

The Last Word™

Issue #526

August 2018

A person burned a dumpster and it was the most interesting thing that happened all month

It's almost like having our Independence Day bonfires back like it's 1995!

Friday, July 6, shortly after 11 PM. It was a day of hard work, and I laid down in bed for a little daydream. No sooner did I settle down than I detected a strong odor of burning chemicals. I thought maybe it was fireworks gone sour, but then I heard the siren of a fire engine approaching.

I looked out the window and witnessed the fire truck pulling into the parking lot behind my building. I darted out the door to peep the event. The air outside was thick with the smell of smoke. And it smelled horrible. Absolutely rancid. It wasn't ordinary smoke. It had to be toxic.

I sauntered over to the lot behind my building and saw a thick plume of smoke that appeared to be rising from a small garage. But when I got closer, I noticed 3 firefighters gathered around the remains of a wheeled device like a stroller or Green Machine. I realized it was a small dumpster

—the plastic kind with wheels that you see behind apartment buildings. There was nothing left but the base.

Yes, someone—possibly an idiot—had burned an entire dumpster, which apparently was filled to the brim with garbage. Think how hot the fire had to be to burn the whole dumpster except the base. Even the lid appeared to be completely vaporized. Think of the assortment of trash that was burned. I bet there was food scraps, plastic, paper, glass, foam packing beads, bubble gum, and other burnables.

You don't know *just how close* it came to burning down the garage behind my building! The dumpster fire was *right next to* that garage! The dumpster was probably *right up against* it. There was also a pickup truck parked next to it—which could have very easily exploded in a spectacular fireball.

The poisonous smoke smell filled the entire census tract, and we all know census tracts are actually communes, for they usually have compact shapes and sizes and consist of neighbors who regularly interact. Because they are communes, they are cool. And they're nice and cozy.

It's a beautiful day in the commune, a beautiful day for a comrade. So please won't you be my comrade?

The following morning, when the sun was out, I pept the situation further. The base of the dumpster was toppled over, surrounded by burned garbage. A mostly incinerated plastic soft drink cup from a fast food restaurant or convenience store was rolling around in the debris. It looked as if the fire actually melted the asphalt. Later, I saw a woman cleaning up the mess, but it was still so toxic that she was wearing a mask.

A dumpster got ru.



A person chewed gum from a tube and got skeeped at because reasons

You can't get blood from a stone, but you can get bubble gum from a tube—at least in the 1980s.

Beegee in a tube! What a novel idea! However, the only time I ever saw bubble gum in a tube was once on the school bus in high school.

People beeged on the bus all the time. They even bubbled! They even *discussed* the piquant goo! More than once, I happened to overhear people talking about the time-honored sport of bubble busting. A bus driver once became enraged at a girl from my school because she popped gum loudly in the hopes the driver would become enraged. The girl had mentioned once before that this driver once got mad at her because "I popped a bubble." I thought she meant bubble wrap until she went into detail.

But only once did I see gum in a tube. There was a younger boy on one of the buses who went to another school and was an absolute troublemaker. One day, he had Bazooka in a tube. It was the size and shape of a

toothpaste tube. He squeezed a pile of it into his yapping gizzard just as he arrived at school. Probably even bubbled!

That kid was a little punk. I don't mean that in a good way (like punk rock or punk rocker teeth). He was too old to be a brat and too young to be a thug.

It turned out that Bazooka didn't have the tube gum biz all to itself. Years later, someone on the Internet mentioned that there was a brand of gum in a tube called Tubble Gum. A woman replied that when she was a teen in the '80s, she acquired some of this beegee. She chomped on it for a bit, and there's a very real possibility that she bubbled. After all, what's the point of chewing gum if you don't blow bubbles that burst and stick to your face?

But it all came crashing down when her mom yelled at her for chewing gum. I have no idea why. Not a clue. If it happened to me, I'd make them gimme the reason—and it better be a damn good one. Fact is, when I was a teenager in the '80s, people gummed all the time. They surely did. There's no denying it. If a person *didn't* bubble, it would be a national news story. If you didn't constantly chew gum, people would actually ask you why. Seriously. Some people think it's still the '80s, like a family member who asked me if my comrade chews gum.

I found an article about Tubble Gum from 1983 when it was introduced. It said gum in a tube was a new gimmick by gum manufacturers and that Bazooka in a tube would debut the following year. Bubble gum in a tube was touted as a very good bargain for consumers.

