

Meet The Flagstones

✘ I was reminded of a small bit of trivia today (and I am sure that it was buried somewhere under the heading “Still more useless trivia” which sometimes comes in quite handy). The first couple to be seen on prime time television in bed together were Fred and Wilma Flintstone. Before that, television tots came from the stork, right? On “[I Love Lucy](#),” the word “pregnant” could not even be uttered due to censorship. Hence the title of the episode in which Mrs. Ricardo’s pregnancy is revealed became: “Lucy is *Enceinte*” (the French equivalent of pregnant... why they chose French is anyone’s guess).

Alrighty, back to my original topic. My favorite episode of “[The Flintstones](#)” is entitled “Hollyrock, Here I Come.” In it, the title couple and their neighbors, the Rubbles, travel to the movie capitol of the then known-world. Purely by accident, Wilma and then Fred are discovered by a big-time television producer. Fred is spotted in the television audience snoring loudly during a rehearsal. Mr Flintstone’s boisterous voice and winning personality make him the obvious last minute replacement for the title role in the aptly entitled series “The Frogmouth.” However, he becomes totally overbearing (ad libbing not only his lines but those of his castmates, composing his own music, etc) and the producer concludes that something must be done quickly or the show will be disastrous.

Something that has always bothered me about the series: Where is the cat that Fred is supposed to put out for the night during the end credits. And if we never see it how is Fred supposed to someday when the fight.

Small classes and early starts

7:15. That's what time a sub has to be at the junior high schools (still called that even though they are on a middle-school system- I guess they didn't want to change the letterheads ☐) in the district I was in today. That means being up before six. At least I had a solid night's sleep instead of constantly waking up like I often do. Once I got there, it turned out this teacher had a class that started ten minutes before the regular classes. Say what? Fortunately the plans said another teacher was asked to run this class so no problem not being able to completely go over the plans. The one I was subbing for was also a traveling teacher, which in this case could be called class-on-a-cart. This teacher had a class in a different room every period. One class even had two different rooms- more on that below.

So I got to the room with my cart and the teacher who was supposed to take over (surprise to him!) just said that I could handle this and just ask if I had any questions since he would be in and out of the room. Well then, I had to look at the plans again after all. It really wasn't hard like he said. All I had to do was pass out quizzes they had to complete, inform them of their class/homework assignment once finished, and then monitor them. Fortunately I had second period off to look at the rest of the day.

The next period was communications, basically a speech class. Well, they were good at speaking all right- to each other in conversation that is. They were completing an assignment as well, so again no teaching- just monitoring. The next two classes actually lasted for a period plus another half-period. Being math classes this was a bit odd. This is actually why one of the classes was in two different rooms. They spent one period in one room, then had to move for the

next period. I would gather the regular teacher in that room doesn't have two periods off in a row to allow us to be there for the full time. To get the half-period the students actually sacrificed their study hall half of lunch to have the longer math period.

Where does the small classes part come into play? Well, you three who actually read this blog (☐) already know special education classes can be smaller. Well, two of the math classes were such classes- the first had about eight students in it. Most of them worked well, but there were two girls who thought they were in that communications class and chatted pretty much the entire time, sometimes with others across the room. At least they did *some* work so I was able to put up with it without sending anyone to the office. I left a note about this of course. This was the first of the two special-ed math classes. The second, get this, had **two students**. That's right, just two. They pay for a teacher to teach a class of two students?? I would really like to know more about this but as a sub for just the day I really only know what's in the notes- nothing about it there!- and from what I might pick up from other teachers, but I didn't want to be nosy. Oh well, some things just remain mysteries.

Until tomorrow then. Time for me to sleep...

That time of year

Today was the day for my yearly review at work. In the past, I've dreaded these conversations with my supervisors. I'm never quite sure why, since in all my years working, my reviews have never dropped below a good review. I've even had some outstanding reviews. Now in my old age, or maybe after

all the years I've had on the job, I don't really pay much attention to the whole review process. Yes, I'll make my views known, and I will listen to any constructive criticism my supervisor has, but that is all I get out of it. I don't get super excited about excellent reviews, or down over the just good reviews. I imagine the only review that would bother me is a poor review, and I would hope I see that one coming before it happens. If I don't see it coming than I deserve the poor review.

I think another part of not paying too much attention to the whole review process, is that for the past 4 years, I haven't had my sounding board. I would talk with my wife about my self review and then again after the supervisor's review. This made the review, and my input to it more real (if that makes any sense??) This lack of discussion with someone who really knew me makes the whole thing seem like a dream. Maybe so, but then some of the last four years has a dreamlike quality (mostly the nightmare type). Such is life. After typing this, I feel that this may be a big part of my current feelings.

