

The Last Word™

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'Friends' mentioned Hubba Bubba

What's been the highlight of the past month?

I was hoping against all hope that my dentist would mention bubble gum, because it would have been funny. I've a bubble gum doctor already. Why not a bubble gum dentist too? (I fear a bubble gum optometrist is out of the question.) Alas, it was not to be.

It was a day of sadness when the dentist failed to mention bubble gum. But late that evening, I received a frantic e-mail from someone who said they'd just seen an old episode of the sitcom *Friends*—from probably 20 years ago—in which the zesty goo was discussed, and that the scene could be found on YouTube. In that scene, a man threatens to buy Hubba Bubba for a woman as a birthday present.

Friends coincided very closely with the era when Hubba Bubba could not be found in this fine land, so odds are that this bubble kaboomin' brand of beegie was not available when this episode first aired. Yet Hubba Bubba wasn't gone for good. It was only pooing. Since the brand's comeback, however, it's generally agreed that it bears little resemblance to the vastly superior Hubba Bubba of old. It's like when Eveready was replaced by Energizer.

Big troubles!

I never watched *Friends*. Ever. I still got to constantly hear its theme song that knocked off the Knack because radio played it nonstop for years. But I never watched the show, even though I may have been able to find the time for it because I only had a few million personal attacks in my newsreader to contend with each day.

In the meantime, my recent dental disappointment proves I have to make my own fun. So, 10 years from now when I visit the dentist again, I'll have to induce them into mentioning bubble gum. Maybe I'll beg them for a prescription for it, or ask them if I should use bubble gum as protection when I open cans with my teeth.



'The Price Is Right' mentioned 'Sesame Street'

Of all the models ever to regularly appear on the long-running game show *The Price Is Right*, Holly Hallstrom was the most prone to hilarious foul-ups, bleeps, and blunders. So when I stumbled upon a YouTube video that included a 1982 *Price Is Right* episode labeled "Holly Goes Over the Wire", I couldn't resist!

I don't have time to sit around and watch old *Price Is Right* shows in their entirety, but I was in the mood for a good Holly blooper! So I skipped along in the clip to get to the good stuff! It all goes down a few minutes into the show when then-host Bob Barker trots out the Super Ball game.

Prizes included a trip to Belgium, a hot tub, and other goodies. One of the smaller prizes that went with a Super Ball throw was a View-Master "gift set." As the turntable reveals Holly beaming mischievously next to a stand full of View-Master reels, you'll burst into laughter at the goofy xylophone music that plays.

But it gets even funnier! The late Johnny Olson announces that the set includes "*Annie and Sesame Street* picture reels", among other things. When I heard that, I couldn't contain my laughter! The contestant was a very mature, dignified, intelligent young man, and he had to guess the price of *Sesame Street* View-Master reels! It looked like even Holly was about to erupt in snickering as she introduced the prize.



Everything was anticlimactic from there. Even a few seconds later when Holly tripped over Bob's microphone cord and crashed into the contestant, the *Sesame Street* reference couldn't be topped! I stopped watching this episode after that point, because I figured nothing would beat the *Sesame Street* mention. I guess it's remotely possible that later in the show, Bob Barker bubbled or Dian Parkinson said "ruin." But it's not very likely.

Shit schools waste time on

The cries have approached a howl against those who participated in the nationwide student walkout against gun violence—and it illustrates the hypocrisy of many of those who oppose the students.

I don't usually endorse tighter gun laws, but since the Really Serious People won't enact my proposal of seizing guns from hate groups, what do you expect me to do? Tough shit, NRA. The rights to freely assemble without being shot and to be free of unreasonable searches shouldn't be outweighed by what the NRA sees as an unlimited right to use weapons that are strictly instruments of war.

I applaud the young people who participated in the walkout. I went to high school with some real cretins who'd never do anything that intelligent or socially relevant. (I don't mean my classmates in the "bad" kids' class, who I got along with quite well.) But the walkout fails to enchant the right-wing intelligentsia, who have puffed up and blustered as always.

