

The Last Word™

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Noise, parking problems, and OSHA, oh my!

Depending on what route we take to the friendly commune Krogie-Wogie, we may bip past the old factory building that is being converted into luxury apartments. The city of Bellevue rubber-stamped this project because shut up. This site could have been used for something useful like low-income housing or a homeless shelter, but instead it went to yet another unasked-for gentrification boondoggle that doesn't do anything except jack up housing costs.

And the building's neighbors are hopping mad about the nagging nuisances the project has already created!

Many neighbors reported that the construction was creating gratuitous noise not only during normal business hours but also late at night when people were trying to sleep. It's a truism that Bellevue's noise ordinance is a paper tiger. The pile driver of the mid-2000s and the Manhattan Harbour construction trucks squealing their brakes proved that. Like the latest project, both of those long-lasting annoyances were to build unneeded luxury housing. This time, police reportedly cracked down—but apparently the peace didn't last long, for people later complained of even more noise.

People also reported that workers on this site have cussed them out for no apparent reason, and that OSHA has visited because it's such a dangerous worksite.

A few weeks ago, neighbors discovered that the construction firm purchased some pre-printed "no parking" signs and posted them all over the block—without getting permission from the city. The signs claimed to be posted by the police department—but this is false. The contractor tried to prevent people from parking on their own street. However, the police said they would not be ticketing anyone who defies the signs, because they were posted without permission.

Around the same time, there was a traffic accident caused by construction trucks parked in the middle of the street.

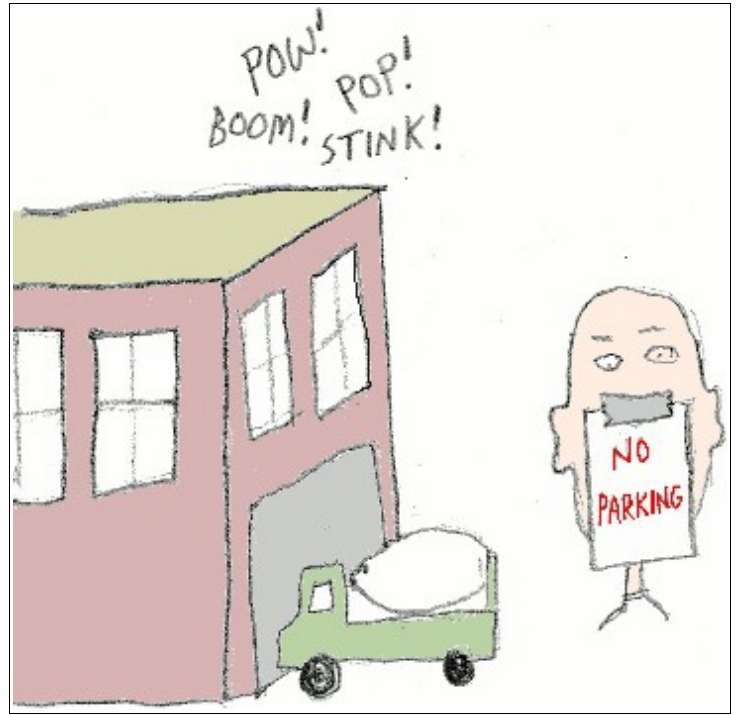
Weeks later, residents reported at a City Council meeting that the problems were just getting worse. Workers were knocking lead paint off the building, and the paint chips landed on cars. The construction company closed streets without permission. And—after police took down the "no parking" signs—the company put them back up again. City officials keep contacting the developers to fix the problems, but they never get fixed. One city council member warned of possible fines against the developer.

But it never should have gotten to this point in the first place. For 40 years, government agencies all over America have had powerful developers in their back pockets, and this has encouraged nibbling away the rights of neighboring homeowners and tenants. I must also mention that these luxury apartments are exempt from property taxes for 30 years—which makes it pointless to attract all these upper-crust residents, as they won't have to pay taxes like the rest of us. This isn't a problem we can just bubble away.

Piano wire traps prove not everyone is playing a new tune

"Butbutbut somebody said you said a bad word 20 years ago in an article about warrantless drug searches! Why should we listen to you?!"

When I see stories like the one I'm about to write about, it highlights the point that whenever someone complains about something I wrote, all I need to do is point out how others in the community prompted it when they shit in their hat first. It also shows they're still doing the same eliminationist crap they've been doing ever



since Reagan's first term—only probably even worse. My reaction to it has been very restrained indeed.

For months, Facebook has been intermittently plagued by a group—run by and inhabited largely by Brossart alumni—that encourages violence against bicyclists. The group is also full of homophobic insults against cyclists. A few weeks ago, it was revealed that a nefarious and potentially deadly setup has emerged on a stretch of the former Ky. 8 in Fort Thomas. Somebody has built a booby trap out of piano wire to injure or kill cyclists on this road.