In case anyone is interested, I had a good review.

A Day of Mini

Finally the snow has stopped (quick, where is some wood for knocking?!? Our snowblower has been put away, which is enough of a jinx, but add a comment like the above, and I'm asking for trouble!), and the weather is finally being cooperative enough for some outdoor fun. So this weekend had us taking in the first mini-golf game of the season with friends. Unless, of course, you count the mini-golfing we did in Florida in

January, but I don't count that since in Florida the mini-golf is more like a distraction to the lizards hopping around the course and the captive alligators you can feed at our favorite mini-golf place in Orlando.

I did not do very well this weekend. Of the four of us actually playing (the kids futzed about the course), I came in last. I will blame it on my pregnancy bump – it's getting quite large lately and is throwing off my balance, not to mention my stamina. I was distracted by looking for a bench to sit on after every hole. Yeah, that's it, I can't mini-golf while pregnant. Nevermind all the practice I got on my computer this winter (see previous mini-golf posts of mine where I have links to (mostly) cool computer versions of mini-golf), I just can't mini-golf while pregnant. Oh, just kidding, I've done it before, it's no big deal and not that much different, just gotta swing around the bump. I just lost because I was rusty, and I didn't take my time putting. Besides that, my husband did extra well this time, and he usually comes in last, so last place had to go to someone. I don't really care if I win or lose, for me, it's just about learning what the ball does in various situations, gaining that experience, and most importantly, having fun! I did win the mini-bowling we played afterwards though... I really want to get one of those for my basement. I've always liked bowling, and here is a way the physically impaired (as I am for a few months here) can still enjoy participating in the sport. Pipe dreams, of course... if I had that kind of money or space in my basement, I could think of a dozen better things to put down there... mostly animals...

But anyway, I looked for cool mini-golf shots on youtube, and I actually didn't see any... just a lot more people worse at mini-golf than I am who don't even realize it. But I did come across this pretty cool contraption at a mini-golf course in Colorado, check it out:

No Country For Old Men... When There's Yet ANOTHER Fog Day!!!

We stayed up late watching the Oscar winning movie, ["No Country for Old Men"](#) last night, so when the phone rang at 6 am this morning, my husband was overjoyed about the fog delay. I did not hear the phone at 6, nor did I hear the follow-up call at 8 saying school was cancelled for the day. I was up by 8:30, since that is the time we have our alarm set and my biological clock won't let me sleep past then for fear the alarm won't work and we'll be late for school. My husband was shutting off the alarm when I said, "We can't sleep too long cuz Disney has a doctor appointment at 9:30. Look at all those delays on the tv for Toledo. Wonder how we got spared?" Turns out, we did not, I just didn't hear the phone ringing and Hubby was wondering why I was taking it so well that we couldn't sleep in after all. I don't understand why it is that every time we have a doctor appointment scheduled for the morning, we have either a school delay or cancellation, meaning we can't sleep in even if we wanted to. And of course on these days, the kids always sleep in, whereas on the weekends, they're up at their usual 7am wake-up-for-school time. So now, they have yet ANOTHER day they have to make up in the summer, which brings them to July by now? Dunno, I've lost track.

And today's fog cancellation means we had to drag the entire family into the doctor's office for our 18 month-old's checkup – which did not go well. Remember how I said the kids were going to sleep in today? That means our 3-year-old, who is a stinker anyway, was not ready to get up, so she screamed from

the time she was dragged out of bed until we got called into the doctor's office. So of course, the chain reaction was set into motion. Seeing big sis so upset made Disney upset, and now she was screaming about everything the poor nurse and doctor were doing to her. All painless stuff too that normally would not have been a problem – SCREAM, measure her head (46.7 cm), SCREAM, measure her length (32.5 in. – tall for her age), SCREAM, weigh her (22 lbs. 14 oz. – normal for her age, but a little on the skinny side because she is long), SCREAM, look into her ears, SCREAM, have her walk across the room to Mom and Dad... well, actually, walk to big sis Taylor since she was upset with Mom and Dad for being accomplices to all the other horrors in the doctor's office. When it was finally over, she was better, and in the end, she didn't want to leave because she was really happy with a toy they had in the waiting room she was playing with while I was making her next torture date, err appointment. The good news is that Disney is exhausted from being so upset all morning, so I should get my nap today while she takes one... hopefully.

