

The Last Word™

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'The Bachelor' is horseshit

This nonsense fills the former time slot of *That's Incredible!* (and then some)?

It's hard to believe ABC's *The Bachelor* has been around for 17 years and I was only recently exposed to it because some people insist on leaving the TV on after the news. *The Bachelor* is a so-called "reality" show in which a man tries to select a wife from a pool of candidates. The show takes participants around the world to "romantic" locations like...Singapore.

I know, man, that's so realistic. Yes, every week, I travel halfway around the world to countries with dictatorial governments—at a TV network's expense—to have a cocktail party with potential mates. Don't you?

Why does ABC keep lengthening the show as ratings drop? The show sure isn't very good at matchmaking: Out of 22 completed runs of the show, there's only one where the couple is still together. Often, the couple breaks up within weeks.

How unrealistic is *The Bachelor*? The man who stars in the current run of the show is only 27 but he's already retired. I'm sure he's a nice guy and all, but when I was 27, I only wished I could retire—so I wouldn't have to worry about another round of closed factories and boarded-up storefronts (and the right-wing media gloating about how "great" everything was). Somehow, I think I would have been laughed right out of the Social Security office if I applied for retirement benefits at 27.

Perhaps as bad as any of this, the show is thoroughly annoying! In 2009, a contestant alleged that the whole show was scripted—despite supposedly being a "reality" program. The confrontations and other situations on the show are hackneyed and irritating.

The Bachelor should be renamed to *That's Unwatchable!*

A Morton Downey Jr. poster got ru

A few of you may be familiar with Channel One News—a vehicle for selling TV ads in America's schools. Thankfully, I was never force-fed Channel One. It was introduced nationwide when I was in high school—but only at the end of the Brossart fiasco.

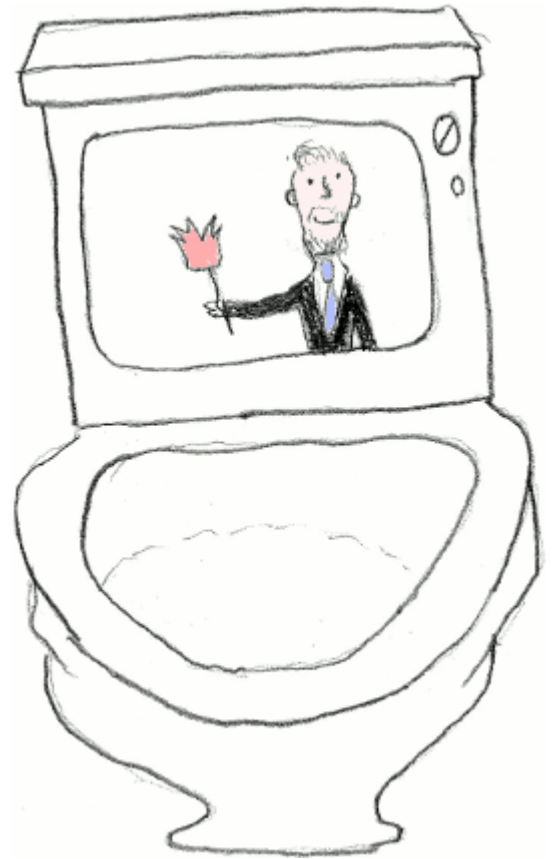
Channel One was founded by Chris Whittle, whose Whittle Communications championed the right-wing idea of plastering our schools with ads. Channel One provided schools with TV sets and satellite dishes to receive its broadcasts—but in addition, schools got a whole lotta commercials, which squandered valuable class time. The TV sets reportedly turned on by themselves whenever a Channel One broadcast started.

Whittle Communications also put ads in books and launched its own magazines for doctors' offices. Doctors who received these magazines were required to limit competing publications—thus giving Whittle a captive audience. One of Whittle's most visible endeavors was its gigantic posters that were splashed about the walls of high schools and colleges. These posters talked about various events, famous people, and activities—and did of course feature a big row of ads down at the bottom.

Someone on the Internet relayed a funny story about one such poster. He said that one of these posters when he was in college featured a huge close-up photo of the late Morton Downey Jr.—right when his abrasive TV talk show was at its peak of popularity. These posters were changed monthly, and the student's roommate wanted to keep the Morton Downey Jr. poster when it was changed.

At the end of the month, however, poor ol' Mort was found wadded up in a garbage can. The poster was ru.

