

The Last Word™

Issue #540

October 2019

Looming Marianne disaster shows why I'm not a capitalist

With one bad economic story after another—for decades on end—I'm reminded every waking moment of why I support socialism. I don't need for something bad to happen once every 15 years so I can say, "Gee, now I know why I'm not a capitalist." I live it every day. After my experiences, I'd be an idiot not to be a socialist.

I live in the real world. The 1% doesn't.

The latest threat against Bellevue's quality of life is a greed-driven plan to lay hulk to the venerable Marianne Theater by converting it into yet more luxury condos. The city bought this old movie theater building in 2014 and solicited proposals from developers for a new use for it. Now a developer has stepped forward with the condo plan—which has proven to be universally unpopular.

City officials have voiced disappointment, because they wanted the Marianne used as a public space. Then don't approve the condos. It's that simple. But do you really expect the city to not rubber-stamp this project? Nah, Bellevue would never rubber-stamp a useless development that serves only developers and the 1%. That's just a myth. Just joking! They would.

Everyone seems to agree that luxury condos are about the worst possible use for that property. People have suggested everything from an arts center to a comedy club. It already is a comedy club of sorts. That's because it's laughable that the city thinks anyone would support luxury condos. Too bad it's such a serious matter.

Why is this plan so bad? There's several reasons. This plan is yet another element of gentrification—a gluttonous process that not only directly steals affordable housing but also drives up housing costs. The condos would also generate traffic on already strained roads. By changing the city's character, it would weaken the political voice of the poorest residents. Plus, high-income housing has failed to reduce serious crime in other urban areas.

That's not to mention the fact that there's not even an actual need for more luxury housing—given the high-end housing glut that exists throughout greater Cincinnati. There is however a need for more public space. In addition, the Marianne isn't even zoned for condos!

Someone on Facebook said everyone might as well just sell all their land to developers and let them rent it out to them at a confiscatory price. Isn't that going on now? Land was free before feudalism took over. But in modern democracies—up until fairly recently—real estate was usually designed so people would have enough to support their families. It wasn't intended so big corporations could manipulate the market or so speculators could cash in at everyone else's expense.

Though it hasn't been used as a theater in decades, it's sad to think of the impending ruin of the Marianne Theater, where I first saw *National Lampoon's Vacation*.

Bellevue needs to welcome the 99%—not continue to roll out the red carpet for developers.



People stuck gum under Thomas Jefferson's desk

From September 14 to 17, I went on a fact-finding mission to Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, and I had a mighty fine time, yep!

Remember, it's a national park—something that belongs to all of us. So I don't care to hear a peep from the 1% claiming I must have "ruined crazy money" by visiting it—especially because book royalties are not a government benefit, and national parks are very inexpensive to visit anyhow.

Did this roadtrip feature celebrity look-alikes? You betcha! The outing got off to a flying start when we saw a Wilford Brimley look-alike at a rest area on Ohio 32. Before visiting the park, I went to Monticello—Thomas Jefferson’s home. His house there is pictured on the reverse of the nickel. The man who checked our admission tickets bore a resemblance to Jim Hightower.

It was there that I heard some gum lore. The young woman who addressed us before the tour of the house said visitors on this tour are positively forbidden from chomping gee. That’s because past visitors had stuck bubble gum under Jefferson’s desk. She said she strongly suspected that Jefferson did not stick that gum there. Despite this Allowed Cloud, a couple that was probably in their fifties chewed gum during the tour. But they didn’t bubble. Also on this tour, a Don Imus look-alike was sighted.

Plus, we saw Jefferson’s favorite basement toilet, which drained into an underground conduit, ingeniously carrying the waste downhill. A sign said, “Cloth was probably used as toilet paper”...



As we were leaving Monticello, we saw a couple angrily arguing with a woman who worked there, apparently because she wouldn’t let them park their RV in a lot that wasn’t meant for it. As the conversation heightened, it went something like this...

Employee: “I’m going to have to call security.”

Male visitor: “Then can I have your name?!”

Employee: “Why does it matter what my name is?”

‘Twas kinda neat!

Monticello is a very stirring sight to see—and it’s educational. It gets good reviews on websites, but there are a few bad reviews by right-wingers complaining that Monticello has “gone liberal” because it presents history in a factual manner.

We camped for 2 nights at Shenandoah. I barely finished a short hiking trail there, but my energy levels and crippling knee pain permitted nothing more. At one of the trailheads, I saw a Paula Abdul look-alike. I believe it was shortly thereafter—at the campsite—that I overheard a loud-and-proud bunker blast wafting our way from another campsite.

A highlight of the trip took place on Monday evening when we brang back the spirit of our great bonfires of old. That merits its own article. However, that night faced obstacles to sleep. First, a group of elderly women had a campsite right next to us. They had what sounded like an alcohol-fueled orgy and kept laughing loudly for hours into the night. When they finally stopped, a baby at another campsite began crying and screaming so loudly that park officials pulled up in a pickup truck and laid down the law. Later still, another LAP was detected.

As we were leaving the campsite to go home, we drove past a Terry Bradshaw look-alike walking along the road.

This roadtrip lasted only a few days but will live forever as one of our most eventful in years!

Dayton suffers gentrification nuisances too

As Bellevue mails Strongly Worded Letters to developers and contractors that violate ordinances and abuse our streets, our upriver neighbor Dayton seems content to just tolerate the abuses outright. Wait, Bellevue does too (see: blue truck that keeps knocking over the wall around the neighbors’ yard and illegally registers its plates in Ohio).

Following complaints that construction trucks for the unpopular Manhattan Harbour gentrification boondoggle were leaving hazardous dust on cars and houses, it was pointed out that they drove through populated

areas of Dayton because the city did not permit them to use the new street that was built just for them. It didn't take long for complaints from others to arise that the trucks were abusing other streets too—which are nowhere near the construction site.

Guess what? There *is* a 1989 Dayton ordinance barring trucks from roads other than Ky. 8. Someone posted a copy of it on Facebook. A big problem with this: Ky. 8 is no longer Ky. 8. It's now Business Ky. 8. That means trucks may no longer use it. But the other streets the trucks have been misusing lately have never—to the best of anyone's knowledge—been Ky. 8. So why are they able to use these streets?

