

Out Of The Mouths Of 1st Graders

I find it truly fascinating when I discover little tidbits about today's youth. Recently, a first grade teacher quizzed her students on proverbial phrases. She began by handing each of her 26 pupils a slip with half of a popular saying and asked them to complete it. I was amazed at the number I did not know....

1. Don't change horses.....until they stop running
2. It's always darkest before..... Daylight Saving Time (true)
3. You can lead a horse to water but.....How?
4. Don't bite the hand that.....looks dirty (very wise)
5. If you lie down with dogs, you'll.....stink in the morning (don't know that one)
6. An idle mind is.....the best way to relax (don't I know it)
7. Where there's smoke there's.....pollution
8. Happy the bride who.....gets all the presents (what about the groom?)
9. A penny saved.....is not much (so true... and won't get you much gas for your car, either)
10. Two's company, three's.....the [Musketeer's](#)
11. Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and.....you have to blow your nose
12. There are none so blind as..... Stevie Wonder (surprised 1st graders know who Stevie Wonder is)
13. Children should be seen and not.....spanked or grounded
14. When the blind lead the blind.....get out of the way
15. A bird in the hand.....is going to poop on you (HAHAHA)

I came across this insightful tidbit while glancing at our copy of "Now Hear This" the newsletter from [Kenwood Hearing](#)

[Center](#) in Toledo, Ohio.

Wall-E World

No, I am not talking about Wal-Mart. This summer's Pixar release is called *Wall-E*. I know very little about it other than it concerns a robot. Apparently, reaction to the concept and promotional tools has prompted talk of a remake of another masterpiece concerning a robot. That fantastic tale of Number Johnny 5 in *Short Circuit* (and its sequel).

For the uninitiated, [Short Circuit](#) stars Steve Guttenberg and Ally Sheedy. The real star of the movie is a military prototype robot that is struck by lightning thereby giving the machine human personality. While on the run from his military masters, Number 5 is taken in by an animal loving peace fanatic. The robot immerses himself in culture primarily found through the television. He develops an affinity for The Three Stooges and learns to dance like John Travolta by watching *Saturday Night Fever*. The robot and his friend attempt to convince his creator and the entire military that he in fact is alive.

Although, it is cheesy and the special effects are quite dated. *Short Circuit* is good fun. "You're mama was a snowblower."

Put A Dime In the Jukebox

It may cost more nowadays to play a song on a jukebox (think the last time I played one it cost a quarter). Which brings me to another trend in musical theatre of the past few years: the jukebox musical. These are shows which include songs from artists from other genres: country, pop, rock and roll, etc. Music from artists such as Elvis Presley, Billy Joel, Patsy Cline, Frankie Valli and the 4 Seasons, the Beach Boys, and Johnny Cash have each had their music be the focal point of stage shows. [Smokey Joe's Cafe](#) was a Broadway hit which brought the Mike Stoller and Jerry Lieber songbook to the stage. Songs such as "Jailhouse Rock," "Yakety Yak," "Charlie Brown," and 36 others are the focal point of the musical revue.

An attempt was made to set the tunes of Elvis Presley to an original story. *All Shook Up* probably would have done better if it had something to do with the king of rock and roll or at least staged one of his better movies (many of which are better left forgotten).

Perhaps the best known jukebox musical is *Jersey Boys*. The turbulent history of the 1960s pop music group Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons is told through many of its greatest hits ("Big Girls Don't Cry," "Sherry," "Walk Like A Man," and several others. *Jersey Boys* was the recipient of four 2006 Tony Awards; is still playing strong at the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway; and has touring companies throughout the U.S. and other countries, including Australia.

So... the next time you are playing a game and the question is asked; "What kind of music makes you want to get up and sing?" be careful. Broadway music may now have more than one meaning.

How Many Of Me

I recently received an email which directed me to a site where you can find out how many people in the United States share your name. I thought that it would be fun to discover just how many lucky people shared my name. To my shock, there was not a single person who has my name. That is exactly what the result was "There are 0 people in the United States who have that name." That is strange, I have had that name for the last 34 years 8 months and some odd days. I knew I was unique but did not know I was THAT unique.