A heroic effort was made to retrieve the crumpled poster from the trash—but it was never the same after



that. It was probably covered with opened mayonnaise packets, crumbs, and other waste.

I'm waiting for someone to lecture the university that Downey posed for that photo just for them.

Despite media praise, the Whittle empire crumbled in 1994. Channel One was sold to another company and limped along until just last year. (We outlived Channel One! Just like how we outlived the *Kentucky Post!*) I'm not sure what became of Whittle's poster project. Several years after Chris Whittle's enterprises fell apart, I noticed similar posters at NKU. They were periodically changed and filled a poster stand that had protective plastic covering. One of these posters featured a small photo of singer Jewel, which someone famously stuck bubble gum on, making it appear as if Jewel was blowing a mean bubble.

I'm not sure if these posters were from Whittle. I get the feeling that Jewel has more integrity than many other celebrities. So she probably would have refused to have anything to do with a Whittle project.

Am I standing still? I couldn't stand still while Whittle Communications was pumping "buy, buy, buy" into America's schools, so I've discussed Chris Whittle's madcap efforts before, like his for-profit schools that stunk up everything.



'Zoom' zoomed into unenforceable contracts

Remember the PBS children's show *Zoom*? Though it had a later version, I watched the 1970s run of *Zoom* in my childhood. I remember hardly anything about it, so I can't accurately critique it.

But the producers of *Zoom* apparently didn't understand contract law.

According to Wikipedia, the '70s version of *Zoom* held the children who starred on the show to a contract that barred them from doing any more TV appearances for 3 years after they left the show.

Uh, you do know that contract was unenforceable, right? I'm quite certain that contracts cannot be enforced on anyone under 18. Yes, I know the CPH gulag (now part of NorthKey) preyed on younger people when they were at their most vulnerable by trotting out contracts they were coerced into signing—so CPH could bill their insurer \$2,000 a day. But numerous articles written by lawyers all say that minors do not have the capacity to enter into contracts.

I also know all about the mature minor doctrine, but I'm quite certain that would not apply to such contracts—in either the *Zoom* or CPH case. The purpose of this doctrine is to protect, say, a 16-year-old from being forced by their parents to attend a bad private school. Strange how some people seem to forget about the mature minor doctrine for things like that, while acting like contracts are binding on minors.

Zoom seems to bear no relation to *Studio See*, another PBS kids' show. Despite this, Wikipedia says *Studio See* was the successor to the '70s *Zoom* and the predecessor to the later *Zoom* (despite a 20-year gap). I don't remember much about *Studio See* either, though one lone episode has surfaced on YouTube. In fact, I had no idea what the show's name referred to. It may have been a pun on "studio C", but I used to think it was like the Holy See.

Biddle gibzz!

A person tried playing their albums on a Victrola and ruined them

If you're reading this zine, you're probably mighty smart. So you know that a Victrola—an antique phonograph that operates by turning a crank—isn't going to play more modern records.

But there's always some sucker out there who tries it anyway.

In my day, my grandparents had a neat Victrola adorning the dining room. But I don't remember them having any records that were playable on it—because it could only play ancient 78 RPM discs, which were so brittle that few lasted that long. Even later 78's probably could not be played on this device. Not long ago, however, someone made an Internet post titled "Can I play 33.3 rpm records on a 78rpm Victrola wind up machine?"

Uh-oh. That doesn't sound good.

This person had just acquired a century-old Victrola and wanted to know if they could play modern albums on it. They lamented, "The steel needles that came with it are too thick and skip over any lp I try to put on

it.”

To answer the question, someone replied, “Short answer: No. Long answer: Nnnnnoooooooooooo.” They said that a Victrola stylus is “heavy enough to instantly destroy the groove of any LP you put on it.” In other words, that was the end of those records! Suffice it to say, they’re ru. Not just *one* album, but *many* albums.

This ranks right up there with the time I was on a roadtrip in North Dakota and saw the aftermath of someone towing a boat (which was apparently brand new) under an overpass that was too low for it.

A Victrola FAQ says that Victrolas don’t even play every kind of record from the Victrola era. It warns, “Don’t play thick Edison discs, as these are vertically cut, and the Victrola’s needle will ruin them.” The magic word! It also says that the steel needle of a Victrola is intended to be used *only once*. You should listen to *one* record with it before replacing it, because using the needle more than once will spoil the record.