The response was that these trucks are “under special delivery” and that the city has granted special permission to use these roads. So I guess there's not really an effective ordinance, since the city grants exemptions just for the asking. Exceptions are supposed to be for activities like delivering packages or collecting garbage. It's not meant to apply to construction trucks that don't need to use these streets—and are always speeding and running red lights and stop signs anyway.

So why are trucks still prohibited on the new road? The answer is easy. That's where some million-dollar palaces that are part of Manhattan Fubar have already been built. Do you really think the rich will have to suffer like everyone else?

Also, it turns out the developer was the target of a lawsuit by the family of a teenager who injured his leg on the development site. The local media—which has run years of stories cooing over the development like it's a stack of baby photos—swept this story under the rug.

Burn magazines! It melts!

Shenandoah National Park was an exciting trip, and the Monday we spent at the park was an exciting day!

The campsite featured a fire pit. We could have purchased firewood at a steep price. But—noting that paper is made from wood—we did things the cool people way instead. By burning magazines that were slated to be discarded, we kept this waste out of our landfills, saved valuable wood, and avoided burning items like batteries. Also, burning paper seems to be permitted under the general rules of national parks. If you're rubbing your hands together in the hope that I'll get arrested for incinerating paper, bust goes that bubble.

Not all magazines can be hoarded indefinitely. I used to work at the library, and I recently read on a website that libraries have a policy of selling off books on science and health that are over 20 years old, because the information may be outdated. Libraries don't hoard books just because they're *objects*, but instead serve as sources of *information*. If books must be discarded, so should a slick travel magazine that was full of ads.

That magazine that we burned contained an ad that was laughable but also rather sad in that it was aimed at tourists who are so greedy and have so much money that all they can do with it is show it off. It advertised an African safari and an Alaska trip and extravagant gear to go with it. This included a hat that cost over \$1,000, a backpack costing over \$4,000, cargo shorts at over \$1,000, gobs of fine jewelry, and a “Kermit sweater” (which had nothing to do with Kermit the Frog) costing hundreds.

Wouldn't all that expensive gear just get dirty during a safari?

We also burned 2 alumni magazines from NKU.

This photo shows the event getting under way, as the flame sips away the corner of an NKU mag...



The second photo shows the fire roaring! One of the NKU magazines featured law school grads who became judges. My only worry is that someday I'll be in their courtroom and they'll be angry that I burned their magazine...



Slick paper is harder to burn, but we can all agree that it's more satisfying! That's because slick paper was once so common for large pieces of junk mail. A tiny piece of the travel magazine was still identifiable after our fire, and it included part of the ad for safari gear that featured sunglasses that cost hundreds of dollars...



We burned stuff.

A person spit gum everywhere at Ploptoberfest

People can't get enough of that neet to eet treet we often refer to as gum!

Gum isn't like other foodstuffs. It's also a toy. It's clearly a food—for I had a high school teacher who gave us a list of rules banning “gum or other food” from the classroom—but it's not designed to be swallowed. It just flops around and bubbles.

A few weeks ago, I went to Oktoberfest in Covington. I call it Ploptoberfest because of the propensity for people to put assorted household items in the toilets. Before the space for it was reduced to appease the streetcar (which is just a yuppie tourist amenity), I used to go to Oktoberfest in Cincinnati, and it had some of the most uproarious ploppings I've seen in my adult life—including phone books, an envelope full of bubble wrap, a pair of pants, a Geico gecko fan, and a metal pickle jar lid. All those items were certain to utterly decimate the toilet cleaning machine. At the Covington event, it's usually just plastic grocery bags, though a cardboard Cheez-It box once appeared in the roomy depths of the poopot.

Anyway, at the recent Ploptoberfest, I was just standing there being a cool person. A group of people strolled by on the sidewalk in front of Goebel Park. One of them—a bespectacled young woman—was chomping on a big plug of gee. As she was talking, the gum tumbled out of her mouth and onto the pavement. “I just spit my gum out!” she exclaimed, and they all burst out laughing!

She Chewed Gum And Thought It Was Funny.

It was like the time on *The Price Is Right* when a woman in the studio audience did the same thing and Bob Barker exploded in laughter. I saw a woman doing this at a baseball game once too. It was like Kate McKinnon's Stride commercial where she said, “Discard!”

It might be awfully easy to accidentally expel your gum if you're trying to blow a bub—especially because you're usually trying to hold in your laughter at the same time. But it did not appear as if the reveler at Ploptoberfest was attempting to bubble.

Why does this occasionally happen with gum but not other food? This festival had plenty of soft pretzels and popsicles, but nobody was spitting those out. What makes gum so special?

As the wad of gum rested on the sidewalk smiling its ass off, it looked like it was just a boring minty gum—not a hilarious bubble bustin' variety. But here's the best part of the story. I turned my back for about 15 minutes and then I noticed the young woman and her friends walking past the spot where the gum had disposed of itself. I noticed the wad of gum was gone—and she was chewing gum once more.

I could come to only one conclusion: ***She must have picked her gum off the filthy ground and chewed it again!*** Must be a Brossart alumnus. Best all, she must have done so after letting it sit there for at least a few minutes. This suggests that gum is so central to her life that she didn't just forget about it when it leaped out of her mouth and that she schemed to resume chewing this wad.

And Ploptoberfest in Cincinnati? It's dead. I went there a couple weeks later, and it was totally dead now that the city moved it from 5th Street to soothe 3CDC's nonstop crying. However, in at least one of the portable restrooms, they had posted a sign that read, “PLEASE DO NOT THROW TRASH INTO TANK.” But people continued to put items in toilets including a Pepsi bottle and a plastic bag.



Copyright trolls no longer winning against Winamp

How stupid has the past month been? It was stupid before it even began!

In our previous ish, I regaled you with Microsoft forcing us to install a new Windows 10 version that not only took 4 hours to install but also disabled Winamp—apparently to appease the recording industry. I promptly reverted to the previous update. Well, on August 31—the day before September started—this update reinstalled itself on my computer, squandering another 4 hours. Plus, it said the previous update would no longer be supported after November.

Winamp was again disabled. It turned out other people got this update before I ever did, and they said their Winamp was disabled too. The fact that the problem still wasn't fixed months after they reported it is pretty damning evidence that Microsoft disabled Winamp on purpose.

