

# The Last Word™

Issue #541

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## Marianne condo boondoggle dead!

Good news, good news, Boss!

I've lamented the loss of our beautiful countryside at the hands of luxury subdivisions. I've been just as vocal against this wasteful practice invading our busy cities by bringing high-end housing and displacing existing residents. The 1% may be asking this: If we don't build luxury housing in the city, and we don't build it in the country, where do we build it? Try nowhere. We don't need it—anywhere. There's way more than enough already.

Where does this leave the ridicule-evoking plan to turn the Marianne Theater in Bellevue into luxury condos? In the toilet. That's where. After a firestorm of criticism by local residents, the developer has withdrawn the condo proposal.

It was unclear how they planned to fit 16 luxury units into such a small building, but someone on Facebook said the plan was to build more stories on top of the Marianne. This would block the views enjoyed by surrounding residents—but only for as long as it would take to raze their homes and build high-rise luxury condos in their place. I bet that was the plan all along. Neighborhoods a lot like ours have been similarly destroyed.

The public's current disgust for more luxury housing contrasts with an ugly Tea Party-inspired episode in 2014 in which wealthy residents of existing luxury condos shouted down a Bellevue City Council meeting by whining that average-income renters of a proposed apartment building might use "their" amenities. One of the hecklers referred to renters as "those people." Their claim that ordinary renters had nothing invested in Bellevue was a filthy lie, as I'd lived in the same *efficiency* apartment since long before the condos they lived in were even planned. Why should I move out of Bellevue just so right-wing bigots with more money than me can stampede into town and have free rein?

I'm sure there will be more wrinkles in the Marianne story, but very few folks support high-end condos, and the excuses from the few who do keep becoming thinner and thinner.



## No leads in vehicular assault but there's photos so the media can't yell "hooaaaxxxx!"

Ever experience something so obviously bad that it's physically impossible to get mad?

It happened on October 14. And they were dumb enough to leave proof. Not like it matters, because even if they were caught, they'd just use their money and clout to get let off—like they always have.

That was one of the days I scouted out sites for next May's Cincinnati roadmeet. I used Red Bike, and at the end of this errand, I stopped by Kroger in Bellevue. I was almost home when I put the bike away at the stand on Ward. When I was walking across Ward, a black car zooming down the street knocked me onto the sidewalk.

They didn't say anything, but I know it was intentional, because of their history. If it was in any other county—*anywhere*—I would have thought it was an accident, but Campbell County is known as a wholly owned subsidiary of organizations that have encouraged attacks like this. I didn't see the driver's face or their license plate. They turned right onto Fairfield towards Dayton.

There were witnesses, so wipe that smirk off your face. The bags of groceries flew a rather impressive distance, but I only lost one small item.

Just how dumb was the assailant? They left visible injuries. I thought they'd learned a long time ago not to, because it's evidence. Last time I remember them leaving visible injuries, *Throw Momma From The Train* was one of the top movies in the land. It's not like nobody saw later assaults, but witnesses were forced to keep quiet.

Since you like blood, guts, and gore, here's some photos of the injuries...



I made a police report, but police said there's no cameras at that spot to catch them. There's cameras *everywhere* these days. Just not where people commit, you know, *crimes*.

If I had the license plate, I don't think even that would be enough, judging by past experiences. This leads us to ask: What happens to license plate data? I asked someone who knows, and the answer depends on who you are. The courthouse doesn't give you plate info just for the asking. You have to be special and privileged. I do know the courthouse seemed to destroy old license plate info within about 7 years at most—but the data would magically pop back up again when someone like Citizens for Community Values wanted to stalk people who visited adult businesses. In other words, the records are kept in a safe place where crime victims can't access them, but the records can somehow be found by well-connected people with bad motives. All you need to do is become a private investigator for a secretive right-wing lobbying group, and you're all set! All of this is particularly true in Kentucky, one of the nation's top states for giving special rights to criminals. (A little factoid about Citizens for Community Values: According to Wikipedia, a member of CCV's board of directors is also a lobbyist for debt collectors. Next time you get a nasty phone call at 3 AM asking for a total stranger who allegedly owes \$3 on a phone bill from 1954, remember the caller is part of the revolving door of right-wing corruption and authoritarianism.)

Now that there's solid proof of injuries because of the assailants' stupidity, what laughable defense will be trotted out by their apologists? I bet it'll be some combination of the following...

- 1) It's a "hoax" and all the witnesses are lying (despite the photos of the injuries).
- 2) The fact that the photos have to circle the injuries shows they're not all that serious.
- 3) "Kids will be kids" (even though they're almost 50).
- 4) I did something to deserve it.

- 5) I didn't look where I was walking (even though pedestrians have the right of way).
- 6) It wasn't them.
- 7) "Their poo also voted."

All of this obscures the fact that even if I wasn't specifically targeted, it was still a hit-and-run.

Just to show I'm serious about pursuing this case to its conclusion, here's the police report. I don't know why it has the wrong date and time, when I can remember what I did and saw on a specific day when I was 6, but we can't all be cool people...

<b>CALL RESPONSE RUN REPORT</b>								
<b>COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY</b>								
<b>ADMIN</b>	AGENCY OR/NAME: <b>0190100 BELLEVUE POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>				CALL/CAD EVENT NUMBER: <b>19-10-05178E</b>			
	REPORTING OFFICER		BADGE/I.D. #		BEAT/POST		REVIEWED BY	
<b>CHARGE, LOCATION &amp; TIME</b>	CALL TYPE		CALL TYPE OTHER			REPORTED BY		
	<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>					<b>INVOLVED PERSON</b>		
	LOCAL ORDINANCE VIOLATION				LOCATION TYPE			
					<b>HIGHWAY, ROAD, ALLEY (INCLUDES STREET)</b>			
	INCIDENT DATE	INCIDENT TIME	DAY OF WEEK	EXACT/ESTIMATE	TIME RECEIVED	TIME DISPATCHED	TIME ARRIVED	TIME CLEARED
	<b>10/16/2019</b>	<b>11:50</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>ESTIMATE</b>	<b>11:50</b>		<b>11:50</b>	<b>12:15</b>
	EXACT LOCATION OF INCIDENT	<b>FAIRFIELD AND WARD AVENUE</b>						
		ADDRESS: <b>FAIRFIELD AVE</b>						
		CITY: <b>BELLEVUE</b>				STATE: <b>KY</b>	ZIP CODE: <b>41073</b>	
		COUNTY: <b>CAMPBELL</b>			LATITUDE: <b>39 DEG</b>	<b>6.478 MIN</b>	LONGITUDE: <b>84 DEG</b>	<b>28.875 MIN</b>
LOCAL CITATION NUMBERS:								
<b>INVOLVED PERSON INFORMATION</b>	PERSON SEQUENCE	PERSON TYPE						
	<b>1</b>	<b>of 1 Reported By, Victim</b>						
	INVOLVED PERSON NAME: <b>BROWN, TIM</b>						PHONE:	
	ADDRESS: <b>7-18-1973</b>							
	CITY: <b>BELLEVUE</b>		STATE: <b>KY</b>	ZIP CODE: <b>41073</b>		SSN:		
	DATE OF BIRTH: <b>7/18/1973</b>	SEX: <b>MALE</b>	ETHNIC ORIGIN: <b>NOT HISPANIC</b>		RACE: <b>WHITE</b>			
	PERSON SEQUENCE	PERSON TYPE						
	<b>of</b>							
	INVOLVED PERSON NAME:						PHONE:	
	ADDRESS:							
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP CODE:		SSN:			
DATE OF BIRTH:	SEX:	ETHNIC ORIGIN:		RACE:				

