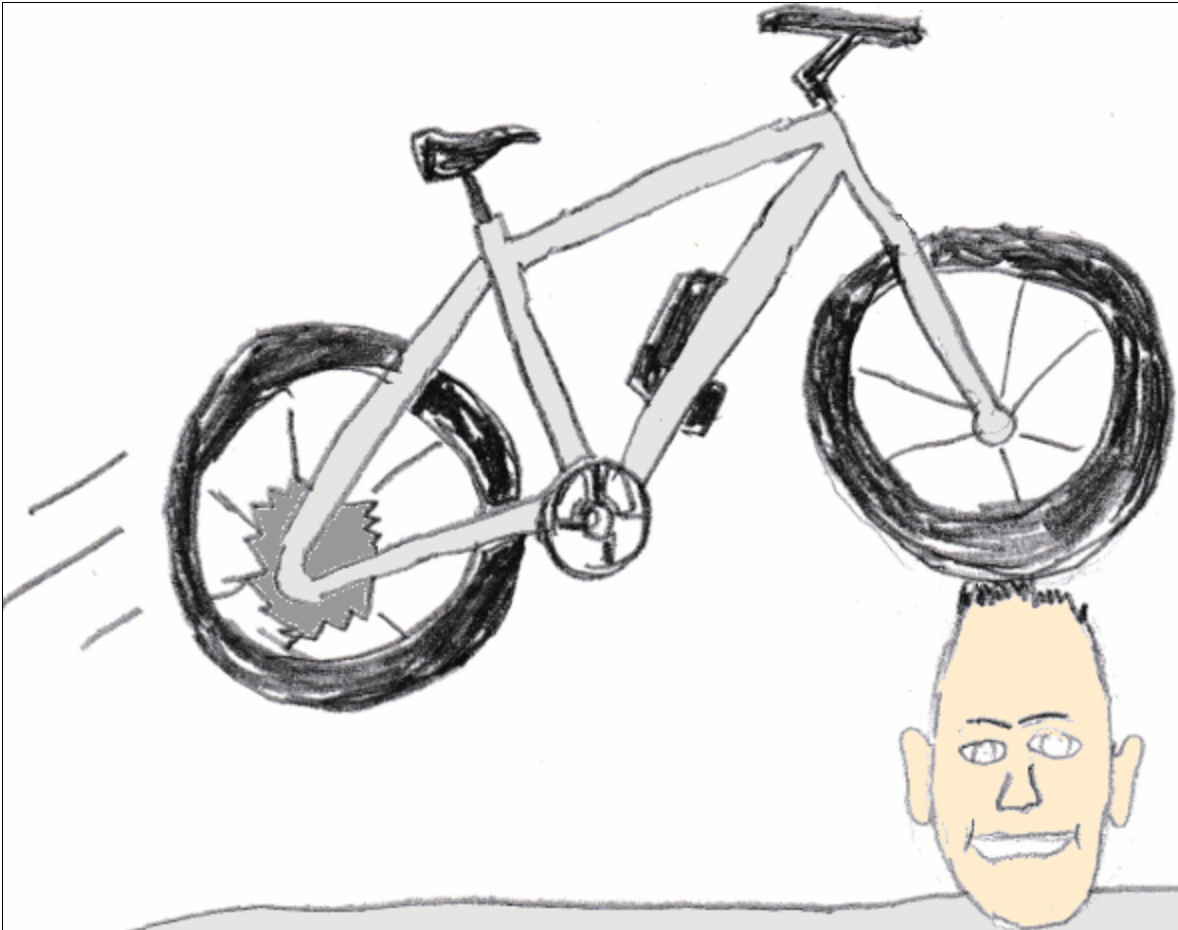


# The Last word™

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## Road Ruiner faces down Allowed Cloud



I do things I'm not allowed to do—whether it's legal mandates, doctor orders, or school rules. Even when I was 32, I violated the dress code at community college and got away with it. So there.

Meet the Road Ruiner. The Road Ruiner is an electric bicycle I just purchased. I don't owe anyone an explanation as to why I bought an electric bike. Just cope. Before the alt-right feudalists scream their ugly faces off that I must have spent someone else's money on it, I didn't, and the bike only cost a low 3-figure sum anyway.

As it turns out, Kentucky is one of very, very, very few states where electric bikes are either illegal or overregulated—courtesy of the “small government” Republicans, of course. “Big government” California doesn't restrict them, but “small government” Kentucky does. Got that? But no bother! I broke this law. Karma can be rough, eh, Bevin?

According to the Interpipes, Kentucky is the only state that classes electric bikes as mopeds. Mopeds require a full driver's license in Kentucky. I had to let my driver's license lapse a long time ago and can't get a new one. However, my old Kentucky driver's manual says mopeds only need a moped license, and bikes don't need a license, period. I'm an '80s guy, so I go by that—not some newer law some right-wing elitist sponsored. For the record, the Road Ruiner is *not* a moped. It looks *exactly like* a regular bike, but it just happens to have an electric motor—which only works when it's on!

I'm an American, so I've already operated the Road Ruiner on Kentucky's public roads—city streets as well as state highways, long live 'em. I violated an Allowed Cloud! Don't like it? Why don't you try to come to my place to stop me? I don't owe the Bevin reich one fucking thing except a middle finger. You're not my governor, Matt, so I'll do as I please.

You won't keep the law with a broken word, so what are you gonna do?

It appears that New York is the only other state that restricts electric bikes like this. They're illegal

altogether. “Small government” New York City mayors Rudolph Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg pressured the state legislature into scuttling efforts to liberalize bike laws. Despite this, everyone in New York just ignores the law like I do in Kentucky.

Also, the Road Ruiner arrived with a defective seat and left pedal, and I’ve filed a claim with Amazon because their outside seller won’t cooperate with replacing the defective parts. Under Amazon’s guarantee policy, I might be eligible for a full refund, since the seller is so uncooperative. In the meantime, I have to use the pedal from the Peace Bike, and for weeks, I had to ride around with the seat too low too.

## Feelin’ the Bern of not having a youth center

I love Bernie Sanders. I’ve been a fan since I was 17. Sure, he can’t be perfect, but who is? I’m almost in tears because my area didn’t have leaders like him—especially when it mattered the most to me.

In his bestselling book *Our Revolution*, the popular statesman briefly mentions that he helped establish what was sort of like a community center for young people in Burlington, Vermont, in the 1980s. This youth center kept kids out of trouble. Those who benefited from it back then are grown now, and they still talk about what a positive experience it was.

Such a great youth center in such a small city! But what did we have like this in my county of 90,000? We had absolutely *nothing*—that I can recall. Zero. I sure don’t remember anything like this.

Why we were deprived of a youth center like the one in Burlington? Because we were deprived of leaders like Bernie Sanders. All for ideological reasons. Serving the people clearly was not a priority for public officials in my area. All they cared about was those coveted endorsements from right-wing single-issue groups. Sadly, there were enough screeching right-wing voters around to decide for us what policies we got.