Recently, the Victrola brand started making a comeback. These new Victrolas are designed to look like antiques, but they play modern records and sometimes even CD’s.

Ru is forever...Ru is forever...With you.

Business writer marries Nazi

My business partner tells me that not everything has been peachy keen in the world of local media.

She says that one day—many years ago—she was sitting on a wall outside the Cold Spring branch of the Campbell County Public Library, devouring a book. A car rolled up. Out popped a woman who she recognized as a business writer for a local publication—along with a man who appeared to be the woman’s husband.

She immediately noticed that the man had a Nazi swastika tattooed on his bicep, which was visible as he was wearing a short-sleeve t-shirt.

The couple strolled into the library where this shocking spectacle could be observed by perhaps dozens of patrons and employees.

You’d think it wouldn’t be very often that Nazis visit libraries, but somehow, they find an excuse. I know they have, because at least twice, neofascists from school tried to run over me in the parking lot.

When I heard this story, I got a feeling of *deja vu*. I could have sworn I once saw this couple—and recognized the woman—at the same location. I must have been in such disbelief that I figured I couldn’t have possibly seen what I had seen, and that the woman was only someone who *resembled* a local business writer, and the man’s tattoo was only something that *resembled* a swastika. So I forgot about it. Just like when I saw a brief clip on TV of George H.W. Bush bubbling at a baseball game. I’m thinking I may have even written about the Nazi couple when I saw them, but I can’t find *anything* I’ve written about them. All I can think of is that I must have heard this same story years ago.

A long time ago, this zine ran a short article about Nazis placing flyers praising Hitler in library books in other cities. (Donald Trump accelerated shit like this, but he didn’t start it himself.) I think I’m confusing the other story with this one. I wonder if that’s what the couple sighted at our local libe was doing.

You can’t make these stories up. Gee, I thought things like this weren’t supposed to happen because The New Civility Fixed Everything (tm).

A person got mad and threw a wad of gum

Bishop Brossart High School has been described as the bubble gum capital of the world. When I attended school there, students secretly masticated the zesty goo in principled defiance of a school rule that imposed a stiff fine.

Rarely, however, did they blow bubbles. Bubbling was a common pastime in the real world. But in the topsy-turvy Brossart universe, it was far from an everyday occurrence.

One morning when I was a freshman, I bopped into school and discovered that somebody had stuck a giant chaw of pink beegoo on the side of a student’s locker. This locker was at the end of a row of lockers (which kept getting broken into), so the side of it was exposed. The wad was humongous. I could tell that somebody had gone to town with that thing and puffed out some big bubs. As it rested on the side of the locker, it was roughly



round, slightly flattened, and perhaps the size of a silver dollar—though much thicker. It looked as if it featured a shoe print—as if somebody had walked up the side of the locker as if they were trying to recreate Lionel Richie’s “Dancing On The Ceiling” video.

One thing is for sure: It was gee of the bee variety.

A classmate who had that locker showed up soon after. I pointed out the wad of gum to him. Then the usually friendly, mild-mannered student flew into a rage!

He angrily snagged the quid of bubble gum off the side of his locker with his bare hands and threw it at me! I burst out laughing as I dodged the flying beegee!

You read that right. He handled a dirty, germy wad of gum with his bare hands! I have to give him credit though, because he didn’t cram it into his mouth and chew it, like some of those kids would have done.

Along comes a butt blast

“Then along comes a butt blast...There’s a change in the pants that you’re wearin’ tonight...”

Dan Quayle liked to tell bomb jokes at airports. He thought it was edgy and made the libs get rekt. But a Home Depot store in Wichita, Kansas, has found out just how pooppy bomb jokes can be.

A headline in the *Wichita Eagle* screams, ““Bomb threat’ was a warning from man needing to poop at Home Depot, Kansas cops report.” One afternoon recently, police were summoned to this home improvement megastore after a 911 call about a bomb threat. When officers arrived, they were told that an employee was at a urinal in men’s restroom when a man emerged from a stall and declared, “Somebody told me there’s a bomb in the building. You need to leave the building.”

A clerk recognized that the man was a regular customer and gave his name to the cops. Police contacted the man, and he had a chance to set the matter straight. It was just a poo-poo joke he heard from another man in the lavatory. The police report said the other man “was in a serious need to defecate, and that he was attempting to provide a polite warning to the other patrons of the bathroom.” Restrooms have patrons? Who knew?

No charges are being filed in this unchecked poologgery.