They assail the students for missing 17 minutes of class time. But let's look at the nonsense that schools take *even more* time out of class for.

Schools regularly take away valuable class time for pep rallies. When I went to Brossart, I dreaded each one, because I was attacked even more than usual. They wouldn't handle a classroom with 5 kids throwing things, so why would they control a gym with 200?

Schools also waste time on standardized tests—which is fine if you enjoy loudly passing gas and flicking Skittles across the room.

At Brossart and other Catholic schools I attended, we were also taken out of class for other fucked-in-the-brain pursuits.

We're always hearing from The Media about how American schools should mimic conservatives' favorite foreign dictatorships by adding months to the school year—yet schools won't wisely use the time they have.

News outlets are *littered* with accounts of students being punished for participating in the walkouts. A school in Arkansas paddled participants. School officials in Chicago have threatened to punish students who participated in an event that didn't even take place at school. A Nevada school suspended a student for calling his congressman's office and saying lawmakers should "get off their fucking asses"—even though this call wasn't made using a school phone and wasn't placed from school. Everyone knows damn well students wouldn't be disciplined if they walked out to support a cause that school administrators support. When I attended the "bad" kids' class, school personnel took us to a rally on Fountain Square to support the 1991 Gulf War—which I opposed. We took time from class to walk over a mile to Fountain Square, sit through a rally, and walk back. That was a couple hours down the crapper right there.

It's not as if our schools aren't baldly political the rest of the time. For example, Brossart required each of us to sign a newspaper ad demanding a constitutional amendment to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

And why do public schools sponsor the annual See You at the Pole rally? Students may pray in public schools as long as they don't compel the school to sponsor it. So why are public schools sponsoring a religious event and taking time out of class for it?

At least today's students care about mass shootings enough to give the problem plenty of attention. The Republican Right doesn't care: Gun violence wasn't unheard of in the '90s, but the GOP fought against fabricated crises like the "welfare dependency" hoax without even *acknowledging* the rise of mass killings. With young people today focusing on gun safety activism, other issues are sure to get attention too. If this keeps up, the 1% will rapidly be reduced to a powerless husk as it so richly deserves—as long as the right-wing media doesn't violently silence this movement like what happened to Occupy.

Mr. Mister gets blistered

People are obsessed with all sorts of things. For instance, toe jam. But would you believe a person was once obsessed with Mr. Mister?

I never went spooony over Mr. Mister, but I used to think the band wasn't completely ridiculous—when I was 12! I guess I've soured on them over the years because of maturity—mine, not Mr. Mister's. I don't think Mr. Mister intended to appeal to adults.

I was reminded of Mr. Mister recently when I heard one of their songs in an *American Top 40* countdown from 1986—which first aired right around the time I was expelled from Cline and force-fed the more militant class warfare of St. Joe's. That was late in my 7th grade year. St. Joe's acted like they were doing me a favor by enrolling me. That was a load of roo gas. I didn't want to go to school there, always hated it with a passion, and haven't changed my mind ever since. St. Joe's was a disaster.

When I was in 7th grade at St. Joe's, there was a girl in the 8th grade class who was possessed by Mr. Mister! Because of this unusual preoccupation, she gave the impression of being the type who'd utterly pick her nose and eat it. For days—possibly weeks—all she talked about was an upcoming Mr. Mister concert she planned to attend. As a joke, other students kept telling male schoolmates that this girl wanted them to go to the concert with her.

If not for her obsession with this band, she might not have given the impression of being the type who'd utterly pick her nose and eat it. I don't remember much else about her, so she must have not been too much of a nuisance. But this was St. Joe's, so it's all relative.