**NARRATIVE**

On October 16, 2019 Mr. Brown reported that he was struck by an unknown black vehicle as he crossed the street on Ward Avenue at Fairfield Avenue. He stated that as he crossed in the crosswalk from on side of Ward to the other, a black car came up an hit him. The driver is not known or the type of black vehicle. Mr. Brown stated that he did have minor injuries.

Once in 22 years in Bellevue is a better rate than 30 times in my last 10 years in Highland Heights—admit it, you'd rather live in Bellevue in 2019 than Highland Heights in 1997—but notice how these assaults restart under Donald Trump, Matt Bevin, and gentrification.

Wouldn't it be terrible if I posted names and addresses of people who have done things like this before?

## Whatcha gonna do when they gum for you...

You may be shocked to learn that people I knew a long time ago who regularly bubbled with peerless precision went on to become highly paid professionals.

A court case from Melrose Park, Illinois, proves that even police bubble. It's hard to believe, because we usually think the police like order. Bubble gum seems too frivolous for them. But a few years ago, bubbling reared its head when a police cadet filed a federal lawsuit claiming she was discriminated against by the city.

Make no mistake, it was a serious case, and if the city practiced discrimination, it should be held liable. And a document written by the judge regarding the case mentions that the cadet bubbled. She wrote, "When she

chewed bubble gum and blew bubbles during a training exercise, one of her superior officers wrote a memo about the incident and she was directed to write a memo as well.” Apparently, the bubbling had its own exhibit number.

Let this sink in. A *federal judge* wrote that document—regarding a *police cadet*. We have judges and cops talking about *bubble gum*, of all things! Not just bubble gum, but *blowing bubs*! For a serious case, what can be more unexpected? The judge was an Obama appointee, but this story would be even sillier if she had been appointed by some hardcore right-winger like Bush or Trump.

It appears that in that document, the judge was merely denying the city’s motion for summary judgment. I don’t know how the case was ultimately decided, so the plaintiff may have won her case. Bubbling isn’t really a performance deficiency, so that alone shouldn’t have cost the plaintiff a position in the department.

## World’s funniest Dungeons & Dragons tantrums

Who doesn’t love Dungeons & Dragons? Ronald Reagan. Seriously, you daydream each day that life itself is a role-playing game, and that instead of your insufferable real life job, you dream that you’re an experienced member of a team of characters that raids various unsavory organizations like your former high school for treasure.

Which character class are you? Are you a tough fighter, a wise cleric, a cunning rogue? Or are you simply a comrade, as you play Dungeons & Dragons the cool people way?

Have you ever experienced a good Dungeons & Dragons temper tantrum? I remember how one of the game books had a hilarious piece advising D&D masters on how to deal

with argumentative players, but I found some Internet posts that describe some legendary D&D meltdowns. There’s lots of stories about “downright sobbing crybabies” spoiling D&D sessions. Most of them were adults.

One of the most common types of tantrums involves angrily ripping up the character sheets. One player flew into a skizzum because his elf character was reincarnated as an orc. He went outside and vandalized another player’s car. Another player crushed a 20-sided dice in a vise.

One D&D master says a game was ruined by 2 players who were also a married couple. They got into a huge argument with each other that spilled out into the backyard and drew the attention of all the neighbors. Another player flung a clipboard across the room at a glass door because his character died. One player—an ordained minister—kept throwing dice at other players. Another blew snot bubbles to protest his character being kicked out of the game. Another got mad and threw the *Players Handbook* at the D&D master’s face frisbee-like. One stomped off because his cleric character got killed off. Sometime later, he phoned the master and demanded that he bring the character back. The angry player ranted that none of his characters had ever been killed in 20 years of playing D&D and made threats against the master.

A group of teenage players got into a fistfight over who would receive a +5 holy avenger sword. In a separate incident, a member of this group cried all because his character was killed off and the group burned his character sheet.

One group expelled a youngster who was about 12 because he kept stealing snacks from other players and playing with their cellphones. When he was kicked out, he started crying.

It isn’t only Dungeons & Dragons. During a session of the sci-fi simulation game *Car Wars*, a player went ballistic, accused another player of cheating, kicked over the table, stomped on all the books, and stormed out. There’s a game called *Warhammer* that involves miniature figures. One player got so mad during a game that he smacked his hand down on one of the figures—which had spears pointing upward, which cut his hand all up.

What are these tantrums like? For years, I’ve frequented online chat rooms for road transport enthusiasts. We used to have trivia contests where we’d answer questions about each state’s highways. One evening in the early 2000s, one of the regulars blew up because he didn’t like the contest host’s questions. They were either too easy or too hard—but never just right. The complainant ranted that he was never going to let this host run another



trivia session ever again—all because things didn't go his way.

## Microsoft support call was a scam

Fool me twice, shame on me. Fool me once, won't get fooled again.

Remember in our previous ish when a Microsoft support specialist told me to call a support number to fix the camera app that was disabled by the disastrous new Windows 10 update? It turns out that was a scam, and this staffer was in on it.

The ink was barely dry on last month's issue when it occurred to me that something didn't seem right about that call. It was a gut feeling. So I looked up the number on Google and discovered that a handful of other people had noted it was a scam. One of these posts was on Microsoft's worthless support forum—the same place I got the number.

This means that for months, Microsoft had allowed its forum to be used for posting a bogus support number.

