

# St. Some Times

V236 NOVEMBER 2020



## Happy!

### ThanksGiving

US Thanksgiving is always a feast day, no matter where you are around the globe.



## QuailMary

Check it OUT!

Small bird and all the fixings. Just don't forget to properly attend it.

The Bird tips the cup!



# MANY BIRDS

Dave just doesn't do things half assed. He goes all the way. When I was "told" several days before turkey day that I would be attending Haigler ThanksGiving again for the fourth year in a row, I knew what to expect.

The feast starts with his recipes several days ahead of time. Even though he was in the desert on assignment, I'm sure Rachel (the nanny, maid, and Dave's Nigerian secret weapon in the kitchen) started out Dave's famous three day beans. Rachel is one of the only people Dave

Anyway, imagine not just one, but two authentic Butterball Turkeys. Yeah, life comes down to connections and who you know not what you know. Dave's Navy base connection came through this year. Of course, Roseanna got two more birds at the local Tamimi market, a feat in and of itself. Come on! Only four birds this year? Oh, I forgot the chickens. There must have been some chickens on the grill. This was a spectacular spread! Too bad I wasn't able to attend Days 2 and 3 of the feast. That's another part of the tradition. Come back

Imagine not just one...

but two authentic Butterball Turkeys, two more birds from a local grocery, a few chickens, three day beans, stuffing, bread, corn, and more, much more...!



confides some of his recipes in. Rachel broadens his flavor arsenal with Nigerian panache, so there is some sharing there. Of course, neither Rachel nor Dave will share the complete recipe with each other. I think they compartmentalize their recipes! Hah.

the next day or two. There is always more food.

Some day, I'll have to host a massive dinner event for all of the Haiglers - no cooking for David, Rachel, or Roseanna. Not allowed. Imagine. That will be fun and unexpected. Awesome.



# THANKSGIVING ON THE BEACH

*Judds and a Few other Families gather on the beach and include UG.*

There lies another encampment on the north side of the island. Behold a beach town. This is where my other family lives. The Judd/Schneider clan of blondie, Aryan, bundles of energy!

Matt called me up a few days leading up to turkey day and caught me by surprise. I totally forgot about Thanksgiving. The Canadians already had theirs. It's still Covidcation so life on the island is maddeningly standing still. We still work on every American Holiday unless the days happen to fall on a Friday or Saturday, the weekend days here. "Greg, come hang out on the beach with us for Thanksgiving!"

"Cool Matt. I have a commitment for the actual night of Thanksgiving Thursday (we had school, of course). But how about the weekend?"

Matt drove the 45minutes down with two of his sons and picked me up. I was waiting with Starbucks coffee and cheesy bread for the boys. And so it started. A weekend with the Judds.

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear "we'll have dinner out at the yacht club"? I immediately think of snazzy dress, champagne I don't drink, and white table cloths - perhaps some pelicans diving into the water for fish. Well, my mind still pictures such images, even after visiting the Judds on weekends over the past four plus years. Their "yacht club" is an empty building available to rent out and a handful of covered picnic tables right off the beach.

I should have brought something to share at the table. I had taken my pies to the Haiglers the night before. Crap. Not that Stacy or Matt really cared. I just should have been prepared to bring something to pass. There several other couples with their kids and a few single teachers. All of us teach for the same district, just different schools. These were friends of the Judds.

I fit right in. The time flew by. The next thing I knew, Crosby and Carew had snuck into the room at 6am to wake up "Uncle Gweg".



An educational technology product known for its Banana Piano, the MakeyMakey kit is an amazing foray into electronics and circuits. I've had two of my own MakeyMakey kits going on almost three years now. The school has purchased three education kits - that's 36 MakeyMakeys in total. The picture above is just one kit. Since we have three labs, we can have one kit in each Future Lab.

## ***An Early Christmas? Nope, our resources just arrived for the Labs.***

Last year, when the assistant principal started us on the path towards three tinkering labs, I was part of the preparation and resource ordering. I never thought we'd get the entire wish list.