Sadly, when I went to Brossart, schoolmates regressed to the even less mature sounds of New Kids On The Block. By then, some of these students were old enough to drive or work outside the home, but they only listened to acts who appealed to children half their age! And I'm the immature one because I mentioned *Police Squad!*? (A little footnote about *Police Squad!*: When ABC canceled this series, they said it was because "the viewer had to watch it in order to appreciate it." No shit, Sherlock Hemlock! Did they expect someone to create a TV show with the intent of it not being watched?) After hearing that great *AT40* installment from 1986, I learned the next one to air would be from 1988, and I became sick to my stomach because of the memories of Brossart it would dredge up. But, although 1988 was full of stale music that now evokes foul memories, the Casey/Stew team did a fine job with what they had to work with.

The broken record goes 'round and 'round.



We're on the same page about gum ruining books

In last September's issue, I regaled you of the capability of bubble gum to ruin books. This is accomplished by blowing a bubble and shutting the book on it. I had a fuzzy, faded recollection of finding a book that was destroyed in this manner in my high school library.

It turns out that this unconventional beegoo busting wasn't limited to the abysmal depths of Bishop Brossart High School. As you know, it's a barrel of kangaroos to read the many Internet forums about bubble gum that have cropped up over the years—mainly because of the pointless arguing. But one fella observed that he witnessed and participated in the technique described above. He wrote...

"i cant for the life of me remember where i saw it, but i once saw someone close a large hardcover book (like an encyclopedia) on a bubble, i tried it once myself, COMPLETELY ruining said book, but still a cool effect when on tv or in a movie"

Some people just have no lives. But not that guy. Quite the contrary, he has a *hilarious* life! Who else is lucky enough to be a firsthand witness to someone blowing a bubble with gum and closing a book on it?



I'm curious to know what TV shows and movies he's been watching that include such a scene. Was it a romantic comedy, or perhaps a documentary? I never saw *The Amityville Horror* until I finally came across an old, battered copy of it, but I was once told this film included a scene in which people blew bubbles with gum and fired shotguns through them. Whoever told me that was full of shit, for the movie has no such scene.

Best all, the guy who posted the above message uses the magic word: Notice that he says closing a book on a bubble was responsible for "ruining" the tome.

No mall, y'all!

I'm bad, I'm bad!

I've discussed a lot lately how I attended a class for "bad" kids when I was a junior and senior in high school—after being expelled from Brossart. But in the "up is down" world of northern Kentucky schooling, "bad" means good. I don't remember ever being bullied at the "bad" kids' school—except

by school administrators, who coerced me into attending this class even though it was a shitty program in almost every other way (except they weren't real big on idiotic dress codes).

The program had an official name—which is beyond the scope of this piece, because it made it sound like students were suffering from a mental disorder. But we'd be happy to put our sanity up against Bro\$\$art's world of delusion and gaslighting any day.

Since we were denied the school-sponsored social events that pupils of regular schools got to enjoy, my classmates once planned an outing to Florence Mall—just to socialize. We all planned on going to the mall together one evening or weekend—away from the tyrannical eye of school officials (that is to say the Far Right).

It wasn't clear how we'd get there, since most of us lived nowhere near the mall. Even though most of us were at least 16, I don't think anyone in the class even had a driver's license. Spoiled goody-goods were allowed to get a license just for the asking—but not so for those of us of normal sensibilities. The specter of us abusing privileges that almost everyone else got was one of the extreme Right's made-up fears that bore no resemblance to reality—like their Nazi-like lies in which they accuse people of abusing Social Security Disability. Even back in the early '90s, the malice, bluster, and crybaby antics of the Far Right were already on display.

We never got to figure out how we'd get to the mall—because the school required us to cancel this outing before we got to that point. Never mind that the outing wasn't going to take place during school hours, nor was it a school-sponsored function. It was to take place completely independently of school. But school officials decreed that we couldn't go.

