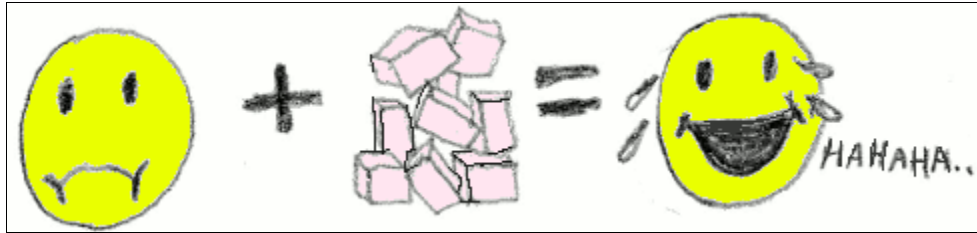


The Last Word™

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A person mentioned Dubble Bubble and it was the most interesting thing that happened all month



Life is boring.

Except, that is, when gum exists.

April 16. Cool people call it a Monday. Once again, I go to Kroger—sadly relying on the limited mercy of Corporate America. It was the day of the famous April blizzard—so it was after the store got clogged by frantic customers stocking up for inevitably becoming snowbound.

And I arrived at Kroger at just the right time to hear bubble gum discussed in public.

I entered through the entrance closer to the automatic scanning machines and headed towards the produce section. There was a woman walking a few feet behind me, and she appeared to be emerging from the area of the supermarket with the seasonal specials.

The customer approached 2 store managers who were standing there supervising the checkout lanes. I thought I heard her ask the managers where the Dubble Bubble was. I guess she was in a bubble bustin' mood. She was probably planning the exact moment she would blow a humongous bubble and let it burst and stick to her face, and scheduling her whole week around it.

One of the managers answered. “Dubble Bubble?” she said. It was as if the manager had never heard of this brand of beegee her entire life and has missed out on decades of bubble kaboomin' fun. Maybe she's never even heard of gum at all. Maybe she has no idea that there's this stuff out there that you can chew and blow bubbles with. Considering how hard it is to find bubble gum at Kroger, that's a possibility. Buckets of Dubble Bubble do make occasional appearances at the friendly neighborhood Kroger-Wogie—but only *very* occasional.

I couldn't help but giggle when I heard this conversation—and I'm pretty sure they heard me.

Operation KroGum is in full swing!

Someone made another funny on Wikipedia

My next Money Making misadventure will require a little research on local neighborhoods, and to get a feel for it, I looked up one affluent suburb—Taylor Mill—on Wikipedia. (The less money I make from my next project, the more the Far Right will scream that I'm practicing “socialism” and that the project shouldn't exist because it's not profitable enough. Watch. But they long ago forfeited the privilege of me giving a shit what they think.)

I was confronted with this little tidbit that you never knew before...

“Taylor Mill annexed the former cities of Sunny Acres (inc. 1953) and Winston Hills (inc. 1929) in 1959 and 1972, respectively due to immigrants confusing the town with a popular TV series episode Shady Deal at Sunny Acres from the show Maverick (TV series) as well as the general ill regard for Winston Churchill and citizens of England.”

Actually, it's Winston Park, not Winston Hills, but what's a mere mortal to do? Stink?

Winston Park was also the home of the Winston Park Pie Toss, a fictitious event I once jokingly referred to in these pages.

This story also highlights the effort by Taylor Mill to rename streets it annexed from Winston Park because there's other streets in town with the same name. This despite the fact that the streets in Winston Park

were built first. In fact, both Sunny Acres and Winston Park incorporated before Taylor Mill did—but I guess Taylor Mill got to be the surviving partner in each merger because it was further from us city folk.

Winston Park is probably deemed too close to Latonia, and therefore too working-class to get much respect from America's economic royal guardsmen. They must be afraid Winston Park might have someone who regularly humiliates the Tea Party and puts out a really cool zine with insulting cartoons of Donald Trump after he pissed his pants. Winston Park folks might lack proper business attire for the get-with-it environment of 2004. They may even have an amateur "WE ARE THE 99%" tattoo or three.