Luckily, when I was on the phone with this fake support center, I didn't give them any passwords, credit card numbers, Pepsi Generation card numbers, or the like. I'm not easily fooled, so I would've become suspicious if they'd asked. I *damn sure* didn't send any money. Some years back, a virus on my computer placed by the Russian government actually extorted money. This highway robbery cost me only a few dollars, but I tried getting my bank to reverse the charge. How was I supposed to halt this virus as it was in progress? Was I supposed to call the police? With American elected officials' friendly attitudes towards dictatorial regimes, what would that accomplish? The Bush crime family was friends of the Saudi monarchy that stoned dissidents, for pity's sakes! But in my recent dealings with the phony Microsoft support center, no money changed hands.

Some frauds are hard to detect, and almost anyone would fall for them. But like I said, I can't be fooled easily, and if the woman on the line had asked for money, that would've been a red flag, and I would've hung up instantly. I figured out Reaganomics was a racket by the time I turned 12, and I realized psychiatry was a put-on as a teenager (something that some who were adults then still haven't figured out), so it's hard to deceive me.

The woman referred me to a few websites, but those received no personal information or money either. Now I know why she threw a shitfit. It's because 2 of the scam websites she directed me to had apparently been shut down. If I find out my computer got any viruses from any site recommended by this number, I intend to hold Microsoft legally liable for allowing a fake support number to be posted month after month.

Somebody must be falling for it, or it wouldn't be going on for so long. And these days, crime pays, so don't expect it to stop anytime soon. The few times I've tried to sell anything on Craigslist, someone has tried (unsuccessfully) to scam me, and nothing was ever done about that, so why would other scams stop?

## The Internet is public (imagine that!)

About the Internet: It's public. Public as a bird!

There's been a rumor going around lately that the Internet is public. This rumor has been confirmed as fact by multiple sources. Don't take it from me. Look what's being said by those who insist otherwise—and make asses of themselves in the process.

One feller—who is a crackpot—posted on a website that the Internet in the U.S. is private, and contrasted it with countries where it is public. He said this private ownership is actually a benefit. I guess he thinks it's a benefit that my Spectrum bill is 7 times what my Internet bill would be in some other countries. But another guy shot this claim down and said nobody truly owns the Internet. Private parties owning the Internet would be like if they owned all our air. Another man correctly said in another thread about the Internet, "It runs itself." Another said, "It just sorta 'happens.'"

So the "let's privatize everything" thought police is already outvoted.

One hapless gent said the Internet is owned by "the corporations that own the hardware." Hahaha. No. That's like saying airlines own our airports.

Usenet—a once-important part of the Internet that nobody uses anymore—is also public. There was a proposal called Usenet II that seemed to be an attempt to replace Usenet with a privately owned system that would be censored even worse than Usenet was. But Usenet II never got off the ground. Note that Usenet being public does not completely free it from censorship. Not only did private parties erase Usenet posts because they disagreed with them, but just a couple years ago, a private organization in Germany shut down legitimate Usenet



portals all over Europe in the name of fighting piracy. Nonetheless, a website about Usenet says, “No one person or group in particular own the usenet,” despite what some insist.

Another right-wing talking point swirls down the crapper with such gusto that it barely even leaves a telltale wisp clinging to the drain.

## Brossart spoke its own language on course offerings

Welcome to another exciting installment of high school failing to offer the courses you need for college!

Yes, I got ripped off too. When I started at NKU, I discovered I had to take a remedial math course there, even though I took—and passed—4 years of math in high school. NKU wouldn’t accept all of these credits, and I have no idea why.

These days, NKU requires 2 foreign language credits for admission. This requirement wouldn’t apply to me presently, as NKU’s website says it doesn’t apply when someone who is almost Medicare-eligible goes back to school. If it did apply, there’d be a big problem: I didn’t take a foreign language in high school. In fact, I wasn’t *allowed* to. (Ooh, an Allowed Cloud!)

The infamous Bishop Brossart High School offered French to most students, but didn’t let me take it. That’s because the school didn’t let anyone who took both art and drafting take it. What makes French mutually exclusive with art or drafting? The school labeled anyone who took art and drafting as unfit for college, placing them in a “track” that would supposedly disqualify them from higher book learnin’. They kept haranguing me that I couldn’t go to college if I took those classes—but wouldn’t let me take French, which was part of their college-bound “track.” So I was condemned for not taking a class that they wouldn’t let me take.

Not long into sophomore year, when I got in a major disagreement with the art and drafting teacher, the school wouldn’t let me take up French instead. I don’t think that would have mattered anyway for avoiding bad classroom situations, because the school’s toxic culture filled almost every class.

The following year, all my classmates in that grade level got to pick at least one elective—but I wasn’t allowed to. The school never said why. Although the school had pitched a king-sized fit the previous year when I didn’t take French that I wasn’t allowed to take, they didn’t let me take it this time either.

I had to take English—a language I already knew—so why couldn’t I take a foreign language to broaden my horizons? I know it’s hard to become fluent in a new language once you’re past a certain age—because of the way the brain grows—but at least languages are interesting. I might have been better at learning a new language than I thought, for this zine is awfully hip to 2010s expressions. English was one of my worst school subjects, but this zine is in part a celebration of language. I’m not the skilled writer I appear to be, and that’s why I have a whole lexicon of catchphrases to compensate for it.

Any class beats the “retoolings” Brossart kept making us waste time on. Regarding the “retoolings”, I was always waiting for the school to fall back on the catch-all excuse that they were preparing us for a “marketable” career. That’s as bad as NKU forcing me to take so many classes unrelated to my major so I could have a “well-rounded” education.

When I think of an image to represent a place like Cline Middle School, I think of a stinking restroom stall. But when I think of an image for Brossart, I think of a bathroom where every toilet has water overflowing onto the floor and where the air is thick with the scent of urine, vomit, and poisonous chemicals.



## A right-wing nobody got humiliated on Facebook

Because this was a month between January and December inclusive, some right-wing crybaby said something idiotic on Facebook—and humiliated themselves in the process. In fact, they started October’s cavalcade of stupid before the month even began, because this happened on September 30.

I posted the message below on the Greater Cincinnati Politics page on Facebook. You’ll notice my post is sensible, calm, and G-rated...

**“Isn’t gentrification an illegal manipulation of the market? Someone on another site said there was a comic book shop that tried buying every copy of a rare Batman comic and destroying most of them just so they could resell the remaining copies at an inflated price. Someone replied that this would be illegal manipulation of the market. How is gentrification any different?”**

Naturally, that post lasted only about 15 minutes before some sorehead complained about it because they disagreed with it and got it taken down. This reams a massive Bubble Yum hole through the cries of the liars who claim that our side is the one that supports censorship. They're so thin-skinned that they got a post taken down all because of a differing opinion. My post didn't even violate any of Facebook's stated rules.