Apparently, you can still buy Tubble Gum. But I don't know anyone who does—especially not adults, since it appears to be marketed to the under-10 crowd.



Poop ruins hay

The magic word got used because people poop on stuff.

Many tourists visiting Iceland have begun to shun public restrooms. Rather, they relieve themselves outdoors—regardless of who may be watching.

Recently, a woman who has a farm there spotted a woman defecating in her field—even though a public johnnypot was only 300 feet away. The farmer said, “It’s a problem here and all over the country.” She later added, “The hay is just ruined.”

Hear that, everyone? Ruined!

Nations go to war over pee and poo, it’s just a form of appreciation.

The rubber meets the road in Minnesota

The magic word is about to be used again! I’m grinding my jagged chompers in anticipation!

Recently, an elderly motorist drove on a closed stretch of U.S. 63 in Minnesota—where fresh concrete had just been poured. He left a huge, 800-foot-long groove in the wet concrete.

Best all, this prompted a use of the magic word! KARE-TV in Minneapolis reported on its website, “An 800-foot stretch of Highway 63 north of Rochester is ruined after a 95-year-old man drove through wet concrete. Repair estimates top \$100,000.”

Ruined! Hey ruined! Where are you, ruined?! Pooping?

I would have liked to watch the video on the station’s website, but there are no known instances of videos embedded on news websites that actually work. (Kind of like YouTube now that they’ve made it so you can’t shut off theater mode.)

You may know that I’ve bicycled through wet asphalt—when I had no other choice.

Spectrum’s rectum strikes again!

Between Cincinnati Bell (which wiretapped Gerald Ford and Al Schottelkotte for “communist” activity years before the telcom giant blocked websites because of content) and Spectrum (which overcharges for Internet service that has declined in quality since its takeover of Time Warner was rubber-stamped), our area is an “Internet desert.” When the Interpipes first became popular, we were promised an open ‘Net free of censorship. The latest development is more proof that this was yet another broken promise, as the monopoly by Rectum and

Cincinnati Bellyache now brings yet more censorship.

Spectrum is now illegally throttling Internet traffic—a type of censorship. I never caught Time Warner doing this *before* the merger, but those days are gone. I discovered this electronic book-burning when I was using a chat room that had an audio channel, and the audio broke up so badly I couldn't use it. Nobody else in the channel had this problem.

I was able to access the channel just fine on my cheap smartphone—after battling my way through the app store. But I didn't want to keep accessing it on my phone, because I have a very limited data plan.

The fact that I could reach the channel on my phone and that people in other cities who got their Internet from someone other than Spectrum had no trouble with the channel is proof beyond any reasonable doubt that Rectum was throttling the channel.

Was it because of content? I don't know, but it's mighty suspicious that right-wing fake news sites aren't throttled.

Was it because this channel might compete with other websites? Even if it's not because of content, it can still be censorship, as it disfavors a particular site.

Is this a First Amendment matter, even if it isn't because of content? You bet your bizcream it is! Since the dawn of the phone industry, telcoms have been common carriers. An Internet provider throttling access is like a phone company blocking phone numbers. It's grossly illegal. (We know the phone industry has been around a long time, because I remember the Yellow Pages in my youth bearing a logo that read, "Reuben H. Donnelley—since 1907." Because I saw this some 75 years after 1907, I feared the worst about poor Reub's eventual fate.)

The Trump thugocracy's gutting of 'Net neutrality is a non sequitur, as online providers *are* common carriers. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut) said repealing 'Net neutrality is "a danger to free speech—one of the core principles of our democracy—at a time when so many of our First Amendment rights are threatened." Gene Kimmelman of the advocacy group Public Knowledge also called it "a First Amendment issue." Free speech applies to common carriers.

Conversely, right-wing extremists have argued that 'Net neutrality itself actually violates Internet providers' First Amendment rights. That argument is laughable and bogus, because they are common carriers, and because corporations are not supposed to have rights.

As long as the bourgeoisie makes hilariously idiotic ads talking about their "right" to cosmetic dentistry that's medically unnecessary, the proletariat's right to open Internet access must be respected. I wouldn't put it past the telcom industry to throttle chat rooms because of content, but we are adults. Adults need to socialize with each other. Big Business doesn't get to foist its so-called moral standards upon the public.

Gum to the Honeycomb Hideout!

"He needs to write about bubble gum."

"No, he needs to write about cereal."

"Nope. Bubble gum."

"No. Cereal."

