Ameren Exhibit 5.5 (Part 2)
Page 1 of 4

# The joys of traveling and watching people turn into cows

*Jeff Vrabel is on vacation. Here's a classic column from the archives.*

I generally try to avoid writing about things like the repeated body blows of awfulness that befall you during an average visit to the airport, but having been absorbing CNN at My Bloody Valentine-level volumes for an hour, and also having just been hit in the leg with a skateboard, I'm giving myself a pass here.

JEFF VRABEL

I am not kidding when I say that my iPod is powerless to drown out the sheer force of Wolf Blitzer right now. I have also just learned that even when it's just to ask you to change your seat assignment to accommodate a family, having your name called over the loudspeaker immediately makes one think, "Oh, God, I'm being detained."

But this is actually not just an airport. This is Newark International Airport, which, in addition to being a really crowded airport, carries the added bonus of being in New Jersey.

I know I am in New Jersey because on the way here I sat next to the Most New Jersey Family Ever, a family so New Jersey I thought someone was shooting a movie around me, a family so New Jersey I'm pretty sure they were some of those fancy new actor robots from Japan.

The dad was a small mountain of leathery tan and cool hair and questionable man-jewelry; upon arrival onto the plane he attempted to jam basically a suitcase the size of my first apartment into the overhead compartment, and then grew predictably furious when the overhead compartment failed to reorient its molecular structure to stretch open enough to accept the massive bag.

He then gave up and started removing items from the bag with the sort of exasperating sigh/grunt that you might expect if someone told him he had to carry the plane on his back to Florida but seemed a little excessive when applied to luggage.

He spent the rest of the flight cursing loudly and hugging his kids in these weird, genuine displays of affection, and then would curse at the SkyMall. I tell you, these people were not real.

But that's how it goes. American airports are places where people absorb the tension of strict schedules, forced human interaction and terrible food courts and deal with the subsequent aggregate stress by turning, to some degree, into cows.

Well, that's not entirely true. When a cow hears the phrase, "Now boarding Section 1 only" and full well knew that he is a citizen of Section 2, the cow likely does not jump up and skitter over to the line in apparent belief that the plane will be airborne in the next 15 seconds.

I cannot for the life of me figure out this behavior pattern. We have all been to airports enough to realize that in the time between boarding call and actual takeoff you could probably get in a regulation NBA game, and yet people — mostly in oversized floral print things — sweat and panic and waddle to the gate as though it leads to the last spaceship leaving the planet before it's incinerated by the Death Star.

But that's once on the plane. Before the plane is the gate experience, which is where I am, enjoying a coffee and a muffin, which cost $37.50, and listening to both Wolf and the light and lilting tones of a harsh-looking woman barking reports into her phone about the back-pain situation of one of her acquaintances.

Is there a reason no one ever shouts anything good into a cell phone at an airport? Something like "My donation to the museum cleared today!" or "I'm going to be singing at the orphanage at 2 p.m.!" Why must it generally be about someone's medical problems, or the unprecedented lateness of the airport in which you're sitting?

But wait, hold on — the people on the loudspeaker just issued a call for someone named Fantastico. I listened twice to make sure it's real. Fantastico. Which actually has made this all worthwhile, as long as he's not getting detained.

I am looking all over this place for Fantastico right now. Where is this magical man? Fantastico can fly wherever Fantastico wants! Fantastico flies on an airplane made of unicorn wings and dark wood paneling! Wow. I really hope I'm on Fantastico's flight.

Airports are weird, they're little enclosed traps where people sit for hours and scribble things into notebooks but also have come to expect not just utter comfort and pampering, but an absence of even the most minor of life's little inconveniences, such as 10-minute takeoff delays having to wait a few minutes to board.

It is why I'm glad I have my iPod and can hide in my little notebook here and try to sneak away from the stress, and the people, except Fantastico, who, I imagine, isn't bothered in the least.

Jeff Vrabel is a writer who grows tired of asking this so it will be the last time: Where is the rebel base? He can be reached at jeffvrabel.com or followed at twitter.com/jeffvrabel.com.

**Please join us for an open house—because your input matters.**

The Fargo-Mapleridge Transmission Project will enhance reliability, provide capacity for future electric load growth and improve voltages in the Peoria area. Your opinion is vital as this initiative takes shape. At our open house, you can learn about the need for this new transmission line, share your thoughts on the best possible routes and get answers to your questions.

**American Legion**
**5 p.m. – 8 p.m., Monday, Aug. 13, 2012**
**4501 S. Airport Road, Bartonville, IL**

Learn more now at **FargoTransmission.com** or call **1.800.229.9280**.

FOCUSED ENERGY. For life.

Ameren ILLINOIS

"I told Clark to stay off that ladder."