What a fool believes

Although I’m a nonfiction writer, I can write a fake news story and still be more believable than the pop-up media. Although the right-wing death cult doesn’t represent a majority of the American people—as shown by the recent midterm elections—it’s breathtaking how detached from reality their institutions have become. They don’t just have flawed arguments on matters of opinion, but they make up their own facts too, and these alternative facts become the “official” version of things—even if they can be demonstrably disproven. They even use Internet sockpuppets to bolster their stances.

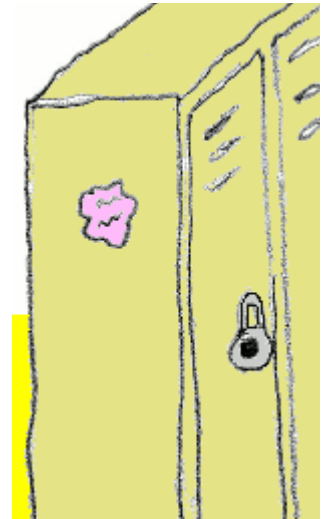
Recently, someone posted a thread on a highway transport forum inviting folks to write their own fake news articles, and this is what I came up with...

Missouri town to build Michael McDonald statue

The city of Rolla, Mo., has approved construction of a 50-foot-tall statue of singer-songwriter Michael McDonald, to be visible to travelers along Interstate 44. The \$2.3 million fiberglass sculpture was approved by City Council on Tuesday. City Manager Tom Casper said, “I’m not a rock ‘n’ roll guy myself,” but added that the statue will bring in tourist dollars to this university city.

McDonald, who sang on many of the Doobie Brothers’ records in the late 1970s and early 1980s, was born in St. Louis, 100 miles to the northeast. Latest population estimates show Rolla with a population of about 20,000.

The statue is inspired by a mural honoring the band Air Supply in Lansing, Mich.



You believed that, didn't you? Here's another fictional story...

Unemployment, crime eliminated by Trump

The Trump administration's campaign for religious freedom has yielded the lowest crime rate since the FBI began keeping statistics. Plus, experts say, it has fueled an economic boom not seen since the presidency of Herbert Hoover.

Recent reports of chronic poverty have been proven to be falsified by liberals sympathetic to the communist dictatorship in Iceland. Emily McLaren, 29, of Chicago said at her Dallas home, "Eat the rich and take their oil." McLaren's uncle set off a firestorm in 1986 during a showing of the comedy film Back To School at the Lemuel Cabarrus Center for Performing Arts when he yelled, "The pee and the poo!"

You believed that too, right?

Alternative facts have even invaded Wikipedia—thanks to right-wing editors and vandals ranging from far-right academics to ordinary neo-Nazis. Some use sockpuppets—accounts under which they assume completely fake identities. One was caught creating 140 sockpuppets over 10 years.

Right-wing sockpuppetry isn't limited to Wikipedia or to secular websites in general. Several years ago, a Texas man was exposed for using a sockpuppet to make comments supporting far-right blogs run by Lutheran pastors in Pennsylvania and Tennessee. This sockpuppetry isn't even limited to laypeople. One of the clergymen posted under a phony account himself! Then he had the nerve to accuse someone who disagreed with him of being a fake.

What are we supposed to think about pastors who bombard the Internet with hateful, juvenile posts using phony identities? Somehow I can't imagine Jesus or the Twelve Apostles creating fake accounts to argue with people on the Internet.

We're forced to live under vicious extremists who have created a make-believe world full of fake people, fake news, fake events, and fake ideas. None of their deceit is believable to you or me—but it's still the "official" story. For example, right-wing hatchet man and "filmmaker" James O'Keefe has made undercover videos that were deceptively edited and have been debunked again and again, but are held up as gospel. Twitter suspended far-right activist Jacob Wohl after he bragged about his plan to spread misinformation using numerous Twitter and Facebook sockpuppets. Wohl also admitted using a false identity to e-mail several news outlets containing bogus sexual misconduct allegations against Robert Mueller. Call me weird, but it's hard for me to understand why we're supposed to trust right-wing con artists who can be discredited within minutes. Even without their bogus videos and not-so-great moments in sockpuppetry, their political positions alone should disqualify them from elected office. Anyone unfamiliar with our political realities would look at their stances and think they're completely unelectable. We're decades past the point where we knew they were truly evil.

