

# Monkey-ing Around

This morning before going to work, I caught a few moments of Good Morning America. One of the segments featured a pair of monkeys employed as waiters at a tavern in Japan called Kayabukiya. I'm not entirely sure what all goes on in the tavern except that the pair passes out hot towels to the customers as they order their first drink. No word on their rate of pay but they are tipped generously in boiled soya-beans. According to the report on GMA, many people have complimented the simians and noted that they are better than some human servers they have had previously. The names of the pair are Fuku-chan and Yat-chan. But check out the [link](#) to see the monkeys in action. I wonder if the owners of Kayabukiya are breaking any animal labor laws... cruelty to animals and such. Not sure if PETA operates worldwide.

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## Hauntings down for the count...

It is official, the Haunted Theater is officially canceled. The hard work and planning that went into this fund raiser is all for naught. I can't see why people would want to throw away a fund raiser. Even if it only raised \$100, it would be \$100 that they didn't have prior to the event.

I won't say more other than this may affect my future involvement in the theater. I'm not sure at the present time. They want money, but I guess there are only one or two ways to get it. This wasn't one of them. Too bad, the other ways aren't working, as far as I can tell.

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# Overweight???

There have been recent stories in the news about some extremely overweight people. One is the world record holder over 1000 lbs, another hit the scales at over 900 lbs. Sadly, the 900 lb man died from heart failure today. It simply astounds me that they could get that large.

I have a problem with both of these men reaching such weights. Both men were bed ridden, they could not get out of their beds. Both men gained weight after being bed ridden! I can see how they got to the point of being bed ridden. They could feed themselves at that point. I do question how the people taking care of them would not get help to make sure these men lost the weight once they could no longer move. Did they pay people to feed them?

No, you wouldn't want to starve them, but calorie content could be reduced. I'm not sure I would ever want to take care of someone who put themselves into that situation. Hard decision that. Once the person is stuck in their bed, they become wards of someone else. Should we as a society hold these people responsible? Who would make such a call?

Just some thoughts as I try to get this nearly 50 year old body back into shape so I can at least play one more game of softball.

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# Fire! No wait, just that time of the year.

Today was a special day that occurs just once a month. 10AM, first Tuesday of the month- the testing of the disaster sirens all over the area. I've always wondered what if there was a real disaster at this time? No one would believe it. It is also the season for testing something else. For the past two days I have been lucky enough to work at the two closest schools to me. One elementary, one middle. For the past two days I've been blessed with the classroom disruption known as the fire drill. I was warned of the impending one this week at the first school, and eventually told that Monday was in fact the day, but today at the middle school I didn't have much warning. In fact, I would have had none at all if it weren't for the happenstance of one of the students leaving the room (with permission) to do something, and being told by another student that there would be a fire drill. He came back and told us (there was a teaching assistant there as well). Of course student-to-student information cannot always be trusted when you're talking 7th grade, but we prepared for the possibility anyway. Sure enough, about ten minutes later we were headed out of the building and across the street. I bet that van driver coming up the street was none too happy about having to wait for a few hundred students to cross in front...

Yesterday I was with fourth grade, and had such a good day that, coupled with the clarity of being wide awake from an energy drink imbibed at dinner I was thinking- what if my calling to teach the grades I'm comfortable with was an accurate interpretation after all? I speak of a calling I felt back around ten years ago to teach. I was reading an article about teachers that day when I felt the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit on me seeming to tell me "this is

what I want of you.” After that I started to teach, badly at first due to my lack of experience, 4th grade at my church. A new 4th and 5th grade ministry was formed that same year which I joined and still teach to this day. A couple years after I went back to school to finish a degree. I had come so close to an electronic engineering degree and failed at the very end. This time I would be going to become certified as a teacher. Well, I did very well for most of it, just like with my electronic engineering degree some years earlier, but like that degree I failed to pass the ultimate test. Back then it was a senior design project. This time it was student teaching. I did an excellent job on my lesson planning, an okay job on teaching the plans, and a horrible job managing the classroom. One of the rooms had over thirty students, but that’s no excuse I guess. After that, I cooled my heels and started substituting- the professors at the school felt sorry for me and gave me a degree anyway, calling it success after so much time spent in school, but to this day it hasn’t felt like success.