I went on Microsoft's utterly useless support forum to see how to enable Winamp again. I don't think I'd ever gotten any decent answers from their support staff about anything, so I knew it was a longshot—especially since it was pretty clear by then that the loss of Winamp was considered not a bug but a feature. My best bet was for someone outside the support staff bubble to reply with a real solution.

Now this forum was even worse than worthless. One of its so-called “installation specialists” replied with instructions on how to enable an app acquired from Microsoft Store. Uh, Winamp isn't a Store app, genius. Or—as a certain person might have said in 2015—it ain't a Store app! (That's an inside joke.)

If that didn't work, he said to use “system restore”—which would have sent me back to a Windows

version that will soon be unsupported. He said if that didn't work to just reinstall Windows altogether and gut my whole machine. The rest of his post was a mishmash of unintelligible nonsense.

I firmly but politely informed him—using no profane language—that Winamp isn't a Store app. He went off half-cocked and said in part...

“I gave you steps to recover any apps that work for everyone else. I then gave you how to roll back the UpDates. No one would have been more thorough. Did you even try any of the steps before rating my post unhelpful?”

Winamp did not “work for everyone else.” It worked for nobody who used the new Windows update. And I'm not going back to an update that Windows won't even support.

If he'd only thrown in a few instances of the word *fuck*, he would've sounded like Storer Cable customer service.

What a beezweezer.

A few days later, I needed to import a small road video from my camera, and I found the camera app had been disabled. I posted about this on Microsoft's so-called support forum and got replies from 2 different staffers. One reply said it was a known bug. But like I said, it was clear by then that disabling audiovisual apps is a feature, not a bug. Microsoft expects people to use computers for nothing more advanced than word processing or making banners that say, “I'm 10 feet tall but I'm only 3 feet wide.” If it was a bug, they wouldn't have let it go for months. This message provided some workarounds—which I'd already tried, but they didn't work.

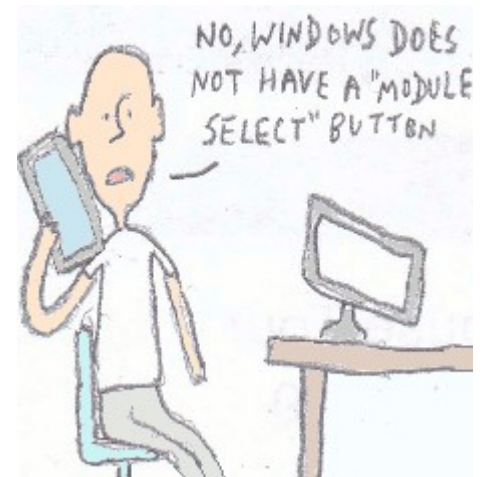
The other reply said to call Microsoft's support number. I did that, and the woman on the other end said to go to an online support site and click “yes.” I clicked “yes” and the website went away. Then she insisted I'd clicked “no” and wouldn't tell me how to get my support ticket back. She then gave me links to 2 other websites—which were both dead. I—again politely—told her the sites were dead, and she flew into a tantrum. So I hung up. Then they had the nerve to try to call me back—but I didn't answer.

Luckily, I found a different app that was able to access my camera. So you lost that battle, Microsoft.

Then I found that the new update had introduced a bug that closed your apps when returning from sleep mode. I asked for help for this on their ridiculous forum, and their “solution” was gibberish involving a lengthy process. Reading to the end, I noticed that this was for returning from restart—not sleep mode—which proves they didn't even read what my question was about.

Meanwhile, back in the world of Winamp, cracks appeared in the copyright trolls' war. An intermediate build of Winamp was released to run under the new Windows update. All of it works properly except for one plug-in I used, and soon that will be fixed too.

You lose, RIAA. Technology defeats capitalism and greed.



Taking care of bubbling

Office Depot seems to have taken a page from the Kroger playbook!

In recent years, Kroger has classed bubble gum as primarily a back-to-school item. It seems unusual for a big corporation to try to sell a harmless product to children that is frowned upon so much by the bourgeoisie. Most of our overlords peddle dangerous crap but act like bubble gum that contains no artificial sweeteners is poison. If you select a random U.S. resident—of any age—it's more likely that they took Ritalin today than chewed bubble gum.

We truly live in an America we don't recognize. But—by calling bubble gum a back-to-school product—Kroger is one of few major companies to buck this nauseating and frightening trend towards tyranny.

Recently, a family member gave me a piece of junk mail they received from Office Depot and OfficeMax. They thought it would be useful to me, but it wasn't, because it was full of coupons that expired that very day, and I have no idea where the nearest Office Depot or OfficeMax is. Remember, the rule of modern retailing is to put stores as far away from populated areas as possible—unless they specialize in items you'd never buy. However, one couldn't help but notice that the front of the flyer was emblazoned with this photo...



That's bubble gum.

And that photo—which had the words “GUM-BELIEVABLE SAVINGS” below it—was being used to advertise back-to-school deals. Office Depot acts as if bubble gum doesn't exist except in schools. Although the bub is supposedly a scratch-and-sniff label that smells of beeg, it smells like nothing at all.

The inside of the mailer says, “BURSTING WITH SAVINGS.” Get it? Like how bubble gum bursts everywhere!

As I consign the mailer to the recycle bin, you can at least take comfort in the fact that bubble gum still exists and that the time-honored sport of bubbling remains strong!

A store smashed perfectly good records

The public Internet has provided yet another story about valuable items getting ru—and again, it was on purpose.

I found an interview from several years ago of an elderly man in Maryland who collected old 78 RPM blues, bluegrass, and jazz records. He despised later music. When asked to tell a “sad record story”, he said that one time decades ago, he was driving through West Virginia and stopped by an S.S. Kresge store—forerunner of Kmart, which itself is now nearly extinct thanks to its own self-inflicted wounds. He noticed the floor was littered with broken records. The store had decided it couldn't sell them, so it yanked them off the shelf and dumped them on the floor.

They were now-rare folk and blues records that had never been played and were in tiptop condition—before the store wasted them. Customers kept stepping on the records. The man said the event “still brings tears to my eyes.”

And that ain't all! *American Top 40* used to be distributed to radio stations on reel-to-reel tapes or vinyl LP records. Old copies of this weekly countdown show are now very valuable. But back then, *AT40*'s distributor *required* copies of the show to be destroyed after they aired. Stations were supposed to either destroy the records themselves and mail back an affidavit affirming that they were demolished, or send them back to the distributor to have them destroyed.