I fully understand it would have cost taxpayer money to build a youth center, because all public projects do. But the county has no trouble at all finding money for expanding the fucking *jail*, of all things—again and again. It has no trouble finding money to give to private schools for bus transport—when these schools don’t pay a cent in taxes. It has no trouble finding money for road projects that destroy working-class neighborhoods, or for tax handouts for luxury condos. (Also, the private school bailouts are unconstitutional because they violate separation of church and state—and because they discriminate against public school students by not providing transport to kids who attend public schools outside their district.)

Sadly, none of this is surprising, considering one of the political “leaders” of my county wrote fan mail to the right-wing dictatorship in Singapore.

What positive activities were open to me when I was a teenager in Campbell County? Everything I remember was negative. It certainly didn’t keep me out of trouble, and it led to some very irresponsible activity and bad choices. Ideological pursuits, crusading against “indecenty!!!”, widening the school-to-CPH-to-prison pipeline, catering to right-wing extremists, and running everybody’s lives were more important to our public officials than the county’s young people were. They must have been afraid that if they built a youth center, someone would bubble or something.



We didn't have what kids in every other community had, because the Footloosers decreed we couldn't have it. (Same reason we had such bad radio stations in the late '80s.) This angers me. The county could clearly afford it, but flushed money down the toilet on unnecessary pet projects. It's now clear that we couldn't afford *not* to have a youth center. Look at how much it would have saved the taxpayers by keeping kids out of trouble. I guess our local politicians didn't count on me someday growing up and asking questions about why they were such shitty leaders. They hoped I wouldn't live this long.

Let me be clear: They didn't give a shit about me—or you. *They. Simply. Did. Not. Care.*

And for those who say we can't have Sanders-style populists in elected office around here, **why the fuck not???** Sanders was elected as Vermont's congresscoolster only 6 years after Reagan won every county in the state.

At the same time, I'm hopeful, and it's because of Bernie Sanders. The Bern would want me to be hopeful, not bitter. He may be the most influential public figure in America today. Where do you think public opinion is heading? Considering Donald Trump (R-Loompaland) lost the popular vote by 3 million, do you seriously think people are in the mood to entertain the same stale right-wing whinings as 20 years ago? Our side always has new ideas, but the other side is still stuck on the same shit as ever.

## A person pooped on a self-cleaning toilet seat

Warning! If you think it's disgusting when people shit on things, don't click on this YouTube video...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2D1\\_cZrxwk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2D1_cZrxwk)

Since you're afraid to go on YouTube because you think a robot arm is going to reach out of your computer screen and pick your nose, here's a synopsis of that vid: This clip takes place in the stall of a public restroom. It starts out with a big-ass log curled up on the toilet seat. It turns out that this is a rather strange johnnypoooper in that the seat cleans itself upon flushing. The seat rotates clockwise, and a mechanism is supposed to sweep the poo-poo away.

But this was one of those soft, squishy poos—the kind that leaves folks with utterly ruined Hanes—so things went more hilarious than planned. The cleaning mechanism smeared the grogan so that it left a thick layer of shit running almost the entire circumference of the toilet seat. Best all, part of the turd got caught in the mechanism—which appeared to lift the morsel of feces several inches in the air.

It will stink.

## Dungeons & Dragons & Donald

In recent months, I've met up with a cool person more and more. I've known her since the days of Tantrum 95.7 and the constant "ka-chunk!" of the Extremist. People act shocked by this, even though I thought they knew 16 years ago. They behave as if I retconned her into existence going back to 2001 even though she was in plain sight.

Our December ish talked about how we were





going to turn our public confrontations with Donald Trump cultists into a game based on Dungeons & Dragons. Our displays of mishandling our sunglasses and rotting our teeth with junk food in grocery checkout lanes would earn us experience points. They go low, we go rogue.

Surprisingly, we haven't encountered any more Trumpers inside the store since then. Trump's followers are probably too ashamed now to let anyone know they supported him. But we've built a new concept: Dungeons & Dragons & Donald. This involves playing Dungeons & Dragons like normal but meshing our showdowns with Trumpists into the game. The game includes both real life and fantasy.

Our game characters are based on reality. We even have bonuses at picking locks—because my friend just couldn't resist a punk rocker teeth joke. If only I could melt stone with my crossed eye, we'd be invincible. Maybe I can read scrolls backwards with my dyslexia.

Lest you get the image of us lounging around like bored youths with a couch potato gaze and torn t-shirts, this game actually teaches teamwork and strategy. But I'd forgotten how difficult it was to initiate a Dungeons & Dragons campaign, so this is going slower than we'd like. I also don't know what the local equivalent of the Keep on the Borderlands is, or if the Marathon station accepts electrum pieces. We also haven't decided how many experience points we get if we conquer the Holiday Inn.

Think. Do. Be.

## Kroger's the one that took the stick out of gum

Our probe into the paucity of gum at the nearest Kroger supermarket continues in Ernest!

In 1979, Wrigley's revolutionized the beegie biz by introducing Hubba Bubba bubble gum—which wasn't supposed to stick to your face when you blew bubbles. That's because the #1 reason people chew gum is to blow bubbles that burst on their face. But Wrigley's had been down that road before. Back in 1975, the gum giant had introduced Freedent. In contrast to Hubba Bubba, however, Freedent wasn't supposed to get stuck *inside* your mouth. Freedent has been readily available on a consistent basis—unlike Hubba Bubba—even though nobody chews Freedent.

Freedent's big selling point is that it won't stick to dentures or other dental work. The *Chicago Tribune* once reported that the brand "appeals to denture wearers who have trouble with chewing gum, or at least gum that sticks to their teeth." Freedent's early TV commercials featured people talking about how they could chew gum again—after years of abstention—because Freedent won't warp their false teeth. These creepy old ads concluded with a mellow jingle accompanied by an acoustic guitar.

Is Freedent any different from any other gum in that regard? I'm quite confident that no brand of gum sticks to dental work or appliances to any life-ruining degree—because saliva prevents this. It's like if Keebler marketed Zesta as being the only cracker that doesn't have porcupine quills. I think I have 16 fillings, but in all the years I've had fillings, I've never gotten food stuck to them. (At worst, a big hunk of bread will fill the space where my tooth was knocked out in high school. No bother! I just spit it onto the nearest Republican campaign sign.)

The long and short of it is that nobody buys or chews Freedent. My entire life, I've hung around people who chew gum. I don't incessantly chomp this savory sweet like they do, but some of them actually *discuss* gum. Gum is funny, after all. I've always noticed what brands of beegie they chew, and it sure as shit ain't Freedent. It's safe to assume not all of them have most of their teeth, so they rock dentures instead. And they go for the good bubble bustin' gums just like teeth people do.

