

Surprises of various kinds



This week certainly had some surprises, starting off on Monday morning. Having been extremely lucky, or so I thought, with a five-day assignment in 4th grade, I was a little surprised when the phone rang early Monday. Uh-oh. Yep, job canceled. It seems the school decided to use "one of their own" since it was more than a few days- lucky me. Fortunately the district is good enough to substitute any jobs on hand at the time when they cancel a job, so I was able to pick up two days that way, but not the half-day that was offered for that afternoon- seems the offer is for a short time only. So, I was up early on Monday and no longer with a job for the day so I started doing my rounds.

This leads to the next part of the story. Remember when I mentioned a problem with a certain district? Well, I called last week and was told that there was no problem with my account that would prevent my seeing jobs for them so I was ready to call the sub system company this week to see what their thoughts were about why weeks went by without seeing jobs for the district. During the rounds a full-day job in this district popped up and even surprised as I was I took it immediately before seeing what it was. 8th grade LD/BD. Well, it wasn't fourth grade but it was a full day so a nyah-nyah to the other district's offered replacement half-day that I didn't get ☐. As it turned out, I would have to be there in just over a half-hour so I was off to speedily get ready. I made it, barely. It was actually a great day. The first period- very quiet, the students seemed to be working. Second period same thing? These were LD/BD 8th graders?? I certainly couldn't complain. These were the only two periods I had by myself too. All other periods I helped in a mainstream classroom- 1½ language arts blocks with another sub and a math period. I would sub for this teacher again in a

heartbeat.

Did I mention the one district gave me two days for the price of five (figurative- not five days of pay for working two!)? I guess I had better correct that to the real offer- one day, not two as when I got home I discovered one of the jobs was canceled like the original, at the same school no less. This makes me very wary of taking another job at this school in the future. I was so concerned I worried that my Tuesday jobs (two half-days at the same school in neighboring classrooms) would be canceled as well. If this were not a different school they may very well have, but come Tuesday morning there was no call, and when I got there the jobs were perfectly valid- I bring this point up because one time in this district a couple of years ago I showed up for a job only to find a very surprised teacher who had not requested the day off- turned out some student was able to get into the system and did some messing around. So there I was, ready for a day in classrooms with autistic kids. Not a problem, as long as the assistants in the room weren't subs too. I have had that happen too- that day was not easy. Two regular staff members camped out that day in the room to give the kids familiar faces which autistic kids really need. Fortunately, I was the only sub. For the most part this day went fine. The teachers were even there, just pulling kids out for testing. The biggest problem was during the morning. As you already know from my previous post, putting a hand in front of the face of an unwilling autistic learner can lead to consequences. I was reaching in front of this girl to point out something on the paper and apparently she gave in to the animal instincts we sometimes have and bit into my thumb. Well, that was the end of working with her. Good thing she didn't break my skin or I would have had to get some treatment just in case. The other kids were more willing to do the assignment. In the afternoon I did some one-on-one again for math, but there were no incidents here. One of the kids was actually more of a two-on-one because a concerned assistant stayed to make sure the

boy worked okay with me.

So that was Tuesday. Wednesday I was surprised again. I had no job lined up again, so once again I was up early looking. Surprise- another job in that district that was dry for the last month or so came up again. Unfortunately for me it was a half-day for the afternoon. Not having anything else show up, I decided to keep it and use the extra time to catch up on some much-needed sleep. Nothing really to tell about this one. It was a school I hadn't been in before, but it was a subject I like, science. It was a good afternoon. After I got home I slept for another hour before drama rehearsal at night- the reason this post is dated today, not yesterday. One of my cast was missing (there are three casts for kids drama) and one poor boy was the sole member of his cast. At least they still let him rehearse, even if some of us stood in for the other members of his cast. Neither his cast nor mine perform for another six weeks or so though due to a long break for Eastertime.

It's official- summer is over

And mostly due to my laziness I am subbing once again, and that is good news for this blog. I have been on hiatus from this for too long. I still intend to have some posts of my life outside of teaching, but for a while I have just been turned off from writing during the best time those post would have fit. Well, to tell the truth my life outside of teaching really hasn't been too exciting. Remember back in June when I went to camp? Well, I am finally making the DVD I have done for my cabin for the last few years. I have two slideshows and a video finished, along with a video I borrowed from my DVD two years ago in which I just had to modify the end to fit

my more recent cabin. I have been using Ulead VideoStudio which I got free with this computer. It really is a nice program, and not ridiculously high-priced like some packages out there. Last year I used a 30-day demo of a \$250 DVD authoring package which was nice, but not worth that price in my opinion. Maybe \$100 like this one, but not \$250. I also used a slightly buggy freeware program to do one of the slideshows, and maybe another one. I haven't decided yet what to do about this last one to make it different enough from the first two. Well, I still have a week to put the DVD together before the next church time. This weekend is the last one of the month, so 4th and 5th grades don't meet.

As for subbing, I was actually able to get three half days during this first full week of many districts. Apparently the special ed meetings started right away. I could have had a fourth, but they called me after 8:00 to arrive there at 8:30. Well, I might have been able to do that if I was ready to go when they called, but since it was 25 minutes away and in fact I was woken up by the phone call, that wasn't going to happen. Besides, I had to take my car in that morning for a new muffler. Anyway, the three days I did have were pretty similar. They were all at different Junior Highs (that district doesn't call them middle schools) and were 8th grade, or a 7th/8th mix. Two of them were 7:15 AM jobs (too early!) but fortunately I got to sleep in for the last which was an "afternoon," starting at 10:45 AM. I didn't have to leave notes for two of them either, which is always nice, since the teachers came back. Surprisingly one of these times was the "afternoon" job. I guess she came back from her special ed meeting for the weekly school meeting. Since school started last Thursday in this district and the meetings are on Wednesdays after school, this may have been the first one which would probably make it important to attend. As for the other morning job, that teacher only teaches there in the morning, so I she wouldn't have come back. I would presume she teaches somewhere else in the afternoon.

All in all the three half-days went well. Hopefully I will have more work next week even if there is one day off for labor day. I am signed up again in three of the districts I worked in last year. The last was still on the hired subcaller system and barely called me so I switched them for another district that is computer-based so I have more of a chance for work. That is, I am still working on being signed up there, but that is for a rant in another post...

It's nice to not have to drive far...

When they say the average American is stuck in traffic (i.e. not moving or moving slowly, **not** the total commute) commuting to work 38 hours per year (nearly **double** that if you hail from L.A.) it is nice to have a short trip. In fact, this is a trip that I could easily walk if not for the heavy bag I carry. I suppose I could stick my stuff in a backpack, but that really wouldn't look very professional. In any event, coincidence gave me two half-day jobs- for two team teachers! From my understanding they did not coordinate this, but had to take off half-days for two different reasons. I literally walked through the wall to get to the other class. Okay, it was a collapsible wall that was partly open, but still. Both teachers taught 3rd/4th grade multiage and so I even saw some of the same students both morning and afternoon due to switching classes- they switched for spelling and math. It was a pretty pleasant day overall, in the top 15-20% of all my workdays. I just had to look around, because this is exactly the sort of thing I will see in June if I get to do camp again. What I mean is, combined 3rd/4th grades just graduated to 4th/5th. I would put up a video here of last year, but

since I am not their parent I don't think I can since I'm sure more than my friends read this even if they don't post (hint, hint!). Perhaps I can be persuaded to give a private viewing if asked though. Of course it's possible I already showed a couple of you the video last year, but not all. What, still with me? Go on, leave a comment already! ☐