Also, staying up late last night to watch the Oscar winning movie was regrettable. I just didn't get it. I think I understood the movie, but not why it won 4 academy awards and got nominated for a bunch more. I liked other Coen Brothers movies too – [Fargo](#) is really good, but this one was not very good in my opinion, and my husband agreed. Just a story about a man who stumbles upon a crime scene and finds a ton of money, then he spends the rest of the movie trying to outrun the psychopath who is chasing him down for the money. I was pleasantly surprised to see [Tommy Lee Jones](#) in this movie, because I didn't know he was going to be in it and I always enjoy his work – from Two-Face in the 3rd Batman movie, [Batman Forever](#) to [Men in Black](#), to [Volcano](#) and [The Fugitive](#), he's a pretty good actor and always fun to watch – even in this movie, which I would officially classify as a waste of time. Sure, it wasn't nearly as bad as the other stinkers I've seen lately, like [the Night Listener](#) or [Doomsday](#), the standard bad

movies that I judge all bad movies by, but that's only because it wasn't as boring as the former and not as gory as the latter. Academy award winning movies are always a hit-or-miss as far as I'm concerned. I used to write them off, but when I started giving them a chance, I've actually enjoyed some, such as the aforementioned Fargo and [As Good as it Gets](#), to name a few. Now that I think of it, Coen brothers' movies are kind of hit and miss also. [Ladykillers](#) was just ok, Fargo was very good, [Big Lebowski](#) was average, I didn't care much for [O Brother Where Art Thou](#), and I'll have to see [Raising Arizona](#) again since it's been awhile, and I didn't realize it was a Coen brothers movie.

I think I will skip the other Oscar winners from 2007 – seemed like a slow year. I might be more open to nominees from other years past though... a friend borrowed us [Walk the Line](#), the Johnny Cash biopic. I'm not a huge [Reese Witherspoon](#) fan, but I do like Johnny Cash. Been trying to get Hubby to watch it with me, though I'm as yet unsuccessful even though he admitted we should have watched it last night instead of No Country for Old Men. Oh, well, now we have some Oscar-winning-film watching experience under our belt for future reference. YES – the baby is down for a nap, think I'll join her... and a side effect of the fog day, actually a GOOD one – no need to wake from my nap by 3:30 to pick up kids! Now if only the older 2 can settle down for an hour or more to give me peace and quiet...

Hey Rocky Watch Me Pull A

Rabbit Out Of My Hat

There have been several one-night open and close flops on the Broadway stage. Some of these include a revival of George M. Cohan's [Little Johnny Jones](#) (starring Donny Osmond); the more recent [Dance of the Vampires](#); and quite famously, the musical based on the Stephen King novel [Carrie](#). Apparently, there is another such production that is such a stinker that it is the show by which all stinkers must be compared : *Moose Murders*.

For a history and brief synopsis of the show and a recent 25th anniversary revival of sorts follow the link:

[A Broadway Flop Again Raises Its Antlers](#)

After reading the article, I noticed several signs that the show was doomed after its opening night performance. The opening night cast party at Sardi's was vacated after dessert was served. One party goer gave a two word review of the show to its creator Arthur Bicknell ("the worst"). Mr. Bicknell spent the rest of the night drinking, talking with friends, and taking in a midnight drag show (NOW THAT'S DEPRESSING!!!! Who else would take in a drag show after a GOOD opening... or after a bad one for that matter?). Before going to bed the next morning, he walked by the [Eugene O'Neill Theatre](#) to find that the set was being unloaded from the stage. If none of the other occurrences had tipped him off...

Family, Fun and Charlie Brown

One of the things I remember from my childhood, is reading the comic strips of Charles M. Shultz. The Peanuts strip. I read them in the paper, I read them in book form. At one point I even had a Snoopy dressed in a space suit. To this day I will

occasionally pick up and re-read one of the books I have, or put in a video of one of the seasonal specials. My wife and I had both liked the Peanuts Characters. And now, I assume my children like them too.

Today with family I saw a theater production of "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown". This is the second time I saw this show. The first was over 25 years ago when I was in College. My roommate played the part of Snoopy. Seeing this show with my youngest daughter, my dear wife's parents and sister, and a young niece was a trip to the past for me.

For those of you who don't know the show, it is a full musical filled interspersed with "panels" almost straight from the funny pages. Of the show I saw 25 years ago, the only thing I could remember was the "Suppertime" song that Snoopy sang. My roommate was blessed with a very fine singing voice, and wonderful acting ability. He was one human who could make you believe he was a dog. Not just any dog, but the one and only WWI flying Ace beagle. The Snoopy of today's show at the point of "Suppertime" had me re-living that one short segment of my life. Good memories.