A couple years later, I had an idea that I would get secondary certification (6th-12th) and get certification that way. I would teach science in middle school I thought. Well, after being told by a professor there, who had even filled in as head of the education department for a short time, I was later informed that no, it was a mistake and the policy of no second chances at student teaching still applied, even if I changed from elementary to secondary. I then applied to another school and was accepted, but then once again I was later told that no, it was a mistake and they couldn’t take someone who started a teaching program elsewhere. It has now been a year since that decision and a lot of wasted money taking classes to fulfill that secondary degree. Thanks a lot. ☐

This brings me back to today. As I was saying, last night I had some sort of clarity on this and the shortcomings I have thought I had seemed somehow miniscule, and that I could

indeed teach reading and writing as well as the things I'm good at- what was I thinking? I am most comfortable with upper elementary so why should I have settled for a secondary degree anyway? I am now seeking confirmation with God that I am ready for this and have His approval and blessing. My mind has been changed so often that I can't be sure on my own that this clarity is true or just caffeine-induced. I do have some other lifestyle changes I need to make, particularly as I am not sleeping well again. I had started Tae-Bo about a month ago, but then I pulled some leg muscles, followed by severe lower back pain (both are gone now), and finally the flood in the basement where I was working out. I'm still not positive about guys and aerobics, even if it is martial-arts aerobics, but it's better than running or laying out big \$\$ for weight training equipment or a fitness center membership. Hopefully this can help me sleep once I start again.

So... how was today? Well, I had no problems. It was another LD/BD resource position like last week, but the kids were much better behaved than the one job. In fact, talking was the only issue leading me to believe they were strictly LD (learning) issues. I am a little perturbed about the rest of the week though. I had a three day assignment that was cancelled at the last minute. I logged in to the system to confirm it again and it was gone, no call about it no nothing. I called the system as that is where it actually does the cancellations- for some reason it doesn't do them through the web interface- and all I got was a busy signal. That explains the lack of a call I guess- the phone interface was down. I eventually got through and it did tell me the job was cancelled, so now I have to fill those days again. Actually I did find a local 2nd-grade position for tomorrow, so that beats getting up at 6AM (other job) but now I work until 3:30 instead of 1:45 (Wednesdays are early dismissal days in the one district). Well, that's part of being a sub I guess.

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# The Office – Season Premeire!

**WARNING – SPOILERS AHEAD! THIS POST DETAILS THE HAPPENINGS DURING THE OFFICE PREMIERE – YOU’VE BEEN WARNED!**

I can’t believe I didn’t get around to writing about the Office season premiere until now! For goodness sakes, it aired almost two weeks ago! It all began when our kids were acting up so much that we didn’t catch the premiere episode when it aired on tv the Thursday night before last Thursday night. Still with me? Doesn’t really matter... just skip to the part of the post you like. Thinking we had set our computer to tape The Office premiere or that we could find it online, we didn’t fret too much until it was time for bed and we still hadn’t found it. Finally got ahold of it late Friday night after some corn maze fun, stayed up way too late to watch it, followed by a busy weekend, a chaotic week, and another bustling weekend before I got a chance to write about it! So anyway, here is my take on The Office’s premiere episode. I always like what tvguide.com has to say in their tv show blogs, so I copied and pasted their tv show blog synopsis of the premiere and that’s in italics. I will interject my own comments throughout the article, and those are in **BOLD CAPS**. A brief break for the Vice Presidential debate last Thursday, and then some more funny new Office episodes begin this Thurday!!!

*Last season ended with cliff-hangers galore: Andy proposed to Angela, Jim was thwarted from proposing to Pam, Michael committed to playing babydaddy to Jan’s mystery spawn, and – this really killed me because my DVR cut off early and I only found out about this the next day – the cameras, those ubiquitous Office cameras, caught Dwight and Angela boinking*

*minutes after she accepted Andy's proposal. The writers developed great storylines last season, and this premiere episode did a great job picking up those threads and setting up some great arcs for this season. (AGREED! AT THE RISK OF ALIENATING POTENTIAL VIEWERS, I WILL SAY THAT THIS SHOW IS A COMEDY WITH SOAPY CHARACTERISTICS GIVEN ITS CONTINUING STORYLINES AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. BUT IF YOU'VE NEVER WATCHED THE OFFICE, DON'T LET THIS OBSERVATION DISCOURAGE YOU! MOST TV SIT-COMS HAVE CONTINUING STORYLINES – YOU JUST DON'T ALWAYS REALIZE IT!)*