They never really explained why. Maybe they were afraid we might bubble or something. And bubble I would, if it was to spite the school. Proletarian roots mean bubbling knowhow. An equally grand mystery is why anyone complied with the school's demand that we not go to the mall. Under the 104th Reich, America developed a fetish for unquestioning obedience. But this was earlier, and my classmates weren't the compliant type. Back then, I was more vulnerable to official coercion than *any* of them were, because my spirit had been crushed so thoroughly at St. Joe's and Brossart.

This also preceded the days when most malls started treating customers like criminals. I just inspected the voluminous "code of conduct" on Newport on the Levee's website, and it's a maze of police state restrictions. This mall's list of rules for customers declares, "T-Shirts may not extend more than 6 inches below the waist line if worn outside the pants." Newport on the Levee also has a "papers please" rule that requires all customers to carry an ID at all times. Another rule bans "unauthorized singing." Although the website keeps bragging that the mall is private property, LINK-GIS reveals that the parcel is actually owned by the city of Newport. (Notice also that Newport on the Levee keeps calling itself a "lifestyle center", not a mall. This is their term for a mall full of stores nobody shops at. The law of modern retailing dictates that all shopping facilities shall be built to appeal to customers who don't live anywhere near them.)

We ought to buy t-shirts that are too big and wear them at Newport on the Levee while not carrying an ID—just to see if we get arrested. It's times like these I wish my "Attack!" shirt hadn't worn out. How futuristic of Newport on the Levee to worry about oversized t-shirts. I'm surprised they don't have a rule against parachute pants too.

Tic Tac No

Because this is a day ending in y, Operation KroGum has your back!

Did you know Tic Tac breath mints now makes a gum, causing people to laugh because gum is funny? Recently, I was watching TV, and a commercial for Tic Tac's new gum appeared. I was quite surprised, because it had been ages since I'd seen a new commersh for gum.

Even better, out of the corner of my eye, I thought I saw that the commercial included a brief shot of a computer-generated animation of a person blowing a bubble. Later, I found the ad on YouTube and confirmed it.

Because Tic Tac is primarily known as a breath mint and not a gum, it has a long way to go before people actually, you know, buy this new product. Most folks want to bubble as they freshen their breath. If you had a choice of a product to freshen breath, wouldn't you want one you can bubble with? I can't possibly imagine why anyone would select a breath mint over a gum that has bubble busting powers. Admit it. If you don't admit it now, I'm going to personally ask you if you prefer mints over gum. Just you watch. If you do, I'd love to hear why.

However, Tic Tac gum is not specifically labeled as *bubble* gum—despite the bubbling in the ad. Perhaps worse, its website reveals it is laden with dangerous artificial sweeteners—even though most flavors of the breath mint apparently still use real sugar.

Naturally, this disadvantage caused the Kroger in Bellevue to begin carrying this new gum immediately. You can find hardly any goodgum there anymore, but when a new badgum hits the market, Kroger can't get it onto its shelves fast enough.

If you want to test the bubbling capabilities of every brand of gum, you'd become so full of artificial sweeteners that you'd be a cyborg. It's better to outlive your teeth than your teeth outliving you. So for us, it's natural sugar, not unsafe "alternatives" that can cut years off your life. Sure, one of the leading gum makers keeps smuggling artificial sweeteners into their gum in addition to the sugar, but a few of you can't resist, because you want to blow a bubble so badly. I know you have lofty goals in life.



Monthly Moron Motorist

You can always gauge America's political winds by how much bad driving you see. That's why it was so bad under Bush but much better under Obama. Now I'm bringing back this feature for one month only—because somebody drove shittily.

During my Roads Scholaring in late March, I was bicycling west on 4th in Covington when a car barreled up behind me blaring its horn. They almost plowed into me—because they were driving too far to the right.

I'm not sure if Kentucky has passed the recent bill to require that motorists maintain a safe distance when passing cyclists, but it's the law in most states—and it's common sense. If I'd been struck, it's unambiguous who'd be at fault.

I noticed they had an Indiana license plate. They're probably some rich right-wing exurbanite. Most bad drivers are.