As good as the show was, the best part was seeing and being with family. My In-laws are some of the best people I know. Not always perfect, but who is? For my children reading this, of course I know who is perfect. That was a rhetorical question. Back to the family... In the years after my wife's death, I have come to appreciate the good relationship that I developed with them over the years. So many times people treat there spouses family as outsiders. I tried to treat my wife's family as my own, and I hope they treat me the same. When I got married so many years ago, my wife and I decided that we would accept both families as our own. That didn't mean there was always smooth sailing. There were many "disagreements" between various members, but I bicker with my natural family, why should the same go on with the in-law side. The point here is that even today, four years after the death of a wife,

daughter, sister, and aunt they are still my family, and that my friends is something to be happy about.

It's Just A Flesh Wound, Honestly

Tuesday night's American Idol will feature the finalists performing the music of Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber. I really do not have a problem with this per se. However, I do recall on several occasions when the judges have commented that a contestants performance is better suited for the Broadway stage and not what would make a good money-making pop star. To me, the finalists should be well versed in multiple genres of music. Why should they appeal to only screaming, teenage fans? There are other outlets for people with some degree of musical talent.

There have actually been attempts to integrate musical theatre songs into the realm of "popular" culture. In the late 70s, the soundtrack from the movie *Grease* generated several songs which were popular hits. In the late 90s, the British boy band Boyzone had a modest US hit with the song "No Matter What" from Webber's [*Whistle Down the Wind*](#).

Recently, former American Idol contestants have also gone on to appear on the musical stage. Third season champion Fantasia Barrino was cast as Celie in [*The Color Purple*](#). In January 2008, second season runner-up Clay Aiken joined the cast of [*Spamalot*](#) as Sir Robin.

While the music of the theatrical stage may not appeal to everyone, it will be very interesting to see the American Idol contestants takes on the songs of Andrew Lloyd Webber. They

may introduce audiences who would otherwise steer clear from the genre or one of them may become tomorrow's Broadway star.

Happiness Is...

Going waaaaaay off on a tangent, I believe that my first acting gig was in the first grade as a balloon salesman who had one line: "Balloons for sale! BALLOONS FOR SALE!!! Red and YELLOW AAND GREEN BALLOONS!!!" And the finale was a ditty entitled "H-A-double P-I-N-E-double S." But that is not what this post is about.

Friday evening I had the opportunity to take my four-year-old niece to see a production of [*You're a Food \(Er... GOOD... sorry\) Man Charlie Brown*](#). Happily, she was a very good audience member.

The musical is a fun vignette of scenes featuring the main characters of Charles Schultz immortal comic strip "[Peanuts](#)." We have the siblings Lucy and Linus; the Beethoven fanatic Schroeder; little Sally; and of course the well meaning, though perpetually insecure title character. However, the star of the show is the scene-stealing beagle, Snoopy. Whenever the canine is on stage, the action seemed much more alive, energetic, and fun. Whether he was aboard his trusty Sopwith Camel as the World War I flying ace in search of the dasterdly Red Baron, simply chasing rabbits, or singing the praises of his favorite time of day: "Suppertime," the actor totally exemplified the exuberance of Joe Cool.

Another fun scene is "Book Report" in which Charlie Brown, Lucy, Schroeder, and Linus all attempt to compose a report on Beatrix Potter's classic story "Peter Rabbit." Each character at times in solo and at other times in a quartet, gives voice

to the words they are formulating on paper.

The set of the show was also very well imagined. The trees, doghouse, fence, big comfy couch, etc. were all constructed in such a way that the comic strip was brought to brilliant life. While in the dogfight (HAHAHA) with the Red Baron, Snoopy's giant doghouse actually moved up and down just enough to give the illusion of flight. The only thing missing, according to the critical eye of a four-year-old, was the sun and clouds.

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown is a fun show for all ages. Although I was not sure how a young girl would act during the performance, I was actually glad that I was able to take her.

What's wrong with this picture?



I thought the passing mention of Mr. Gore's inconvenient half-truth last post would be all I had to say on this topic. That was before I came across this little news item. Apparently Time magazine has taken it upon themselves to compare global warming to World War II. And to do so, they took an icon of WWII and changed it to replace the U.S. flag with a tree. This gaffe is enraging veterans everywhere, and rightly so. They had no right modifying such a sensitive image as the one showing the hard work our soldiers put in (and heavy death toll they suffered) at Iwo Jima and elsewhere in the war to keep our freedoms alive. Just click on the picture to read more about this atrocity.

P.S. While I don't believe in the accuracy of the global

warming effects we are being force fed, there is definitely something going on. Polar ice caps have been melting among other things. I am just highly skeptical we can do anything about it. Yes, all the carbon emissions we put out are having an effect on our lives- after all CO and CO2 are poisonous to our bodies. We used to simply call this pollution. Now we are trying to pass draconian laws that will bankrupt us with the expense before it has any significant effect on the carbon monoxide/dioxide levels in our atmosphere.