**\*\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*\***

*Thursday's premiere was chock-full of big shockers: Jim's proposal to Pam at a rest stop, Ryan's return as a receptionist bent on revenge (IT'S GREAT FUN TO SEE RYAN AT THE BOTTOM ONCE AGAIN – EVEN MORE FUN TO SEE HIM AT THE BOTTOM NOW AFTER HIS SMARMY ATTITUDE ALIENATING HIS CO-WORKERS), and Dwight and Angela's secret affair – consummated in an out-of-the way warehouse closet. Lots to talk about, so let's get started.*

*The episode begins with the announcement of a corporate weight-loss contest, a still-unengaged Pam leaving for Pratt Design in New York ("what up, 2-1-2?") and Angela beeping Dwight for some Office lovin', right after Andy serenades her with a personalized version of Rihanna's "Umbrella" ("Angela-ela-ela"). Honestly, I would page Dwight for a booty call if somebody did that to me, so I'm definitely not going to moralize.*

*Meanwhile, Michael is in the "friend zone" with Holly, and, according to Jim, "killing it" because "she's kind of a dork." Cut to the "wicka-wicka-wicka" bebop (I think that's what the kids call it), and you appreciate that there's a special chemistry there. (I also loved the "Acting!" and Yoda impersonations in last season's finale.) Clearly, Jan and the baby are going to complicate matters, but since Michael may*

have found in Holly the only woman with whom he could possibly have a healthy relationship, I'm rooting for them. The writers, though, seem hell-bent on making his journey with Jan and the baby as difficult as possible. I'm looking forward to the ride. **(I SO WANT MICHAEL AND HOLLY TO END UP TOGETHER – THEY'RE PERFECT FOR EACH OTHER AND SHE SEEMS TO ACTUALLY LIKE HIM. HE KEEPS BEING SO CLUELESS ABOUT IT THOUGH, ITS FRUSTRATINGLY FUN TO WATCH!)**

As for Jim and Pam: The writers really have it in for them, don't they? First, unrequited love. Then, Jim leaves and returns with a girlfriend. When he comes back, Jim is almost killed by Roy – thank God for Deputy Dwight and his can of mace! – and now, a long-distance relationship? Really? The Office has been great at avoiding clichés, and I hope it continues to do so by not sucking Pam into a complicating “friendship” with some college dude. **(I WAS NOT HAPPY TO SEE THE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE COLLEGE DUDE. PAM HAD BETTER NOT PULL A “ROSS” (REMEMBER THE TV SHOW FRIENDS?) AND CHEAT ON HER SOULMATE – SHE AND JIM ARE MADE FOR EACH OTHER, AND I THINK THE SHOW WOULD BE JUST AS ENTERTAINING IF THEY GO AHEAD AND LET THESE TWO GET MARRIED. IF THEY WANT TO FOLLOW IN CHEESY SITCOM FOOTSTEPS, THEN ADD A BABY OR TWO DOWN THE ROAD, BUT DON'T BREAK THEM UP!)**

*And now on to my favorite scenes:*

*The return of Ryan*

*I found myself clapping out loud, it was that awesome that a humbled, court-ordered-community-service-oriented Ryan returns as Pam's temp fill-in. Ryan's out for some weird revenge angle, as evidenced by his menacing goatee, his black attire and his anti-Earl list, which includes Jim and – strangely enough – Kevin. I'm sure Michael will figure out a way to keep him around longer, but I wonder if the once-humble intern truly has turned irrevocably to the dark side. **(I THINK SO – RYAN WAS NEVER A NICE PERSON. SURE, THEY MADE YOU FEEL SORRY FOR HIM WHEN HE WAS A TEMP THE FIRST TIME, BUT HE WAS STILL A***