But before my post was deleted, some Far Right dictator—probably the same who got it deleted—replied...

**“The Bolsheviks agreed with this position. So they killed a bunch of people.”**

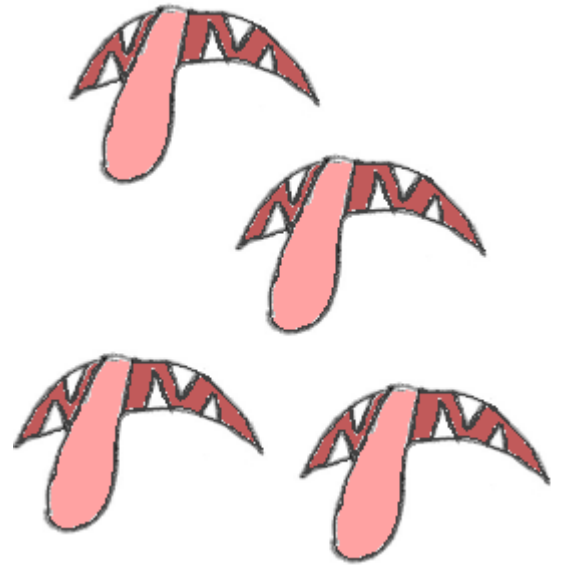
So I responded...

**“The Nazis disagreed with this position. So they killed a bunch of people.”**

Gotcha on that, Tea Party guy!

It's demonstrably true that the Nazis were big supporters of gentrification. It's safe to assume that almost anyone who supports it in America today is a dominionist—a particularly virulent kind of religious zealot. One of few reasons anyone favors gentrification today is that it fits their worldview that they seek to impose on everybody else. They think privileges should be granted based on one's wealth, and that anyone who dissents is “covetous.” Nearly everyone else has abandoned gentrification, and hardly anybody remains except fanatics. The end of gentrification should be nigh.

But don't hold your breath, seeing how the Evil Empire never gets any complaint out of their system, no matter how much people appease them. This is a good reason not to appease them.



## People keep having valuables lost by their parents

It seems like everyone in our society has the same story: They move out on their own, a parent insists on keeping some of their irreplaceable heirlooms so they don't get stolen, and the items end up getting lost anyway. A similar story is when someone goes away—whether for a day or for a year—and comes back to find out that a parent has broken into their house and rearranged everything without permission. Valuables are inevitably broken, lost, or thrown away in the process. The Interpipes is rife with stories like these.

One anonymous website poster said they studied abroad only to return home and find that their mom had rearranged their room without permission and lost all their most treasured keepsakes. The most important items were figurines of puppies and kittens that were no longer being made. They had been kept in a special case, but their mom had removed them and put computer equipment in the case.

When the commenter asked their mom where the figurines went, she replied that she either didn't move them or forgot where she put them. They never turned up.

It's stunningly common for the parent's story to change over the years in cases like this. What's amazing is how many parents say they “accidentally” broke into their child's home.

I'm sure some losses are accidental, but many of the acts that people have described stem from the parent's disrespect for boundaries. A parent doesn't like their grown child's choices in life, so they try to control their space. A lot of parents come right out and say they don't like their child's decisions, but sometimes, instead of saying what they think, they pull passive-aggressive shit. It makes them feel as if they've won, because there's no direct confrontation, which the child would have invariably won. When a grown child is a captive audience, the parent might force them to listen to a bunch of bullshit about their friends, other family members, certain celebrities, or the direction of society, but the child doesn't respond, because they'll be gaslit by being accused of “starting” it.

It's also sort of like the stories by people who are grown now but say their parents still don't trust them with simple tasks because when they were kids, they fucked up their chores, broke something, flunked a test, or drew naked comic book characters. For some reason, my parents think I'm rough with electronics, even though my stereo has lasted 25 years, and I have a digital camera that's lasted 11 and an old calculator that's lasted almost 40 (and miraculously survived St. Joe's where classmates always stole my things). In gym class at Brossart, I left my school pants and shirt in the locker room, and someone stuck chewed bubble gum in the pockets—ruining them. My mom said I must have stuck the bubble gum there myself. She never explained why. One might suspect I would have done it because I hated the school's idiotic dress code. But I knew that if my school clothes got

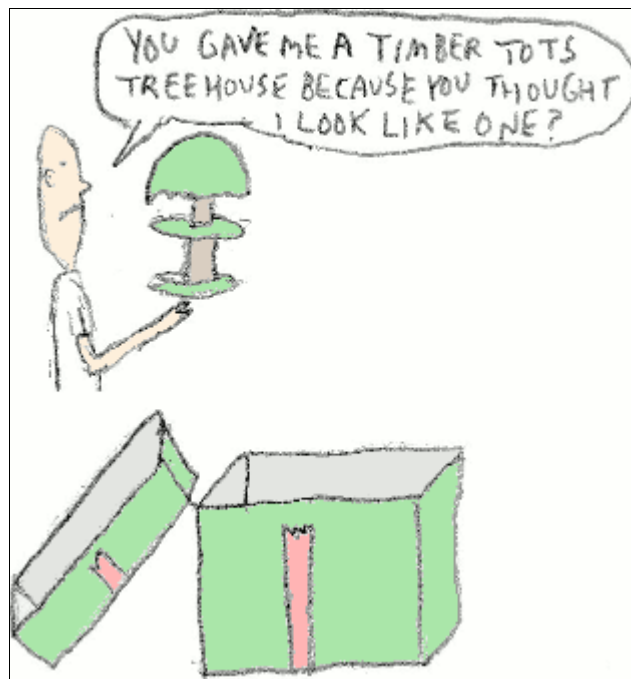
ruined, they'd just be replaced by something even more hideous. Besides that, how come I found bubble gum stuck in my underpants too?

It's also a bit like how there were a couple times when my parents got me toys or books that I was too old for, and then they got angry because I didn't use them. I heard about it for years after. When I was about 20, an expensive camera that was practically brand new was stolen from me—through no fault of my own—and I heard about that for years too. I misplaced my keys once about 25 years ago and—you guessed it!—every time I leave an important family gathering, I'm still treated to a big lecture about whether I have my keys. I misbehaved at my school's Halloween party in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade—I acted as if a cowboy costume entitled me to let a few four-letter words slip out here and there—and I was never allowed to attend a Halloween party again.