The right-wing flat earth society cares about political dominance—not the people's needs. This is like the story of the emperor who had no clothes but nobody dared to say it. Their bottomless deceit is a horrifying window into their twisted souls.

Come back when you grow up, righties.

Finally! Monopoly for cheaters!

I stopped by the friendly commune Krogie-Wogie again (imagine that!), and while I was sauntering along at this supermarket, I noticed something that wasn't very Kroger. Usually, when I think of board games, Kroger doesn't come to mind. That's a place to buy food and toilet paper, not games. But they had a shelf full of games, and one of them was something I'd never seen before: a "cheaters edition" of Monopoly.

The box featured the mustachioed Monopoly man scurrying away from a bank after robbing it and leaving a trail of money. He's holding his finger to his mouth as if to say, "Shh! Don't tell anyone!" The box challenges potential players, "What can you get away with?"

Later, I investigated this new version of Monopoly—which was introduced just last year—and found that it receives rave reviews. People love this game that lets you be a bank robber, unlicensed contractor, or identity thief. The game even lets you dodge rent! Plus, you can carry out illegal foreclosures by taking another player's hotel and giving it to the bank, and you can frame other players for your crimes. But watch out! If you get caught, you can and will go directly to jail! But of course you can escape.

Not everyone likes this game though. One reviewer called it "a stinker." Another called it "the worst game I've ever played in my life."

I'm almost inclined to think Hasbro cheated by borrowing my ideas. I know I mentioned years ago that I came up with my own Monopoly rules that are almost identical to some of the rules in this new version. When I

was about 12, I noticed it was impossible to finish a game of Monopoly, because players would always accuse each other of cheating, and they'd quit. So—as “The Goonies ‘R’ Good Enough” blared on WCLU on the boom box in the den—I devised my own rules, in which players could burn down properties instead of paying rent.

This was of course before we played Monopoly in high school, when we really did cheat. I was under no delusions that the Monopoly set in the classroom didn't have many pieces missing. After all, this was the same class where the teacher would buy brand new jigsaw puzzles, which we'd put together only to find pieces missing, reportedly because someone ate them. So, when we played Monopoly in high school, I didn't take the game seriously. I just wanted to have fun! Our incessant cheating ruined more game pieces. One way we cheated was to wad up the money and pass it under the table—leaving the money a crumpled mess. Despite our uproariously unruly behavior, I was actually surprised when I saw the teacher looming over us and scooping up our money as she made us put the game away.

You usually think of the Monopoly man as greedy but not actually a criminal. To see him robbing banks and committing other sordid crimes might be too much for some to handle. Some folks have expressed worry that the “cheaters edition” of Monopoly sends the wrong message to our young people. But doesn't that mean regular Monopoly does too? While the new Monopoly rewards *illegal* forms of greed, the old Monopoly rewards *legal* forms of greed. But, as I've discussed before, regular Monopoly evolved from a game designed to criticize the greed of capitalism—not promote it.

One hopes that an edition of Monopoly is in the works where the players get to be early 18th century pirates, whose violations of the law were usually rooted in good, not evil. These pirates were usually peaceful rebels, not violent brutes.

What's next? A version of Scrabble that only lets you use cuss words? A Stadium Checkers game that mimics Disco Demolition Night? An edition of Donald Trump's board game in which you argue with customers wearing “Make America Great Again” hats at the grocery?

A person got mad because someone complained about a TV catching on fire

If you're in search of a new TV set, unexplained fires may be the least of your worries. You may also have to deal with a screeching skizzum from a heavy-handed moderator of an Internet forum when you dare to complain about this hazard.

Not long ago, someone posted on the Interpipes about how his Samsung television caught on fire after only 4 years. Samsung breezily dismissed this danger. Someone responded, saying that their Samsung that was only 3 years old “poped” and did the same.

But someone claiming to be a moderator of this forum replied to this respondent, saying, “Your posts are now becoming disruptive,” and accusing this person of posting the same complaint multiple times. Except that they hadn't, you moron. They had posted it only once.

Someone else said their \$500 Samsung caught on fire 3 days after the 1-year warranty expired.

It turns out that Samsung recalled many of its sets because of fires—but hardly anyone was notified.

It's not only Samsung. A Georgia woman reported that her Sony exploded and nearly caught her house ablaze.

A person ruined a Life cereal contest

Quaker Oats' breakfast cereal Life is known for one of the most memorable TV advertising campaigns ever (except the ad where people in business suits threw piles of shit at each other). The commercials featuring a 3-year-old Mikey aired for 14 years in the '70s and '80s. As Mikey shoveled cereal into his mouth, his brothers declared in amazement, “He likes it!”