**JERK.)**

*"So you think it's a choice?"*

*The patented Office awkwardness of Oscar and Holly having the "I'm a lesbian... No, I'm actually not" exchange was fantastic. It certainly didn't reach the cringeworthy heights of last year's classic dinner-party episode, but it still managed to make me laugh and squirm like no other show on TV does. For some reason, that appeals to me. (THIS SCENE WAS HILARIOUS AND ONE OF MY FAVORITES – NUFF SAID!)*

*"That wasn't a tapeworm."*

*I would like to proclaim, in this, my initial Office blog, that Creed is my hero. He may be my favorite sitcom character of all time. Kelly says she swallowed a tapeworm to lose weight... that Creed sold her. Cut to Creed: "That wasn't a tapeworm." The only question that remains, and I'm afraid of the answer: What was it? (I AM A BIG FAN OF CREED ALSO – HE IS AN AWESOME CHARACTER, SOOO FUNNY. MY FAVORITE CREED LINE IS WHEN HE SAYS "YEP, IT'S CRAZY. IT'S CRAZY." IN THE EPISODE WHERE DWIGHT WANTS TO COOK A GOOSE IN THE OFFICE. IT DOESN'T LOOK NEARLY AS FUNNY IN TYPE; YOU HAVE TO SEE THE EPISODE. AND THEN THERE'S THE EPISODE WHERE CREED DYES HIS HAIR AND STARTS USING SLANG TO APPEAR YOUNGER – CLASSIC!)*

*"I've replaced Angela as head of the party-planning committee."*

*Phyllis reveals her Machiavellian side with this power play. As she caught Angela and Dwight doing their illicit dirty deed, her little upward smile indicated at the very moment she caught them that the party-planning committee chairmanship was all hers. You go, girl!*

*The big shocker: Jim and Pam get engaged!*

*On exit 17 off of what I can only assume is the New Jersey Turnpike, Jim drops on one knee and pops the question. I'm really glad they didn't drag it out and save the engagement for some sweeps or finale ploy. The unexpectedness of the*

*proposal, and how unassuming it was, really kept true to the nature of their relationship. For me, this is one the main reasons why this show is so great: The writers don't betray their characters. (AGREED!)*

*So, what did you guys think? Was the Season 5 premiere worth the wait? (IT WAS GREAT, BUT NEVER WORTH THE WAIT CUZ THAT MEANS THAT WE HAVE TO GO WITHOUT THE SHOW!) What did you think of the engagement? (VERY HAPPY ABOUT IT – CALMS MY FEARS ABOUT THAT RANDOM COLLEGE DUDE A LITTLE BIT – I WAS FEELING JEALOUS FOR JIM!) Did you see it coming or were you, like me, totally shocked? (I WAS SHOCKED, DIDN'T SEE IT COMING AT ALL, BUT IT WAS SOMETHING I WAS REALLY HAPPY ABOUT. I'M GLAD THEY DIDN'T SHOW IT TO US IN A PREVIEW!) Finally, what were your favorite scenes? (THE OSCAR / HOLLY EXCHANGE AND THE CREED / KELLY TAPEWORM INCIDENT WERE MY FAVORITES – KELLY LOOKING SO SICK AND PASSING OUT WERE PRICELESS! OVERALL, AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS WITH TV SHOWS, THE SEASON PREMIERE DID NOT DISAPPOINT IN THE SLIGHTEST! CAN'T WAIT UNTIL THURSDAY!!!!!!)*

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## First full week, finally

Did I really not post about my teaching for the last week? Well, let's see what I can remember. Monday I worked as a special ed teacher at a junior high. The teacher I subbed for I remember used to work in the district's therapeutic day school program which is a program for students with particularly strong behavioral problems. They even had large people specifically trained to restrain problem students and bring them to a cooling-off room when required. I actually subbed for him in that position a couple of years ago. These days he has moved to those with lesser, but still behavioral,

problems. Much of the day was quite simple with either team teaching (read "sub acts as teaching assistant") or resource periods where students would work on homework. He did have a language arts block at the end of the day though. I did have an assistant to help as I worked with a group at a time so it wasn't too bad. We read a story about grey wolves. The fun began last period, which was a study hall. That's when a lot of the behavior problems came out. No, that's not true- the last group of language arts was a struggle as well. They were pretty much the same students in both cases in any event.