"He should have called Gutter Helmet."

Let US clean your gutters for the last time!

BONUS COUPON

15% OFF

Gutter Helmet

INCLUDES FREE GUTTER CLEANING WITH PURCHASE

*Must present at time of demonstration. No other discounts or offers apply with this coupon. Not valid on prior purchases.

HURRY! SALE ENDS AUGUST 11, 2012

Gutter Helmet®

NEVER CLEAN YOUR GUTTERS AGAIN®

203 EASTGATE DRIVE • WASHINGTON

309-682-4600

www.illinoisgutterhelmet.com

PE-4289915

NOT THE TYPICAL REPLACEMENT WINDOW

*Let us tell you why.*

$100 Off PER WINDOW when you order 6 or more windows

$150 Off PER WINDOW when you order 10 or more windows

$200 Off patio doors

*DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer valid through August 31, 2012. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Available only at participating locations. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. License number available upon request. "Andersen", "Renewal by Andersen" and the Renewal by Andersen logo are registered trademarks of Andersen Corporation. All other marks where denoted are marks of Andersen Corporation. © 2012 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved.

Renewal by Andersen

WINDOW REPLACEMENT

an Andersen Company

PE-4290769

CALL TODAY TO SCHEDULE AN IN-HOME CONSULTATION

309-693-6707

OR VISIT OUR SHOWROOM AT

7704 N. Grand Prairie Dr.
Peoria, IL 61615

www.renewalbyandersen.com

Showroom Hours: M-F 9AM-5PM; Sat. 10AM-3PM

Brad, Danny, Scott and Jeff

JournalStar

1 News Plaza, Peoria, IL 61643 | 309-686-3000 | pjstar.com

# AFFIDAVIT OF PERFORMANCE

Newspaper: Peoria Journal Star

Address: 1 News Plaza
Peoria, IL 61643

Advertiser: Ameren

Insertion Date(s): September 16, 23, 30, 2012

Ad Size: 3 column x 10"

This affidavit is issued as proof of insertion and in lieu of tearsheets, which are no longer available.

Affidavit Completed by: Lori Sutton

Signature: Lori Sutton

Title: Sales Executive

Date: 10-18-12

Affirmed by me, this 18 day of October, 2012

Carolyn Hawley
(Signature)

OFFICIAL SEAL
CAROLYN HAWLEY
NOTARY PUBLIC - STATE OF ILLINOIS
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES 4-21-2014

Ameren Exhibit 5.5 (Part 2)
Page 3 of 4

# Illinois needs comprehensive look at value of early education programs

IGPA EXPERTS ON THE ISSUES

With the first Chicago teacher walkout in 25 years, the city's public school system has been making national headlines as a starting point to discuss education reform.

While a central issue in Chicago has been evaluating teachers, perhaps an equally important question to consider is whether reform programs, on the whole, are effective.

Of particular concern are programs aimed at closing achievement gaps that imply not all children have equal opportunities to attain the American Dream. For example, the most recent report card from the U.S. Department of Education documents persistent gaps between poor and non-poor children. In 2011, nearly half of higher-income fourth-graders were proficient in reading compared to less than one-fifth of lower-income children, a gap of 30 percentage points. The gap in Illinois was slightly larger, at 33 points.

RACHEL GORDON

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

This is the third in a 10-part series that has the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois exploring a variety of political issues. The last installment will appear on the Sunday before the Nov. 6 election.

Education reforms aim to reduce these gaps in school. But evidence suggests that the gaps begin in early childhood, before children even walk through a school door.

A recent national study found that poor kindergartners began school nearly 10 points below their higher-income classmates in reading and math. Interventions thus increasingly start in early childhood, fueled both by the desire to reduce these school readiness gaps and the success of some widely publicized programs in doing so. Indeed, state funding for pre-kindergarten more than doubled during the 2000s, to nearly $5.5 billion in 2010. Illinois spent almost $300 million on pre-K in the 2010-2011 school year.

With this type of investment, lawmakers and the public want to see evidence that current programs in Illinois are effective. Yet, the best evaluations cost the most money, and without good data, the programs are often vulnerable to budget cuts. Policymakers in Illinois can look to other states that are beginning to support better-designed evaluations, often using federal dollars and partnerships with universities and research firms to help fund the efforts.

For example, an innovative evaluation of Oklahoma's state pre-K program capitalized on the fact that some children just missed the birthday cutoff for enrolling one year. Those children were compared with children who did make the cutoff. By the following fall, the children who had made the cutoff had completed a year of preschool. Those who had missed the cutoff were similarly aged, but were just about to begin preschool.