A lot of relatives came up with weird gift ideas. They gave me things I couldn't possibly use—even when I was well into adulthood. I once received an M&M dispenser because I allegedly resembled the round, green M&M man. I sold it soon after. Folks on the Internet say their relatives gave them Toys “R” Us gift cards after they were grown. Another source of ridicule is when a parent won't let their child buy some item because they “neglected” a remotely similar item years earlier that took care of itself. The flip side is when a disappointed parent says, “I knew this would happen.” If they knew it would happen, why didn't they stop it?

I also remember when my mom taped several hilarious episodes of *The PJs* off TV because I wasn't able to watch them when they aired. Then I lost the tape and it was never found. I heard about that for years. But it was I who lost the tape—in contrast with the tales of those on the Internet whose belongings were lost by their parents. As another example, one person says that when they went off to college, their mom threw away their priceless autographed copy of *The Hobbit* that their uncle had given them.

Nobody loses more minor items than me—my Goo Gone being the latest victim. It's not entirely my fault, because everyone should know by now that I had to spend most of the Bush era laying down in bed. Once in a great while—often after years—these items miraculously resurface. My hole puncher that's been missing for 20 years still has a chance of being found. The copy of *The Hobbit* that's been gone for 50 years doesn't.



## Reeling in Storer's movie taping ad

Did Storer Cable encourage movie piracy? If poo.

Storer had a monopoly on cable TV service in several American “markets” such as northern Kentucky. I put “markets” in quotes because a market is supposed to offer customers a choice—like a farmers’ market. But it's also one of these words that often defies its own meaning, such as *progress* or *school*. For example, a “market economy” often forces us to buy—at an inflated price—from a very limited selection of products. Monopolies of cable TV and other utilities are a good example.

There's a zillion stories from the abyss of the cable TV industry. People describe cable systems in their towns having unusual channels. One said their cable system operated a channel that consisted solely of a man onscreen reading aloud from magazines. Every page in every magazine seemed to be laminated—as if the cable company was worried about ruining them. The man even imitated voices of people quoted in the articles.

That's as silly as an idea for a TV show I came up with as a youngster. When I was about 5, I went to an important family gathering. I was sitting on a recliner when I tried getting up from it without pushing the footrest back in. An older relative warned, “Don't break it, don't break it!” I thought this admonition was so hilarious that I came up with a show called *Don't Break It, Don't Break It!* I never came up with what it would be *about*—just the title. Maybe it was supposed to be a “show about nothing” like *Seinfeld*.

Now peep this vid before a phone book eats you alive...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DzvyQVN2Is>

Hey?! What's wrong?! That link is dead! Anybip, before that video got taken down by YouTube, it was comprised of a commercial for Storer Cable from the 1980s. This ad featured a cartoon of a man watching movies on cable and suggested viewers can tape movies off TV and build their own film library.



Whoa! Whoa, whoa, whoa!

Let me introduce you to some factoids about copyright law. Copyrights are abused by entertainment companies all too often, and I fully support fair use. It's fine to tape something off TV and watch it once before taping over it—because that's fair use. What about a permanent collection? That appears to be legally considered fair use too as long as it's only for personal viewing. But I bet the MPAA didn't like Storer's ad! After all, the Supreme Court case that allows viewers to tape programs off TV was decided by only 5 to 4. It's not like I feel sorry for the MPAA. Hollywood has a lot of highly paid actors, but they don't make nearly as much money as the entertainment firms that are always screaming about "piracy." The real story here is Storer's hypocrisy.

I lived in my previous apartment for years before I discovered that I could have just hooked my TV up to the cable plug and gotten cable for free, because Storer never deactivated the cable from an earlier tenant. But do you think Storer—by then it was TKR or maybe InterMedia—would have liked that? If I'd done it, and if I'd been caught, there'd be some real criminal charges barreling my way. Storer encouraged taping movies, but they'd never allow people to get cable for free.

And why did YouTube take down that video? It was probably over a fourth-party complaint accusing the person who posted it of "pirating" it, even though posting a commercial from 30 years ago doesn't deprive a now-defunct cable company of any gain. If it's legal to hoard movies you've taped off cable, it's certainly legal to upload Storer's commersh to YouTube.

There ought to be a law. In some countries, falsely accusing someone of a crime subjects the accuser to the same punishment the accused would receive if found guilty. There should be a law that says any person or corporation that makes false complaints to websites like YouTube about copyright infringement must face the same criminal penalties as a real movie pirate would.

## Armchair vigilantes defend criminals

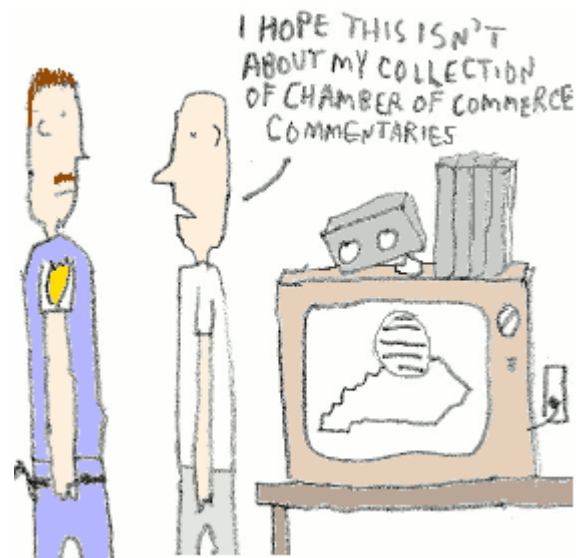
One of the most basic principles of criminal justice is proportionality—the commonsense idea that the severity of punishment should fit the crime. Another basic criminal law principle is that innocent people shouldn't be punished for others' crimes.

Armchair vigilantes defy both precepts. They defy the presumption of innocence, just as Donald Trump did when he ran a newspaper ad demanding the death penalty for the Central Park Five—who were later cleared after the real perpetrator confessed. Self-anointed couch potato warriors run roughshod over proportionality, like when social media sockpuppets cheered a discredited "documentary" urging a crackdown against Seattle's homeless—though homelessness is no crime. Hammock vigilantes are full of idiotic bravado. Their bluster may seem silly, but it hurts society. It encourages others to directly harm those who may be innocent, and it poisons discourse. They've done it locally too, encouraging harm against someone who was released after doing time for a crime he was probably innocent of. Then they blamed President Obama for his release, even though the man wasn't let out until after Obama left office.

The system itself fails us just as badly. The *Lexington Herald-Leader* reports that a Kentucky man is serving 20 years in prison for a second offense of making meth—even though there's no way he's guilty of a second offense, because he didn't even have a first offense. Prosecutors added "enhancements" to a lesser charge so he'd be punished much more severely. This turned a years-old marijuana possession charge into the legal equivalent of producing meth. The man says he's innocent of meth production—period—and even prosecutors admitted the evidence against him was "sloppy." How can a court convict on even one charge on evidence that had been mishandled so much?