Tuesday I worked in grade 1. And 2. And 3. And 4. And 5. And- no, I'm finished... I was in fact a floater. I took over classes for an hour at a time. I do wish they had organized the meetings a little more in my favor though. I actually had to go from one end of the school to the other end at one point, a few minute walk due to the design of the building when I had to be in the next room right away. Fortunately in that case the kids in the second class had been sent out to recess so the teacher was able to go to her meeting though I had not yet arrived. It was overall an easy day and I was mostly able to talk directly with the teachers before and after meaning no written notes.

Wednesday I was in music. This was actually the most challenging assignment. The kids in many of the classes were very talkative. Grades were mixed here too of course, from second to sixth (not inclusive- I had no third graders). The older ones were the most challenging. We did some music games the teacher had left, including instrument bingo (a standard) and a game where they formed musical symbols on the ground with their bodies. *That* one was fun.

Thursday- let me look it up. Ah yes, 5th grade. Pretty normal though I had one very challenging boy in that class. I'm not the only one who had problems with him either- I overheard a conversation in the lounge about him. Apparently when we switched for math (I had the advanced class and did

pan balance problems with them- similar to hands on equations I think I mentioned once before) he refused to do any work at all. Well, with me he worked slowly but he did work. He got distracted very easily though. In the end he wasn't as bad as some students I have had, but still a challenge nonetheless.

Friday I was in another special ed classroom. The three sixth graders- wow. Next to ELL a couple of years ago they were the most troublesome. It was at this same school by the way... One of the sixth grades is apparently on ADHD medication. His parents I'm told are quite good at making sure he comes to school ready and medicated. Guess which day they forgot? Yep. Once he had his meds after lunch he was a pleasure to work with. Of the other two one was got very easily distracted and the other tended to work on only what he wanted to work on and was quite belligerent toward another student. Two of the three finished their science assignment by the end of the day (worked on during no less than three periods...) and one even finished his math assignment. There was one seventh grader who mostly worked independently and an eighth grader who wasn't a problem when working, but he got some bad family news in the middle of the day and he was pretty much done working at that point.

Well, that was how my week went. Now who would like to join me in subbing? Come on, there must be one of you... ☐

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## A new home

Our 4th and 5th grade ministry has been undergoing some changes as of late. Early this summer the one who headed it up for the last several years passed the reigns over to the one who had been running the younger ages for some time. His

own duties now encompass the entire children's and student ministries, as well as co-running the church camp. Anyway, things for the last few months have been running pretty much as before with a few new policies thrown in- things like changing the reward system (for memorizing verses, doing devotions, etc) and having us interact more with the parents.

Well, transition period is over and things are a-changing. A few weeks ago someone who had been with us a few years ago came back and has been placed in a position organizing the 4th/5th grade ministry as a part of his studies at Moody Bible Institute, and he is full of ideas. He has made a few changes already and probably the biggest one this weekend is that we are now to call the children who are in our small groups weekly. We took down their phone numbers and I have a list of about six or seven who I will need to call this week. Next week some of them will go with one of the new leaders who has sat in the last couple of weeks and will be ready to lead some of the kids next week on his own and so he will become responsible for calling them. I hope we get more 5th graders next week though as they were pretty much outnumbered by the 4th graders and I would like to have a larger group than three or four after we split. Unfortunately at least one of them usually attends at a different service so I will lose him for sure. Oh, another change was to go back to splitting groups by grade as we have been just splitting by gender for the last year. I will be first to admit that we have been getting lax over the years so changes are refreshing and will hopefully benefit the students.

The biggest change however has nothing to do with the staffing changes. While this weekend we started with phone lists, we also started in a different room. The room we are in now was at one time exclusively for junior high school, and on Sat night/Sun morning since junior high didn't meet (they meet Sunday nights) it was used as a live video feed for those who for some reason weren't in the regular worship center (parents

with crying children who took their children out of the worship center for example). However, they redid the area in front of the church and that has become the new live video area. So now we are back in the junior high room. Wait, did I say *back*? Yes, when we started the ministry, breaking it off from the rest of the grade school ministry, it met in this very same room. I'm not sure why, but at some point they moved us to a different room (maybe this was the start of live video feed?) and we finally ended up in the school library after that wing was remodeled and second floor added. Now that we've outgrown that room we're back in the original room, only now it is better than before. We have a full sound and video system including microphones if we need it, we have games like foosball, carpetball, and air hockey that the kids can play before the service starts and while waiting to be picked up, and the room just looks nicer than it did nine years ago. Yes, I have been doing it for that long. Who knows, maybe my calling might be to leave this church and organize a similar ministry at a smaller church? Or maybe just stay here for another nine years.