If you feed gum to friends who wear dentures in the hopes you'll get to see the gum adhere to their dental work, you're setting yourself up for a colossal disappointment. I think the only times I've ever seen anyone do anything even remotely like this was a few times in my youth when schoolmates got bubble gum or a Sugar Daddy tangled in their braces they spent thousands of costly dollars on when it probably wasn't necessary.



Hilarious? You bet! But I'm sure it didn't ruin them, because I assume any device designed to go inside a person's mouth is built to withstand being within 100 miles of bubble gum. Someone on the Internet said braces wearers were probably Freedent's intended market, but apparently Wrigley's was afraid dentists would complain if the ads encouraged people to chew gum with braces (which people did anyway). Yet Freedent might be stickier than other gums: Someone on Amazon complained that it even stuck to a crown. Another reviewer said this brand is "a reminder of money wasted." Even funnier, another review consisted of only one word: "STALE!"

So nobody chews Freedent, because it doesn't have any advantage. But try telling that to Kroger.

In the past couple months, our investigation—code-named Operation KroGum—has revealed that even in the unlikely event that you're not in the mood to kablammo a huge bubble, the local Kroger has a very disappointing gum selection. Yet I've discovered they sell Freedent—which nobody buys. They sell the huge mega packs, no less. These packs of gum are just gathering dust. It reminds me of how when I was growing up, there was a delicatessen near my grandparents' house where dust gathered on *everything*, because hardly anyone shopped there. When we bought bubble gum there, we had to blow the dust off the pack. It was the same way with beer. Also, the friendly deli owner used to spread his newspapers on the counter as he was reading them, and set his lit cigarette down on them, which was a fire hazard.

In the meantime, if your chompers suddenly fall out, don't just curl up in a ball and give up on life like everyone else does. This funny video proves it's possible for people with dentures to bubble without dislodging their dentures or gunking them up...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qP0ak1sBDGY>

So go ahead. Bubble.

## When integrity beat greed

People got mad at me recently when I recalled that I have integrity.

Even if a billion dollars crashed through my ceiling and landed in my lap, I've forever locked myself out of squandering it on certain personal comforts or "improvements." That's because I've been so critical of spoilage that I'd be a sellout if I did. I live like I've taken a vow of poverty. Plus, *I'm not spending the money on a more aesthetic right upper lateral incisor. Understand???* Tough toilets, YouTube.

My integrity showed when I was a radio DJ—at WRFN, the student station at NKU. In some dayparts, WRFN aired ads, because it was a carrier current station and wasn't restricted to noncommercial operation.

No Americans younger than 20 are old enough to remember when people actually listened to radio. But if you're older, you may have heard radio commercials in which the DJ would break in with some blurb about the product being advertised. For example, if some hot new movie was coming out, the DJ might break in at the end of the ad and say, "Check the Sunday newspaper for times and locations."

That's one thing I absolutely *refused* to do. I was not a product spokesman. I had no such objection to appearing in parody ads or public service announcements—but I wasn't going to endorse a real product I might have hated. Shit, to hear the alt-right talk about me at the time, you'd think that if I endorsed any item, it would have touched off another Great Depression (and I wouldn't have even needed Newt Gingrich's help). I know some of the most respected and admired broadcasters have done commercial voiceovers—but I assume it was for products they liked.

I should have told people to check the Sunday paper to *read the fucking news*. It's called a newspaper for a reason. A lot of folks clearly didn't know what was going on in the world. I know most newspapers around here



had a right-wing bias, but at least they weren't completely useless (and I give the *Campbell County Recorder* credit for endorsing Michael Dukakis in such an oppressive environment). Considering how bulky our weekend papers used to be, they had to contain something informative instead of just that huge portfolio of slick ads. (The right-wing hypocrites who ran the local printing presses accepted colorful ads for designer clothes, and then they editorialized that school uniforms might be necessary to stop kids from competing over their clothing. Stop inducing people to buy designer clothes, and then all the competing wouldn't be a problem.)

By the way, what will I waste my billion dollars on? I think I'll spend it on a *less* aesthetic right upper later incisor. Just joking!

## We're all playing in the same band

Our September ish regaled you with the enthralling true tale of the time a record of the song "It's A Beautiful Day" by the late Bert Sommer was seized from Bishop Brossart High School and promptly ruined.

Bert Sommer was best known for his optimistic folk-rock tunes, and best all, he shared his first name with that of a *Sesame Street* character. His association with the ol' Ses rivals that of leading Kentucky politicians in the past few decades who also happened to have *Sesame Street*-themed names. If they aren't named for a *Sesame Street* character, they may physically resemble one. For example, Matt Bevin (R-*Courier-Journal*) shares Bert's enormous forehead, wide mouth, and tuft of hair. Hopefully he won't revoke anyone's notary privileges for political reasons like other right-wing Kentucky governors have.

I searched a comprehensive record kablammoin' website for any mention of "It's A Beautiful Day" being released as a single, so I'd know how much money the record was worth before my school pal destroyed Brossart's copy, but it turns out it was actually the flip side of "We're All Playing In The Same Band"—Sommer's only charted song, which hit #48 (ahem).

"We're All Playing In The Same Band" was a typically positive Sommer number. It was a song about unity. While it just missed the national top 40, it actually did surprisingly well at WSAI, Cincinnati's highest-rated pop station in 1970. I wasn't born yet in 1970, so I asked someone who was around at the time if he remembered Bert's hit or its flip side. He said he doesn't remember the side that charted, but he remembers "It's A Beautiful Day."

It should have been a double-sided hit (to use one of Casey Kasem's favorite phrases). I have several racks full of singles from the '70s and '80s, and even most flip sides back then were better than most charted hits today—by far.