"Bubble gum!"

"Cereal!"

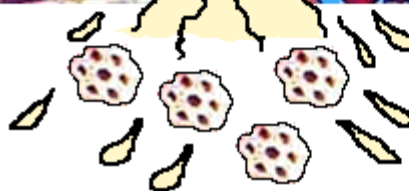
"Hey! Let's cooperate! How about if we tell him to write about bubble gum offers in cereal boxes?"

"You mean...both? Wow! That's cooperation!"

Our August 19, 2010, ish lamented the reported decline of Honeycomb cereal. A 2006 change to Honeycomb's recipe prompted a family member to write hate mail to Post. Because of all the complaints, Honeycomb's formula was reportedly changed again the following year—when Post touted its "improved taste"—but it's unclear if it was restored to its earlier glory.

Well, Post didn't learn.

Last year, Post did the exact same thing it did over a decade earlier. The cereal giant again changed Honeycomb's formula—



and was met by complaints. Wikipedia says reviews “were almost universally negative.” Someone on a cereal review website said the new formula “will make you want to eat the cardboard box it comes in instead of the cereal.” The response was so bad that Post recently announced a return to the old recipe.

I know of no recent instance in which Honeycomb or any other cereal has had a bubble gum offer. But, like other cereals, Honeycomb was once in the beegee bustin’ biz. Back around 1976 or 1977, the Honeycomb Hideout kids found the zesty viand in their cereal...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDCUK8N_e-M

Here’s a synopsis of that commersh in case you’re afraid of everything. In that ad, the kids find their precious Honeycomb Hideout upended by Big Boris, who demands a gargantuan Honeycomb breakfast fortified with all the essential vitamins and minerals he needs to get him through a grueling day. After feeding Boris, the kids find a pack of Trident gum in the cereal box.

That’s when the real funniness began—because, after all, nothing is funnier than the existence of gum. The kids argue like a bunch of spoiled brats about who gets the gum. “Hey, that’s mine!” one of them declares.

The kids refer to it merely as *chewing* gum twice, but the voiceover man calls it *bubble* gum—thus making it funny. To underscore this point, the little brats all blow some bubs. Unfortunately, however, it’s Trident, which doesn’t meet the criteria for goodgum. That’s because Trident was one of the first brands to be laden with dangerous artificial sweeteners—which are pervasive these days but were an annoyance that could be avoided back then.

An interesting place, that Honeycomb Hideout was. It looks like something my neighborhood pals would have built in the woods so we’d have a place to argue about the Life-and-Breath Sign, take apart dud fireworks, draw dirty pictures of nursery rhyme characters, and burn stuff. I remember a neighbor kid giving out Lucky Charms and pink Care-Free bubble gum, but the gum probably didn’t come with the cereal.

I closed my hand in a door and all I got was this bent finger

Yes!

I have a new weird feature to express and explore my individuality. This is what punk was like before it *was* punk.

Other than my amateur “WE ARE THE 99%” tattoo, I don’t engage in intentional body modification—though if somebody else does, that’s their choice. I just rock what nature gives me or what has been accidentally incurred. As you know, back in January, I broke my left index finger when I was laughing so hard at some *Sesame Street* jokes that I accidentally closed a car door on it in the parking lot at Big Lots. The finger is paralyzed for good, and I had to teach myself how to type without it.

Now that it’s finally healed all it’s going to, I noticed something cool about it. It’s bent. Permanently. If you look at the photo, you can see the tip of my finger is bent ever so slightly to the left. It goes great with my strabismus, misaligned dentition, and *Sesame Street* sore. Now I have something else cool to show my friends! I like the ‘70s.

Think. Do. Be.



A person chewed gum and it looked ridiculous but it got wasted

You have my explicit permission to chew gum as obnoxiously as possible—in any time and place you desire. You may stretch it, snap it, and even bubble with it.

But beware! You might look ridiculous.

I remember a girl in grade school who managed to accomplish looking ridiculous all by her lonesome. My memory of this is fuzzy, so I don’t remember what year or the exact location. But—to quote an intelligent person—she worked that gum like a gummer.

One day, she had a big pink wad of Pal bubble gum. That brand is easy to remember, because bubble gum is your pal, your friend, your buddy, your comrade. She gummed like a pro, and it was obnoxious. I don’t think I’ve ever seen anyone contort their face so much while chewing gum—except when my dog found some.

