

The Last word™

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How cool people roadtrip in Big Bend

Socialism works. That's why America has such beautiful national parks. If you want to live in a land without socialism, emigrate to a country that doesn't have national parks. Just pack your bags and (cups hand around mouth) *MOVE!*

My trip to Big Bend National Park in Texas in 2011 was legendary in its own right, so recently—from October 14 to 21—I embarked (arf-arf!) on an encore. Our cooler caravan left on a Saturday morning. Not much of note happened until Sunday, when—after downing lunch at a seemingly clean restaurant along the route—I used the men's room at this eatery and saw this perplexing sign...



Uh, it's called toilet paper because toilets were designed to accept it. One does not need to use the funny toilet (the garbage can) to discard toilet paper, much as one does not need to use the funny garbage can (the toilet) to throw away other trash. Some countries don't do toilet paper, and some lands—such as Singapore—have many a johnnypot that does not handle bathroom tissue. But this sign was seen in the United States.

We lodged in Fort Stockton, Texas, that night. Flatulence was detected: A loud-and-proud bunker blast was heard inside a Chevron gas station convenience store there. The lowlight of our trip was the truck noise that kept me awake almost the whole night. It sounded like the droning siren of a tow truck or construction vehicle, and why Fort Stockton tolerated it is anyone's guess.

A urinal at Big Bend was the heehaw inducer we have every right to expect...



I call it a layer cake urinal, for it seems to have 3 layers.

As you know, I have no energy, because of a chronic health condition—so I couldn't hike for more than a few minutes. The only celebrity look-alike I saw on this trip was a Jack Nicholson look-alike I saw on a short hiking trail at Big Bend. On Monday night, I sprained my knee while climbing into my tent—which would have made an even bigger struggle of hiking.

Our counterculture procession camped at Big Bend for 2 nights, and then it was on to San Antonio—hometown of Christopher Cross. At a restaurant there on Wednesday night, I noticed there was bubble gum stuck all over the pen they gave us to sign our receipt. It smelled minty!

On Friday, we visited Bill Clinton's boyhood home in Hope, Arkansas. Here we saw ol' Bill's favorite childhood toilet...



Then we continued to Hot Springs National Park—another park maintained for the enjoyment, ennoblement, and education of the American people. It's your park, America. Don't let the Tea Party town criers take your national parks away.

Also on Friday, I noticed the restroom at an Exxon station in eastern Arkansas was flooded. The area around each donicker was flooded so mightily that I had to stand 3 feet back from the urinal to use it. It's unclear which johndola was the source of the flooding, but one of the urinals was marked as out of order.

Don't like it that I went on a roadtrip? Too fucking bad. I don't live to appease those who hate me.

Occupy mole busted



I avidly participated in Occupy Cincinnati until it folded like a cheap pair of boxers, and I remember being warned that our movement had infiltrators. I was told that if we ever caught an infiltrator, it would be someone we'd never, *ever* expect.

That day has arrived!

I can think of a handful of Occupiers who I *know* aren't moles, since they have so much invested in the cause. It's sort of like how I know Jim Hightower will never abandon real populism, because he has so much invested in it. I can't say that about some other political figures—after they abandoned us.

Many of those involved in Occupy have since joined other great progressive movements like Black Lives Matter and the pushback against the Trump thugocracy. An Occupy regular who has been exposed as an infiltrator in recent weeks had seemed to be marching forward too—until now.

How was this person exposed as a mole? In a very short timeframe—maybe a couple weeks—her political views that she espoused on her social media accounts seemed to do a complete reversal. This was a smoking gun for a couple reasons. A person almost *never* becomes that much more conservative unless they've joined a cult. For most, this saying applies: A mind stretched by a new idea never returns to its old dimensions. A study several years ago showed that most folks actually become more liberal over time. But not in this case. Her apparent political degeneration is also suspicious because of the timing. In the past year, American conservatism has been so disgraced that the Right isn't gaining any real converts. It hasn't in years. This is not the era for

someone to suddenly charge rightward.