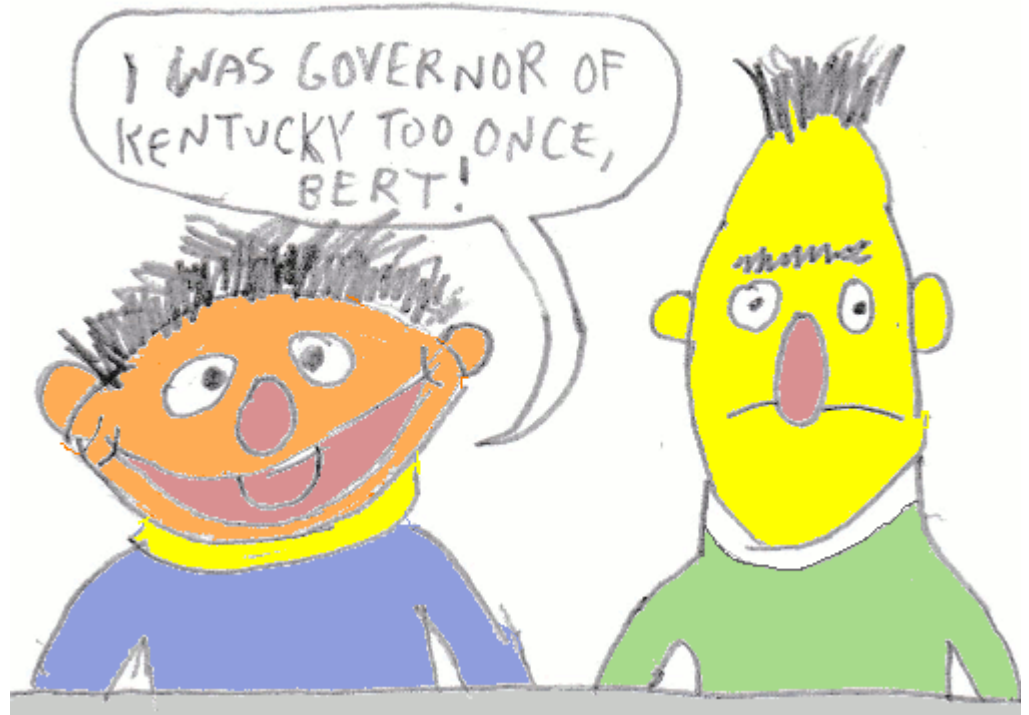
Maybe the times will change finally.

## Heroin dealers try to poison my city

When you see someone in a central city in this region with a Donald Trump sign, you can bet your bifocals it's a heroin dealer.

But this story isn't about the heroin house that had the Trump sign a few blocks up from here—or the similar drug house in Dayton. This is about the dope pusher I saw a few weeks ago when I Krogered.

I was bicycling home from the friendly neighborhood Krogie-Wogie when I saw an unusual and disgusting sight. A white pickup truck with a bed spliced onto it from another vehicle roared out of the shopping



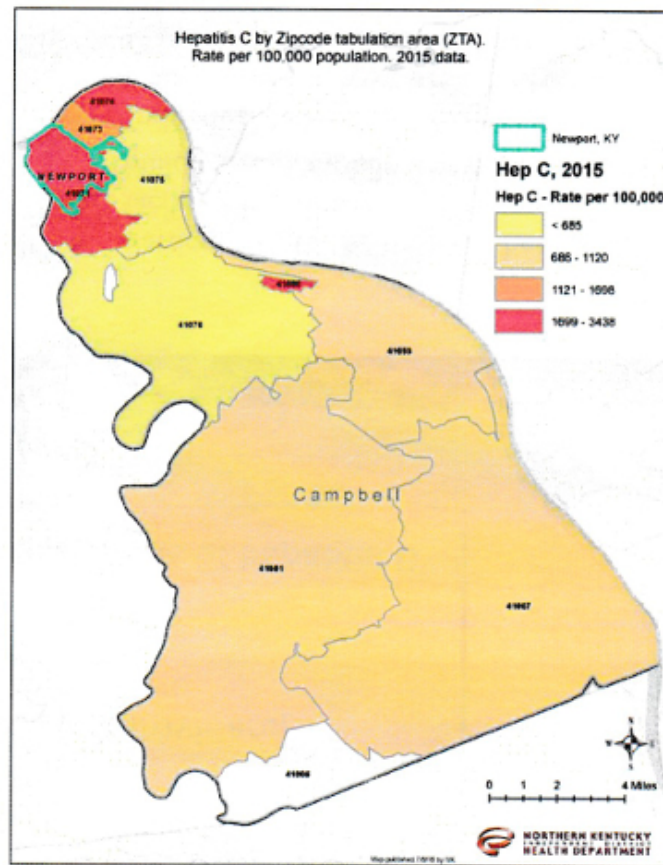


center parking lot and down Riviera Drive. The truck bore a *gigantic* Trump campaign sign. You almost *never* see Trump stickers or signs on vehicles—I still see far more Obama stickers—but when you do, it’s bigly.

I wasn’t sure yet that the motorist was indeed a drug dealer. But when he pulled into the service lot behind the building where the Save-a-Lot used to be, my suspicions were confirmed. I saw him pull into the lot, idle for about 30 seconds, and drive away. It was obvious he was trying to meet a customer. That location is notorious for heroin.

When he carelessly sped away, I couldn’t see his license plate, since it was conveniently (and illegally) obscured. Although he was sighted on the border between Bellevue and Newport, I strongly doubt he lived that close. Trumpers usually don’t do the cities unless they’re up to no good. They hate the cities. They always have. When I went to Brossart, one of my opulent Enemies List inductees who followed me home on the TANK bus had a keychain with the Newport cigarette logo, and he pointed at me and said Newport is my origin, as if it was an insult.

The alt-right hates us, so they prey on us. We all remember last year when one of the leading lights of the Campbell County Tea Party got busted for selling opiates, so you can’t very well say I’m being paranoid. Recently I attended the open house at the Campbell County Health Center. I was actually one of very few people who showed up other than some public officials. The health center gave us a tour where we saw their eye chart and other tools. They also gave us a packet of papers put together by the Northern Kentucky Health Department about the region’s pandemic of heroin abuse. It included this small map of the county showing the highest rates of hepatitis C—a disease that can be spread by intravenous drug use—in red...



Why is the northern end of the county being targeted by drug pushers? *Why???*

Incidentally, as the white truck sped away from the shopping center, it was me who mouthed some profanities towards the driver. I was the guy.

After the pickup truck was sighted, there was a similar incident a few days later. I Kroed for it again, and in the parking lot in front of Kroger, there was a beige Mercedes station wagon with Ohio plates parked there. It was emblazoned with very large stickers supporting Donald Trump and Rob “Pee-in-a-Cup” Portman. A Trump sticker on a Mercedes debunks the right-wing media’s laughable claim that billionaire Trump was the working-class candidate. Plus, what was someone from Indian Hill doing in Bellevue—at a parking lot plagued by heroin activity, no less? Here’s a hint: They’re selling. I’d *bet the farm* on it. I jotted down the license plate number, by the way.

Don’t hold your breath expecting anything to be done about it. Hardly anything has been done in years, because of pressure by right-wing public officials who are profiting from drug dealing.

# The Internet is still arguing about bubble gum

Bubble gum. It was the Internet's favorite topic in 1998. And the zesty goo still exists in 2017. This fanzine of freedom talks about gum because the public demands it!

If it was outlawed in my youth, I could someday be the old man who tells kids, "When I was growing up, there was this stuff called bubble gum. It was such dumb stuff that all it did was get stuck to people's faces and hair." I can imagine a grandparent saying something like that to me in my day—in those exact words. The older generation was a living library of history. But bubble gum hasn't been banned (yet), so the legend continues.

I was browsing the Interglasses in the late '90s, when—on a whim—I did a search for websites about bubble gum. It was like the time when I was about 8, a family member won a set of encyclopedias as a prize, and asked me if there was anything I wanted to look up, and I said bubble gum. But the encyclopedia confused gum with taffy. Anyway, back to the '90s: By then, I was about 24, probably in the middle of my outside agitation campaign at NKU, and I dared to look up beegee online.