Leggo my Agloe

I wouldn't be bringing this up again if Brossart's followers weren't now falsely accusing apparent supporters of a rival school of being paid Internet trolls. (I suspect those who were accused weren't even supporters of the rival school except as an alternative to Brossart.) But I guess Brossart wants to play hardball.

Back in April 2015, I regaled you with how a proponent of the soul-crushing Bishop Brossart High School edited OpenStreetMap by labeling the school's driveway as Avenue of Champions—even though there was no evidence that this was its real name. Uproariously, OpenStreetMap was later edited again so that the drive was changed to Avenue of Losers. It was like that for about 5 years before being changed back.

Brossart was a thoroughly revolting school. In an era in which some define piety by how many online accounts you can hoard to stage-manage public opinion, this Catholic high school isn't the only offender, but it certainly appears guilty to some extent. It looks as if they gave a roadway a name in the hopes that this would automatically make it official with no action required by anyone else.

This reminds me of the story of the town of Agloe, New York. Back in the 1930s, a map publisher made a road map of the state of New York for Esso gas stations. The map marked a tiny upstate town called Agloe. But Agloe wasn't real. The cartographers invented this town as a copyright trap. That way, if other mapmakers also marked Agloe, they'd be exposed for plagiarizing the Esso map.

Later, someone built a store where Agloe was marked and called it Agloe General Store—apparently thinking Agloe was a real town there. Then, other maps began marking Agloe. Esso threatened to sue Rand McNally for marking this town, but Rand McNally argued that Agloe became a real place when businesses there began using the name.

True to form, Google, Bing, and Yahoo (which reported journalists to the Chinese government) all began labeling Brossart's driveway as Avenue of Champions—apparently after seeing it on OpenStreetMap. Worse, LINK-GIS—a local website that claims to be backed by area governments—has begun labeling it that too. LINK-GIS is usually mighty reliable. It even has some use for finding rights-of-way where streets have been abandoned. But I wouldn't be surprised if one of Brossart's revisionist minions who has clout with local government officials was appointed to a patronage position that oversees LINK-GIS.

This isn't even the only time an incorrect street name locally was widely treated as factual. Many maps label the driveway of McDonald's in Newport as Zott Street. This probably started as an honest mistake. It appears as if a cartographer—likely the federal TIGER shapefile—transcribed 20th Street wrong, since it's possible a 20th Street was once built or planned there. (The 20th Street that exists behind McDonald's is so small that some maps ignore it.) Other maps copied this foible.

My former high school's apparent revisionism is more like when the Philippines' dictator Ferdinand Marcos redrew the boundaries of cities and towns in the shape of his head. If our local politicians opt to rally around a school like Brossart, that should be their problem and nobody else's.

Your soda is being ruined

I noticed something very disturbing about soft drink dispensers, so wipe that smirk off your face.

During March's Roads Scholaring, I took the rare step of bipping by the Taco Bell in downtown Covington. It's rare because of the stark decline of this chain of fast food eateries. Like most other big corporations, Taco Bell seems to have a tough time getting its poop in a group.

When I got my beverage, I discovered something funny. Not ha-ha funny, but weird funny. I saw that the soft drinks were grouped into sets of 4—so that 4 different sodas came out of the same spout like so...



I got Mountain Dew that came from the same spout as Diet Mountain Dew—meaning it came into contact with dangerous artificial sweeteners. Depending on your medical condition, artificial sweeteners may pose a PKU or gluten hazard. Now, because of the design of these newfangled soda fountains, people with certain disorders must not only avoid diet sodas but also regular sodas, since they come from the same faucet.

Later, it dawned on me that at other restaurants, I'd seen soft drink dispensers that have a touchscreen, and where all the beverages come out of the same spout. It never occurred to me before that I was being pumped with aspartame, because I was busy learning how to use the new dispensers.