The nation's economic gatekeepers are terrified of many things. They keep us down because of their own fear—panic, in fact. The fact that they experience fear doesn't mean they're not intentionally being assholes. They've been lavished with many chances to stop being assholes—yet they never stop.

The grapes, they are sour.

How cool people chew gum in Pensacola

Our 1998 family roadtrip to Pensacola, Florida, remains legendary 20 years later. This was the year after the celebrated Par-King trip in Chicago—and we worked our nostrils off to be able to afford it. Our Pensacola outing was the one in which we brang along pliers and confiscated a "NO SKATES" sign, violated *every single one* of the swimming pool's rules, and did donuts in an Arby's parking lot.

Beegee was busted on our Pensacola vacation—and not just by our caravan of comrades. The highlight of the route down was at an Exxon station in Evergreen, Alabama. We encountered a large family that needed 2 cars to travel. The woman warned her kids, "Tell them they can't have bubble gum in the other car." One of our crew of 6 heard her and snickered.

What prompted this dictum against chewing bubble gum in one car while apparently allowing it in the other? Whatever it was, it had to have been hilarious. The Internet is rife with stories of people getting bored on long trips when they were kids (even if they lived in the era of decent radio) and passing the time by figuring out how to blow a bubble. Might a bubble have burst on the upholstered seats? Why would it be more likely to happen in one car than the other? Or did one car contain a traveler who didn't know how to bubble, and their feelings might have been hurt if they saw gum?

We had brung along a few jumbo packs of beegee for our trip. It was one of the soft brands like Bubble Yum or Bubblicious. I didn't chomp any of this scrumptious gum—let alone bubble with it—but the tiny tots burned right through it. There had to have been 100 pieces, but they were gone by the end of the trip.

One day during this trip, for hours on end, the kiddos displayed a technique that resembled bubbling, only it was even more obnoxious—and therefore funny. It works like this: You poke your tongue through the gum so it goes completely through the wad. Then you spew saliva everywhere. I seem to recall this occurring as we were waiting in the rented van at a Winn-Dixie parking lot. I remember laughing uncontrollably because of this Stupid Gum Trick.

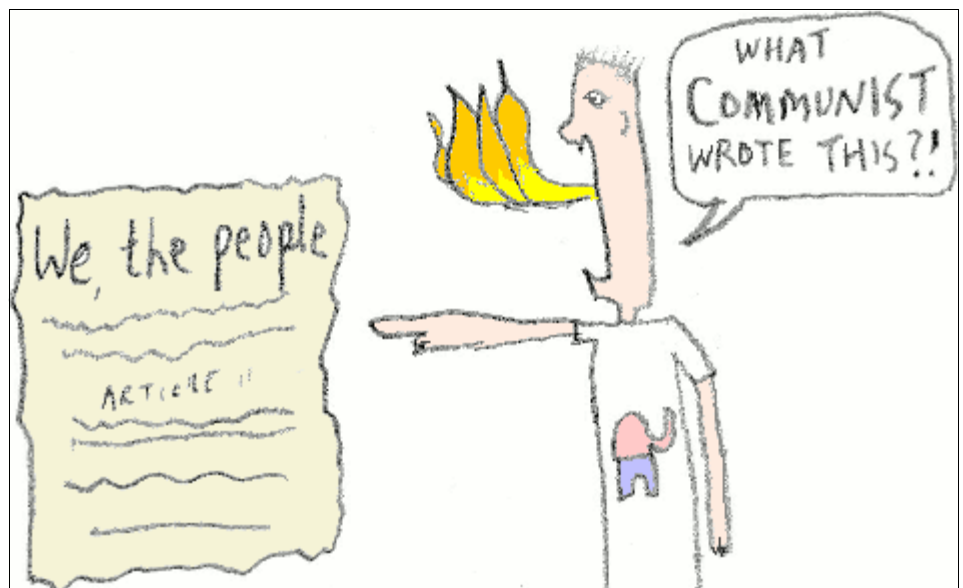


That situation occurred in the state of Florida, the Sunshine State.

Cool! Someone called me a communist!