The wire stretches between two barrels along the road. Piano wire is thin enough that it's hard for cyclists to see, but stiff enough that cyclists can't just plow through it, and rough enough that it can cause real injury—even death. A 2016 article said other materials have been used to ensnare

cyclists in other locales. Massachusetts officials posted warnings at state parks about “wire cable being maliciously strung.” Cyclists in Colorado found spikes embedded in concrete to flatten tires. In England, a mountain biker received cuts on his face from barbed wire that had been strung across a trail. I've also found a 2002 post on Usenet (the 4chan of the dial-up era) that endorsed placing piano wire across trails.

Because the same dumb losers have been doing so much stupid shit around here for 35 years, it's hard for me to get worked up again over bottomless alt-right thuggery that continues because local authorities refuse to crack down. They've never been punished, so they take that as permission to keep doing it. By contrast, the “broken windows” theory of criminology is shorthand for punishing victimless crimes while overlooking *real* crimes. If you support the “broken windows” theory, you're soft on crime. Period. Perhaps the biggest difference now versus then is that serious crime is encouraged on Facebook—which refuses to permanently remove groups that condone it. In fact, Facebook makes money off of it. They make money any time people use their system.

I think it's time legislators open a comprehensive investigation into hate groups on Facebook—especially eliminationist groups like the one we're dealing with here. I think we can all agree that enough is enough. If you don't understand why these groups are wrong, ask an adult.

Short-term rentals, long-term pain

I'm almost expecting some billionaire real estate mogul to crash through the wall of my apartment like Kool-Aid Man and convert it into a short-term rental that serves out-of-town tourists. Short-term rentals—which provide lodging to vacationers but don't have to follow regulations that govern hotels and other lodging businesses—have in some communities become a growing racket that depletes the supply of affordable housing. Airbnb probably has most of the short-term rental market—and Airbnb has extensively lobbied Republican legislators to pass laws favorable to the industry.

By taking over apartments, this industry not only reduces the availability of housing but also artificially drives up housing costs. And it reduces surrounding property values. So nobody wins. You can have decent property values but still have relatively low rents. But short-term rentals give us just the opposite.

Bellevue wisely forbids apartments from being used as short-term rentals. But there's a few vulture capitalists—who don't even live in the city—who encourage it anyway even though it violates this ordinance. Now they want this regulation repealed altogether—even as other cities tighten such rules to fight the housing crisis. Hypocritically, the economic royalists who want apartments replaced with single-family houses because they think residential renters are “transients” also want apartments replaced by short-term rentals—whose customers come and go much faster than residential tenants do. They come up with cockamamie reasons like how they “want to meet new people.” I guess the “transients” like me who actually *live, work, and pay taxes* here aren't good enough for them.

When I go on vacation—which isn't often, because I'm not made of money—it's not so I can meet the motel's owner and neighbors. I don't go pounding on the innkeeper's office door so I can get their autograph.



In some cities, predatory investment firms buy up *blocks* of apartment buildings and turn them into short-term rentals. Because of the resulting housing crunch, *residential* apartments might now charge tenants 8 times what I pay.

So I might as well make the best of this crisis. Predatory companies exploit the real estate market, so I get to exploit the catastrophe they've created—by finding stories of short-term rentals being utterly ruined by guests. But don't laugh too hard at these events, because not only is it sad when buildings get damaged, but these incidents have also surely sent neighbors' property values plummeting. Tenants, landlords, and homeowners all have reason to keep an eye on this burgeoning threat.

One person said a guest destroyed their rental by tearing out an entire bathroom vanity and leaving it in the front yard. Another says a guest crashed a big rig through the garage door of their rental. At another unit, a guest flushed a pencil down the toilet, which clogged it spectacularly. At one rental, people kept shitting on the neighbor's car.

Owners of an Airbnb in Canada said their place was ruined by guests who held an orgy in which they did drugs and smeared mayonnaise all over the furniture and ceiling. They also clogged the toilet by flushing condoms. The owner of another Airbnb said a customer stole a flashlight and a phone charger. An Airbnb in San Antonio wound up with pee everywhere and a smashed glass dining table.

Another guest used a hose to flood all the heating ducts at the unit they rented. At a bachelorette party at an Airbnb in Nashville, a lamp and coffee table were destroyed by a drunken partygoer. A party at an Airbnb in London destroyed a whole apartment complex. Obligatory pee was everywhere, and a press account said everything was "completely ruined." At an Airbnb in Spain, guests flushed entire rolls of toilet paper down the toilet and left cigarette burns on the brand new sofas.