We don't even have the labs ready, but now we have some of the resources. Get this....60 Lego WeDo 2.0 kits. Yes, 60. That is 20 per lab. They work with our Chromebooks now. I made sure of that before we ordered them. And so the list goes.

It's incredible. WeDos, Lego Mindstorms, Spheros, BeeBots, Duplos, StrawKits, KEVA Blocks, and some MakerCarts from TeacherGeek. Incredible. Just the

legos alone cost in the thousands of dollars. All eyes are going to be on us now. Money has been thrown at us and the spaces are unfinished but made.

Perhaps the most incredible new resource I have in my lab (we have in our three labs) is the TeacherGeek cabinet of goodies. It's like Grandpa got together with a shop teacher and my Swiss Mercedes Mechanic and put together a rolling cabinet full of "stuff" from Santa's workshop. Each cart is organized with nuts, bolts, screws, circuit wires, small tools, wood, plastic, bulbs, etc. Get the picture? So much to do. So little time.

# ALL EYES ON ME

Not only do I have a room twice the size of any other teacher besides art, there are hallway windows on three of my four walls. Everyone is and will be watching me closely.

Pressure is on. The windows have opened up the walls for everyone to see.

The first thing I did was start building. I spent mostly lunch hours putting together Lego sets, towers of straws, tinkertoy models, and 3D printing various little projects just to get the machines active. The windows became displays of awesomeness. Incoming parents and new students have been

paraded by the labs. The excitement is building up. The tiniest of our k4 kids have gotten a glimpse, but the majority of our students haven't seen the labs yet. We are at 50% capacity for covid and students are podded into their homerooms.

Soon, we will see the action. For now, between my two other jobs, I can explore the vast array of tinkering resources that arrived.



This panoramic picture is a bit deceiving, but the sheer size of the lab seems notable. I have a long way to go before this lab is ready for students. We still haven't bought furniture, finished the walls or electric, or received the entirety of our orders. Since students aren't going to Specialist classes yet, we still have a little bit of time to prepare our three new Future Labs for classes. Who knows when that will be. The unknown is lurking around every corner, along each day of our school calendar. No matter what, I will make this lab a showstopper!





# SORT CONUNDRUM

To **sort** or not to **sort**. The jury is out. Which is the better scenario? Let me walk you through my side of the **argument**.

I am a firm believer in students doing most of the work, especially tasks that will help them become more familiar with specific manipulatives. However, I have experience with students sorting the initial lego kits from bag to sort kit. In this case, the result is more work.

When all is sorted, I still have to go back through each kit so each of my students can start on the same step. If the kits are sorted the way I'd like them to be sorted all the time, students can THEN be held accountable. Start with the expectation. Continue with the expectation.

Some teachers just shake their heads when they go by my lab and see me sorting legos, straws, or tinker kits. I see it as a control for one, and two, as an opportunity to really KNOW the products. The more time I spend with the array of kits, the better prepared I am to coach my students.

When I teach math or reading, I am familiar with all of the problems and readings. I'm the version of teacher that has actually read the vast majority of the books my students read. Name it. I've probably read it. Same with my lab resources. My students will access projects I'm familiar with and grow from there.



## WEDO 2.0?

*I am getting paid to work with Legos again. This is the best career in the whole world. Too bad our labs aren't ready, the kids cannot safely come into specials, and covid is still rampant!*

It's been almost five years since the 2.0 version of WeDos were introduced. I ordered and worked extensively with the 1.0 version at TASIS, bought my nephew the 2.0 when they came out, and then came to the desert. Now, we have 60 sets that work with our Chromebooks and lots of eager students that cannot use them.

Who would've thought the product would be here before we could actually use them. I'm using this opportunity to put together as many projects as I can. Lunch, weekends, after school, sometimes between other tech duties. I have to sort them anyway. Why not explore and build them in preparation for classes? I guess I'll have to. Poor me.





Have you ever had NitroCoffee? I had my first one here with KP. She was driving us around and this is her "fav" coffee spot. Someone decided to infuse pressurized nitrogen bubbles into coffee and create a tasty coffee beverage that reminded me instantly of a Guinness. Served cold out of a canister with a tap and all! Who thought of this? Yummy.