Subject: How Many Are There of ME????

This activity is fun to do! Be sure to add your name to the bottom of this list.

Go to this web site <https://www.howmanyofme.com/>

Put in your first and last name and see how many people in the USA have your name as well.

After me just put your name and results below like I did. MAKE SURE YOU ONLY WRITE HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE THE SAME EXACT NAME.

Send the message to your friends and remember to SEND IT BACK TO ME so I can see how the list is growing!

1. There are 41 people in the US named Debbie Pugh.
2. There are 36 people in the U.S. named Kesha Davis.
3. There are 274 people in the U.S. named Evelyn Arnold.
4. There are 292 people in the U.S. named Rose Burns.
5. There are 72 people in the U.S. named Terri Gilbert.
6. There is only 1 person in the U.S. named Jenniffer Kinney.
7. There are 33 people in the U.S. named Esther Good

8. There is only 1 person in the US named Rhonda Erway.
9. There are only 2 people in the U.S. named Joyce Antes.
10. There are 9 of us in the U.S. named Thomas Swartout.
11. There are 12 'females' with the name Debbie luther.
12. There are 4,461 people named Patricia Martin (oh my!).
13. There are 1,150 ppl in the U.S. named Kelly Walker (Kelly Daw-4).
14. There are 18 people in the US with the name Tiffany Zimmer.
15. There are 97 people in the US with the name Donna McGhee.
16. There are 1318 people in the US with the name Donna Phillips.
17. There are 3859 people in the US with the name Richard Phillips.
18. There are 2 people in the US with the name of Karla LaPlante.
19. There are 36 people in the US with the name Colleen McLaughlin.
20. There are 2,962 people in the US with the name Mary Murray.
21. There are 77 people in the US with the name Dianne Murray.
22. There are 10 people in the US with the name Susan Addy.
23. There 186 people in the US with the name Cheryl Caldwell.
24. There are 37 people in the US with the name Lisa Lea.
25. There are 337 people in the US with the name Cathy Nelson.
26. There only one person in the U.S. named Lea Sikora.
27. There are 1,010,592 people in the U.S. named Betty Smith
28. There are 33 people in the U.S. named Mary

Blakeley.

29 There are 9,047 people in the U.S. named Mary Lewis.

30. There are 487 people in the U.S. named Charles Grimes.

31. There are 13 people in the U.S. named Debra Fenn.

32. There are 593 people in the U.S. named Jill Harris.

33. There are 931 people in the U.S. named Anne Thompson.

34. There is only 1 person in the U.S. named Aletha Shell.

35. There are only 35 people in the U.S. named Shelly Rhodes.

36. There are only 1 person in the U. S. named Valorie Rouse

37. There are 140 people in the U.S. named Beth Griffin

38. There are 143 people in the U.S. named Wilma Jenkins

39. There are 1,081 people in the U.S. named Louise Anderson

40. There is 1 person in the U.S. named Treasure Wasdin

41. There are 3,777 people in the U.S. named Patricia Clark

42. There are 22 people in the U.S. named Courtney Mercer

43. There are 20 people in the U.S. named Clarissa Jenkins

44. There is 1 person in the U.S. named Mikel Bean

45. There are 26 people in the U.S. named Lee Street

46. There are 1 person in the U.S. named Renea Durrence

47. There are 51 people in the U. S. named Sandy Lane

48. There are 15 people in the U. S. named Sondra Lane

49. There are 3 people in the U.S. named Yolonda Hart

50. There are 35 people in the U.S. named Sharon Alderman.

51. There are 10 people in the U.S. named Leslie

Hutchens.