This brings us to a series of crimes that is eminently solvable—and I need solved. No excuses. I'm talking about the home invasions I suffered here in Bellevue in 2009-10. After authorities puffed up and blustered for so long about how "tough on crime" they were, this case fell right into their laps. Yet nothing happened—and those who lambasted innocent defendants and petty lawbreakers are now the first to defend local criminals who were caught for a different break-in. All they have is, "We told you so" (although my experiences prove them wrong).

In 2010, 2 men who lived nearby were caught for a burglary, and articles about this bust said they were suspected in gobs of other break-ins. The day they were caught, the home invasions at my place stopped. But—for reasons unknown—it appears as if one man was charged with no other break-ins, and it seems as if the other man was charged with only one other. I can find no reports that they were ever charged with any others. They went on to be convicted of the burglaries that I know they were charged with.



Clearly, I was a crime victim, and I have as much right to see the home invasions here investigated with as much gusto as a sidewalk chalk slogan and a made-up “trespassing” charge at a public university library were. So recently, I posted on Facebook about these break-ins. Nowhere did I mention by name the men who had been convicted in one or both of the other cases. But guess what? Other people did.

Oops.

We’ve all read about the spoiled 30-year-olds who live in their millionaire parents’ basements and get let off by the justice system because “kids will be kids.” The burglars’ defenders have an equally silly excuse: “Only God can judge.” Uh, their crimes were of this world. So this world can judge. That’s why we’re a society of laws.

Armchair vigilantes spent years and years swaggering about how they should throw the book at everyone else for the slightest misstep. But when they finally hear of somebody being guilty of a serious crime, their response is, “Only God can judge.” When did they suddenly become self-styled advocates of corrections reform?

The man with 2 burglaries was sentenced to a total of 29 years in prison—but of course next year he’s up for parole after only 10. The other man was sentenced to 8, but was paroled after only 4. Of course. And that’s even with an enhanced penalty for a prior felony offense. Most felons in Kentucky have to serve at least 85% of their sentence. But there’s none of that pesky “truth in sentencing” for these guys. A locked dungeon for petty offenders is a revolving door for real criminals.

Those who defend these burglars say they became “changed men” the moment they were sentenced. Well, the “changed man” who was paroled actually went on to be locked up again, this time for possession of a forged instrument.

Why defend them? The only thing I can think of is that their defenders see a bit of themselves in them—which means their defenders must be criminals too. They are dominionists and believe they are entitled to break the rules that govern everyone else.

Am I certain this pair committed the home invasions here? No. I’ve had a couple other theories. The intruder—whoever it was—rifled through documents that had no monetary value, as if they were trying to dig up dirt. So the invader could be a private eye gone rogue. But it’s interesting that the break-ins stopped when this duo was arrested—and that my place is one of the first buildings you see coming out of the alley behind the home of one of the men, which would make it an easy target. It doesn’t look good for the pair that I’ve never even mentioned them by name yet everyone who rushed to their defense did. But you can’t argue that mentioning their names wrecks a case against them for the break-ins here, because authorities have ruined it themselves by not solving it after 10 years.

Ten years, no justice. And it’s even worse that convicted burglars are being mollycoddled and released early by those who relish punishing innocents or small-time lawbreakers. It’s exactly like the morality mavens supporting Trump despite his own immorality. I’m going to be on this case like stink on shit until it’s solved.

After writing the above, I read that a man just did 36 years in prison for stealing only \$50.75 from a bakery. He did 36 years for a small commercial theft while a hardcore burglar did only 4! A business having money stolen from it is nothing compared to having your home and person violated—but the punishment was much greater. After this was mentioned on Facebook, the reactionists there lapsed right back into vigilante mode and mixed in some of their trademark bigotry. One of these bigots said that those who criticized the bakery bandit’s outrageously harsh sentence were part of a “Jewish hegemony.”

## People wasted more stuff because that’s what people do



Our previous ish was a bonanza of valuables like Christmas ornaments, wedding china, and expensive appliances getting ruined or lost. But did you really think we were done? More irreplaceable heirlooms got ru, and you're going to frolic in the ruinment of each until your face flies off in public!

A commenter on a website says their mom made numerous sculptures for an art contest—and won. The sculptures were then placed on the mantelpiece. Over time, each and every one of them was demolished by the kids carelessly throwing things. Another commenter says that when they were in elementary school, they went on a field trip to a museum, where a schoolmate dropped a prehistoric fossil—breaking it. Another says their teenage daughter ruined \$31,000 of brand new flooring by overflowing the toilet. Another destroyed an original *Gone With The Wind* wall hanging from the local movie theater by using it for target practice. A 3-year-old shattered a TV by throwing a lollipop at it.

Another says their dad worked for a toy store owner who built an incredible train set that filled a whole room and included hills and working switches that automatically switched tracks to keep trains from colliding. It took over 10 years to build. They took it home, and everyone adored it. But one day, some kids came over, and they “role played” a tornado. They grabbed all the trains and swung them back and forth across the set—until the whole set was completely destroyed.

Another says their mom was a teacher who collected books that included an irreplaceable one-of-a-kind notebook of an accomplished poet. The commenter's sister ruined it by writing spells from *Charmed* all over it. Another commenter says that when they were a child, they buried all their parents' good silverware. It was never found. Stories were also posted about Coke being poured down inside a \$1,700 laptop and coins being shoved inside a VCR.

Yet another commenter says that in 4<sup>th</sup> grade they took their dad's Michael Jordan basketball cards to school just to show off—and lost them all. Another says that when they were growing up, they went on a guided tour of a mansion with their parents. The guide was a “very posh, well spoken and presumably prudish woman.” The commenter accidentally knocked over an antique telescope—shattering it beyond hope. This prompted the “prudish” guide to yell, “Oh, fuck!” Another commenter once found some spoiled apples and threw them at the roof of the neighbor's Mustang convertible—“which ruined it.” Another says that after seeing *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, they stomped around the house pretending to be a dinosaur. They hid under a shelf that contained their deceased grandmother's priceless china, and when they got up, they knocked the dishes off the shelf, shattering them. Still another ruined their dad's autographed Larry Bird basketball. Another broke a mug and hid the shards in the washing machine so their parents wouldn't find out. The broken pieces ruined all the clothing in the next load of laundry. Another dropped their mom's \$800 camera into a lake. Another says one of their in-laws destroyed their printer by throwing Fun Snaps down inside it. Another scratched off the “void if removed” label of their mom's \$11,000 winning lottery ticket.