Guests at an Airbnb in Washington, D.C., stole TV sets and left behind rotting food. A luxury Airbnb at a \$5 million mansion in San Francisco became filled with piles of feces. At another unit, guests stole the washer, dryer, and dishwasher. They also smashed the toilets with a baseball bat and hid feces in large holes they drilled in the walls.

We can bemoan unruly guests who can afford to goof off like this instead of working like we have to do. We can and should bewail those who deplete the housing supply by converting great, inexpensive apartments into short-term lodging. But much of our unshirted wrath should be felt by big corporations that encourage it—like Airbnb. Airbnb has refused to remove listings that violate municipal regulations—and has filed lawsuits against cities with such rules, laughably citing the Communications Decency Act, even though that law was ruled unconstitutional in 1997. As far as I know, judges so far have laughed Airbnb's argument right out of court.

Gum goes green

Gum is green! I don't mean that it's necessarily green in color—though it can be, and it's just as hilarious when it is. I mean that bubble gum is becoming more environmentally friendly again!

Some websites have expressed fear that discarded bubble gum pollutes. But some of the most diehard consumers of beegie that I know are not only proletarian populists but also avid environmentalists. They puff out some mean bubs as they lament the climate crisis, overdevelopment, and the dumping of poisonous chemicals in our waterways.

Bubble gum has a history of good environmental stewardship. People have bubbled fluently with gee for about 90 years, but folks have been chomping the acclaimed goo since antiquity. Ancient people found the natural ingredients in trees and plants. It was only in the past half-century or so that bubble gum began using synthetic ingredients.



It would be folly to say that even modern varieties of beegies use polluting single-use plastics like those found in straws and grocery bags. But most do use synthetic rubber and polymers. The good news is that some of these materials are recyclable. Our June 2018 ish reported that bins have appeared in Britain allowing those who partake to discard their gee to be recycled into new goodies.

Even better, some new brands of bubble gum have emerged that tout their environmentally friendly ingredients. They advertise themselves as all natural. As an added bonus, they contain no artificial sweeteners, so they won't cause cancer and are safe for those with allergies or other medical conditions. Best all, you can bubble big with these exciting new varieties of beegies!

If you're an environmentalist like most readers of this zine are, you'll never have to feel guilty about kablamming those bubs!

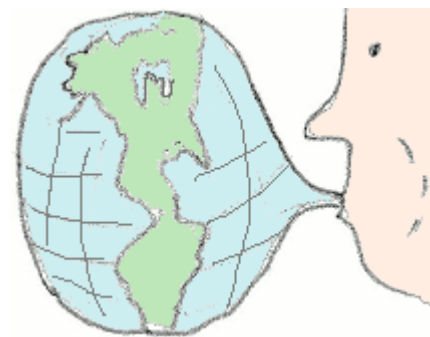
A couple years ago, I had an idea for a brand of bubble gum called Rulebreakers. True to its name, its commercials would include people masticating it and blowing huge bubbles in places where gum chewing is frowned upon—such as church. But this campaign could also promote the environmental benefits of its natural ingredients by showing environmental activists chaining themselves to a chicle-producing tree as they enjoy a nice, juicy wad of the stuff. Protester #1: "Did you know Rulebreakers is all natural and good for the environment? That means you can break the rules and feel good about it." Protester #2: "We're breaking the rules just by being here!"

One of the new environmentally sound brands ought to have a promotional campaign in which members of the public are invited to show off their bubbling skills on YouTube and other social media sites.

Bubble gum may be safe for the environment, but I'm sure the passions of the rich aren't nearly as safe. I'd love to see some of the materials that are squandered on their dumb activities taxed like everything else.

It's easy being green if you're gum!

Have some gum! It's good for the globe!



BBB busts GoFundMe

A toast to success! Blublublublublub! I had to get the Better Business Bureau involved, but at least my good name isn't being tarnished because GoFundMe can't get its poop in a group.

Recently, after I discovered GoFundMe had closed the safe space campaign without telling me, I contacted them about returning the money to the donors. When I didn't get a response, I had to complain to the Better Bubbling Bureau.

After the BBB got after them, GoFundMe finally contacted me and refunded the money. GoFundMe lamented that I must have missed earlier e-mails they sent about the campaign. That's believable, because Outlook stupidly pre-filters e-mail—even while it made spamming easier, to appease a European Union regulation. (Why should EU laws apply in America?) But that doesn't explain GoFundMe closing the campaign or failing to refund the money at first.

Anybip, problem solved—we think.

Smart kids liked bubble gum

A person mentioned bubble gum when I was in 6th grade and I haven't forgotten it because it was just so fann dunny!