I quickly discovered that bubble gum was the #1 topic of concern and discussion for a significant segment of Internetters. There was a smorgasbord of GeoCities pages, message boards, and guestbooks about beegee. There was even a site that attempted to list every TV show, movie, commercial, or comic book in which a person bubbled.

And people argued. Yes, about bubble gum. They fought about whether an actress in a Care-Free gum ad was anyone famous, and about the hair color of an actress in a Sears commercial who bubbled. They argued about whether other users of the forums were real or just sockpuppets. They fought with the website owners that they needed to post more stories about public bubble sightings. I can only guess why.

Here's the best part. *It's still going on.* Almost 20 years later. The *exact same people* are fighting and complaining about the *exact same things* as they were when *Home Improvement* was one of the top TV shows. I was still buying vinyl singles and using an all-text browser when they first started arguing, and they're still at it. Talk about living in the past!

I still look at these websites just so I can watch all the arguing. It's *that* funny. Occasionally, they'll register a complaint saying "I've had my fill" of the decline of gum's bubble poppin' capabilities. Once in a while, they'll come up with something less argumentative, like how they ruined their lampshade by blowing a bubble big enough to burst on it, or their devious plan to blow a bubble big enough to lift their baseball cap off their head by its bill. (It's like the time someone ruined a book at school by closing it on a bubble.)

New websites still crop up. Nearly all of them so far have been G-rated—but now there's an adult bubble gum board too. There's essentially no difference between this board and the others—except for an occasional explicit story that everyone ignores because they'd rather argue.

## *It. Is. Uproarious.*

Just a few weeks ago, someone on this forum announced a new phone app that they wanted to use to "organize a little group blow." I read that and *could not stop laughing*. Since it's a gum forum, it was clear "blow" had to do with blowing bubbles—not the other meaning. These are grown men and women, and they're gonna sit around all day making selfies of themselves blowing huge bubbles with gum!

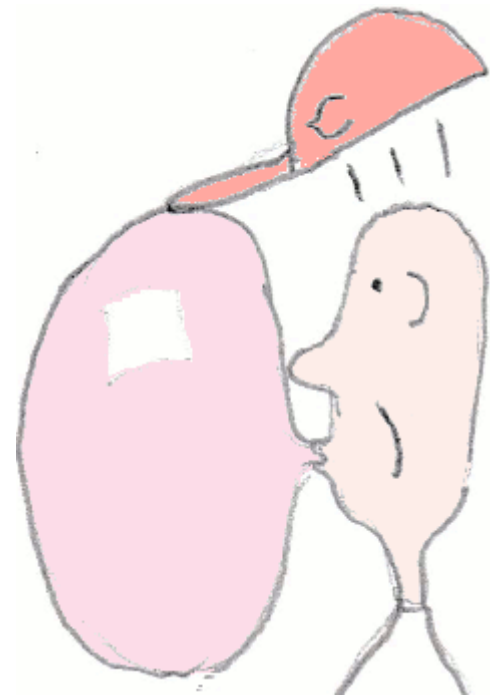
It sounds like they're planning a bubble gum orgy!

How do you think I'd like to spend a nice evening with a relationship partner? Should we pick up a tasty din-din from her favorite deli and put on some good '80s modern rock? Or should we film each other having a bubble blowing contest and upload it to complete strangers on the Internet just so they can get aroused? I'm a weird guy, but probably not weird enough to do the latter.

One evening, years ago, I was returning home from some event and stopped at a rest area outside Louisville. I saw a group of people—men and women—excitedly skipping into one of the restrooms there. Some appeared to be rest area employees in their work uniforms. It had to be an orgy. But maybe it was a "group blow."

Who needs Comedy Central when 20 years of laughs have piled up from people on the Internet arguing about bubble gum?

In the meantime, I've prepared this parody of a Heinz ketchup commersh to coolsplain the influence of beegee...





## Someday he still won't find it...His brass mass collection...

*Brass mass  
Toss it in the grass  
I passed gas  
I broke a glass!*

Thirty years of remorse for an act of mischief can only be relieved by the knowledge that it almost certainly destroyed my school's lawn mower. For a long time, I couldn't remember whether it was me or someone else behind this dastardly doing, but I found one of my old articles to refresh my memory.

This is another story from the putrid pits of St. Joe's. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll be back for more (as Ratt would say)! I've actually felt bad for decades about carrying away some of my 8<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher's set of small brass weights, but you had to be there. I truly thought I could use them for self-defense against the spoiled bullies at school. Apparently, the instructor had borrowed the brass mass set from his previous school. In 2000, I wrote about the incident: "He always borrowed tools from the school where he worked previously for us to use in the activities and expected us to treat them with impeccable love and care—which was quite a tall expectation, considering that we couldn't handle a bottle of Liquid Paper for more than 5 minutes without spilling it down the radiator, be in the presence of a gallon jug of Elmer's glue without ruining the entire thing by removing the lid, or avoid dumping a flask of dangerous nickel sulfide down the drain in the supply room." My science teacher's voice sounded *just like* Kermit the Frog, so I accompanied the article with a drawing of his head on Kermit's body, singing "Rainbow Connection."



One of the brass masses got buried in the mud behind the church building. Now it's just dawned on me that it very well may have popped back up out of the ground during the heavy rains we always receive here (most likely in the "drought" of '88 when it rained all summer). That means it broke the school's lawn mower.

Pretty cool, huh?

My 2000 article also touched on the fact that the teacher's former school got back an incomplete brass mass set and probably didn't notice until it was too late.

I bet they haved a sad.

## Everyone acts like my life is ruined by acne scars

The topic of my acne scars was brung up at a family gathering recently, and it just highlights how cool I am.

Let's keep this brief. I have permanent scars because when I was a youth, I picked at acne scabs when I wasn't allowed to. And no, I don't need the scars "cured." I rock them. Also in my youth, I *could not stand* acne cleansing pads, because the smell was too strong. When I used them, the stink gave me a headache that kept me awake. Most shampoos do the same thing. I might as well have had *real* poo, not shampoo! So I really have to be careful what poos I buy. (Cool, my word processor knows *poos* is a word!)

In the late 2000s, I visited Indianapolis several times as part of a partly successful campaign to get abusive teen residential programs shut down. I walked past a stand at a mall where a young woman tried to sell me a special men's lotion. That's fine, because this stand kept people employed. But she saw my acne scars and said, "Don't you want that gone?" I don't. Even if the lotion was free and odorless, I wouldn't take it.

This is one of these weird things about me. I have strange features like this, and I think "curing" them



when there's no medical reason for it just seems...wrong. One of few drawbacks of my sunglasses is that the arms cover part of the scarring. It's outside my comfort zone to appear too polished for my economic level.