Another commenter said that when they were visiting a high school friend, they accidentally knocked a wine glass off the counter. It turned out to be a unique glass that the friend's parents got on their honeymoon in France. The glass had been hand-crafted and decorated just for them. Another says their 2-year-old broke their PlayStation by putting Cards Against Humanity cards in the disk slot. Another says their sister broke a brand new, expensive Tony the Tiger radio. Another took their mom's expensive lipstick that cost a week's salary and inexplicably used it to write numbers on the bricks of their building.

A commenter says their mom lost her diamond wedding ring—but it was found 10 years later in the toilet of a Barbie dollhouse. Another says they had a friend who wanted to go ice skating even though it was summer, so she took all her parents' record albums, spread them about the living room floor, and skated on the records with her ice skates—ruining all of them. Another says their kid put a nail in their computer's floppy drive. Another says that when they were growing up, they played an April Fool's Day joke by hiding all the plastic cups in the chandelier. They forgot they were there, and the lights melted the cups, which ruined the chandelier. Another commenter says their brother shoved a hamburger down inside a Wii. Another says their sister ate the reel inside their VHS copy of *Pocahontas*.

Another respondent says an 8-year-old smashed a McDonald's ketchup packet onto a brand new white sofa. Another got into their mom's boyfriend's priceless *Star Wars* collectibles and broke or lost all of them.



Another destroyed a microwave oven by trying to cook rocks in a Coke bottle. This commenter also says they had a friend who ripped a copy of the debut issue of the *Donald Duck* comic book to shreds. It was worth \$15,000. Another says their sister shattered a hand-painted ostrich egg from Africa at a friend's house. Another says their daughter broke a \$23,000 antique glass table. Another ruined a brand new \$55 hole puncher by trying to punch holes in coins.

Yet another says that when they were growing up, a neighbor kid shredded their mint condition debut issue of the *X-Men* comic and pulverized their cherished C-3PO figure. Another says they got gum stuck to their mom's raincoat when they were 3 so they were never allowed to chew gum in the house ever again. Another got mad at their dad when they were growing up, so they stuck gum on his chair, and he sat in it and ruined his pants. They were never again permitted to chomp this zesty viand at least until they were in college.

It's a truism to say people wasted stuff.

## A person bubblicioused their denture good!

What's funnier than people talking about bubble gum? People ruining their dentures with bubble gum!

Beegee shouldn't stick to dentures, because of all the saliva. But when it does, it does. And it's uproarious! A woman posted on the Intertubes back in 2017 asking how long she should wait after getting dentures before chomping bubble gum. "I am so excited to be able to chew gum again one day," she declared. She probably couldn't wait to puff out some mean bubs! After all, gum is wasted if you don't blow bubbles that burst and stick to your face.

Responses were mixed. A man replied that bubble gum pulled a couple teeth off his dentures. One respondent had a "Freedent fiasco" on a roadtrip through South Carolina. And one woman replied...

**"Whatever you do, do not try to chew Bubblicious! I tried that one time and boy did I bubblicious my denture good! It took me forever to get that darn gum off my denture lol. Someone on here told me that gum won't stick if its sugarless. I cant confirm that though because after the Bubblicious episode I haven't tried any more gum."**

She did not say whether she bubbled. But Bubblicious is generally frowned upon by bubble gum poppin' people because the bubs tend to wilt before they get big.

A few years earlier, someone posted on a Joan Jett message board that they believe the singer has dentures and regularly bubbles with them. Cool also.

## My bologna has a first name...It's R-U-I-N-E-D S-T-E-R-E-O...

Keek! Ruin!

It boggles the mind—and it mindles the bog—that people permit stuff to get ru, wosted, or destructamundo. I don't allow it. (Ooh, an Allowed Cloud!) I'm of humble origin, so I make sure my belongings are protected to the best of my ability. But lots of people break stuff, and there's no end in sight to this wastage bastage! Once again, you should mosey through these stories slowly and let it sink in about how valuable these precious items were before they met their destruction.

An Internet commenter says that one Christmas, their big family gift was a sparkling new Wii. They ripped open the package, played tennis with it, and the first thing that happened is that a priceless crystal chandelier got shattered by the controller. Another commenter says their mom received a gold-plated pen for working for a company for 20 years. That very day, the commenter lost the pen while using it to draw on napkins at a restaurant. Another person blew through \$10,000 in lawsuit settlement money in only 2 weeks by buying expensive clothes and video games. Another says their sister shattered an irreplaceable urn because she thought their deceased aunt's toe was in it. Another says their nephew destroyed a copy of the debut issue of the *Silver Surfer* comic that was autographed by Stan Lee (the comic book writer, not the right-wing Kentucky politician of the same name). Another says they sold their parents' entire collection of VHS movies without permission for only \$10.

Another commenter says their nieces and nephews "destroyed a complete collection" of mint condition G.I. Joe and Barbie toys from the 1960s. Another flushed their own G.I. Joe figure down the toilet—destroying an



entire septic system with G.I. Joe's bulky diving suit. Another says they pulled off all the bathroom tiles using *Toy Story* figures that had a suction cup. Another says their brother broke an expensive lawnmower blade by mowing over a rock—after being repeatedly told not to do it. He threw a tantrum over being punished for it and punched a brick wall—racking up over \$10,000 in medical bills. Another ruined their mom's laminating machine by trying to laminate a slice of ham. Another says their little brother peed all over a PlayStation because he lost at a game.

Another says he went to a Christmas party hosted by an unspecified elderly woman. The commenter's 2-year-old shattered an antique crystal clock that was an engagement gift to the woman from her deceased husband. Another says that when he was 9, his friend tore up a *Magic: The Gathering* card just to see what it was made of. Now that card would be worth over \$15,000. Another cut a hole in their parents' waterbed—forcing all the flooring and subflooring of the house's second floor to be replaced. Another says their whole collection of ceramic snow bunnies was demolished when their roommate's bratty kid climbed up onto the bookshelf, grabbed these figurines, and threw them down the stairs—shattering them all. Another says their sister ruined a \$50,000 diesel-powered Jaguar by putting gasoline in the tank.

Still another says they tried dancing with a prized Japanese statuette that their grandfather got when he was stationed in Japan at the end of World War II. Result: a broken statuette. Another says their cousin kicked his shoe off, sending it crashing through a painting from 1912 that belonged to their grandmother. Another destroyed a 5-level liquor cabinet—and wasted 5 whole levels of liquor—fighting with a friend at age 14. Another ruined most of their parents' cassette collection by dropping pieces of chocolate into the cabinet—drawing ants that ate the tapes. Another says his 3-year-old son completely shattered a brand new 80-inch TV with a foam bat.