After the end of this campaign, when I was about 13, Quaker Oats had a contest in Life cereal boxes in which you were supposed to identify a college-aged Mikey among a crowd of people pictured on a sheet of paper. The folks in the photo were of all different ages, races, and genders—but only one of them was Mikey!



We were going to enter this contest. But disaster struck. A family member promptly dumped an entire cup of orange juice onto the sheet of paper.

Yep, it was ru.

After the contest sheet was wasted, we could not enter the contest. We certainly weren't going to rush over to Kroger or IGA to buy another box of Life just so we could get a fresh contest sheet. I had school that day. On the other hand, farting around in the cereal aisle at the grocery would have been more productive than school was.

If they'd poured orange juice on my Trix secret decoder or my Froot Loops record, I'd be furious!

The Trabant was the Road Ruiner of cars

Socialism works. Soviet-style communism, not so much

A few party poopers like to complain that I ridicule fascist governments too much, but never communist governments. Well, worry no more! On the other hand, I think we can safely say that many communist regimes were more right-wing than left-wing, but that's another matter altogether.

I've had several bicycles in my adult life, and if we had to compare bikes to cars, I'd say the Extremist was roughly equivalent to the Yugo. The disastrous Road Ruiner has its own equivalent in the automobile world: the Trabant.

The Trabant was an East German car that started production in 1957. This car is considered by many to be one of the worst ever made. The Trabant continued to be manufactured until the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, but it remained pretty much the same all those years. Even in the 1980s, the Trabant had no rear seat belts and no fuel gauge. The only way to gauge your fuel was with a dipstick in the gas tank—and the tank was under the hood, which was dangerous.

This vehicle also had no turn signal indicator, so one could drive around not knowing their turn signal was on. When the windshield wipers were off, they obstructed the windshield. The Trabant did have windshield washer fluid, but you had to keep pumping it by hand. It has been said that this car could barely make it to 55 MPH—and certainly not 60. One motorist said their Trabant had a radio, but it kept turning on by itself and could only get one station.

When folks in East Germany wanted a Trabant, they were placed on a waiting list for years before the government let them buy one. Kind of like Kentucky! East Germans were not allowed to drive their Trabants into West Germany, because these cars produced so much blue exhaust smoke that they didn't meet West German regulations. However, the Trabant was more environmentally sound in one respect: The body wasn't made out of metal but out of a type of fiberglass made from recycled cotton from the Soviet Union. So if you shit your pants in Russia in 1957, it might become a Trabant!

Cars made by Russia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia in that era actually enjoyed significant sales outside of communist countries. But Trabant sales outside East Germany were practically zero. Nonetheless, a few Trabants have managed to make it into the good ol' U.S. and A. The few Americans who have Trabants today say that they sometimes meet stunned immigrants who haven't seen one since they lived in East Germany before the Berlin Wall fell. Some folks have tried registering their Trabant only to discover that the DMV doesn't even have a way to code it into their system.

Why was the Trabant so miserable? East Germany—like many other European countries—was dependent on the Soviet Union, which apparently was unwilling to invest in better automobile technology. But that doesn't explain why the Trabant was so much worse than these other countries' cars.

Some have defended the Trabant, saying it only polluted because owners put too much oil in it and otherwise abused it. Some say that while the Trabant didn't have the amenities that luxury SUV drivers are used to, it was still eminently operable. But those defending this little car are vastly outnumbered. On the other hand, I know that poor quality in the auto industry isn't limited to communist countries. If the Trabant was a school, it would be Bishop Brossart, which isn't exactly left-wing. In fact, if



Brossart built a car, it would probably be just seats and a frame, and the gas tank would probably be just a leaky backpack hanging off the back.

The mystery and mystique of other countries' cars is a bit like the pop music charts. Casey Kasem occasionally mentioned if a record hit #1 in another country, but he never said whether communist countries had a music chart. For the record, Cuba does—a top 175, no less. The song titles on the Cuban chart are in Spanish, but some of the artists are the same ones who have hit it big in the U.S. (I have no idea what “Las Pu” means.) I read on a website that even North Korea has a music chart. But the song titles—when translated from Korean—were things like “Let’s Praise Our Great Leader For Our New Tractor.”

I hope Trabant doesn’t make tractors!

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