When all else fails, start throwing around the "communist" label and hope it'll stick.

Support for adding a much-needed economic equality amendment to the U.S. Constitution grows—but it's not known what the amendment would actually say. There's some agreement on giving the judiciary some power to enforce it—to stave off mob rule by the 1%—but nobody has settled on anything else. Plus, there's almost



universal agreement that economic equality is the glue that holds civilization together.

But when I voiced support for the amendment on a political forum, I was met by this reply (in all lowercase and with no punctuation)...

“are you admitting that you are a communist”

That from a self-described Republican, a member of the American political party that runs candidates unopposed far more than any other. You know who else regularly ran candidates unopposed? The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, that’s who. The parallels between the Republicans and Soviet-style communism are chilling.

Who else is tired of going into the voting booth and finding so many offices where the only candidate is a Republican? By running unopposed, the GOP is doing nothing short of telling people who they have to vote for.

It’s much like how they—by imposing capitalism on us—commandeer what necessities we’re allowed to have. They’re at least as authoritarian as the Soviet communists were.

It’s not as if Democratic Underground has any less Red-baiting than the Republican Right lately. When someone posted an article about Bernie Sanders’s popular legislation to guarantee a \$15/hour job to every American adult “who wants or needs one”, Democratic Blunderground regulars went off half-cocked. One of them titled a reply, “They did this in Communist Russia,” and said, “Would we have a choice of the kind of work we would do? They did not in Russia.”

Do we have a choice as it is? Then how about if I apply for a position I’d really like to have such as civil engineer?

Another Blundergrounder stovepiped Donald Trump propaganda by declaring America is already at full employment—an outright lie. It hasn’t been true in modern times.

Instead of investing taxpayer money in jobs, the neo-McCarthyists think we should give it all to right-wing billionaires so they can feel good about themselves. If their feelings are hurt by people wanting economic fairness, that should be their own problem and nobody else’s. Maybe they should go on *Dr. Phil* and seek help.

Gum on down!



(Fair use, so tough toilets.)

I’m about to mention gum. That means you’re about to laugh. As you can see, Bob Barker thinks it’s a hoot too!

Lots of people think *The Price Is Right* is the Bee Gees’ knees, and I guess it does have some redeeming social value—even though I’m not into game shows in general. Game shows may have some comedic or even educational value, but celebrating accumulation of huge material prizes isn’t my bag. My marvelous business partner told me she wanted to fly to Los Angeles once years ago to try to get on *The Price Is Right*, but she couldn’t get time off work.

It’s also rather amusing that most *Price Is Right* episodes start with “Here it comes!”—the same thing many folks say when they’re about to crack a nice, loud fart. How many of you have heard this announcement at the beginning of *The Price Is Right* while the exciting music plays and then turned to someone in the room and ripped one?

For 35 years, the program was hosted by Bob Barker. Bob knows about the existence of gum. He briefly

emceed a show titled *That's My Line*—which was CBS's answer to *Real People*—and, according to legend, he once supplied the entire studio audience with bubble gum. The whole crowd blew bubbles in front of millions of viewers nationwide. However, it's unknown whether Mr. Barker himself bubbled during this segment.

If you were on the Internet before the social media and blogging boom, you may vaguely recall a *Price Is Right* tribute website that featured old clips from the show. In one of them, a woman in the studio audience—in the row just behind the front row where 4 contestants bid on prizes—was chomping a big morsel of beegee. Then, as she was cheering a contestant who was bidding, the gum flew out of her mouth. This sent Bob Barker into a helpless fit of guffawing!

Because, after all, it was funny. It was automatically funny because it involved gum.

After the wad of gum grew wings and tried to fly away, the woman frantically shoved it back into her mouth. I saw a woman doing the same thing at a baseball game once.

Unfortunately, that website appears to be gone now. But while the Wayback Machine didn't save my bizbud's old GeoCities page—so you can't stare captively at an animated GIF of her eyes blinking red and blue—it did save the page with the *Price Is Right* gum mishap. However, you'd need RealPlayer to view the clip, and you probably don't have RealPlayer installed. Just because we have a warmongering fascist in the White House doesn't mean it's 2002, when people still used RealPlayer.