Sixth grade at Cline Middle School was one of the years when I was arbitrarily assigned to a gifted class called OASIS. I never got why it was so great or how I was supposed to benefit from it. The teacher I had for that class suddenly turned against me during the year, and I've always wondered why. I think now I remember the incident that did it. One day, we made little cubes of paper called "cubies" that had facts about a type of insect on each side. Someone—I don't think it was me—threw one of the completed "cubies" onto the floor and stomped it flat. Then the teacher crouched down, picked it up, and asked the class, "Who ruined this cubie?" The magic word!

I burst out laughing, so he just assumed I was the culprit. After that, he hated my guts.

One afternoon—long after this occurred—beegies got mentioned. Some folks thought intellectual giants such as myself and the other kids in that class should never have anything whatsoever to do with bubble gum. Bubbling didn't fit the persona we were expected to have. But intelligent people actually do chomp the stuff. Anyway, I was paired with one of the 7th graders in that class to work on a class activity. I don't even remember what it was, but I decided I wasn't going to do it. The assignment wasn't anything I considered unethical or embarrassing. I just didn't feel like I was getting anywhere in that class.

So the other student and I just goofed off the whole time. The teacher just sat there about 8 feet away and scowled at us all the while. The other student and I kept coming up with ridiculous ideas for Olympic sports. I don't remember what any of them were. Except one. That was when my classmate blurted out, "Bubble gum bustin'!"

There was no impetus for him to specifically mention gee. I guess the idea of an Olympic game involving bubble gum just suddenly popped into his head out of nowhere. He didn't go into detail about it. Did he mean bubbling? Or was he talking about how people make that loud popping sound without blowing a bub?

The teacher continued to scowl.

Kings Island...It stinks in here!

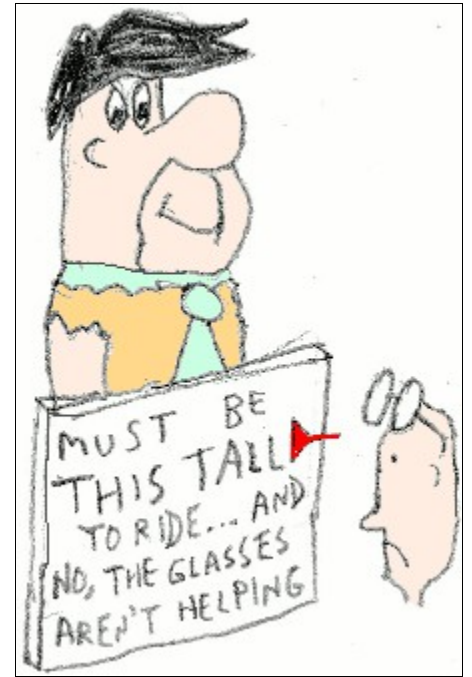
Summer! It turns me upside-down! Summer, summer, summer! It's like a merry-go-round!

Know what's best about summer (besides the warm weather making it easier to bubble)? 'Tis the season for bad reviews of amusement parks! Don't get me wrong, I used to have a blast at Kings Island—back in the Kikky Kangaroo era, which shows how long it's been since the park has been truly enjoyable. But since I haven't been back since 1990, the most amusement I get from this amusement park now is reading all the bad reviews it gets from guests! And now that it's summer, people are back for more!

One reviewer lamented the high prices at this amusement park, saying they wasted \$60 just on "food that was cold and disgusting." They concluded their review saying, "Fuck Kings Island." Another complained that parking alone cost \$20.

Another complained about the restrooms being a stinky mess and posted a photo of one of the messy stalls—replete with toilet. They said the lavatories are "hot musty crap smelling chambers." A guest who visited all the way from Illinois gave the park a bad review because of new rules against visitors who wear glasses. Another person called Kings Island "the worst park in the country."

Trust me, Kings Island jumped the shark long ago. The sharpest fin may have been when they changed the Enchanted Voyage into a Smurfs ride, but that wasn't the only fin. Recently I was thinking about how they closed the observation decks at the Eiffel Tower replica one by one. When I was there last, the only deck that was still open (even in daylight and in good weather) was the 265-foot deck, which had a solid ceiling and was completely enclosed in a screen (like a jail cell). It was the least interesting of all 3 decks. The 275-foot deck had closed by then. I'm actually old enough to remember when the 50-foot deck was still open, which was a *long* time ago! While it doesn't sound as exciting as the higher decks, it was a much bigger deck, and you could wave to people on the ground. Apparently, the lowest deck was closed because couples kept having sex.



My teachers hoarded bubble gum

For almost 40 years, I'd forgotten how much ass my grade school buddies must have kicked. They must have been a real ass-kicking crew, because recently it dawned on me that our teachers actually stockpiled bubble gum to feed to them.

One day, when I was in 1st or 2nd grade, my teacher gave one of my classmates a gumball as a reward for good behavior. As the boy returned to his desk, he began to stuff the gum into his mouth. But the teacher warned him that he wasn't allowed to chew it in class.