It's sort of like how WCLU in the mid-'80s sounded great playing music from vinyl. Becoming all-CD would have been selling out.

There's a name for what I do: being cool.

## Bad attitudes lasted into 2012

This is a promising sign. And the magic word will be used, so keep your peepers peeped!

When I found an Internet post recently about a child as recently as 8 years ago losing his shit because of his eyeglasses, it gave me hope. The late 2000s were a highlight in modern American history, but since this episode was that recent, it would appear as if the spirit of principled rebellion is still alive. It's what authority figures often call a "bad attitude"—but I call it cool.

It gets even better, since now I've found an Interbips posting from less than 5 years ago about a similar incident. This time, it was from a woman complaining because her 16-year-old daughter threatened to rip out her own braces because she hated being forced to get them.

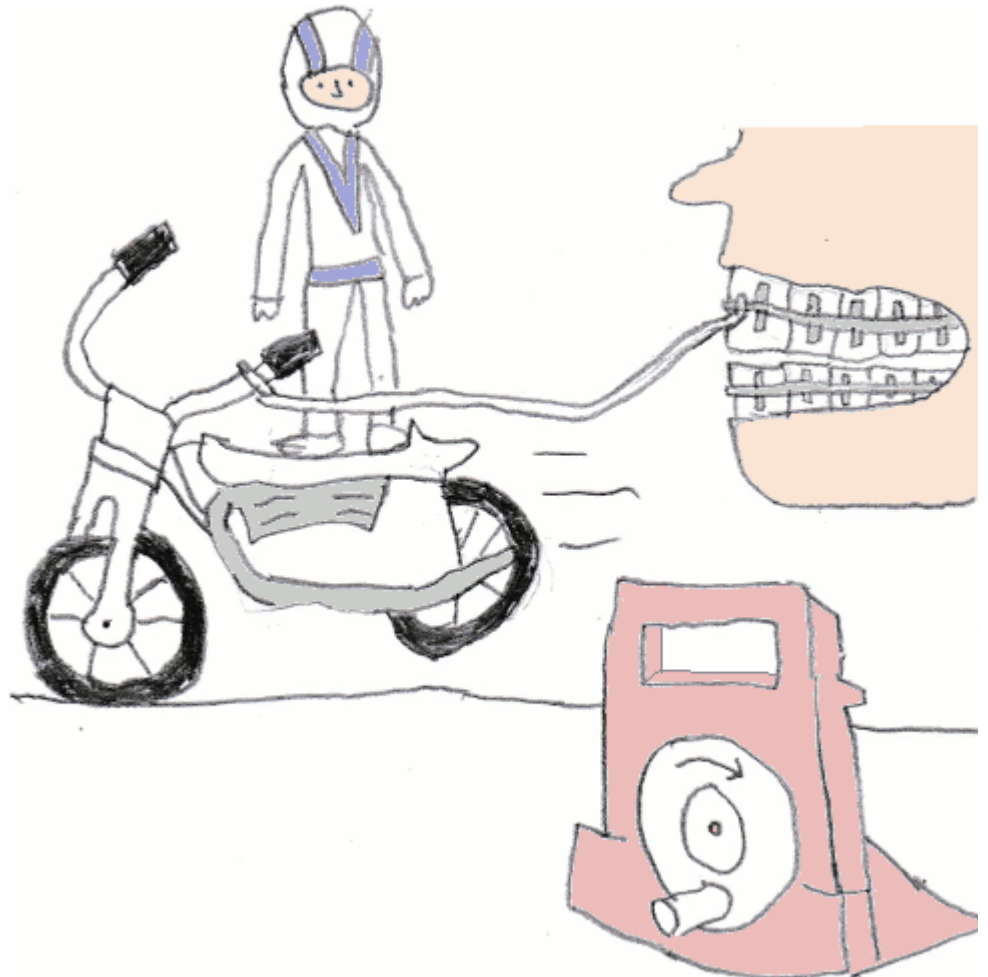
I never had them. (Imagine that!) I won't get them. (Imagine that!) I refused to play that game regardless of cost, so I don't know the proper procedures for taking care of them without getting skeeped at. I never understood why people got them. But this is almost *exactly like* the story of the kid threatening to snap his glasses in half—yet the parent in this story was being far more petty. Besides, the braces in this story were strictly cosmetic, and the daughter was old enough to be protected by the mature minor doctrine. Why in the Wide, Wide World Of Halo would anyone *force* a child who is that old to get braces that are just cosmetic? That's like if CPH pinned me down and cut the *Sesame Street* sores off my feet with broken scissors.

According to this story, the daughter bit the orthodontist and proudly disobeyed recommendations on what to eat. (Apparently, there was a *humongous* list of foods to avoid. It's like the list on the TMJ disorder websites that everyone defies.) She answered her mom's questions only in Russian (which she studied in school). Best all, the magic word got used: The mother grumbled, "We paid 6,000 dollars so she can have something to ruin when she gets mad." Hear that, everyone?! Ruin!!!

Then don't make her get them. It's that simple. It's like expecting me to appreciate being sent to Bishop Brossart.

The fact that a dental specialist agreed to force her to get them is shocking. What's just as shocking is that someone who posted in that thread actually sided with the mother. Another advised the mom to ask the daughter "whether she would really be happy with crooked teeth for the rest of her life." Uh-oh, punk rocker teeth. Heaven forfend! (My word processor knows *poos* but not *forfend*?)

For the record, I wouldn't know how to pry off braces. Like I said, I never had them, so I didn't have to figure out how. The only way I can think of—though it might be very painful—would be to use twine to attach your braces to one of those toy Evel Knievel motorcycles that zooms across the room when you turn the crank on the ramp. I'm told that once—back in the '80s—that there was a junior softball league around here in which a girl who was about 11 threw a tantrum on the field, approached a player on a rival team, and angrily tried to pry off her braces with the claw end of a



hammer—but the attempt was unsuccessful. She also yanked out another girl’s earring so it tore her earlobe wide open. The coach reportedly said, “Hey. Hey! *Hey!*”

I can’t believe I’m 43 and writing a zine full of youth angst and discussing medical policies like the mature minor doctrine that protect young people. On second thought, I *can* believe it. When I’m in one of my less mature moods, I’m both hilarious and a legal genius.

## People burned stuff at school

*“Can’t be burned at school...”*

School. It’s where people—and not just students—burned stuff.

Did people burn things at Bro\$\$art? You bet your Blistex! All cool people knew that, because all coolsters read my work. But it wasn’t just Brossart.