52. There is 1 person in the U.S. named Niki Mainer.

53. There are 8 ppl in the US named Lucy Brinson.

54. There are 35 people in the U. S. named Jan Bowen.

55. There are 4 people in the U.S. named Lisa Ruffo.

56. There is 1 person in the U.S. named Sheri Harshman.

57. There are 29 people in the U.S. with the name Cathy Holder.

58. There are 204 people in the U.S. with the naem Renee Richardson.

59. There are 77 people in the United States with the name Heather Gamble

60. there is 1 person in the united states named charnel hazelton

Food Chain Gang

I should probably explain where the title of my blog comes from. It's actually a title I picked out years ago as I was musing while doing housework one day. I thought, a story about our household should be called, "The Food Chain Gang". At the time, we had a few more pets than we have now, completing the chain. Back then, we were the happy owners of 2 dogs, a cat, a parrot, and a little marsupial (animal with a pouch, like a kangaroo) called a sugar glider. The sugar glider and the cat have since crossed the "Rainbow Bridge" which some people call pet heaven. And, if you're a regular reader, you've read that we've added a new dog to our family in the last month. But the new dog doesn't exactly complete a food chain, so I just felt the need to explain why my blog is called "My Food Chain Gang" even though we are down to 3 dogs

and a parrot.

As an animal lover, I would love to add even more pets to our menagerie, however, it's just not practical right now. We have 1 dog with some terrier (terror!) in her, Jack Russell to be exact, and she will "hunt" any kind of small animal we bring into the house. So, my dreams of owning a rat or 2 or 3 will have to wait at least a few years, hopefully more, since the "Jerk" Russell mix is only called that in jest – she is our baby. My husband and I adopted her before we were married and before the kids were born. And before you judge me, do the research – rats actually make very good pets! Unlike many of their rodent cousins; hamsters, gerbils and the like, rats are actually pretty clean, very smart, and they are even friendly and cuddly!

Since I already mentioned wanting a rat, which many people think is a crazy pet, it should be no surprise when I say with sincerity that if I didn't have small children, I would have a pet alligator. Again, a little bit of research will tell you that alligators are almost nothing like (in behavior) their fellow crocodilians. They are actually quite docile and easier to handle than you would think ***if you know what you're doing of course*** – stress that point. I know some about handling alligators, though I've only held small to medium sized ones, and I have never even owned a reptile, so needless to say, this is not an option for me right now... but maybe someday!

I would also like a tortoise, but with 4 kids, 3 of which will be under the age of 5, I do enough cleaning up around the house as it is – don't need a tank to clean! Plus, we are very lucky to be able to afford some mini-vacations now and then, and any more responsibilities for the pet sitter might put her over the edge ☐

I have always wanted a goat, and now that we live in the country, I can see how easy it is to get one – you can just

open up the paper, call a number and buy a goat. But I don't think the neighbors would appreciate what our lawn would look like. Something tells me our quiet residential neighborhood near the heart of the downtown of the city would not be a good place to house a goat.

I would love another cat someday, but I'm allergic. And it all but broke my heart when I lost my beloved cat earlier this year... I felt very guilty that I couldn't really pet her or spend time with her as much as I (and she) wanted because of my allergies.

And talking about cheap farm animals reminds me of another realization I had after moving to the country – baby chicks and ducks are really cute AND very cheep, err inexpensive! But again, our Jerk Russell would just try to eat any kind of animal like that. She STILL likes to hunt the parrot when he flies in the house, even though he's taken a nip at her more than once with his huge beak!

And I would LOVE my own parrot – I've always wanted an African Grey, ever since I was really little and read a wonderful book by the same guy who wrote the movie, "The Water Horse". The author is Dick King-Smith, and his book, "Harry's Mad" is just a wonderful story for kids about a boy and his pet parrot. But while I'm on the subject of parrots, let me talk for a minute about pets NOT suitable for families. Parrots sure are beautiful animals, and they're lots of fun when they talk, laugh, and imitate, but they are also very moody and unpredictable. Most are not cuddly, and if they are, it's usually only with one person in the household, and they will resent every other person who gets in their way. Which is what happened with our parrot – he has bonded to Daddy, that's his "mate", and the rest of us cannot touch him, OR ELSE we have to deal with the rath of a beak that is strong enough to snap a broomstick in HALF! Parrots are VERY loud – and there is no relief from their noise. Their scream can rattle your eardrum, and is almost always guaranteed to make a small child

cry. And, they scream to have fun! It's not just when they are upset or want something, so if you think you'll be able to quiet a screaming parrot, guess again! Luckily, ours is about to celebrate his 7th year with us, so through lots of growing pains, we've learned how to make it work in our house. Parrots can also be very dangerous, so just like any other animal, kids need to have constant supervision around parrots. Overall, as the owner of a parrot, I would HIGHLY recommend another pet choice to anyone with kids in the house.