The children who had just made the birthday cutoff to attend preschool scored as though they were nine months older in their knowledge of letters and words than the children who had just missed the cutoff, on average. This design has been replicated in several other states, and Tennessee is currently using it along with random assignment, the "gold standard" approach to evaluation. As these states have learned, ensuring that state-funded pre-K is in fact helping get children ready for school requires not only enough money for high-quality programs but also sufficient funding for well-designed evaluations to document these outcomes. Illinois can look to them for ideas to inform our next evaluations.

As the nation debates the future of education reform, evaluation will be a cornerstone issue. Beyond the question of teacher evaluation that is a touch point in the Chicago labor dispute remains a larger question concerning which programs are most effective — especially in early childhood. Reduced money in state coffers may lead some to walk away from early childhood programs completely. Yet turning away from these important early investments without full evidence about their effectiveness risks lost potential for many children, and for society, in decades to come.

Rachel Gordon is a sociologist at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Illinois Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

**Please join us for an open house - because your input matters.**

The Fargo-Mapleridge Transmission Project will enhance reliability, provide capacity for future electric load growth and improve voltages in the Peoria area. Your opinion is vital as this initiative takes shape. At our open house, you can learn about the need for this new transmission line, share your thoughts on the best possible routes and get answers to your questions.

**American Legion**
**4 p.m. – 7 p.m. Monday, October 8, 2012**
**4501 S. Airport Road, Bartonville, IL**

Learn more now at **FargoTransmission.com** or call **1.800.229.9280**.

FOCUSED ENERGY. For Life.

Ameren ILLINOIS

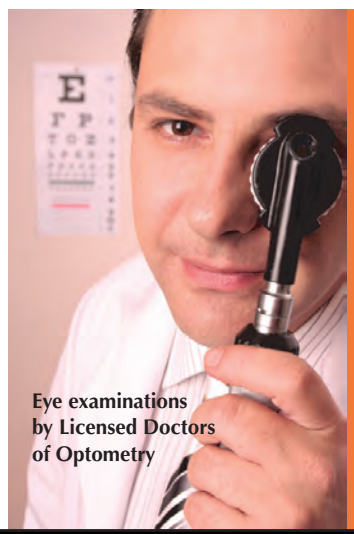
Life's just beginning at 50. Stay active with the **Prime Times** section on the first Saturday of the month.

FALL FLOORING SALE
FINANCING AVAILABLE
Sept 21-Oct 6
MILLWORKS
Exquisitely Crafted, Expertly Installed.
7022 N University Peoria 691-2595
13587 E Manito Pekin 347-5111

BARD OPTICAL

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Peoria - Metro Centre | 692-8222 | Lincoln | 735-1707 |
| Peoria - 7715 N. Grand Prairie Dr. | 691-1320 | Normal | 454-2233 |
| Peoria - Campustown | 672-2273 | Pekin | 353-9313 |
| Canton | 647-0366 | Pontiac | (815) 419-2019 |
| East Peoria | 694-2273 | Washington | 444-2277 |

FIND US ON:




NOW ACCEPTING ALL EYEMED VISION PLANS

A few of the other plans we accept:
• Caterpillar Benefits
• Optum (Spectera)
• Davis Vision
• Medicare and more

AARP MEMBERS SAVE 30%– CALL FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

PE-4251156

# I'm so old, fire wasn't even invented when I was a kid

So it's my birthday this week, which is great, because I was just thinking that I was getting pretty tired of my hips and would like to have new ones, and with every passing birthday that glorious hip-replacement day gets closer and closer to becoming reality.

I'm now officially of an age where I'm closer to the inevitable hip replacement surgery than I am to, like, graduating high school, which is a really comforting thing to think about. If there are any hip-replacement doctors reading, feel free to drop a line so I can start filling out the paperwork now and save us both some valuable waiting-room time in the nearish future.

JEFF VRABEL

Of course by then we probably won't have a functional health care system but a fascist proletariat in which medical care is offered only to the elite ruling class and the military units that guard them, but eh, a guy can dream.

Birthdays used to be so easy. Get some cards, open some stuff, untie that stuff from the military-grade twist-ties that have been designed to bind them forever to their packaging, the usual. Maybe a party at a place with an animatronic band singing '60s songs? Easy things. Even when you get a little bit older it's just, you know, here's some booze, congratulations on the being-born thing.

But see, I am old. And we old people remember birthdays before Facebook, which, for all the damage it's done to our collective self-esteems, is really, really good about birthdays. Because you sit there, all day long, and your little phone goes ping and pong and gives you updates and tells you all day how very many people are wishing you happy birthday! And it is a never-ending Fountain Of Self-Esteem, and it allows you to bask in the reflected joy of a lifetime of friends all paying attention to you all at once, and then it passes and you can go back the next day to doing what you usually do on Facebook, which is either promote yourself or put up baby pictures or Like pictures of adorable kittens that radio stations post, or, in my case, pretty much just all three.