Luckily, I found the episode in question on YouTube...

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

Fast-forward to 11:30 for the gum funniness! It's been confirmed that this episode originally aired November 19, 1982—which was World Toilet Day years before there even *was* a World Toilet Day! (I wonder if *The Price Is Right* gave away a toilet on National Bubble Gum Day.) Considering it was 1982, I'm guessing the gum was Bubble Yum or Hubba Bubba.

But nobody bubbled.

Wisconsin city badgered by serial plover

You're gonna recoil in laughter when you read about what's been going on in Sheboygan, Wisconsin!

Since 2016, there have been at least 29 instances of the women's restroom at a city park being vandalized by someone shoving 20-ounce plastic soft drink bottles into the drain of the toilet. Surveillance footage has revealed a man entering the restroom late at night to carry out this destruction.

Best all, the toilet has to be removed and reinstalled each time a bottle gets plopped. The bottles can't just be flushed away or retrieved with a handy-dandy auger.

Toilets. They take a beating but keep on competing.

A person may have plopped their glasses because they needed new ones

How do you react when you're forced to wear eyeglasses?

I asked my business partner what she did when she was forced to, but she's never been forced to. So I asked her what she would have done if she was forced to, and she replied that she'd "let out the baddest earsplitting scream you ever saw."

How do you react when you don't mind glasses in general but are forced to keep wearing ones that don't fit your face and have the wrong prescription? Mayhaps you will put them in the toilet and get poo on them.

I was thirsty for more broken gafas stories—as a substitute for antipsychiatry stories, which seem to be even rarer—so I found one from just a few years ago. This person—presumably a tiny tot—asked, "How to make it look like you accidentally broke your glasses?" The person was asking this because their spectacles were old and ineffective, and their mom wouldn't let them get new ones unless they broke.

Several useful replies were offered. One recommended losing the glasses so they could be turned in to a recycling program and used by someone who could benefit from them. But I suspect these glasses were too old to



be used reliably.

But—assuming the recycling idea wouldn't work—the best suggestion was to plop them. Someone said the person should “drop them in the toilet along with a fresh mud pie and say ur never gonna wear them again.” That'll show who's boss!

People can relate.

Gum-wasting graveyard game should be laid to rest

Because this is a day ending in y, I received an urgent e-mail from someone about bubble gum.

This e-mail was from a woman who says that—in her youth—she played a gum-themed game called graveyard. According to the unavoidable Wikipedia, there does exist a simple but juvenile game called graveyard, but her version was slightly different in that it involved gum.

Her game was played with friends and family—usually in public places. Often, her peeps would chew bubble gum. The object of the game was to wait until another person blew a bubble, grab the inflated bubble out of the person's mouth, and yell out, “Graveyard!”

Yes, that was the whole game. It was sort of like doing a Wright brothers.

The last she saw this game being played was when she worked at an electronics store while in college. One day, her co-workers were playing this game. One of them bubbled while standing on a shaky stool as they placed merchandise on a top shelf, and they were almost knocked off the stool when another employee reached up and tried grabbing their bubble.

A person keeps pooping in Portland

Defecation is feasible in Portland, Oregon.

Folks in one Portland neighborhood keep finding poo-poo everywhere. Several residents say they've found piles of human feces in their yards and around their homes lately.

One woman told the media, “On Sunday, we found a huge pile against the garage door.”

Many people believe the culprit is a man who was busted last year for flooding basements by shoving garden hoses through the windows. Some say they've actually witnessed him shitting in their yards.

All together now...

*He was pooping in Portland
Pooping in that urban growth boundary deal
Pooping in Portland
But do I really feel the way I feel*



Municipal employee accused of embezzling gum

Did a city employee in Bozeman, Montana, steal gum? If poo. Defendants in criminal cases shall be presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law, so we can't jump to any conclusions. We're not like St. Joe's where they'd dish out punishments without proving a violation.

According to the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, a neighborhood program coordinator for the city is accused of embezzling over \$4,000 from municipal coffers. Prosecutors say she used city-issued credit cards for personal purchases like a bar tab, a Chicago hotel room, and...gum. Now she faces a felony count of theft by embezzlement.