I wouldn't recommend a sugar glider as a pet either. Ours was "used" – we actually found her at a garage sale – and that is a testament to how often people think it'd be cool to have one of these only to decide later they're too much work. They are intelligent, social animals, so they require lots of attention. However, they are also nocturnal, so you have to be available at night to take them out of their cage to play. Light will actually damage their eyes, so taking them out at night in a specially under-lit room is required. They can be nippy, smelly (they excrete an odor to mark their territory), and can even make loud noises all night that keep you awake. And they require a special diet of fresh fruits and vegetables also, which can be inconvenient and expensive.

So anyway, now that I've recommended all the pets that AREN'T good for families, I would say that the standard dog or cat IS great for families. Obviously, there is a lot to take into consideration when shopping for one of these, and I won't go into that this time... if you really need some good advice about why humane societies are a better choice than pet stores and what to look for while choosing a pet, see my previous post called, "3's a Crowd?".

So, now you know where the title "My Food Chain Gang" came from. Maybe someday, I will add to the chain and have a real zoo to call my own. But for now, I will stick with the gang we have – everybody knows their place in the chain and gets along great!

Trouble spelled C-U-T-E

Disney, our youngest-for-now, got into some trouble today. She went “missing” for about 10 minutes while I was making lunch, so I started thinking to myself, hmmm, she must have fallen asleep somewhere. So, I went to search for her and found this:



I went to the store and bought some toilet paper today. I had it on the stairs waiting to go up, and apparently she found it and thought it would be fun to play with. It was no big deal, as far as how much trouble toddlers usually get into. And, when I think about it now, the fact that I thought she was sleeping when she was “missing” really says a lot about what kind of baby, err, toddler she is. When my middle

child was that age, if she went “missing” and the house was actually quiet, we knew there was going to be REAL trouble – and there always was. Our middle child went through a – how to put this eloquently – a ‘playing with poop’ phase. She would wake up in her crib, take off her diaper, and paint with the contents of her diaper, all while we thought she was still asleep so there was little we could do to intervene before it happened. We even had to postpone opening Christmas presents one year because we had a huge poopie painted mess to clean up before we could see what Santa brought. Good thing big sis was really patient about that one. Our oldest child, Taylor, was kind of like Disney as a baby – never any real trouble. In fact, she also had a toilet paper incident – see flashback photo below, note the stream of toilet paper behind her:



So anyway, Disney is a very sweet and mild-mannered child. In fact, she really likes to play with my glasses and my Chicago Cubs hat, but she will only ask (yes, that’s right, she asks) to play with them when I’m not wearing

them. And unrolling toilet paper is her idea of trouble – for now anyway. She is nearing 2, so I am anticipating more trouble from her, but so far, this is it. I just hope kids don't come in any sort of behavior pattern. Meaning, our first and third have been exceptionally good, our second is a HANDFUL (putting it mildly), so the fourth would be...

I'm not going to jinx us... we're hoping for the best. I don't know if I can handle another poop player!

Important Car Shopping Tip

We bought a new car back in November, and we're very happy with it. But I have to admit, there is a feature I forgot to check when car shopping – how is the reception for WGN radio AM 720? Translation: will I be able to catch the Cubs games being broadcast all the way from Chicago?!?

Luckily for me, the answer is yes! Since baseball season was over when we bought the car, it didn't occur to me to check for this very essential feature in a vehicle. But today, the radio's ability was tested because as the family errand-runner, the only way for me to be able to catch any of the Cubs game was in the car between picking up kids from school, taking them to and from piano lessons, the library, etc. Not only did the Cubs game come in, but it was even better than the lousy reception our old Ford mini-van picked up last year.

So BOOLYAH! Now I am even happier with the new car and also ecstatic that I got to hear the Cubbies avoid a series sweep by the Milwaukee Brewers today. To quote Harry Caray, CUBS WIN! And to quote a friend named Morat, Everyone Wins! Ok, everyone wins who doesn't drive a Ford that is...