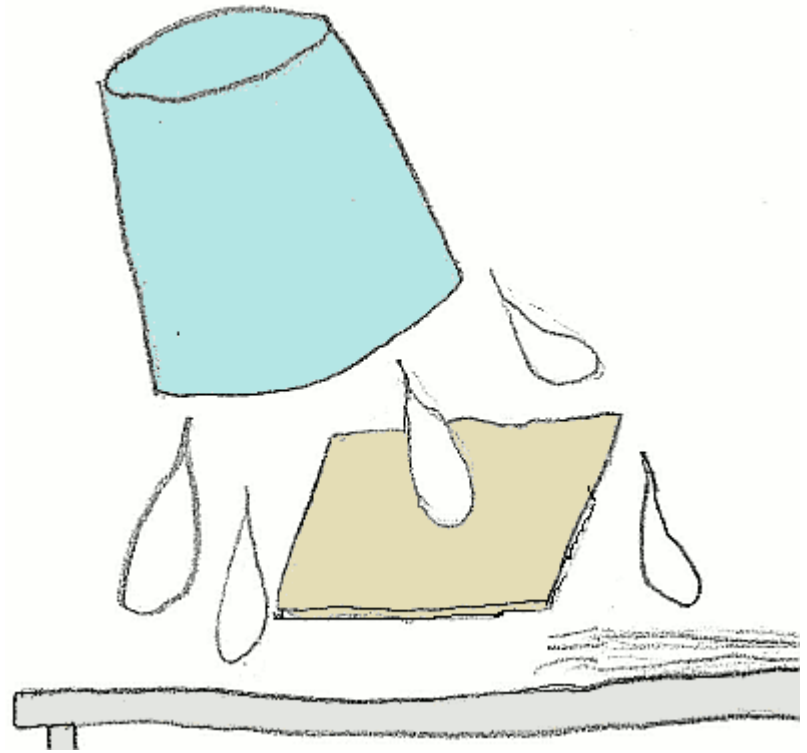
Now I realize something. ***My teacher must have been hoarding bubble gum!*** That was the only time I remember her giving gum to anyone, but she must have had plenty stashed away in her desk to give out. Yet she never got to give out gum any other time, because everyone misbehaved so much. Mind you, they didn't act up nearly as badly as they did at Brossart—but I do remember them spitting on the floor next to their desk and making a funny burping sound at their cubicle ("Eh-ooh-ooh-eh-eh-ooh-eh-eh!"). Because the teacher so rarely had cause to give out rewards for good behavior, she must have kept the rest of the gum for herself. She probably took it home and bubbled with it!

I remember one Friday in February 1980, we went on a field trip, and we were on the bus tooling southwest on Dixie Highway. An old man was driving a car right behind us. The aforementioned student leaned out the window of the bus and yelled at the aging motorist, "You chewin' bubble gum, man!"

A funny memory of that class that has nothing to do with gum that I just can't fit anywhere else: One day, the teacher was going to show us a science experiment. She was going to demonstrate how you can place a sheet of cardboard over a bucket of water and turn the bucket upside-down, and it wouldn't spill. Where did she get the ridiculous idea that it wouldn't spill? That's like how Mister Rogers thought you could resurrect a dead fish by wrapping it in a paper towel soaked in salt water. Anyway, as we were all gathered around a table, the teacher placed the cardboard over the bucket. She invited me to turn the pail upside-down. I knew the entire bucket would spill, but I dared not say it. Yep, it spilled! All over the table! The teacher acted shocked that the water in the bucket didn't defy gravity.

My main teacher in 3rd grade was a very stern nun. And she hoarded beegies too! One afternoon, she gave bubble gum to a couple students as a reward. It was one of the twist-wrapped brands like Pal or Dubble Bubble. With students' behavior worsening from the previous couple years, she probably had almost the entire supply left over. I have a hilarious image in my mind of all the nuns back at the convent having a bubble gum blowing contest.

If I found out my teachers were spending their spare time bubbling, I'm sure I would have laughed so hard that it would have melted the ink right off the Pabst Blue Ribbon calendar they had in the classroom.



The tone police...They live inside of my head...

Team Tyranny has been defined by ridiculous fits of bravado and bigotry—yet they think I need to have things richsplained to me.

It's called tone policing—and it represents a double standard. What the Evil Empire says and does is terrifying by any standard, yet they get angry if I call someone a wee-wee face or a Hootbot head. I have news for you. They earned it—many times over. Their name-calling was bad enough, but when it expanded into stupid excuses for denying privileges—even *rights*—they forfeited the privilege of being treated with civility.

With me, you get insults the old-fashioned way. You *eeeeeeeeaaarrnnnn* them! For instance, if you're a high school staffer who arbitrarily excludes a pupil from the student council ballot, don't expect the student to donate their vast fortune to the school for a new electronic bingo flashboard.