This person attributed her political epiphany to her dislike of unspecified tactics of the Left—which doesn't make any sense, because the Left isn't carrying out any unprovoked violence. Just recently, the Right has been responsible for Charlottesville, Las Vegas, and other deadly violence, but what violence has the Left committed? This person spent almost 9 months of Donald Trump's reign bashing the so-called President, but then suddenly began "liking" his Facebook groups and reposting discredited propaganda put out by Tea Party websites and other fascist sources.

But wait! There's more!

She's also filling her account with general racism and xenophobia, accused the Obama administration of refusing to prosecute pedophiles, and posted a harangue attacking unwed mothers. (She said she posted it because of God.) And it's been going on 24/7. She's become a caricature of every right-wing authoritarian you can imagine. She also listed the Occupy movement among "enemies to this country" and "hatemongers", and expressed a hope that Trump "sends them all to the gulag." Another frenzied tirade from this person claims socialism is "nothing more than what immature people find when they decide God isn't real."

The sound of no hands clapping is heard. Almost everybody has ignored her since this started.

Seriously, I *never* would have guessed this person would be a mole. Not in a million years. But in hindsight, it makes sense. Back when Occupy Cincinnati met regularly, she accused a local supporter of progressive causes of committing wage theft. Occupy being a populist movement, it's an accusation we take seriously—and it's the perfect allegation you'd make if you want to divide Occupy, since some would never believe that the accused would commit such a crime. A classic tactic of infiltrators is to divide. At least once, when Occupy held a meeting in a public building, she *yelled* loudly enough that I thought we'd be kicked out of the venue. I thought at the time she was just trying to make a point—and I didn't ask her to pipe down—but now I think she was actually *trying* to get Occupy in trouble.

It's breathtaking. You think you know people but you don't. I'm devoting a whole article to just one person because she's the only one I know who was so successful for so long at subverting Occupy Cincinnati like this. A couple other people who showed up at Occupy Cincinnati early on have also been outed as infiltrators over the years. But everyone forgot about them, because they didn't last more than a few days at Occupy before they decided their fee-fees were hurt by being around people they disagreed with.

This is obviously an organized effort, but who's behind it? Authorities should pursue racketeering charges under RICO against organizations that are responsible for it. Then again, I wouldn't be surprised if the CIA was behind it, because of the CIA's own history of right-wing thuggery.

People want me to talk about toilets because they think it's funny

I'm a funny guy, and I solicited requests on Facebook for humorous topics to discuss in these pages. It went without saying that I was only interested in subjects I have experience with. For example, I didn't want to write an article about prying caviar crumbs from orthodontic work, or living in a drought. But toilets? Everyone has experience with toilets! I don't live in a toilet-free bubble.

People replied to my recent posts by saying they wanted me to talk about toilets because they think toilets are funny. Guess what? People are right. Toilets *are* funny. Damn, they're hilarious! They're big and bulbous, and they're a looming presence in many modern homes, businesses, and public buildings.

But people are sensitive about the proper position of the toilet seat and lid. So any jokes about these aspects of the toilet world are in hushed tones.

In a quarter-century of zining and indie publishing, I know I've mentioned pee on toilet seats. I've even mentioned poop on toilet seats! But the positioning of the lid and seat are of interest too, regardless of the risk of



soilage. And when I was growing up, the topic became more and more controversial in our household.

Some of my family members seemed to be obsessed with the toilet lid. When I was a teenager, I'd often pee. I left the toilet lid up when I was done. Shortly thereafter, a family member would angrily stomp down the hall to the bathroom and slam the toilet lid down—scowling all the while.

I can understand the controversy about the seat, but why the lid? Toilets need seats, but do they really need lids? People sit on the seat—not the lid. It's not like *South Park* where Mr. Hankey the Christmas Poo can jump out of the toilet and smear itself on everything. Toilet lids spread germs by having to be opened just to do your business. In most public restrooms, toilets don't even have lids. I remember one time back in that era, my mom gave us a lecture that our bathroom was becoming so dirty from people not flushing the toilet and slopping pee everywhere that it was becoming like a public restroom. All we needed was free road maps and a portrait of the governor in the hallway. But if this comparison was really true, we didn't need a toilet lid—regardless of whether we had a picture of ol' Wally in the hall.