The city sued the newspaper when it requested details about her resignation.

It's unknown whether she bubbled using gum that she allegedly embezzled. Newspapers usually skip important details like that.

People got kicked out of amusement parks (imagine that!)

I want in the worst way to witness a person being ejected from an amusement park. Now *that's* amusement!

I can't recall offhand ever seeing it happen—and I probably never will, because I'm not a trillionaire and don't plan on visiting an amusement park soon. About a decade ago, I saw security at the Bellevue Vets Carnival forcibly carrying a teenage troublemaker out of the event, so I guess that's close enough. But according to the Internet, Kings Island expels guests using extreme dispatch.

Once, years ago, a guest was ejected from Kings Island because he kept throwing sandals at folks in line at Son of Beast. He knew people weren't going to give up their place in line to fight him—but he wasn't counting on security catching him.

Someone who worked at Kings Island—again, Son of Beast—says they caught 2 girls line-jumping but waited until they were on the roller coaster before trying to eject them. But the offenders refused to get off the coaster. They still refused even after security showed up. So the police came—and they *still* refused! Then one of the cops grabbed one of them by the arm and hauled them away from the park in handcuffs.

Decades ago, whenever I drove the turnpike cars, I always did the exact opposite of what the traffic signs said—but some guests were kicked out of the park for this.

A couple was once kicked out of Kings Island for having sex in the supply closet of a restroom. The male half of the couple demanded security give them another 20 minutes so they could finish the act. Plus, a drunken guest was once kicked out of the park for having 3 cigarettes in his mouth at the same time and blowing smoke in an employee's face after being asked to extinguish them.

People have been thrown out of Six Flags too! In 2016, an elderly man was ejected from Six Flags over Texas because he looked too much like Santa Claus. Six Flags issued an insincere apology in which they said he was ejected because “the safety of our guests is always our highest priority.” Somehow I doubt the guy was a homicidal maniac.

A guest of Cedar Point had his season pass revoked because he handed out his business cards to employees. He was informed of the revocation when Cedar Point security called him days after he visited.

Also, Cedar Point has a smartphone app that ostensibly tells folks if rides are closed—but it waits until it detects that you're in the park before it tells you, after you've already spent money on admission. This makes the app useless.

Someone was once ejected from Disneyland for sneaking in champagne. A high school band was barred from performing at Disneyland for years because some of the members were caught shoplifting there. Similarly, a high school football team was banned from there for years because some of its players derailed a train ride.

One year, there was a grad night at Disneyland, and—upon entering—one of the teens was dumb enough to repeatedly vandalize amusement park property by writing her own name on it. She was kicked out of the park before the festivities even started, and she was banned from her own graduation ceremony. By last year, however, grad night at Disneyland had become such a sick joke that the park treated the grads like criminals and banned items such as Chap Stick. This caused the kids to smuggle in Chap Stick in their underwear.

Say, how about we waste money this summer by visiting Kings Island just so we get kicked out? (Say, why do *Sesame Street* characters say “say” before saying stuff?)



Stop the presses! A person actually prefers mints over gum!

One person.

In last month's ish, I told you I was going to conduct an informal survey to ask people whether they preferred gum or mints. You didn't believe me, but I followed through. Kind of like how when I was 14 and I said I wasn't going to tolerate the oppression at Brossart, I followed through. Wait, I didn't. But that was the old me.

Of all the people I asked as part of this survey, exactly *one* person answered mints. As the Bee Gees would say: “One, one.” The reason the person prefers mints is that they're “not supposed” to chew gum because of TMJ disorder and that “it hurts my jaw to chew gum or to blow bubbles.”

Don't worry. There's never been anyone in the history of the universe who doesn't have TMJ disorder. As

you know, my doctor recommended gum to treat it—which is why I call them the bubble gum doctor. Besides, if a medical professional forbade a patient from chomping gum, I'd take that as more of an encouragement than an admonition. (What a great idea for a Rulebreakers commercial!)