Thankfully, not all stations obeyed this command, so copies of old *AT40* shows are still floating around out there. To me, it seems like sacrilege to not do your best to keep copies of *AT40* shows pristine. A lot of DJ's took the used copies home, and there were probably some stations that hoarded them. One station gave their copies to a broadcaster in a remote town to air a week later. But some people who worked for radio stations back then say they would smash used *AT40* records with a hammer over a trash can.

In an Internet post from only 6 years ago, someone said they were selling a copy of the show from 1980, and Clear Channel's legal department sent them an e-mail ordering them to stop. Clear Channel said radio stations were supposed to have destroyed all copies back in 1980. This was none of Clear Channel's damn business—for Clear Channel did not produce or distribute the show in 1980. Clear Channel didn't even exist yet in 1980! Plus, once a person acquires a copy of the show, it's theirs to sell if they want. It's hard to believe a company was whining about a show that they didn't own not being destroyed 30 years earlier—and making fourth-party complaints about someone selling their own copy of the show.

So tough toilets, Clumpy Channel.

Kids got sent home from summer camp for all sorts of shit!

Misbehavior at summer camps is a topic we should use sparingly. I never attended a summer camp—because I had no interest in it, and because it's mighty expensive. The latter reason is why we're only grazing the issue. Remember, this is a zine for the working poor.

When I talk about summer camps, I don't mean abusive "treatment" programs for "troubled teens." I'm talking about regular camps. Is sending kids home for the violations listed below too harsh, too lenient, or just right? You decide!

According to the public Internet, camps have sent kids home for a cornucopia of reasons. Some were teenagers who were sent home because of marijuana or sexual activity. This is why some folks who attended camp noticed that some of their pals would suddenly disappear for the rest of the time at camp. While some violations are committed largely by older kids, younger children have been sent home for other offenses.

An 11-year-old was sent home because she smuggled in a chocolate candy bar. She wouldn't have been caught except camp administrators opened her sealed letter she was sending to her mom that mentioned the candy. Administrators removed the lining of her suitcase in search of more candy. Her mom had to drive over 150 miles to pick her up. Lodging for this camp was actually in a hotel, and the hotel stupidly prohibited candy in the rooms because of past years when this camping group left sweets laying around.

A camper was ejected from another camp for sneaking in whiskey in a mouthwash bottle. Another was sent home from a church-sponsored summer camp for shoplifting Mentos from a gas station. Another was kicked out for urinating on a chair. One camp banned an entire YMCA group because of "harassing and threatening behavior towards other youth participants" and unspecified dining hall misconduct. Someone said drunkenness had been a problem among this YMCA group for years.

Groups like the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts have summer camps too. I don't remember hardly any classmates who were members of these groups. Scouting organizations have certain standards of behavior, and kids who throw things and shove other kids' heads into drinking fountains probably wouldn't last too long in scouting groups. Someone said that a camper at a Boy Scouts camp kept acting up, so troop leaders called his parents to pick him up. The parents refused because they were on a second honeymoon at Disney World. So the camp director threatened to call child protective services if they didn't pick the kid up. That prompted the parents to interrupt their Disney trip to pick up their brat.

Studio See it is not.

A person cussed over their mobile phone

Cellphones have become mainstream—but I always warn people that they should have no expectation of privacy when they chatter away on a cellphone. Cellphones use radio frequencies. Police need a warrant to obtain cellphone location data, but anyone can pick up the audio itself. That doesn't mean people can just listen in on your calls. Wait, it does. Sorry. Just don't talk about anything embarrassing or incriminating, and you should be fine.

It's exactly like what CB radio used to be like. If I'm on a roadtrip and I get a call on my cellphone, I feel like answering it by saying in a Jesse Duke voice, "Breaker, breaker, I got my ears on!" Since even before cellphones became popular, I've daydreamed about gangs of roving bandits who drive around on Interstates, clog toilets at rest areas, and use CB radio to brag in code to their cohorts about their escapades. One of few differences between CB and cellphones is that CB radios were attached to the car—so they couldn't be dropped down under the seat and make you miss important calls about people chewing bubble gum 25 years ago.

It's hard to believe mobile phones have been around since 1946. Mobile telephony took over 60 years to go mainstream. Until quite recently, mobile phones were rare indeed.

Back in 1982, my brother got a police radio scanner. One of the first things I remember doing with it was hearing mobile phone conversations. The signal we heard seemed to originate from the Claryville area and consisted of a man driving around on rural roads.

And the man used every word in the book.

I don't remember exactly what he said, but he



cussed fluently. Every time I heard a four-letter word crackle across the scanner, I put my hand over my mouth and giggled.

I thought he was the man who had everything! I envisioned him tooling about Campbell County in a roomy motorhome or luxury convertible with a TV and other amenities. Work? What was that? I thought his job was to just drive around and cuss on his mobile phone. In reality, however, he was probably just an incel who thought he was important because he made false reports about somebody pirating cable TV or something.

Waste mor chikin

We steer clear of Chick-fil-A at all costs, because of its funding of right-wing hate groups. It's a shame the city of Newport confiscated residents' homes to give them to Chick-fil-A, but I've never been to that location. I haven't been to any Chick-fil-A since its controversies some years back that peaked with Mike Huckabee's gnawing Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day of 2012.

This fast food chain doesn't exactly get stellar reviews. In addition to its float in the Cincinnati Reds parade being booed by many onlookers, a San Diego location boasts many bad online reviews. Many are from customers who report receiving food poisoning from food there. But other reviews provide more detail of the wastage and filth at that location.

One reviewer said he visited that Chick-fil-A, and they were out of carbon dioxide used in fountain soft drinks, so he ordered lemonade instead. When employees tried pouring a big tub of lemonade into the fountain, they spilled it everywhere. As lemonade was streaming down the side of the tub, they set it on the counter where the garbage can was. Then they poured more of it in the fountain—as lemonade that had touched the dirty counter next to the trash can was dripping into it.

The reviewer said this was so unsanitary and disgusting that when he got his meal, he threw the whole thing right in the trash. He vowed never to eat at any Chick-fil-A location ever again.