Double standards? It even applies to restroom graffiti. When I went to NKU, no greater example existed than the men's room at Lucas Administrative Center. People kept writing graffiti threatening to kill various minority groups, and nobody dared to disturb it. But when somebody wrote, "Fuck preps," someone wrote next to it, "You are labeling." I should have written next to that, "You are tone policing." If somebody wrote something positive like, "Power to the people," it would be cleaned up right away—yet truly nauseating graffiti that threatened minorities stayed up for months, perhaps years. NKU should have faced criminal sanctions for creating a hostile environment.

So right-wingers who defend preps and support hate crimes practice tone policing. No news here. But what about when somebody who claims to be progressive engages in tone policing? I was a regular at Occupy Cincinnati, and it happened there. When Tea Party aristocrats started shouting matches with us at our rallies, I responded in kind. A good example of this is when we protested against the Mitt Romney campaign outside a Republican office. Make no mistake, Romney is a fascist. But one of the other Occupiers got mad at *me* because he thought I was supposed to have a calm, compromising tone. I was supposed to "understand" irrational fascists. What's a matter? Did I scare ya? Something similar happened when I posted on Occupy Cleveland's Facebook page about a separate Cincinnati incident. Someone accused my post of "violent nonsense", even though I only engaged in *speech*, not *actions*. Well, Occupy person, I accuse you of "wussified nonsense." Here's the result of your wussification...



Happy now, Occupy person?

People can be anything they want on the Internet, so I'm shocked that someone opted to be a fucking coward. Sadly, it's mostly those who share my policy views who back down on everything.

The result of even "friendly" tone policing is that attention has been drawn away from real injustices and towards those who protest. That way, injustices aren't dealt with.

Plus, caving to tone policing would make my work lifeless and dull. My work should be edgy. I know from experience that nothing is better at making the Far Right get rekt.

Did Highland Heights have a pirate radio station in the '80s?

Highland Heights, Kentucky! My hometown! And the birthplace of Tantrum 95.7—though it looks like Tantrum 95.7 might not have been the first pirate radio station there.

Tantrum 95.7 endured the Contract With America recession and the expansion of the right-wing police state, but there's some speculation that there was another pirate a decade earlier. I'm not talking about someone using an electronics kit to jam WLW when the neighbors had the Reds game up too loud. I'm talking about a station that broadcast in its own right.

Someone who lived in Highland Heights around 1988 says they regularly picked up a mystery station. This station had a clear signal and peopled the noncommercial portion of the FM band. Musically, it seemed to air a *hot AC* format—from very scratchy records. The station was enamored of "Forever Young" by Rod Stewart. It is believed that its only DJ was a teenage girl—but it sounded as if she was talking through a horn like Charlie Brown's teacher. Because nobody could understand her, no call letters or station name could be identified.

Upon hearing of this, I suspected a high school station. I can name several that existed then and were licensed by the FCC. Of course there were none in northern Kentucky, because schools here would rather spend money on toilet strainers or fancy signage that lasts only a few months. (Once again, we lost the zip code lottery.) But there were some in Ohio that would seem close enough to reach Highland Heights on a good day. Then again, I remember being able to pick up high school stations only very, very rarely—maybe 2 or 3 times ever. But hot AC sounds like a likely format for a high school station—because it gives the school an excuse not to play the dirties.

However, people on the Internet say it sounds like it was not an FCC-licensed station but someone broadcasting with homemade equipment. In less diplomatic terms, it was a pirate. It was probably somebody I went to school with! I do recall that there was a pirate station called WKIL at the time, but it played only heavy metal and was quite a ways from Highland Heights. I never heard of WKIL until I read about it in the newspaper when it was raided by the FCC.

As for the station that was heard in Highland Heights, I would have been interested to regularly hear it. The year 1988 is full of memories of sheer frustration and terror. I beat my head against the wall and my needs were always ignored! Over time, I learned I better keep my mouth shut about what was going on at school. If this station was one of these that would occasionally unearth a lost record from a few years earlier, it would have been the sort of secret sauce we needed to combat those who didn't care about anything that wasn't vetted first.

My favorite radio station to listen to at home in 1988 was Lexington's now-defunct WLAP-FM (not to be confused with WLAP-AM, which is primarily a right-wing propaganda outlet these days). A high school classmate who was an absolute idiot said the reason I could pick up a Lexington station so clearly in Highland Heights is that there was an electronics shop up the street from me that was rebroadcasting it. This was hogwash of course, since it would be impossible to rebroadcast it on the same frequency it was received. Plus, I can't imagine anyone saying, "Hey, I'm gonna start an electronics store just so I can rebroadcast WLAP for 2 blocks."