However, a couple minutes later, the person said they were going to redeem their Kroger fuel points for some gum—and they couldn't hide the prohibited pack of green Extra that was already in their possession. Of course, Operation KroGum proves that goodgum is very sporadic at Kroger, so it's unlikely that bubbles were kablammooed.

My bizbud is looking for a commercial from 1987

My business partner is desperate, and she needs your help.

I'm not the only person who remembers old TV commercials—even commercials that included bubble gum. My bizbud is looking for an uproarious commersh she saw in her youth that advertised cereal and featured a free bubble gum offer. She *insists* it's from 1987, and I believe her—but she doesn't remember what kind of cereal or what brand of beegee it included. She says she wasn't even paying attention to the ad until the gum scene, and she only remembers that part because her family members made smartass remarks about it.

She says she didn't masticate bubble gum constantly in 1987, but she chewed it enough to know what the zesty goo was all about. She reports that the commersh had a shot of a boy blowing a bubble in slow-motion accompanied by strange electronic tones like the old PBS bumper at the end of *Sesame Street*.

Egged on by the continuing smartassery, this ad induced her to think to herself, "I need gum!" She was aching for a chew. She also said there was a bubble gum commercial at the time that showed gum morphing into various forms—much like the Ovaltine ad with the morphing chocolate. The ad repeatedly taunted her during her favorite sitcoms, and the urge to gnash beegee could no longer be resisted. Somewhere, she acquired a supersized quid of Dubble Bubble and dug into it with her peculiar chompers. Probably even bubbled!

Advertising works!

She'd truly appreciate it if you'd do her a favor and help her look for those hilarious commercials on YouTube. Please? The terms "cereal", "bubble gum", and "1987" may be of assistance. "Kids like Kix for what Kix has got" and "Cheerioioios!" are optional.

(Also, notice that in the cereal commercials that showed a "complete breakfast", it's certainly more "complete" than any breakfast you remember.)

Smart kids kept wiping poop on stuff

Smearing furniture with bodily substances is a noble tradition—and I found an Internet post in which a parent lamented this pastime.

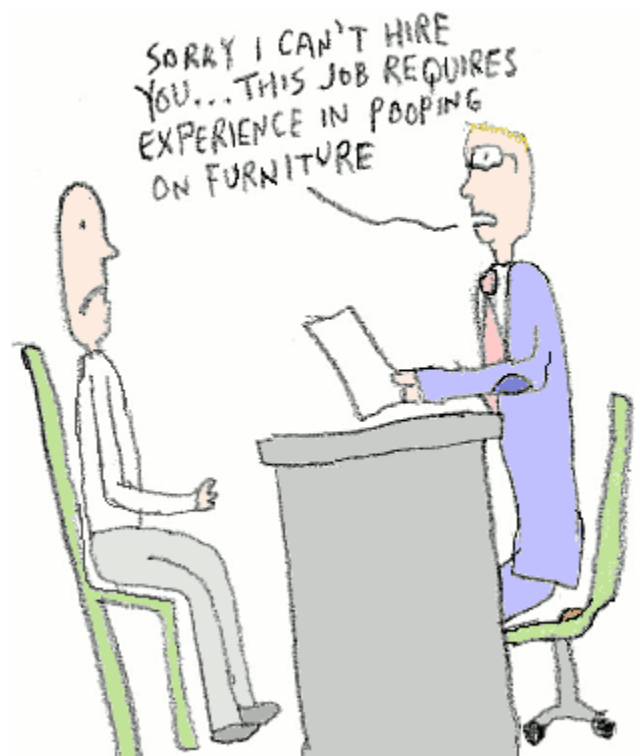
A person said their 12-year-old son—who was intelligent and well-adjusted in every other way—had been causing furniture to become caked with feces. The parent didn't know whether it was accidental from "not wiping well" or deliberate.

"We had to throw away an entire set of furniture because of this," the parent complained. But a replacement sofa found itself fouled as well.