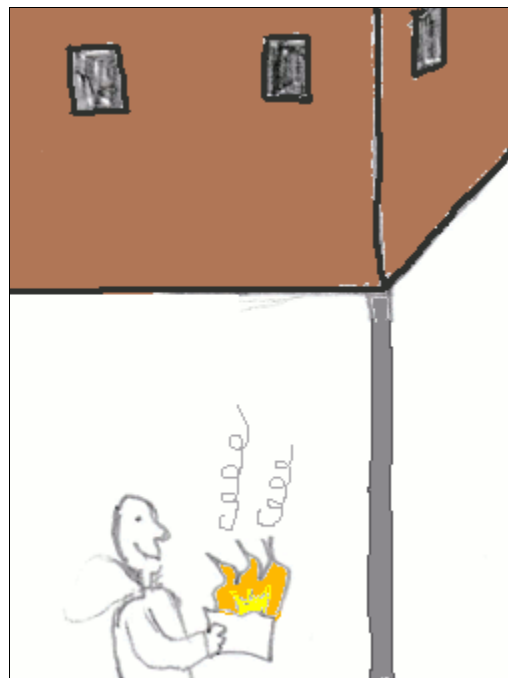
I was a bad, bad boy, so I went to what was sort of like an alternative class in my later high school years. It took place at First District Elementary in Covington. Sometimes they’d make us wait the whole day to use the restroom. The classroom was barely heated, so if anyone there was to burn something, it should have been in class so we could keep warm.

Once when I was a senior, someone burned something. I think I forgot to write it down in my personal diary of school mischief, either because I was in such disbelief or because something even funnier happened that day that overshadowed it. Now, remember, when they sent us home each day, they acted like it was a hostage transfer. A teacher or aide had to be right by our side until the school bus came, because they treated us like 5-year-olds. One afternoon, the teacher’s aide escorted me down to the parking lot under the school for me to catch the bus. Shortly thereafter, a grown man walked onto the lot from the sidewalk, where the building hung over the lot. I just assumed he was a father who was there to pick up his kids.

But then the man extracted a sheet of paper and a lighter out of his pocket. He lit a match and set fire to the paper as he held it in one hand. As the paper burned, he waved a hand over the flame, as if he was casting a spell on it.

Then the teacher’s aide saw the man with the burning paper. “Sir,” she said, as she approached the man. The fire went out, and the man was left holding a partially burned piece of paper. Then the man slowly walked away without uttering a peep. I never saw him again.

He almost burned down the whole school.



## People got mad because their gum sucked

My pals say that not every bubble gum experience is positive. There’s been some bad brands out there. I don’t want to specify what brands, because I don’t feel like personally sampling each one to verify others’ observations. But this should be enough to warn you of what might be in store.

These events took place recently enough that the chewers were adults when they chewed these brands of bubble gum. This means they were old enough not to do anything stupid to (keek!) ruin their gum.

According to legend, one brand seemed to come in a cardboard flavor. It’s a gum I’ve heard of but not one that’s at the forefront of my conscience. I’ve been informed that, after blowing a bubble, this brand released a “whirlwind of 99.44% cardboard flavoring.” I was also told that this gum was so sticky that it stuck to things nobody even knew existed.

Did you know pickle relish bubble gum was available too? Another brand—the chewer doesn’t even remember what it was—was a standard pink beegee with big green chunks in it that resembled Skittles. The chunks didn’t even break up while the gum was being chewn. Remember, the chewers in this report were adults, so it’s not like the user of this gum had done anything idiotic like use the wad to pull boogers off the mirror in the bathroom in high school.

One of the leading sugarless brands produced a pink bubble gum that tasted of medicine and caused chewers to gag.

Some peeps don’t like the newer gums that come in pellets instead of nice, standardized pieces. That’s because they want to know how big of a bubble they’ll be able to blow.

Whatever the weather, these folks must be bubble gum connoisseurs!



## A 14-year-old wiped boogers on stuff

My childhood home wasn't the only household where people wiped mucus on delicate surfaces. It's also not the only place where the culprit had to be at least in their teens.

I stumbled upon a parenting forum on Yahoo in which someone discusses this very thing. Because it's Yahoo, the message was posted at least 10 years ago. Since Yahoo gutted GeoCities and reported journalists to the Chinese government, it's gone the way of MySpace and "values voters." In this forum, someone wanted advice because their 14-year-old stepdaughter "has a habit of picking her nose and wiping it on the walls and furniture."

Splendid, huh?

Someone replied, "14 is pretty old to still be doing that." Another responded that she was too old to wipe her "findings" on furniture. Still another suggested making the stepdaughter pay to rent a steam cleaner from Kroger. I'd hate to be the next person to rent that steam cleaner!

Furniture got booged in America's lost decade!

## Bullshit study says we're ugly

Look out, America! A new study published in the *Journal of Public Economics*—a peer-reviewed academic journal—says we're ugly. You, me, and every cool person who reads this fanzine of freedom.

The study claims that those on the political right are more attractive than those on the left. The report studied political candidates in America, Europe, and Australia. Researchers say this happens because people with better looks receive preferential treatment—and the Right is all about preferential treatment.

Even so, I'm calling bullshit on this study, because I do not find right-wing politics sexy. At all. On the other hand, the features I find attractive are not things that are considered sexy by those in the media who think it's their right to decide what I like. Similarly, a 2012 study said Americans tend to perceive those with "misaligned teeth" as less attractive and less intelligent, and I'm calling bullshit on that too—and not just because the study was sponsored by cosmetic dentists. If that's true, why are my punk rocker teeth such a smash hit? In contrast, a more objective source—an oral surgeon—says people are subconsciously attracted to crooked teeth, because it's more authentic and friendly. I do know of employers refusing to hire people because of irregular gnashers, but it should be illegal to discriminate on that basis.

Fight capitalism! Look cool!

## CPH wouldn't let us gum

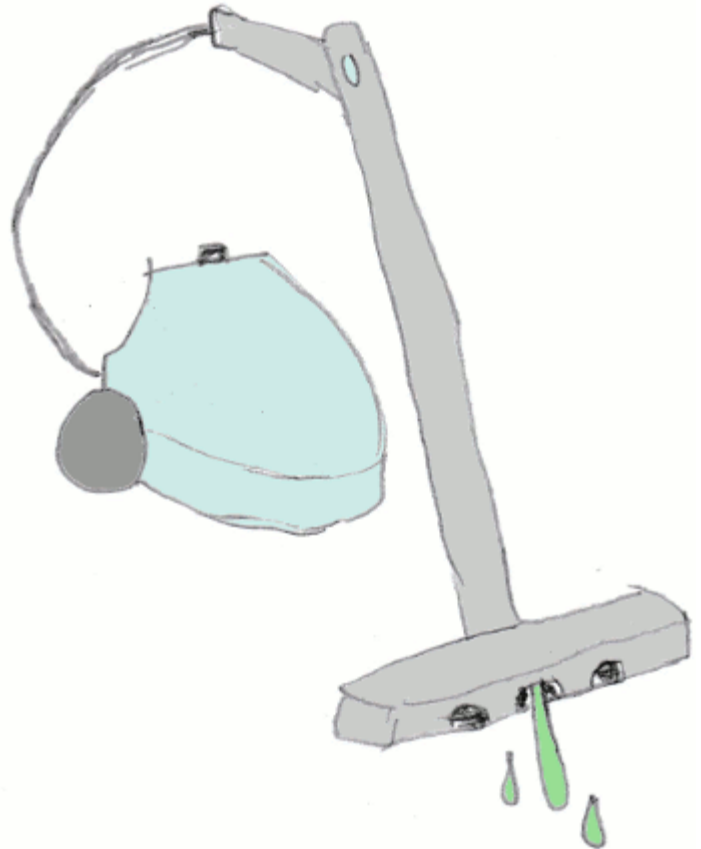
CPH—the hated teen gulag in Covington, Kentucky—sure was petty about stuff.