And then there's the mystery of how a family member could pick up ESPN on Channel 3 without cable.

A person bubbled and it ruined a microphone



I have to admit I *burst out laughing* when I saw this!

I was informed that a woman recently posted a video on YouTube in which she utterly demolishes a microphone by blowing bubbles with bubble gum. Guess what? It's true, it's true, it's all true!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwgkT66nWxw>

The woman in that clip ruins a perfectly good microphone by repeatedly blowing bubbles that burst and stick to it. This uproarious spectacle lasts almost 5 minutes. Yes, I watched the whole thing—and it didn't get any less comical. I'm pretty sure I detected a bubbunk somewhere in there, and even something vaguely resembling a Dallas/Fort Worth.

That's almost her whole channel. She may have 100 videos, and most of them consist almost entirely of herself bubbling.

People got expelled from college for all sorts of shit!

Remember in our previous ish when I found a goldmine of college expulsion stories? Well, I wasn't done yet! There's a few more stories, and I'm going to force you to read every single one of them and write a 20-page report on each one!

A student was expelled over an altercation that occurred because she intentionally dropped snacks on the floor in the hallway every day. After leaving piles of goldfish crackers and gummy worms in the hall each day, a professor confronted her about it. So she kicked him right in the leg.

In another saga, a student who was studying acting caught a stomach virus and missed a week of class. That violated a school policy that said that if you missed 2 classes in your major, you would be expelled. As a result, the student lost over \$1,200 they had remaining in their meal account.

One student said he went to a religious school that required you to attend chapel. He was expelled for having sex with his girlfriend during chapel service.

At another college, some students held a rowdy party in their dorm one night. An EMT left their golf cart unattended while responding to a different incident. So two students from the party stole the cart and drove it all over the campus. Then they tried to set the cart on fire. It exploded, because it contained 2 oxygen tanks. Only one of the students was caught. He was expelled—but the school did not file charges, because he was a legacy student (i.e., he was only admitted to the school because of his family connections, and received preferential treatment).

A psychology major at one school began diagnosing her classmates, and hanging around the school while simulating various psychological disorders and offering a \$100 prize to those who could correctly guess the disorder. She then planned large parties at the homes of schoolmates she barely knew—without even telling them. After being kicked out of this school, she showed up at a dorm building trying to get people to help her find a house so she could open some sort of treatment facility.

The Book Bird it is not.

A person ruined a model car by covering it with lacquer thinner

A rare model car got ru in America's lost decade!

I found a post on the Interpipes from back in 2005 in which someone bemoaned their own careless destructment of a priceless model car. It was a plastic model of a 1967 Mustang, and it was worth a fortune. In a post titled "Plastic model ruined-Please help", the anonymous poster said they were trying to repaint the car with lacquer—an often shiny finish. So they dunked the entire car into lacquer thinner—thinking this would somehow prepare it to be lacquered.

They said that after they did this, the car "now appears to be ruined", as it was covered with weird blotches. Then they tried to sand it, and needless to say, that didn't seem to help matters either.

Someone replied with the sad truth: Lacquer thinner *melts* plastic. They said, "I think you can forget this model." Another user agreed, saying that "this one is probably for the bin." Throughout that thread, the magic word was used repeatedly.

The nifty thing about the Internet is that stories of stuff getting ru are preserved for posterity. In the olden days, most stories were fleeting. The only audience was whoever happened to be in the room at the time. But now the future is here, and the future's so bright you gotta wear bifocals!

Vacations keep getting ru

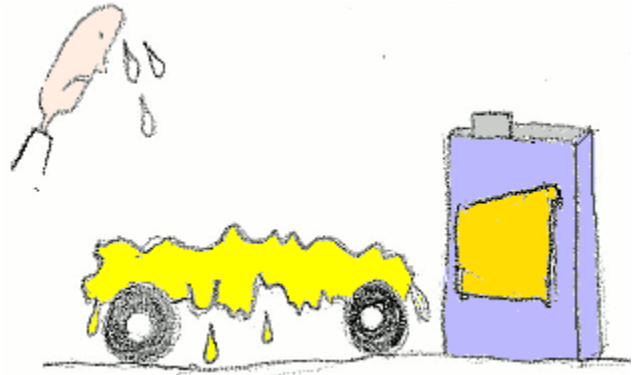
I can't remember ever having a vacation trip completely, utterly pulverized to the point where it had no redeeming value. I remember one in my youth that was delayed for a reason that was absolutely inexcusable, but that's beyond the scope of this piece. My 2000 vacation to Virginia Beach was plagued by torrential rain throughout, so we never got to use the beach. But it's not like we had a beach back home, so I survived. My 2004 trip to Toronto to see a Colin Hay concert was hampered by a colitis flare-up. My 2006 visit to Quincy, Illinois, was menaced by bronchitis, but the boogs were thinned mightily by a spicy foodstuff. On my 2013 trip to Mesa Verde National Park, I spent the last day of the trip home in agony from what I thought was either E. coli or mono. But that didn't start until we were almost out of Iowa. The biggest threats to my roadtrip plans were when people would deliberately catch a highly contagious ailment right before it, which threatened to spread.