When I visited Bill Clinton's childhood digs, the tour guide said the future commander-in-chief used to stand on the toilet lid and pretend he was fishing in the bathtub with a fishing pole. This may be the only documented practical use for a toilet lid.

Whether or not to close a toilet lid was a classic case of order versus freedom—noble values that sometimes conflict with each other. By my teens, I was pegged by my family as a virtuoso of disorder. I'm not sure why. It was probably because I mentioned *Sesame Street* once, I liked Dr Pepper when nobody else did, or some other moronic reason. Once when we went swimming, my towel was provided pre-wadded so I'd know it was mine—since it “fits your personality.” But order and tyranny are not the same thing. The freedom of progressive populism is incompatible with the tyranny of right-wing statism.

My jacket got stained by peach cobbler

This zine showcases the latest doings of yours truly, like stuff I did in 1st grade 38 years ago.

Know what I did back then? I chewed bubble gum. Seriously, I did.

Know what else I did? I misbehaved at school and created a spectacle to be reckoned with. Central to my reputation as a thorn in the side of authority was the hilarious peach cobbler incident in the school cafeteria.

One day, the lunchroom served prepackaged peach cobbler for dessert. This was during one of our long, harsh winters, so I had my winter coat with me that day. This was back when winter jackets were bulky. I had a black jacket with a soft, cozy fringe around the hood, neck, and cuffs. And it got ruined by peach cobbler!

When the cobbler was served, I dug into it. I'm not a big peach cobbler guy, but this time, the cobbler was rotten and therefore inedible. I didn't want it to be wasted, so I tried eating it anyway. But I was still trembling from the unpleasantness of the first bite when I tried taking another bite. Needless to say, a huge hunk of cobbler fell off my fork and onto the floor.

This process was repeated several times with equally comical results. Pieces of cobbler landed in my lap, on the table, or on the edge of the table where it dripped onto the floor. I didn't want to step in cobbler, so I picked up a chunk of cobbler off the floor with my bare hands in an attempt to put it on my plate to be discarded. I accidentally dropped it on my jacket, which was draped across my chair.

One of the teachers—an elderly nun—saw the event. This was the same nun who once angrily lectured the entire student body because someone shit on the toilet seat. But this time, instead of an angry tirade, she launched a more subdued pearl-clutching speech. “Aw, look at that beautiful jacket,” she lamented, eyeing the cobbler stain.

I was still chewing the first bite of cobbler. I couldn't swallow it because it was so disgusting. I think it was then that I let it fall out of my mouth and onto my coat.

Through it all, the aging nun seemed to be concerned about my jacket but not the wasted cobbler. I guess she already knew the cobbler was spoiled.

In a separate incident, I accidentally threw a fork in the garbage in the cafeteria and dumped out the



whole trash can to fish it out. The old nun called it “the fork episode.”

I call attending that school “the useless episode.”

People bubble on YouTube and they think it's funny

You all know someone like this: the person who blows a bubble with bubble gum and proudly flails and gestures to get everyone to watch the orb expand from their pihole. They need an audience when they bubble. This person is usually an adult.

If you're that person—and I know you are—YouTube is tailor-made for you!

Some of the first videos ever posted on YouTube consisted of folks bubbling. When you upload a clip there, you're supposed to agree that it's not a copyrighted music video or TV commercial, but the rules say nothing about blowing a blasted bubble.



The bubblemania on YouTube continues, and there's actually a whole channel devoted to gum reviews...

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq8fmZuyz74dZ7fkA_C_aDA

This beegie bustin' duo calls themselves Two Gum Blondes. Sort of like 4 Non Blondes, only they're Two Gum Blondes. They review different brands and flavors of gum on different criteria—one of which is bubbling capability. But they refuse to review goodgum, so their bubbling proficiency is limited.