Guess what? I got tired in 1990 of being commandeered by the right-wing sociopathic automatons who ran CPH. Anyone who seriously thought they weren't gonna hear about it until the end of time was a fool. Incidentally, my family agrees with me that CPH was full of shit. Ask them. I dare you. You lose, CPH.

I can count on my fingers the times in my life when I've wanted gum in the worst way and felt like I couldn't live without it. Most of these occasions were immediately after having a cavity filled, so I was out of luck. The only other time I can remember was throughout most of the CPH era—and they wouldn't let us have it.

They never explained why we couldn't gum. It was a rule "because it is." That makes even less sense than "because it bips." I have no problem when people bip—but they live dangerously when they try to is. The guards gummed. We didn't. Beegee was a very important element of diet we were denied. One day, CPH took us on a field trip to reward kids who submitted to every diktat unflinchingly, and some girl begged the guards to let her chew gum. They relented on the condition that she would only blow a bubble *once*.

Late during this era, I was being transitioned into the class at First District, so my peers got away with gumming. During those few weeks, the teacher dropped the hammer when people bubbled, but she didn't seem to



mind when they gummed. (The teacher wasn't a gummer. She once related, "I was grown before I had my first piece of gum.") One day, a fresh stick of bubble gum (in its wrapper) sailed across my desk. That time, I didn't want gum. So I smuggled the beegee into CPH and gave it to a fellow detainee. After he "ended up with gum somehow", CPH punished him by withholding food.

Because.

## A person got gum stuck all over everything

Middle-aged people who now chew bubble gum only occasionally may have once gummed far more often.

I asked my friend who gums every now and then if she has any more good gum stories to make you heehaw uncontrollably. She reads and critiques this zine monthly. She says she underwent a "gum stage" at age 14 when she gummed constantly. Probably even bubbled! (It's sort of like how my dog had a Band-Aid stage in which he kept chewing up Band-Aids. But he didn't bubble.)

Most adults have a good enough memory of what they did at 14 that they don't need to be hypnotized about everything. Especially when it involves gum. My friend says she remembers that she was once playing with a yellow gumball that she was chewing, and somehow got a thin film of gum stuck all over her bookshelf.

She also ruined a vinyl folder with bubble gum. She says she crammed an entire pack of grape gum into her mouth, and after she was done masticating it with her peculiar chompers, she instantaneously flattened it in her folder to see what would happen. Then she forgot it was there, and later she opened her folder and was confronted with an impenetrable accordion of sticky, purple goo that stretched between each side of the folder. The best part: Somehow she removed all the bubble gum, but the spot that had the gum kept growing little purple droplets of moisture for months.

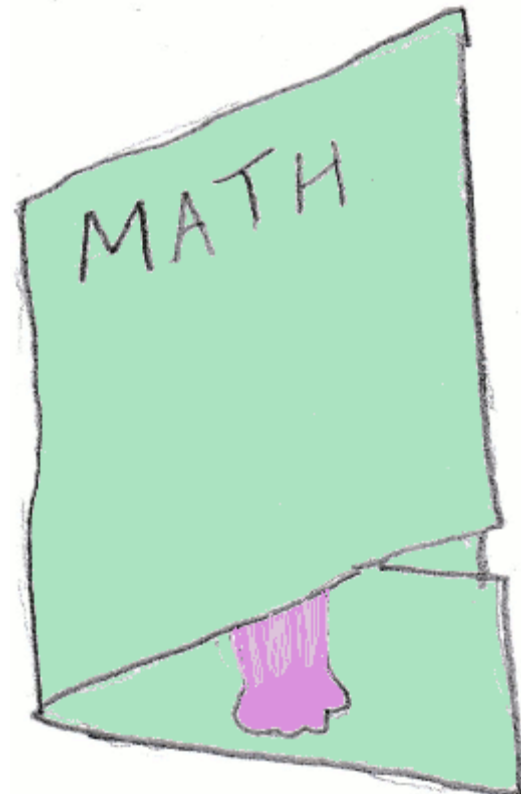
A chewed wad of beegee once went through the washer and dryer at a laundromat in Southgate—creating a hilarious mess.

Although she never attended Brossart, she went to school with some very strange people. She said there was a boy in her class who discarded his used gum in his pants pocket. He wanted to chew the same wad later, and he was seen using a pencil to extract tiny threads of fabric from his gum that had collected from his pants.

I forgot to ask my friend whether she's ever worn a Jane Child and gotten gum caught in it while bubbling.

Some people are good at telling stories of their trials and tribulations involving bubble gum. For lots of folks, their best gum story is something like: "I heard the song 'A Little In Love' by Cliff Richard the other day, and it reminded me of how it was on the radio the time I was riding in the front seat of my mom's car and I blew a huge bubble with Bubble Yum and it popped all over my face." Or something like: "Today at school, we broke piñatas. Some people got bubble gum. The end." But we coolsters can do much better than that.

So take the coolster challenge! Send me your best, boffomost stories about beegee, and maybe my readers will get to read them and peep! E-mail address is [bandit73@outlook.com](mailto:bandit73@outlook.com).



## I'm stinking Arby's

Radio commercials for Arby's fast food restaurants in the early '90s sang, "Same same same, same same same, Arby's is different!"

Oh, it's different, alright.

My friend just told me someone made a mighty fine mess at the Arby's in Bellevue. Here's a hint: There's poo involved.

She says she went into this restaurant looking for some interesting things to eat, but she was taken aback when she noticed a small object laying on the floor out in the eating area. Yep, it was poop. It was just a little pebble poop—not one of those monster logs that coiled—but it was poop nonetheless.

How did it get there? Did it roll out of someone's pants leg? Some people say shit cannot roll, but it does indeed roll—if it's of the right consistency and shape. Most people think all poop does is get caked on things, but it's usually just the big squishers that do that.

Back around 1999, I wrote extensively about how I saw a man eat a hamburger he dropped on the floor at Wendy's in Newport. The patty and each bun came off separately and landed on the floor before he devoured it. I sure hope he doesn't eat food off the floor at this Arby's.

Different is good. Well, most of the time.

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