But other folks' vacations have been spoiled like there's no tomorrow! (And maybe there *is* no tomorrow! Do we really know for sure?) One person said their family trip was wasted when another couple they knew invited themselves on it, complained about the motel the whole time, argued with each other, and finally broke up during the trip. One traveler said they went on vacation to Hersheypark in Pennsylvania only to discover it was closed—even though it was the middle of summer. One person said they caught West Nile fever on their honeymoon. Another said they went on vacation to a water park, but it was closed because some kid shit in the pool.

Still another vacationer blamed her family for ruining their week-long trip to the Australian coast. This area was full of beaches and amusement parks, and it had fine weather when they were there. But the rest of the family dawdled at the vacation rental every morning and then sat around watching *Dr. Phil*. By the time they were done, it was too late to do anything else. This went on every day for the whole week. They went on a trip and did the same things they did at home—and squandered hundreds of dollars to do it!

Another person said they were once in the middle of a family roadtrip when all the kids started arguing about who got to sit on the right-hand side of the car. So their dad just decided to turn around and go home. Another said their trip to Disneyland—which their parents spent years saving up for—was spoiled when the antics of a drunken guest caused the motel pool to be closed. One guy said his trip to Orlando was ruined when he was arrested because his girlfriend stole a bunch of costume jewelry. He said she also shoplifted on a Las Vegas trip, and she even stole from the gift shop at Mount Rushmore—which was a federal offense because it's a national park.

A British couple's trip to Indonesia was dashed to pieces because their dog chewed up the man's passport. They flew 16 hours to Indonesia only to be turned away because of the shredded passport. A reporter from Denver said his vacation to Morocco was spoiled by a flight delay at a London layover caused by drones on the runway. About 1,000 flights from London were postponed a whole day. He never made it to Morocco. A family's trip to Florida was ruined because they stayed at an Airbnb infested with bedbugs, which bit them extensively. American Airlines decimated a family's trip from Boston to Puerto Rico by arriving too late for the connecting



flight from Philadelphia to San Juan. No replacement flight was found for over a day, and the family's luggage was lost in the ozone all the while. The replacement flight was delayed for hours too!

Another person described having a difficult mother-in-law who was responsible for planning a big family trip to Disney World. Four days before they were supposed to leave, the mother-in-law canceled the whole trip because she had a nightmare about it. Three children had to be told at the last minute that they weren't going to get to see Mickey Mouse.

Some folks *think* their trip was ruined, but it really wasn't. They just like to complain. For example, one vacationer grumbled that their whole cruise was spoiled because ESPN went out.

Some of the vacations mentioned above would have easily busted a Bellevue budget—so it's hard for me to get too worked up about their wastage.

Racists don't have anything better to do than whine on the Internet about how everyone is so mean to them

If you want more proof of how we're being persecuted, consider this. My recent Facebook post that solicited ideas for this zine was deleted by Facebook—even though there was nothing even remotely offensive in my post. Yet an Internet domain name that includes an unambiguous racial slur is allowed by ICANN.

Why?

I fully appreciate that we should have broad protections for online content, and we should generally err on the side of minimal regulation. It would be one thing if both my zine and that website were treated the same—i.e., either both permitted or both prohibited. But nope. My zine—which makes a positive contribution to the community—finds its posts deleted by Facebook. But ICANN lets someone use a racist domain name? Some would argue that it might be difficult to police the context of a domain name—but in the case of the website in question, it's hard to misread a volcano.

These days, every time I try looking up information on the Internet about any important topic, that particular website comes up. And it is vile. The entire site—including its message board—is a racist whine about the big, mean world being so big and mean towards racists.

U.S. law does not permit the name of a business that includes a pejorative to be trademarked. The United States Board on Geographic Names (part of the Department of the Interior) doesn't recognize names of geographic features that use certain slurs. That has been its policy since 1963. Why is ICANN any different? I'm sure their reasoning is that they claim to support free speech. But it's weird how all these Internet techies who claim to favor free speech wouldn't extend their free speech support to my work.

Of course, Far Right extremists aren't content with limiting their poison to only their own websites. An article about the Board on Geographic Names policy on a mainstream site was vandalized with comments like, "Dead Liberal Creek' has a very nice ring to it, though." For a political guild that purports to possess limitless righteousness, the Far Right sure has a lot of hate.

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