Chick-fil-A's wastage bastage was also reported in another review. This reviewer said she tried ordering several ice cream cups, and she noticed 2 entire ice creams on the floor. When employees tried making another cup, they kept dropping it too—thereby wosting it. The young men kept goofing off.

I wouldn't be too hard on the employees in that case, because we all need a little fun in the workplace. You'll go mad without it. When I worked at the library, some days were marked by unbearable boredom, and it wore on me. I wouldn't waste food, but at least there were *a few* jobs back then that weren't in fast food—unlike today, when that's all there is. Strange how the least lucrative occupations are also the ones with the most job openings. Our economic gatekeepers deliberately ensure that this is so—just to let the rest of us know who's in charge. They believe economic status should be assigned, not earned—with no chance of mobility.

The reviewer found her ice cream to be inedible, so she called the restaurant later and said that if they hadn't ruined so much ice cream by dropping it on the floor, they'd have enough left for customers.

A Chick-fil-A in Louisiana was described as “poop disgusting” because of the mess in the restroom. At a Chick-fil-A in Florida, the trash can overflowed, and an employee bragged about how he was going to see how high the garbage pile next to it got.

But hey, let's all keep worshipping Chick-fil-A because reasons.



A person walked out of Frisch's without paying

“There's no wa! Badeedle-badeed! Gotta be Frisch's Big Boy! 'Cause it ain't such a value!”

Face it. You've ridiculed Frisch's Big Boy restaurants nonstop for many a year. It may have started because of its absurd commercials, or because Ronald Reagan had a silly pompadour that resembled that of Big Boy. I have eaten there though after I stopped liking it. I basked in its badeedle-badeediness all the while.

And somebody once walked out of the restaurant without paying for their meal.

I don't think I've ever written about this event before—which is hard to believe. Family members say I must have written about it at some point, but I sure don't remember. One day back in 1991, I went to Frisch's for

lunch with some family. I think it was the one on Ky. 17 in Fort Wright. (I wouldn't dare go to a Frisch's in Campbell County, since that was when I used to get attacked any time I walked out the front door.) And this outing was graced by another customer performing a dine-and-dash.

We didn't notice anything out of place until we were finishing up our lunch. Then we overheard 2 waitresses talking about how a patron eating at a nearby table had left the restaurant without paying for their food.

If they'd been caught, they might have had lots of wa—bread and wa! That's because a dine-and-dash is a crime. It might only be petty theft, but I remember watching *Cops* and seeing that in some areas, it's considered burglary—somehow. The home invaders who repeatedly broke into my apartment were never charged—and people on Facebook keep defending a pair who lived nearby and were convicted of another break-in because “only God can judge”—but those who defend hardcore criminals are always the first to support throwing the book at someone for a minor crime. They act like a crime becomes more serious if the victim is a business instead of a person.

So let's get this straight: A dine-and-dash involving a \$3 plate of onion rings is somehow a burglary, while a home invasion is free speech. Got that? Plus, according to the all-knowing Wikipedia, some restaurants commit wage theft by taking it out of servers' pay if a customer leaves without paying. Instead of punishing the offender, an innocent party is punished.

But it doesn't always pay to commit a dine-and-dash. Someone on the public Internet said they used to work at an upscale steakhouse. One day, 2 guys showed up and ordered fine oysters and martinis. And that was just the appetizers. It cost \$200 between them. Then they ordered the best steaks and wine for their main entrees. Another \$200. As the server was bringing them their steaks, the men said they were going outside to smoke.

They didn't return. They not only ran up a bill of \$400 but also wasted 2 whole porterhouse steaks.

But they made a big mistake. They left their brand new iPhone behind. The phone cost as much as their entire meals together! The restaurant decided to hold the phone as collateral.

Hours later, one of the men showed up and tried to get his phone back. The restaurant refused. The police came, and he was hauled to the slammer.

It ain't such a value!



Blame it on the sun that was fallin', fallin'...

Following a constitutional demand that I write an article about MTV, I'm reminded of the first time I heard the word *assholism*. I'm sure I was on the brink of uttering it many a time, but the barrier was finally broken.

Storer Cable—our local cable TV monopoly at the time—got on a big kick about sunspots briefly around 1989. It's like how occasionally you go through phases when you're zealously interested in something you never cared about before and will never care about again. At the time, Storer began blaming all of its many outages on sunspots. It was ridiculous. As your favorite show would fade to snow and static, you'd flip over to a public access channel with a computer screen and find a message attributing it to sunspots.

It was hogwash. I never heard anything else about sunspots interfering with cable TV, and I can't find anything on the Internet about it now. It's possible to have an outage if a satellite goes behind the sun, but TV satellites orbit Earth. They're not intergalactic spaceships. Besides, that would have nothing to do with sunspots.

One afternoon, we were watching MTV when the characteristic snow and fuzz gradually took over. MTV was past its prime by then, but unlike today, people still watched it. It wasn't easy—for reasons I'm not getting into. It was made more difficult when Storer made us lose the signal.

Frustrating it was. I didn't say much about it, because I was so accustomed to Storer's lousy service that this outage was hardly a surprise. But a family member angrily said something like, “We can't watch MTV because of Storer's *assholism*.”

Storer never did treat MTV with respect, but I don't think MTV had many viewers for much longer anyway. A few years after I moved out on my own, I visited my mom's house and stayed until late at night and watched TV. By then, Storer had become TKR or InterMedia. Instead of opting for MTV as I did in my youth, I browsed the local public access channels. I've been informed that the cable company aired some spectacular public access shows back then. What I saw wasn't one of them. Rather, it was just a quarter-century-old right-wing propaganda film with muddy audio and video. Added to the end of it was an incoherent commentary by a

woman agreeing with the film.

Make no mistake, that propaganda show was well-funded. We had to deal with a lot of crackpot control freak organizations that got lots of funding from local right-wing poobahs and religious bodies. Still, all they had to show for it was a bad copy of another film and a rambling postscript. It's like how Brossart had all that money but still had broken-down toilets.

If I wanted enlightening programming, I'd have better luck with the color bars channel or the weather radar channel that often just showed the Windows error message.

A photo album ruined a whole set of priceless baseball cards

The stories of irreplaceable baseball cards getting ru keep cascading in!

Just a few months ago, Cincinnati sports talk host Lance McAlister wrote an article about how his prized cards got wasted.