But this is where it gets tricky, because, again, I am of the age where many of my birthdays predated the Internet, or, as many of any young readers would call it, My Seventies. So I am unsure how to respond when all of these people get all nice on Facebook, because I am too old for Facebook, so I need help.

I've determined there are a number of ways to respond to mass birthday greetings on Facebook, but I do not know which, if any, is the most preferable, so I am turning to you, Helpful Internet Reader People. Do you:

1. Post a general "Thanks everybody!" message at the end of the day, covering everyone, from your actual good friends who posted to high school people you haven't spoken to in 20 years, or people you know only from the Internet you've never actually met.

2. Post a Thoughtful Response to everyone who takes the time to wish you a happy birthday, even if some of them are from college and you have nothing witty or thoughtful to add in response?

3. Just "like" everything and be done with it.

4. Like some, Post Thoughtful Responses to some, ignore some, and thus make public your personal hierarchy of friends and family by length and quality of response?

5. Seriously how do you young people do this all the time? If I had Facebook when I was dating, and by dating I mean not-at-all-dating, in college I'd have probably tried to strangle myself with my shoelaces.

Jeff Vrabel thanks you for the kind birthday wishes, and "likes" them very much. He can be reached at http://jeffvrabel.com and/or followed at http://twitter.com/jeffvrabel.

Life's just beginning at 50. Stay active with the **Prime Times** section on the first Saturday of the month.

HUGE FALL FLOORING Sept 21-Oct 6
ALL FLOORING ON SALE!
13587 E Manito
Pekin 347-5111
7022 N University
Peoria 691-2595
MILLWORKS
Beautifully Created. Superbly Installed.

A new electric transmission line: delivering reliable and cost-effective energy

**Please join us for an open house - because your input matters.**

The Fargo-Mapleridge Transmission Project will enhance reliability, provide capacity for future electric load growth and improve voltages in the Peoria area. Your opinion is vital as this initiative takes shape. At our open house, you can learn about the need for this new transmission line, share your thoughts on the best possible routes and get answers to your questions.

**American Legion**
**4 p.m. – 7 p.m. Monday, October 8, 2012**
**4501 S. Airport Road, Bartonville, IL**

Learn more now at **FargoTransmission.com** or call **1.800.229.9280**.

FOCUSED ENERGY. For Life.

Ameren ILLINOIS

seeing is learning

Vision problems affect one in 20 preschoolers. Some of the more significant eye problems are Amblyopia (lazy eye), Strabismus (crossed eyes), Myopia (nearsightedness), Hyperopia (farsightedness),and Retinopathy of Prematurity, where blood vessels of the eye change, occurring in some premature infants. Color blindness and astigmatism also cause vision impairment.

CHOOSE FROM EITHER

2 Pair Glasses FOR $69
Includes:
- Single vision plastic lenses
- Frame from large group of styles

1 Pair Bifocals (even no lines) FOR $69
Includes:
- FT 28 or NO-LINE bifocal clear plastic lenses
- Select frames

One coupon per patient, per purchase. No other discounts or insurance plans applicable. Expires 9/30/12.

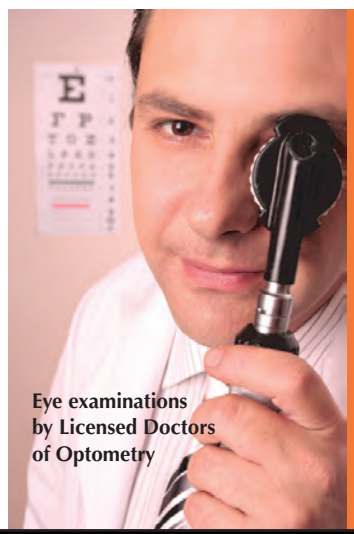
Schedule your child's eye health exam by logging into
bardoptical.com

ALWAYS A GREAT VALUE WITH OR WITHOUT VISION BENEFITS

BARD OPTICAL

Peoria - Metro Centre ..... 692-8222
Peoria - 7715 N. Grand Prairie Dr. .... 691-1320
Peoria - Campustown..... 672-2273
Canton ..... 647-0366
East Peoria..... 694-2273
Lincoln ..... 735-1707
Normal..... 454-2233
Pekin..... 353-9313
Pontiac ..... (815) 419-2019
Washington..... 444-2277

FIND US ON:



Eye examinations by Licensed Doctors of Optometry

NOW ACCEPTING ALL EYEMED VISION PLANS

A few of the other plans we accept:
- Caterpillar Benefits
- Optum (Spectera)
- Davis Vision
- Medicare and more

AARP MEMBERS SAVE 30%– CALL FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

PE-4251156