Another video consists of a bubble gum blowing contest in the early '90s in which a bunch of people with mullets and bad polo shirts sat around and bubbled...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNwcZE0f2s0>

As a bonus, flatulence is indicated as well. At about :50, you can hear someone clearly exclaiming, “Ew, Jamie just let one!” Around 5:10, the uproarious bouquet of a loud-and-proud bunker blast may have filled the air.

In another clip, a bunch of peeps are gathered around for dinner, and a woman blows a huge bubble that bursts and completely covers the lenses of her glasses, ruining them...

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

Then everyone breaks out laughing because her \$400 gafas are ruined.

But no bother! In this video, a woman describes how she removed burst bubble gum from her daughter's delicate specs using baby oil...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oppWBE4Lghw>

A similar theme of world domination through popping a bubble on your glasses can be found here...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sosUWi9L0Kg>

In the next video, a man goes on for 20 minutes about how to chew gum with dentures. The funniest part is when the gum dislodges his dentures and he yells out, “Fuck!”...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUmQL_XagWk

But he didn't bubble.

The woman in the next clip purports to offer “a little tutorial on how to blow bubbles.” In the video, she bubbles and it bursts on a picture frame...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H620ISCeaR8>

Even celebrity look-alikes have gotten into the act! In this video, a Taylor Swift look-alike bubbles, and

she describes how her sister had Bazookacidal tendencies (also known as doing a Wright brothers)...

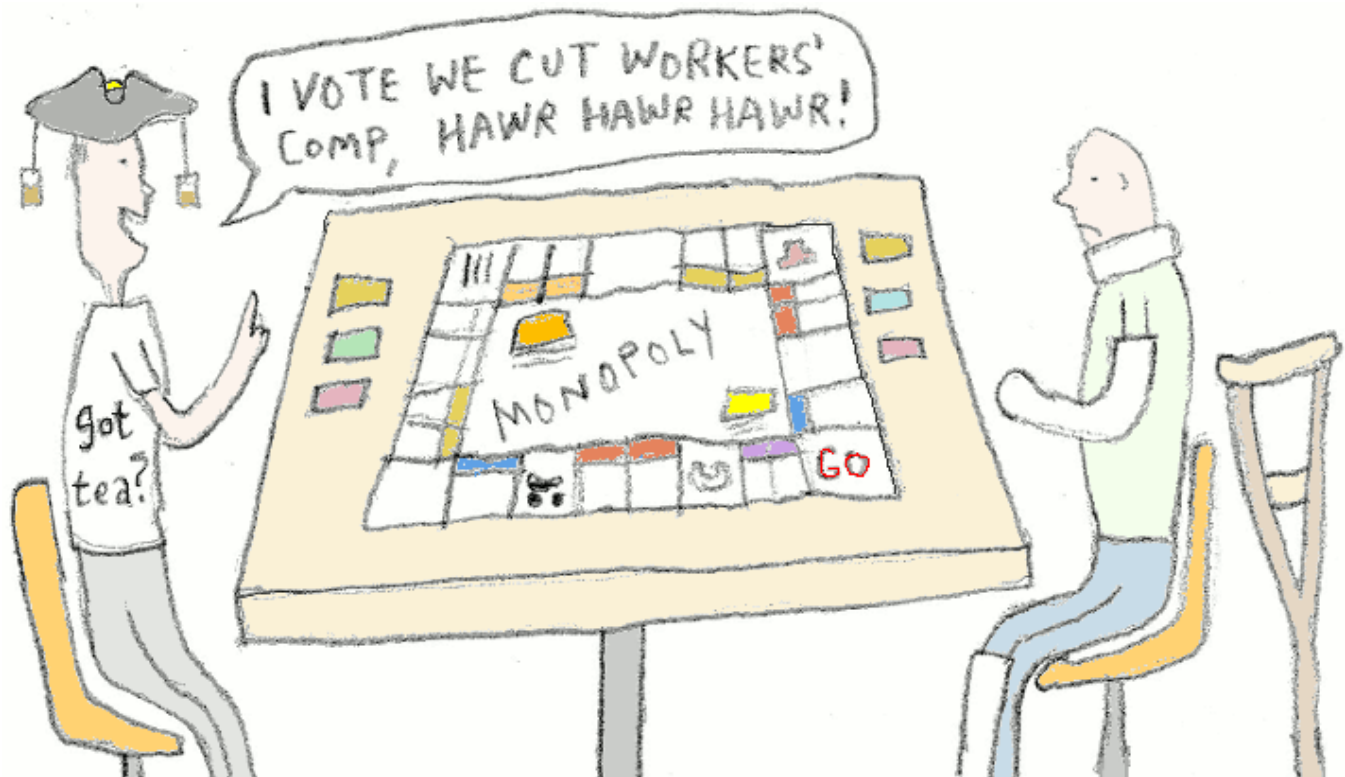
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wy4FqSBMsDw>