In his childhood, he was always acquiring baseball cards. Whole boxes of 'em! They were good ones too! It was the '70s, and baseball was big. I'm furious at TV talking heads who kept insisting the 1998 Yankees were better than the 1976 Reds. That's like saying Kid Rock was better than the Beatles. I'm no baseball diehard, but the '76 Reds were the '76 Reds.

McAlister said he utterly savored opening each box. A lot of magic has been taken out of my life, but I used to enjoy things at one time too.

But one day, ru they got. He wrote, "I ruined a complete set of Topps 1976 cards when I was 10 years old." The magic word! He said someone told him he should put the set in a photo album to protect them from spoilage. Later, after he did so, he tried to take a card out, and part of it stuck to the adhesive in the album. Remember, this was the '76 set, so they must have been worth an absolute fortune the day the bubble gum dried.

He said he had other cards that were lost when he moved. That's no surprise, because every time I've moved, items mysteriously disappeared. Translation: they were stolen.

Other people say they also had valuable sports keepsakes lost when they moved. One person said they lost an entire 1961 Topps set. Another said they lost a baseball autographed by all of the 2003 Astros.

I sat on a Barry Manilow album once. It didn't break though.



Last Word finger foods

A few small items that don't need a whole article...

§ **The Internet** has been called a vast wasteland. But that's only by people who have never seen the kaleidoscopic variety of message boards that talk about bubble gum—which have been a heehaw-inducing legend for years.

Recently, someone on these boards said the sound of bubble gum popping is actually a sonic boom. Seriously, they said that.

§ **Now the** tone policing can end!

A new study by researchers at UC-Berkeley says politically incorrect speakers appear more authentic. Viewers across the political spectrum feel these speakers are more real.

So you lose, conservos. Nobody has been more over-the-top with tone policing than the right-wing intelligentsia—or should I say stupidia. It wasn't leftists who coined dishonest terms like "right-to-work" and "school choice."

A right-wing propaganda technique has been to accuse dissidents of doing what the Far Right is doing themselves. With all the right-wing Newspeak, elitism, and censorship, who is really more politically correct?

§ **Break out** the Mario Bros. games and Rebel Pebbles cassettes! Time for more early '90s nostalgia!

I know it sounds like my senior year of high school was a barrel of guffaws, but I was disappointed at one

thing.

This was an alternative class, and it was such a joke that I thirsted for conflict. No violence or bullying, of course. Just something like the online forums where people argue nonstop about frivolous things and make a spectacle of themselves in the process.

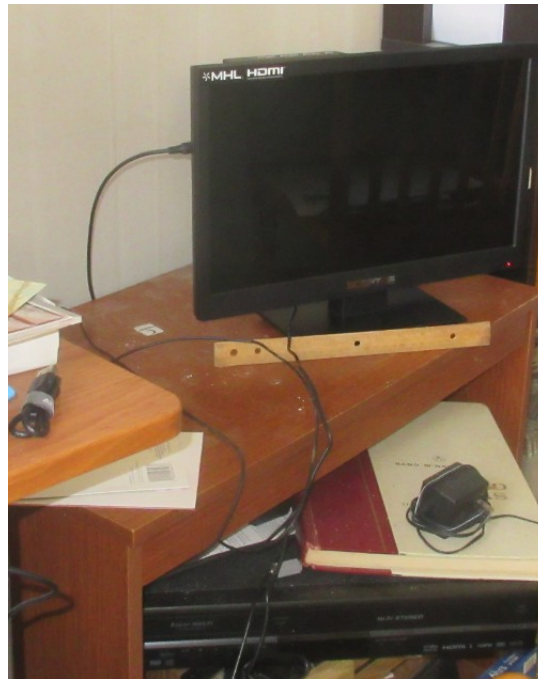
Not long before Christmas break, there was an increase of students being rude to teachers. Nothing major, just a bit of grumbling and arguing. So a teacher's aide told the class something like, "When we get back from Christmas break, we're going to have a little talk about manners."

I rubbed my hands together in excitement! As soon as we rang in '92, we were going to hear a good tirade from our teachers, and it was going to be hilarious!

But it never came. I had a sad.

§ **Our overlords** can cool their crappers about how they think the poor squander money on big-screen TV's.

My 2008 portable clunker has finally been called home, so I spent a whopping \$70 on this new set to replace it...



Yep, that really looks like a big-screen TV to me! (It's even smaller in person.)

Sorry I don't have \$5.2 million for a high school stadium like some organizations do.

On the other hand, TV's are so poorly made now that this is my sixth set in under 25 years. If the 1% is so upset about people spending so much on TV's, how about if they sell us sets that don't break so quickly?

A person ruined their records by running them through the dishwasher

Are people idiots or something? (Yes. Look up "2002 election.")

Someone on the Internet—which is public, as you may have heard—says they purchased a brand new dishwasher, and one of the first things they did with it was try using it to clean their records. In a post titled "New RCA dishwasher ruined my records" (the magic word!), they groaned that after washing their records in the dishwasher, it sounded as if the records were underwater. They asked, "Has this happened to anyone?"

Nope, but my record player did ruin my fine china.

Another person recently posted on the Internet—which is still public—a message called "I think I've ruined my records." (The magic word again!) They said someone gifted them with a turntable, but they think their records



somehow got ru. “I bought one of them with my own money and it cost a lot,” they eulogized.

So you got the rest of them with someone else’s money?

I guess some people didn’t learn anything from the commercial where the woman put the pink cake in the dishwasher (which was around the same time as the infamous soup wars).

Every single one of us...The bubble inside...

How is it humanly possible to have never witnessed a person blow a bubble within a bubble using bubble gum?

I’m not talking about a Dallas/Fort Worth—which is 2 bubs side by side. I’m talking about when you puff out a mean bubble and blow another *inside* it. Avid gummers describe this feat as tricky but eminently feasible. They’ll demonstrate it if you ask them. A 2008 article from a TV station in West Virginia said only 2% of North American 4th graders could do this, but that’s because it’s for experienced bubblers!

But—believe it or not!—I have a family member who says they’ve never seen anyone do this in their entire life! It has to be 40 years since I first saw someone blow a bubble inside a bubble. But some people really do need to get out more, I guess.