Other parents replied, saying their kids did the same thing. One reported "finding it on our basement couch this evening." Another said that they had "just found poo all over my 10yr old sons room under the rugs behind wardrobes and book cases." Another reported having a 15-year-old son who "poops on the floor in his room"—and a therapist recommended that they put newspapers on the floor, like for a puppy! Another parent claimed to have a son who was going on 13 who "keeps pooping in our shower." One respondent said they had a 14-year-old stepson who hid his bowel movements in his pillowcase, and that because of it, "the house stinks of poo."

Another person admitted to similar behavior themselves—but says they went on to graduate college with a double major and become a highly paid professional.

All the kids described in this story were said to be smart and got along well with their peers. For the first time in years, I feel like an outcast because I didn't defecate on furniture when I was 15. I feel about as left out as I did over not having a diamond-studded Connect Four game like all the other kids had.



A congressman chewed an orange gumball off the floor

The halls of Congress are hallowed indeed!

That's why—when I attended the human rights conference in Washington, D.C., and had to use the men's room in the Russell Senate Office Building—I noticed that some senator had placed toilet paper all over the toilet seat and peed all over it.

But a contestant on the game show *Jeopardy!* recently related a story that shows that nothing is sacred. This man says that he used to work for the U.S. House. He didn't work for a specific congressmoron, but for the House itself.

He said that one day at work, he was walking the halls of an ornate House office building. An unspecified congressman was walking a few feet in front of him. The lawmaker had a little orange ball in his hand. It was unclear what it was.

Then the congresscritter accidentally dropped the orange ball on the floor. Thinking there was nobody around to see him, he picked it up off the floor and stuffed it into his mouth.

Yes, it was a gumball.

Most people who drop perfectly good gum on the floor in a congressional office building would have yelled out, **"DAMMIT!!! SHIT!!! FUCK!!!"** But I guess he didn't want to waste good beegie—even though the floor was probably caked with dog shit tracked in by other members of Congress. Yet most folks would have guarded that gumball for dear life instead of carrying it around in their hand just inviting disaster. In my day, when I'd buy bubble gum, I handled it even more carefully than I do with pizza—which, as you know, I handle like a porcelain doll. I didn't just wait until it *touched* my teeth before letting go. I waited until I got it safely past both rows. Bubble gum is a precious commodity.

However, it's unknown whether the congressman bubbled and scandalized the entire nation.



We won't treat gentry gently

What sort of loser refers to themselves as “gentry”?

One of Wiktionary's definitions of *gentry* is “people of education and good breeding.” But who uses this word to describe themselves? Folks don't walk up to you on the street and say, “Hi, I'm gentry.” People don't e-mail you and say, “As gentry, I love your post about media ownership concentration!”

Nobody calls you “gentry” with the intent of it being a positive term. No woman has ever said to me as a pick-up line, “Wanna destruct something, you handsome gentry?” You don't say to your dog, “Time for a Milk-Bone, my little gentry!”

Perhaps *gentry* should be defined as “rich suburbanites who maraud into cities with the intent of launching land grabs to uproot residents.” *Gentry* is the root word of *gentrification*—a process that destroys cities in this manner. It seems like nobody today who practices gentrification even calls it gentrification—but that's what it is.

The American landscape is littered with countless instances of neighborhoods ruined by gentrification land grabs that artificially jack up housing costs, displace longtime residents, tear down historic buildings, and “retool” public spaces like parks to attract upscale visitors. Gentrification has been around a very long time, but one of its biggest historic supporters was Benito Mussolini. Italy's fascist dictator once ordered a neighborhood of historic buildings in Rome demolished to build a wide boulevard so wealthy tourists could see the Vatican easier. There's nothing wrong with wanting to visit the Vatican, but Mussolini's action served one of the same goals as other gentrification efforts.

The gentrification lobby is like the Monty Burns look-alike at the Highland Heights City Council meeting who berated the townspeople because they wouldn't let him tear down their homes to build his luxury restaurant.

The unliberal practice of gentrification is an invasion—in the literal sense. The gentry stampede into our cities big and small, and plunder land that—even if you rent it from someone else—you've spent your hard-earned money to use. Not content with ruining only rural areas by building fall-apart subdivisions that are rubber-stamped by zoning boards, they've made urban areas unsafe from this carnage too.