I was snickering because the girl was noisy and looked silly. I don’t think she was *trying* to be silly. That’s just how she looked when she chewed gum. She made constant slurping sounds and kept rolling the gum around with her tongue. She was a couple years older than me, so she should have been a role model of maturity. But

nope!

She didn't actually say so, but it's clear that her goal was to blow a bubble. She was scheduling her entire day around it. She was trying to gnash the gum into a bubbleable texture.

But she only enjoyed this quid of beegee for a few minutes—which wasn't long enough to bubble. An adult got angry at her for chewing gum and made her spit it out.

Thus, that morsel of bubble gum was wasted. As I've stated before and I state again—because it's such an important point—gum is wasted if you don't blow bubbles that pop all over your face. Adult intervention prevented this ingot of beegee from realizing its intended purpose. Sad! Not good! Bigly!

A kid broke his glasses because of course he did

Nice to know there were still some good eyeglass breakings in America's lost decade! Maybe not spectacular, but worth mentioning for the encouragement of today's young people. They need our support.

I searched all over the Internet for more stories of kids breaking their own glasses in anger, but the selection has gotten mighty thin. Maybe I need gum to improve creativity. Still, I found one story from 2009 in which a parent says their 4-year-old son thoroughly ruined his own spectacles.

In this story, the youngster poked a lens out of his gafas and snapped the glasses in two. Why? Because it bips. Seriously, the real reason appears to be that his snacky-poo wasn't served in the right bowl. The magic word was used in that thread.

It used to seem to me that my life ran on too fast, and I had to talk about broken glasses just to make the good parts last.

It's a berry poisonous kind of day...

Join Strawberry Shortcake for a nice bowl of poison!

Once when I was a youngster, Channel 5 ran an animated infomercial for Strawberry Shortcake toys in place of regularly scheduled programming. Following this, the entire Strawberry Shortcake franchise became a topic of bottomless ridicule for several years thereafter. Kind of like when Kings Island ruined the Enchanted Voyage by turning it into a Smurfs ride. Or *The Get Along Gang* existing.

We even had a brief Dungeons & Dragons campaign in which Strawberry Shortcake was one of the monsters we could slay. But she was one of the wimpiest monsters in this game. The really tough monsters were a McRib sandwich and a school bus monitor I had who hit kids with a rolled-up book.

Naturally, in 1982, General Mills introduced Strawberry Shortcake cereal. It consisted of pink pellets that ostensibly tasted of strawberries. I never tried the cereal, but not everybody today gives it glowing reviews.

A reviewer on a cereal website recalls...

“This stuff tasted good at first, but it had a weird chemical aftertaste. I remember thinking it was poison when I was a kid.”

Was this the same Clorox-like flavoring that plagued Pac-Man cereal?

Game over.

Bubbling for a cause

Bubbling isn't just a frivolous activity. It can raise awareness of a serious cause.

April of each year has been set aside for the Bubble Gum Challenge. I'm discussing it now in our August edition because—like all things gum—it needs to stay on the frontburner for as long as humanly possible.

Many dentists hate bubble gum, and some have imposed an Allowed Cloud forbidding their patients from partaking in it. But each April, they provide a dispensation as part of the Bubble Gum Challenge. The slogan of the Bubble Gum Challenge is, “Blow a bubble for those who can't.”

The challenge is designed to build oral cancer awareness. Many oral cancer survivors discover that they



can no longer blow bubbles after treatment. That's because they may have had teeth or other oral tissue removed. So, to draw awareness to this feared illness, dentists encourage people to bubble for one month out of the year.

Every April, dentists everywhere post photos and videos of themselves, their hygienists, and their patients chomping and blowing beegee. Some dental offices have a big bowl of bubble gum in the waiting room so folks can masticate a slab or three and puff out some mean bubbles.

People are also encouraged to post photos and videos of themselves bubbling on their own Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages—and challenge friends to bubble as well.

Your dentist has now given you permission to chew gum after decades of trying to deny you this tasty snack!

I defaced a magazine

Once when I was about 8, I found a magazine and ruined it all up.

Unlike newspapers, magazines are usually intended to be hoarded. But I was the only hoarder in my immediate family. Everyone else threw things away (or broke stuff) like there was no tomorrow. Suffice it to say, we were *not* a zero-waste home!