I’ve seen it. You’ve seen it. But some folks are hermits and have never seen it.

Christmas ornaments (and other stuff) got wasted

Grazing on the unmistakably public Internet, I found a goldmine of stories about valuable items getting ru! And lemme tell ya, there’s some bea^uts! Read these stories slowly and lovingly. Savor each one and consider that many of the ruined items had survived world wars, natural disasters, and many moves—becoming prized heirlooms—but as soon as they fell into the wrong hands, it was over.

A person says their child knocked over their Christmas tree, shattering an irreplaceable glass ornament they got on a trip to Wales. Another says their toddler broke a hand-decorated glass Depression-era ornament. Another says their little brother threw a tantrum and pulled down an entire Christmas tree, smashing generations of one-of-a-kind glass ornaments (like what someone did at Brossart when I was a freshman). Another says they once dropped an entire box of their mom’s favorite glass ornaments down a flight of steps. All were shattered beyond reclamation.

And I thought it was bad when my mom threw away a bunch of paper *Sesame Street* ornaments (including Bert with angel wings)!

Christmas ornaments aren’t the only valuables that have been mischievously decimated or lost by prying young hands. A person says their sister carried away their mom’s \$9,000 diamond and ruby engagement ring, took it to school to show it off, and lost it. Another commenter says they flushed their mom’s solid gold earrings down the toilet. Another says their brother flushed a \$5,000 necklace given to their mom by their deceased grandmother.

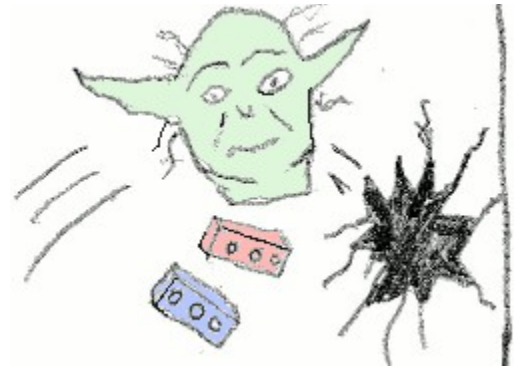
A commenter says their sister who was about 10 at the time pulverized a collectible case of Coca-Cola that belonged to their dad. It was a limited edition case commemorating the Toronto Blue Jays’ World Series win. She started drinking the decades-old Coke, poured the rest in the sink, tore the box to shreds, and crushed all the cans—which had been autographed by the players. Another person took their dad’s baseball that had been signed by ‘70s Reds greats and gave it to their dog—who chewed it up. Another took a baseball that belonged to their mom’s boyfriend that had been signed by Ted Williams and painted over it with white shoe polish.

Another used a hammer to pry all the keys off their parents’ grand piano. Another says an antique piano was ruined when an unspecified object was wedged under the keys to pry them off. Another says that when they were a toddler, they broke the neck of an antique fiddle. It turned out to be a custom fiddle from the 18th century. Still another commenter says their 2-year-old broke an Edison wax cylinder from 1907, smashing it on the floor.

Another says their mom had a priceless photo of herself taken in front of the Berlin Wall just before it was razed. But this commenter took the picture to school for show-and-tell and promptly lost it. Others tell stories of VCR’s wasted by cookies, peanut butter sandwiches, and cheese being stuffed inside them. Another says their brother once fed over \$100 in exotic foreign money to their dog. Another says their brother pulled all the film out of several disposable cameras that their mom had containing years of baby photos. Why didn’t she get those photos processed instead of stockpiling them?



Yet another person says their 4-year-old pitched a tantrum and threw a Hot Wheels car at the TV—shattering the screen. Another says their 4-year-old threw a rock at their brand new 50-inch TV. Another broke their grandmother's vase from the Ming dynasty, which ended in 1644. Another had a 100-year-old book chewed up by their dog. Another says their brother threw a shitfit because he lost at a video game and smashed a Game Boy, game controllers, and 2 cellphones. Another says their 8-year-old broke a glass door when she tried using a slingshot to launch a Yoda figure from a Lego set onto the couch. Another admits to throwing a tantrum at the age of 8 and slamming a door—knocking an antique German cuckoo clock off the wall and shattering it. Another knocked a one-of-a-kind ceramic eagle off a bookshelf—breaking it into a zillion shards (much like the deer bookend at Brossart that the librarian knocked off the shelf and shattered after we stuck a sign that said “BUY SOME BASTE” on the antlers). Another said their 3-year-old ruined a book autographed by Rufus Wainwright by scribbling all over his signature. Another said they flew a drone inside their living room and demolished a 70-inch TV.



Still another commenter said their 5-year-old used Barbie scissors to cut up their great-grandmother's priceless pearl necklace. Many of the pearls were lost. Another recorded over the videotape of their parents' wedding with an episode of *Pokémon*. Another spoiled their parents' wedding video by pulling all the tape out of it. Another said their dog threw up down inside their \$1,400 gaming console. The vomit hit the fans inside the machine and sprayed it all over the room. Another person says they have a friend whose kids destroyed his Magic: The Gathering cards that were worth almost \$80,000. Another says their 4-year-old ruined almost an entire library of DVD's and video game disks by placing them under his feet and sliding around on the floor. Another said hot coffee got poured down inside a brand new laptop. Plus, a PlayStation and a VCR got peed in.

Another hapless individual broke a priceless crystal bowl by placing their toy cowboy figures in it and accidentally pulling the tablecloth out from under it.

It's very fragile, not built to last (as Men At Work would say).

Far Right forfeits participation prize

I'm tired of hearing the Far Right whine about how “the liberals” give everyone a participation prize even when they lose. If anyone doesn't deserve a prize, it's the right-wingers—because they don't even try.

To hear them tell it, you'd think participation awards are a new thing implemented by leftists and pinkos who run our schools. That's a laugh and a half, because kids got participation ribbons on Olympic day even when I was in 1st grade—40 years ago! **Forty!** And if the Far Right thinks Guardian Angel School was run by “liberals”, they're dumber than I've ever given them credit for.

Spoiled right-wing braggadocios live under the Divine Right of Right-Wingers, living off inherited wealth and never having to work for anything. But we're supposed to “understand” them. I remember how there was a right-winger who kept harassing Occupy Cincinnati, and how we had to let him participate in our meetings to “understand” him. He was also suspected of pulling the silent alarm at our warehouse in the hopes that we'd be fined for a false alarm—but still we were supposed to “understand” him. Who is really getting awards they don't deserve? Harassment is not constructive participation.