Finally, a woman blows a bubble inside a bubble inside a bubble inside a bubble inside a bubble...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYypPkRk2fY>

Years of innovations in bubbling have been encapsulated in the aforementioned videos! They range from bubble gum blowing contests in the happy-go-lucky days of old to more serious concerns like keeping clinical accessories free of the zesty goo. These videos certainly contribute more to society than the ceaseless stream of cosmetic dentistry ads that YouTube was inexplicably placing in my recommended video feed. Some would even argue that bubble gum videos are the *opposite* of dentistry!

Monopoly doesn't monopolize economic simulation games



My amazing business partner who critiques this zine mentioned the board game Monopoly on her blog recently because it teaches lessons in life. That it does. This classic game is a cautionary tale that illustrates the hopeless vagaries of capitalism, as the winning player—the one who enjoys the most luck—grinds their rivals into sawdust. Players don't get to make choices unless they've had good luck. The game would be even more frustratingly realistic if each player started with a different amount of money—and if the winner was required to gloat forever.

When I was growing up, I read in a book that Monopoly was invented by one Charles Darrow during the Great Depression. The greed of the 1920s that helped impoverish my grandparents seemed to inspire the game. The book included a photo of an aging Darrow smiling as he hoarded piles of Monopoly cash and appeared to be snatching more play money from a person's hand.

But in the reality-based world, Darrow wasn't entirely responsible for Monopoly. I was reminded of this because my friend is considering buying a Monopoly set with the classic layout (not a modern version or a specialty set based on *E.T.* or *Sesame Street*). She had a set before, but Monopoly sets don't last forever when you have wild and crazy pals who play 52 Pickup with the Community Chest cards, shove the title deeds between the spokes of their bike wheel so it makes a cool sound, swallow all the hotels as part of a game where they throw them into a cup of beer, and use the thimble token to cover broken dental fillings. The set she looked into includes a choking warning because of "uninflated or broken balloons." Since when did Monopoly have balloons?

This version got bad reviews from people who received a copy that had half the title deeds missing. See, Monopoly is so realistic that it even mimics all those gentrification land grabs!

Another option would be to get a modern set, but some reviewers said this edition is of such poor quality that they feared it might be counterfeit. Even the rules are watered down. One reviewer said the board split in half the first time they tried to play it. You can also buy a luxury wooden set for about \$200, but many of the reviews

are from rich whiners complaining because the wood has a scratch that they didn't notice until they first played with the set 6 months after they got it. There's also a cashless edition of Monopoly that uses bank cards that require a battery-powered scanner. One reviewer says it "completely ruins Monopoly."

You might be better off making your own Monopoly set—or designing a whole new game! After all, Monopoly isn't even the only game of its type—or even the first. Monopoly is practically a replica of an earlier game called The Landlord's Game. Charles Darrow didn't invent the idea at all. The Landlord's Game was designed by Lizzie Magie to demonstrate the injustice of monopolistic land grabs. Magie's game showed how artificially inflated rents bankrupted the people.

The Landlord's Game allowed players to vote in the middle of the game to adopt a different set of rules with a more progressive economic structure. The only problem with that is that a single game would probably never end, because progressive policies protect the economy from recession and inequality.

Darrow wasn't even the first person to call this type of game Monopoly or use Atlantic City street names. By the time ol' Charles started making his Monopoly sets, The Landlord's Game was often called Monopoly, and one version was modeled on Atlantic City.