Saying the ingredients of diet sodas don't contaminate the regular sodas in these dispensers is like saying it's safe to drink out of the toilet because it doesn't flush backwards.

The Last Word turns 25

It just occurred to me that this ish marks 25 years of this fanzine of food, folks, and fun. It also just occurred to me that I may be the only person in the world who once buried garbage under some shrubbery and was skeeped at by a person who now has a road named after him.

Pay me for producing this literary showcase or I'll call you a poopyhead on Myspace.

The alt-right ain't alt

What does it mean when something is “alternative”? It doesn't mean the alt-right—though I'm sure that since you're reading this zine, you already know better than to get mired knee-deep in the alt-right's malodorous excrement.

“Alternative” is supposed to mean something that challenges what is already established. Examples: Socialist Alternative or alternative medicine. Alternative rock is a name for music that developed from independent rock.

But in recent years, “alternative” has been applied to things that aren't positive developments but instead double down on ideas that have already failed. In these cases, “alternative” should become “also.” I think most of this started in the mid-'90s, around the time The Media began portraying the Republican Party as an innovative challenger to the status quo even though they had run the country for 12 years straight.

For instance—as part of this newspeak and gaslighting—private schools were portrayed as an “alternative” to public schools. However, my experience has generally been that private schools just magnified the worst aspects of public schools—and added some new ones.

School districts that made students go to school year-round were described as having an “alternative” calendar. There's nothing “alternative” about it. It just added to the months of school that were already being misused.

According to the all-devouring Wikipedia, the “alt” newsgroup hierarchy on Usenet really was short for “alternative.” The idea that it was an acronym for “anarchists, lunatics, terrorists” was just a joke—although these newsgroups seemed to be run by lunatics and terrorists. If only they were run by anarchists, they might not have been censored so much. How can such a heavily censored medium that was overrun by Tea Party droids be considered “alternative”? (Despite this, the “alt” groups were still too much for some ISP's to handle. In 2008, Verizon and Sprint decided to drop all “alt” groups while leaving the rest of Usenet intact. This censorship is exactly like if they blocked whole sets of phone numbers for their telephone customers.)

And the alt-right—rather, also-wrong—certainly is not “alternative.” All they do is double down on the right-wing extremism, bigotry, and violence that have increasingly defined the Republican Party—and by extension, many of America's government officials.

By very definition, the right wing supports the establishment. That's the very essence of the regressives. They are authoritarian in both their personality type and their ideology. They're the ones who have been permitted to make the rules for everyone else—even though they have no moral right to do so. After conservatives have had to explain themselves, all that remains of American conservatism is ideas ripped directly from the pages of Nazi Germany. It has become a filthy ideology.



Higher power for a higher power!

All those who insist the FCC can't block station transfers can cool their crappers now.

Many of America's legendary radio stations have been dashed to shambles in recent years despite

complaints by listeners. Some of them are heritage stations that have gradually degenerated into far-right hate talk. Others are sold and suddenly given a new failed format and identity.

But apologists for this ongoing demolition derby say the FCC has no power to block station sales or ensure that stations offer balanced coverage. Bull. And shit. We know this is hogwash because the FCC actually intervened on behalf of a religious broadcaster some 30 years ago.

In the 1980s, there was a religious station in Dallas called KCBI on the noncommercial portion of the FM band. But KCBI apparently thought they could serve a higher power only by broadcasting with higher power. The station eyed the frequency of KNON, a noncommercial community station, for it was allocated for a higher wattage and antenna height.

So KCBI challenged KNON's license renewal and petitioned the FCC to let them take over KNON's frequency. The FCC cheerfully obliged. In 1988, the FCC required KNON to trade frequencies with KCBI, giving KNON a much weaker signal. The stations have remained on their new frequencies ever since. Despite this, a local publication deemed KNON to be Dallas's best radio station on several occasions before and after the frequency swap.

If the FCC can actively *force* a station transfer like that, they can certainly stop questionable station sales and other practices. No excuses.

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