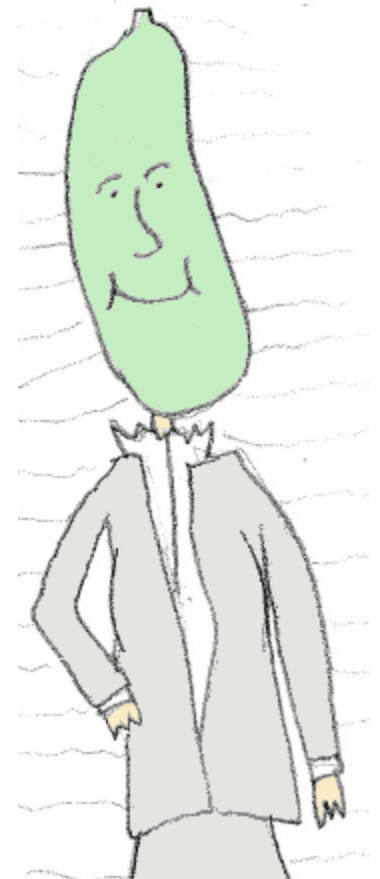
One day, my mom opted to throw away some magazines. This wasn't the first magazine ruining session in our household. A couple years earlier, my mom thought I was weird because I didn't always carry out my before-school routine in exactly the right order every morning. I was only 6, so why would I? So she made a huge poster consisting of pictures cut from magazines to illustrate each step. Uh, I knew how to read. I didn't need pictures. I was reminded of this recently when I stumbled upon photos on the Internet of candy bouquets parents made for their kids—which are all pretty much exactly the same and use pictures cut from magazines.

Anyway, during our magazine destruction day when I was about 8, I found ads for cosmetics and pickles. The cosmetics ad featured a photo of a model wearing a rather conservative outfit. The pickle ad featured a drawing of a big, fat, green pickle with a human face.

So I cut out the pictures of the model and the pickle. I glued the pickle face over the model's head. Then I pasted them on a sheet of notebook paper—along with other things I cut out of the magazines that I thought were hilarious. My mom thought it was “ignorant.”

For years, I kept this sheet of paper in a binder with other important documents. This was the same binder my mom once tripped over and declared, “Son of a b—*gun!*” It wasn't out in the middle of the floor! It was next to the den closet! It's like the time the Magna Doodle got stamped.

Advertising works! It just doesn't always work in the way advertisers want.



What a Wonderful world...but not anymore

At long last, I found an honest ad server for The Online Lunchpail. So naturally, it was driven out of business.

Back in 2010, Google AdSense yanked my account because of my blog's political views—and illegally refused to pay me perhaps *thousands* of dollars in ad revenues I had earned. I later read that a class action suit was filed on behalf of bloggers who had their earnings stolen by BadSense—but the lawyers botched the case.

I tried other ad servers from time to time, but at least one shut its doors without paying me all the revenues I was owed, and others wouldn't approve my account because AdSense placed me on a blacklist.

Finally, I found Project Wonderful.

Unfortunately, capitalism—market fascism—later found it too. Recently, Project Wonderful went out of business. They sent an e-mail citing Facebook's growing monopoly that locks readers within its own network and doesn't direct them to outside blogs. Not only does Facebook's monopoly give right-wing fake news posted there too much clout, but it also shuts out folks who don't use Facebook—or have been banned from there because of their politics. Without outside blogs and websites, people need a Facebook account to follow their friends and fam.

Meanwhile, BadSense lives on—still thieving from bloggers. People don't call it market fascism for nothing.

The good news is that Project Wonderful has done what few other ad servers have done: paid me all my earnings.

But something something free market something something.

Dubble Bubble called “ruined”

I can’t wait until someone discusses bubble gum, *Sesame Street*, *American Top 40*, Brossart, broken eyeglasses, cereal, Ronald Reagan, toilets, Speak & Spell, Roads Scholaring, baseball forfeits, and the word *ruin* in one all-encompassing Internet post. Until then, we have to settle for only bubble gum and *ruin*.

You know that for 20 years, the Internet has been bombarded by message forums about bubble gum where people argue constantly. You know I think it’s uproarious.

These forums are home to several people who have long insisted that there was a point—maybe 15 years ago—when Dubble Bubble changed its recipe so the bubbles aren’t as big. According to them, that was the day the world jumped the shark. Other folks insist this simply isn’t true—even as they lament the discontinuation of other brands and flavors of beege. They claim Dubble Bubble bubbles as hilariously as ever.