The Landlord's Game had other imitators besides Darrow's incarnation of Monopoly—one of the most famous being Easy Money. The Landlord's Game was well-intended, but the concept of economic simulation board games probably also helped inspire a game that tries to make the exact opposite point: a truly classist board game called Public Assistance, which assails the industriousness of people who receive public benefits. One website commenter called Public Assistance a "politically incorrect collector's item", but that understates the utterly vile racism of some of the cards used in the game. The instructions also encourage folks to bring the game to their local welfare office and invite welfare recipients to play it. This game also reportedly suffers from unworkable gameplay—unlike Monopoly.

My suggestion would be to buy a classic Monopoly set and write your own rules that allow players to vote to switch to a more liberal economic system during the game. But be warned that each game would probably last as long as your most successful Dungeons & Dragons campaign. Maybe it'll teach teamwork.

Joan Jett bubbled until they made her stop

Remember rock legend Joan Jett? She's best known for singing "I Love Rock 'N' Roll" and other hits.

She Chewed Gum And Thought It Was Funny. In an interview that appeared in *Musician* magazine in 1983, ol' Joan confessed that she blew bubbles with bubble gum on airplanes. She declared, "I like to make a lot of noise and blow bubbles." She bubbled because "it's a good way to clear out sleeping space on airplanes."

?????

So if you flew on a plane in 1983 and saw someone bubbling, odds are it was Joan Jett.

She went on to star in a 1987 movie called *Light Of Day*. For that project, her band became known as the Barbusters, and the film's title song—written by Bruce Springsteen—charted on what is reportedly the last WCLU survey ever published. The movie also included a fictional band called the Bubblegummers.

Although the movie mentioned gum, the film ordered Joan to stop chomping this piquant goo. It's not known who it was who was involved with the film who ordered her to stop—or why. She said in a newspaper interview that she was forced to stop gumming while she was working on *Light Of Day*. This despite the fact that in the same interview, she said that both she and her character were "rebellious persons."

Yep, when I think of rebellion, I think of not chewing bubble gum because a movie makes me stop.

Failing to chew bubble gum was an unfortunate lapse of judgment by an otherwise legendary musician.



Right-wingers should be forced to finish school like us

Remember when the Far Right screamed, cried, and complained because I didn't go to school long enough to appease them? Pepperidge Farm remembers.

The right-wing deplorapile used to at least pretend to be smart by haranguing everyone else about their

lack of education, but lately they've gotten mighty uneducated themselves. What's worse than an educated rich right-winger? An *uneducated* rich right-winger!

What incentive do they even have to go to school? They inherit all their wealth. They don't have to work for any of it.

Why does their refusal to get educated make them worse? Their lack of education hasn't calmed their greed. More importantly, they didn't have to do what everyone else had to do just to have a fraction of what they have in life. I suffered a life of terror at their hands, and I did just about everything they ordered me to, to try to get that sheepskin. What did that get me? Yet they have *everything* without having to earn it.

How do we wipe the ugly sneers off the faces of these phony populists? It's tempting to hope that their mansions are suddenly swallowed by a giant underground sewer collapse. Barring that, uneducated rich right-wingers should be required to get their degree—just like they force everyone else to do. This should be a prerequisite for them to enjoy the privileges that adult citizens have. Want a driver's license? Finish school.

The desire of wealthy right-wingers to remain lazy is underscored by their support of a report by the state of Kentucky that attacks some of the nation's hardest working people. This report—the only time a state has ever released a study demanding the federal government gut Social Security—is rife with debunked right-wing propaganda and “reforms” to rob the 99%. The Far Right wants to grant themselves the power to deny people the disability benefits they've earned, when the right-wing know-it-all have never gone to school long enough to get a social work or other degree that would qualify them to determine if someone is disabled.

It also highlights the point that I'm not changing what I do just to please people who hate me.

I know nobody *likes* the idle rich. The days of irrational hero worship of random rich guys went out with GeoCities. The national manbaby lost the popular vote by 3 million. But it's not like we live in a democratic republic where we're protected from excesses of the 1%. That's why we still have to fight this shit.