After fascist policies like offshoring, “broken windows” policing, and union-busting ruined populated areas, there's been a recent trend for the right-wing thought police to move further and further from the cities just to remove themselves from making constructive contributions to society. Sure, they still try to outvote us, but that's not the same as fair play. It's just another way they have of cheating. You don't get a seat at the adult table when you act so childish.

They don't deserve a participation prize—because they refuse to participate.

Antique wedding china (and other stuff) got wasted

As long as stuff keeps getting ru, our work isn't over!

You'd think people would keep irreplaceable wedding heirlooms away from tiny tots, but I guess it's like how I always warned family members to store collectibles in a place where they wouldn't be broken and they never took my advice until it was too late.

One person on the Internet says that when they were a preschooler, they found their mom's antique wedding china that had been handed down from generation to generation. They smashed each piece one by one. Another person says they had a friend who took his mom's wedding ring, mutilated it with pliers, and pried the

gem out so he could give it to a girl he liked. Another says their daughter shattered a crystal bowl from Ireland from their wedding. Another commenter says their parents went away for a couple days and their teenage brother threw a wild party where alcohol and condoms were left about the house and half of their parents' wedding glasses went missing. Another says their brothers were playing with toy light sabers and hit a cabinet, knocking over all their parents' wedding china.

Another says their brother set fire to a suit belonging to a neighbor who had it custom-made for a wedding only 3 days later.

It's not just wedding keepsakes. Another commenter says it wasn't their kid who was a holy terror—but their mom. They said that when their mom was growing up, she got into her dad's collection of rare comic books and laid waste to them. She also took her mom's ABBA records and used them to play frisbee with the neighbor kids. Still another commenter says they had a friend who destroyed a hot tub by defecating in it and shoving the feces into the jets. Another says a group of high school classmates had an alcohol-fueled party at a wealthy schoolmate's house where one of them grabbed an \$18,000 statue, danced with it, and dropped it—shattering it completely. Another says their cousin married a rich woman who already had a spoiled daughter who was about 13. They all went to a party at a country club, and the daughter was showing off and tumbled into a waiter carrying red wine. The wine landed on her mom's expensive dress and the interior of her stepdad's Mercedes convertible. Both were ruined.

Yet another says their sister broke a PlayStation by putting 2 disks in it at once. Another broke an antique crystal swan worth \$9,000. Another was playing ball inside the house and broke an antique glass swan—which was part of a set of 2. Another ruined their dad's antique kimonos by scribbling on them with a permanent black marker. Another tore up their mom's autographed Michael Jackson poster. Another says their daughter dropped the memory card from their camera down the trash disposal in the sink—losing the only photos of the daughter's baby brother's first 8 months. Another poured an entire bottle of very expensive Chanel No. 5 perfume into the bathtub to make “potions.”

Another commenter says they and their beloved sibs made home videos during their vacations—but their mom taped over all of them with *Survivor*. Another destroyed one of the first x-ray machines ever made, which belonged to their great-great-great-grandmother, an accomplished doctor. Still another said they found a small meteorite that their dad had found as a youngster, took it to school, and lost it. Another crashed their bike into their dad's prized Mustang GT and tried covering up the scratches with spray paint. When that didn't work, they tried painting the whole car with Rust-Oleum. but they ran out. Another says their child knocked over a display of beer in glass bottles at a store, wasting \$200 worth of beer. Another says they missed a job interview when their child took their cellphone—which contained their alarm clock—to play games. They also said the youngster pried the keys off their laptop, rearranged them to spell his name, and set the homepage to the Elmo website. Another says their mom was an architect, and they ruined all her blueprints by coloring in all the buildings with crayons. Another shattered their dad's antique German beer stein by playing the stereo so loudly that it caused a sports trophy to vibrate and fall off a shelf onto it.

Yet another says their sister took rare stamps—each worth hundreds of dollars—from their dad's stamp collection and used them for an art project. The stamps are “now ruined.” Another says they once threw and broke a bishop from a chess set hand-carved by their deceased grandfather.

All these items are gone. Gone into thin air. Think how long some of them lasted before one careless move ruined them all. A lot of longtime family traditions were broken because the keepsakes to go with them were destroyed.

And what's the deal with the word *heirloom*? I understand the *heir* part, but the *loom* part makes it sound like it's something that can float in midair—like a fart. Maybe that's why people aren't more careful around these items. They think they can stay suspended in midair without falling to the floor and breaking.



Heads or tails, you lose with Franklin Mint coin instructions

If you want to permanently tarnish a penny you found in the toilet at Burger King, that's easy. But what about a rare Australian florin? Or a mint condition North Korean chon? You may have to buy a coin set like those that were offered by the Franklin Mint.

If you grew up in the '80s, you may remember the TV commercial for these international coin sets. The coins came in bound, sealed cases and were sold by the Franklin Mint working with foreign countries' central banks. Coins are interesting and artful, and rare and foreign coins are especially exotic. But I don't know anyone

who bought these expensive sets—despite them being advertised heavily.

A person from Australia who has regularly posted on coin collecting websites has said these coins were spoiled by the instructions that came with them. This commenter has used the magic word fluently.

When I was growing up, I read in a book that coins are slowly tarnished and nicked just by being touched or exposed to air. I read that if you must touch a collectible coin, you should handle it only by the edge. You shouldn't remove a mint condition coin from its case if you want it to stay mint. But—according to this commenter—the Franklin Mint's coin sets included instructions telling people to remove the coins from their plastic wrappers and place them in a slot on the box, where they would be exposed to the elements. Anyone who did this “unwittingly ruined their coins”, and this practice “ruined a majority of the mintage.” (The phrase “unwittingly ruined their coins” was used at least 3 times in about 6 years.) The few who ignored the instructions actually still have coins that are nice and shiny.

Plus, the felt that the Franklin Mint used for the boxes decayed over time and released fumes that corroded the coins.

The commenter said the “ruination” came early to collectors in warm, humid climates. They said that in their part of Australia, every Franklin Mint set they've ever seen “was already ruined by the time I saw it.”

Talk about a Woodland Surprise!

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