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## Terror In Terror Town

This weekend saw another tour of the area haunted fare. Since our haunted theatre was nixed by the local bureaucrats (something about the theatre not being coded correctly... whatever), it has been great to visit the attractions within reasonable drives. However, this weekend's extravaganza was a little weak. Let's just say that I think that the fearless four-year-old who was part of our group just might have enjoyed going through it. [Terror Town](#) at the Lucas County Fairgrounds is a four attraction for one price haunt. In the first building, the thrillseeker is treated to a display of

freaky paraphernalia throughout history (Sasquatch, the KFC trio, the lampshade from [Ed Gein's](#) house of horror, and other oddities). The next was a slaughterhouse in which our group traveled with the use of a flashlight. The problem being, the light was controlled by an unseen force. The third was entitled The Beast which was a tunnel of fun. fINally, came the House of Horror. Let's just say the smell was the scariest part of the whole attraction.

My biggest problem with the site was the ratio of animatronic devices to live actors. You can only stand and watch a mechanical prop jump out at you before it becomes not only UNscary but lame. the actors (no more than 5 in the 4 buildings) just did not have their heart in it. There soul purpose seemed to be to direct the traffic created by the audiences. WAY too many "pop-up" scares and WAY too few human actors feeling their parts created very few chills and spills. So few in fact, that the three of us who usually are psyched and ready for more were hesitant to venture 10 miles to another attraction. Also, the miniature golf course was not yet complete. The let down of the terribly un-terrifying Terror Town led the group to return to watch the [Cubs game](#) which was also a let down. But the Buckeyes won and are now 5-1 overall and 2-0 in the Big Ten... GO BUCKS!!!

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## Disappointment Is An Understatement

I am still a Cubs fan; I will admit it. Even after the 2003 Steve Bartman episode, after the 100+ (now it's officially time to add the + to 100) year World Series drought, and the disasterous playoffs of the 2007 and now 2008 seasons.

I just cannot believe the season is over. The season started off so promising this year, and picked up momentum all summer, only to leave us bewildered and disgusted in October once again. So what happened that made them look so terrible during all the playoff games?!?

You know what? I don't even want to talk about it. At least I don't have to worry about missing the World Series while I'm in Florida! Frickin' Cubs. Maybe next year... UGH!

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## Selling Chili

My youngest is in the High School's Show Choir, and they had a Chili sale during the Homecoming game to raise money for the group. I 'volunteered' to help sell some of the chili. My first official chore was to help set up the tables needed to put the many crock pots of chili on. The next was to taste all of the different chili to make be able to tell all the customers/donation specialists if a specific chili was too spicy or something like that.

I can say that all of the chili was very good, but there wasn't a lot of spice in any of them. On my grading scale of chili they all would have been a zero. On the normal people scale, (those who don't tolerate the spice as well as I do) I guess there would have been a 1 in the group. There were not a 5 alarm chili in the group.

The number of different chili recipes is astounding. I was amazed that each chili had a specific flavor. It would appear that each cook had their own secret ingredient. I didn't have the time to be able to cook a chili for this event, so I just brought the shredded cheese and crackers. Not sure on the money raised, but the chili was gone before half-time. And



there was a lot of chili.

Now for a quick and easy (and not bad tasting) chili recipe.

1 1/2 lbs ground beef browned with 2 cloves of garlic (drained)

4 – 16 oz cans of Brooks Chili Beans ( I like the 16 oz cans for this so I can use different 'heats' if desired – I like the HOT)

1 can of Campbell's Tomato Soup (Progresso is good too)

2 tbsls chili powder.

Hot sauce to taste at table.

Combine browned meat, soup and beans and chili powder. Heat through. Done that's it. Told you it was quick and easy.

The best bean chili I've had starts with tomatoes and dried beans. I'm surprised the recipe didn't call for you to butcher your own cow. I think I supplied a version of a beanless chili to the WCCT cookbook. I can't remember...