Last Word celebrates 20 years in Bellevue

Raise a glass to 20 years in the Belv!



In November, **The Last Word**—your road atlas to freedom—celebrates 20 years since its move to Bellevue!

After I worked at the library but before I worked for the Department of the Interior (a gig where I received absolutely no support whatsoever), this zine of zaniness moved from Highland Heights to Bellevue for the whole wide world to ogle (beep). A few of you may remember that this was a forced relocation—practically a land grab. My previous digs were ruined when raw sewage backed up through the shower drain—which happened because of local governments rubber-stamping every new subdivision regardless of environmental or economic effects. I couldn't find a new place to replace it that was that close. So it was in effect a land grab by developers.

Did it ever blow up in the Far Right's face! It took a few years, but blow up it did. Bet they're sorry now.

You may also know that this zine spent much of that era fighting against deceitful, fraudulent organizations like my former high school and the psychiatric racket because of their criminal and unethical conduct. (*Unethical* means *wrong*. Got that?) Of course, I've been blackballed for it and treated like a criminal, but there's a saying that if exposing crimes is treated as a crime, it means we're ruled by criminals.

It's hard to believe our move to the Belv was only 9 years after the celebrated Plop Lecture, which

lamented the destruction of many a toilet.

Will this biptacular bulletin last another 20 years in Bellevue—or anywhere? If poo.

Operation WalGum

It's a consensus: Walmart should crap its pants.

Nobody today likes this retail giant. Lucky for me, I don't remember ever seeing a Walmart until I was 17, since Walmart didn't have many stores outside the South yet. So I wasn't locked into resigning myself to Walmart's monopolistic presence. In many towns across America today, Walmart has no competition—thanks to the retailer's predatory practices that go completely unregulated.

I bought a TV there once in the '90s, because this was when Walmart liked to brag that its appliances were American-made. In an era when The Media catatonically bashed the American worker for wanting to be paid properly, it was refreshing to find goods made in the good ol' U.S. and A. But try finding American-made electronics at Walmart now. You'll be disappointed. These days, there's no reason to shop at Walmart, because of all its union-busting and predatory ways. But in many small towns, they practically hold a gun to your head and force you to. There's no competition—at all.

During my Big Bend trip, I was at a Walmart in Fort Stockton, Texas, because we couldn't find any other supermarket. But if I needed bubble gum, any one of several gas station food marts would have been better—including the Chevron where a person bunkerooded. The selection at the gas stations wasn't great, but at least they had goodgum. Walmart's gum selection didn't appear to be any better than that of Kroger. I saw the usual Orbit that nobody likes and the Freedent that always collects dust—since you don't need to be a teeth person to enjoy the good bubble bustin' brands instead—but very little else.

So much for the idea that “Walmart has everything.” This is like when Kmart stopped selling records.



A person did a Wright brothers in a Patty Smyth video

We're rockin' and reelin' and too hot to trot, so shake it, baby, don't break it, as we're puttin' on a request for this lost hit from the rock 'n' roll year 1987!

People disagree on lots of things. For example, some folks call Bishop Brossart High School a small-time thug operation. Others disagree, calling it a big-time thug operation. But everybody agrees that Patty Smyth rules, and there's no point in arguing. I saw her perform in concert with Scandal a couple times, and she had some solo albums as well.

So if anyone ever bubbled in a Patty Smyth video, it was inevitable that someone would eventually demand that I discuss it here. That they did. In the clip for ol' Patty's hit single “Downtown Train”, not only did someone bubble, but somebody did a Wright brothers—also known as Bazookacidal tendencies.

The video is set in a subway, as a bunch of peeps—mostly in their late teens—bip the place all up. A girl bubbled. As she was doing so, a guy swaggered past and did a Wright brothers: He extended his finger and burst the expanding bubble. Then the girl stuck her gum under her seat.

This video probably touched off a wave of people doing a Wright brothers on the New York City subway. Much as the subway suffered an increase in robberies starting in the mid-'90s, the rate of Bazookacidal tendencies probably soared after 1987.