Whatever the weather, someone on these boards recently brang up Dubble Bubble’s supposed decline again. He described his favorite brands of bubble bustin’ gum, listing Super Bubble as his current fave and Dubble Bubble’s gumballs as his favorite before that. That differs from the standard Dubble Bubble, about which he said this...

“before this it was Dubble Bubble chunks, that formula changed and is ruined.”

Hear that, people? Ruined! The bubble gum got ruined—or so goes the legend.

Dubble Bubble and the magic word actually appear in the same sentence! How’s that for humor?

Magna Doodle called “ruined”

“Magna Doooooodle!”

That was the desperate cry of a ‘90s commercial for this popular toy. I had one growing up—but not for long, because a relative couldn’t see the blue and orange toy against the celery green carpet in the corner of the living room, and it was trampled underfoot.

That’s not the only time a Magna Doodle got ruined. In fact, it’s not the only time the magic word was used regarding it. Grazing on the Information Pooper Scooper, I found a message thread from 2004 in which someone talks about the destruction of their Doodle...

“I had one when I was a kid and I threw a roller skate on top of it, and it became ruined.”

A Magna Doodle got ru.

YouTube flags a video because a person bubbled

It had to happen sooner or later, I suppose.

Some of the first videos ever posted on YouTube were by people blowing bubbles with bubble gum. After all, why not? It shouldn’t have been surprising. When I was growing up in Highland Heights, the 4 food groups were Bubble Yum, Dubble Bubble, Hubba Bubba, and Bazooka. I’m not the only person who was brung up at that time and place who says this. Ask anyone you know who was raised there at the time, and they’ll say the same thing.

You really had to be there. I’m not exaggerating at all. If you grew up in my neighborhood in, say, 1979, **chewing bubble gum was what you did**. Period. Full stop. End of story. You know people who have a favorite sports team who’ll just start talking about it without even being prompted. My neighborhood comrades were like that regarding bubble gum.



A few days ago, my heart sank when I was informed that YouTube flagged a video because a person bubbled. I was told that the young woman who made the video posted a new clip detailing the situation.

I thought it couldn't possibly be true. But it was.

In the new 21-minute video—in which she bubbles throughout—she says that a couple months ago, she uploaded a clip in which she bubbled. “I was chewing gum and busting the bubbles all over my face,” she tells the viewer. But “health and safety managers” complained to YouTube about that video. They said the clip was “dangerous” because the gum might pick up makeup from her face, and she might ingest it. So YouTube placed an age restriction on the video.

I'm sure any child can still watch the clip if their parents let them use their account. But aren't cosmetics nontoxic? L'Oréal can be toxic to your bank account when they lose or disobey employee garnishment orders, but that's about it.

This is as bad as when YouTube took down Bert and Ernie segments because of bogus fourth-party copyright complaints.

Websites should show Exif the exit

Brace yourself, because far-right copyright trolls have a new campaign of madcap wackiness.

With the alt-right's doxxing against dissidents, you'd think Internet privacy would be of more interest than ever. In hindsight, it's surprising there were no privacy laws forbidding Usenet posts from carrying IP numbers—or requiring Google to remove IP information (often forged) from posts in its broken Usenet archive. Driving a car is a privilege—not a right (even for those who insist it's a right for them but a privilege for everyone else)—but you can't use license plate numbers from 30 years ago to track down people who committed crimes against you. Using the Internet is a right—but criminals can track you down with your IP number.

Exif—which stands for exchangeable image file—is a bit like that. Exif refers to the tags on JPEG and other digitized photos. It includes timestamps, your camera model, and other data.

Some social networking websites quite rightly strip Exif data from photos uploaded by users. Apparently, some do it to save space, but it also protects privacy. For instance, the camera model and shutter speed could reveal a person's identity. Some camera models and configurations are very common, but some are not. For example, you might be the only person who still uses the kind of camera used in Genesis's “Invisible Touch” video. Plus, photos taken with cameras that enable GPS may even carry an Exif tag containing the photo's location.

Now the Far Right wants legislation that would prohibit social networking sites from removing Exif data from pictures that people upload. Their reasoning is so that professional photographers can catch those who steal their photos and upload them.

That is bullshit. If it's the same photo, it's the same photo. It doesn't take Exif tags to prove that.

What we really need to do is *require* social networking sites to remove Exif data—not prohibit them from doing so. But do you expect that to happen? We live under the thumb of a far-right Supreme Court that ruled that *not* having a misnamed “right-to-work” law for public workers is unconstitutional—even though the law itself is in fact an unconstitutional impairment of contracts.