□

Strange thinking..

I kind of follow the political news. I try to stay on top of scientific news. I'm very confused when the two of those collide.

The biggest collision of politics and science in my mind is global warming. Governments all over the world, and of course the United Nations are trying to "solve" global warming. Jumping over any science that is actually happening. With this scientists on both sides of the debate are getting very political on their views. Me, I want to talk about the science and leave any political views out of the picture. Feel free to comment on either picture.

Global warming – is it really happening? The best answer science has right now is.. Wait for it.... Maybe! That's right maybe! The past 20 years of weather data shows some warming, the past 10 years has been very stable. Hmm. Global warming simulation programs show that the warming of the planet will be increasing in the next 20 to 40 years. These same simulations can not use past information to determine the global average temperature in past years... Hmm again! There is a lot of science going on here and it all points to maybe. (at least for me)

Global warming – What causes it. Well until you actually determine that it is happening, you can't really say what is causing it can you? This is where the politics really gets going, so I'm not going there. Just for the science background, most of the heat on earth comes from 1 source, the Sun. Yes, there is planetary heat (think radioactive decay and volcanoes), and heat produced by man (burning all sorts of stuff and other things from our mechanical world), but that is

minimal. The thing to determine is how much heat comes from the sun, and how much is released back to space. If the heat in is more than the heat out, you have global warming. If you have more heat out than heat in, you have global cooling. If they are the same, well, you have steady temperatures. This will have to be measured for more than 10 – 15 years to determine if we are warming or cooling. As far as I know, nobody has these measurements. Big world, and it is hard to do, if not impossible with today's technology. So the talk about carbon footprints and greenhouse effect has no bearing on actual science known.

Global Warming – What can we do? Nothing and everything. Most things people come up with to actually combat the global warming are good to do. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle is scientifically a very good choice. There are a limited amount of resources available to us. While this may have effect on global warming, the best thing is using less, wasting less, and getting better value. By carbon credits? Doesn't do much except move your money to someone else. Not much science in that choice. Alternate fuels? That one is still up in the air as far as science goes. There are some good alt-fuels, some bad. We really need to check to see if the energy cost producing the fuel is less than the energy created. The science I see that may make the biggest impact in the next 10-20 years is [algae](#). Another is the new [Volt from GM](#)

One final thought, remember when it comes to weather forecasting: This is one of the few jobs where you can be wrong 50% of the time and still have a job.

Just a laid-back day

I was a substitute today, but hardly a teacher. As middle school science goes, all the classes were the same unlike a subject such as math where there are usually different levels taught or a foreign language where different grades are taught. I pretty much just announced a pending notebook check and then let them continue on their projects which they started yesterday. That is to say, they already knew what they were doing so I didn't even get to go over that. Ah, well. Mostly I just sat and watched them work, periodically cycling around the room to remind them of my presence and to help out if needed. Fortunately so I didn't expire from boredom, some did need my help from time to time.

This went on for six. long. periods. But it could have been worse. At least I was in a district where most of the kids had a work ethic. Some schools I have been in have had a large number of kids with a goof-off-while-the-teacher-is-away ethic instead.

Well, language arts tomorrow at another middle school. Until then.

Will your child graduate?

The answer we all want for this question is of course a resounding yes (I hope :P). However, if you live in an urban environment the statistics show that his or her chances are lower than if they live in the surrounding suburbs, at least for most of the 50 largest cities. Chicago, for example, has a 55.7% graduation rate while the Chicago suburbs are at 84.1%. Two Ohio cities have more drastic statistics with

Cleveland at 42.2% vs. 78.1% and Columbus being 40.9% vs. 82.9%, and Baltimore, Md. has the largest gap at 34.6% vs. 81.5% for its suburbs! However, at the other end of the scale your child is about 10% more likely to graduate in the city of Colorado Springs (83.7%) than its surrounding suburbs (73.5%). Click the link for rest of the 50 largest cities.

['Crisis' graduation gap found between cities, suburbs](#)