended up playing Jaime Sommers several times... only because my first name happened to be the same but spelled differently... somehow I think there was a little more to it than that, but I guess if I wanted to play with big brother...

But the site has brought back memories of rushing home from school to catch the reruns (I was only a year old in '74 after all).

Back to the Bronx

After returning from being booed at rehearsal... second time we have read through and I'm already being booed... **I'M LOOOOOVIN' IT!!!!!!** I Returned to see the Yanks down 3-1 in the second and it did not get much better after. I'm pleased to say that they never gave in. That dratted combination of Lee-Utley killed us again. Mr. Utley tied Mr. October (Reggie Jackson... even named a candy bar after him) for the most home runs in a single World Series with five... so far, **NO MORE FOR YOU!!!**

So tomorrow night, we go back to 'da Bronx for the magic game six. I have said for the past week or so that it would be six and **BACK TO THE NEW DIGS!**

Final: Yanks 6... Phillies 8.

That show again...

We've had many CSI series or maybe an NCIS series. How many Law and Orders have there been. Twilight Zone or The Outer Limits have had multiple variations. I won't talk about all of the different versions of Star Trek. Or the many versions of various comic book heroes on TV cartoons.

And now the TV series "V" comes back to television. From the commercials it looks like it may be very similar to the original. Good looking aliens, but they are hiding something. Scuttlebutt on the web indicates that what they are hiding will be a little different than the first version.

I really enjoyed the first series back in the 80's. It was one of the show I remember talking to friends about. I'm not sure

if this show will generate the same buzz.

Anyone going to watch? Anyone remember the original show?