Yet another says that when they were 10, their parents purchased a huge glass-top dining room table. They were horsing around with their brothers one day and accidentally broke a leg off the table. So they covered up this capital offense by carefully balancing the table on the broken leg. But the following Thanksgiving, their sisters got into an argument. One shoved the other into the table—knocking the whole thing over and breaking it into smithereens.

Another threw a tantrum as a child and broke their grandmother's ceramic dog that had been in the family for 6 generations. Another ruined a \$2,500 stereo by shoving bologna into the CD changer. Another says a baseball bat signed by Dodgers players was destroyed by kids hitting rocks with it. Another says they flooded the dentist's office by clogging the sink with toilet paper and leaving the water running. Another crashed a brand new bike into a parked van belonging to their local university.

Any time an antique snow globe is mentioned on an Internet message forum, you know right away where the story is headed. One person says that when they were about 9, they pretended to be a comic book superhero by using a blanket as a cape, and the blanket knocked over a snow globe. It was an antique family heirloom that their mom received from a friend. Another says their brother took apart a brand new watch given to him by their dad (who loved watches), ruining it by breaking the crystal. Another shattered 2 of their grandparents' Chinese urns—worth thousands apiece—by kicking off their sandals so each sandal hit an urn. Another says that when they were about 6, they made a fake cigarette out of a plastic straw, lit it, and caught 2 pillows and a couch on fire. Another says they were moshing and broke a glass table that featured mosaic art by an unspecified famous artist. Another broke a handmade sword-shaped whiskey bottle from Armenia while plugging in a video game console. They hid the evidence from their parents for a year.

Another commenter spoiled a brand new TV by using a toy car to cut a hole in the screen so they could climb inside because they saw someone on *Blue's Clues* do it. Another destroyed their dad's Super Mario and Legend of Zelda board games that are each worth \$600 now. Another tore all the pieces off their dad's model Ford Falcon from the Franklin Mint. Another says their little brother inexplicably filled the bathroom sink with water and put their laptop in it. Another cut up their dad's autographed Jerry Rice football jersey for a school project. Another used a chair to badly scratch a \$60,000 artwork. Another says their dog chewed up the *Monster Manual* from Dungeons & Dragons. Another used firecrackers to blow up some mint condition Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles toys that would be worth thousands today.

Think how long some of these items lasted before a child's temper tantrum or rough play drew their existence to a close. Memories flashed before many eyes.



## If you're enemies with Airbnb...Well, then you're friends with me...

Some of the most popular articles in this zine lately have been about rowdy guests destroying short-term rental properties like those found on Airbnb. Let me be frank: Short-term rentals are unpopular among their neighbors—so much so that these stories got some laughs. But to the owners of short-term rentals, it's no laughing matter. Even owners have been shafted by Airbnb, as the company fails to adequately remedy damage by guests.

I wouldn't be writing about it again this month except that it appears as if some owners continue to defy Bellevue's regulations that forbid apartments from being used as short-term rentals. As these owners risk a Strongly Worded Letter from the city, this practice drives up housing costs.

One Airbnb owner said a guest "spoiled" her property by damaging the chairs, burning a living room table with hot coal, smearing blood on furniture, and breaking her plates. The guests also left rotting food laying around and somehow got shoe marks on the walls (as if they were trying to mimic Lionel Richie's "Dancing On The Ceiling" video). An Airbnb owner in Australia said her guest opted to "destroy a room of my house in the most vulgar way possible." She didn't go into detail.

Another Australian Airbnb host said a guest laid hulk to his property by smearing blood on the walls, flipping over tables, leaving liquor bottles laying around, and destroying a car. At an Airbnb in Chattanooga, guests ruined a handmade wooden counter, left a towel inside a hot oven, and even printed counterfeit money—prompting a visit by the Secret Service. At an Airbnb in Canada, guests held a party causing \$80,000 in damages. Nine people faced criminal charges. Damages included insulation being ripped out of the walls. Also in Canada, a 14-year-old girl used her parents' credit card to rent a home from an unspecified online service. She threw a wild party that attracted 200 teenagers, who threw furniture off a balcony into a hot tub and inflicted \$20,000 in damages to the home.

A guest at an Airbnb in Malaysia left illegal drugs and a cup of urine behind and broke or lost many appliances. An Airbnb host in Fresno said a guest stole an irreplaceable autographed Tony Romo football jersey from the unit. Another Airbnb host reported guests smashed a hole in her wall to get into a locked closet full of valuables. They used her credit card to make purchases from Bed Bath & Beyond's website. They burned the guest sheets in the fireplace. Cookware was "ruined."

A guest left poo-poo all over the floor at a swanky Airbnb in Paris. At a Booking.com rental in Belfast, revelers destroyed windows and furniture and used sledgehammers to tear down the walls. At an Airbnb outside Atlanta, guests threw plants into the swimming pool and used a tree branch to smash the grill. Another owner said a guest stole 6 built-in shelves. Another said renters had left *thousands* of syringes behind. The unit had to be cleaned by crews in hazmat suits. Another owner found feces in their refrigerator. Another said their guest kept letting their dog shit on the floor and kept piling newspapers on top of it until there was a stack of newspapers several feet high. This guest also flushed golf balls down the toilet.

Such destructment works both ways. A Boston couple went on a nice vacation in Los Angeles and lodged at an Airbnb. But around 2 AM one day, the unit's owner crashed through a large window and into the bedroom.

But there's no shortage of stories about Airbnb failing owners who use its service. Just as companies like Airbnb cheat our neighborhoods by inflating rents, owners who list their properties with these firms aren't safe either.



## A person farted and pulled a knife

There's never been a person in the history of the universe who doesn't like toilet stories. But it's become less common in these pages over the years as we branch out. Muppet master Jim Henson once said, "You know, toilet jokes are funny but you don't keep telling toilet jokes all the time. It's the easy way out."

But sometimes you can't resist!

Last year, a rather toilety incident unfolded at a Dollar General store in Dania Beach, Florida. The *Miami Herald* reported that a 37-year-old woman became enraged at the response to her flatulence and pulled a knife.

It happened as she was waiting in the checkout line at the store. After the woman let loose with a loud-and-proud bunker blast, a man complained. So she allegedly got a small knife from her purse and brandished it at him. She was soon arrested for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. An affidavit from the sheriff's office said the dispute was "in reference to the defendant farting loudly."

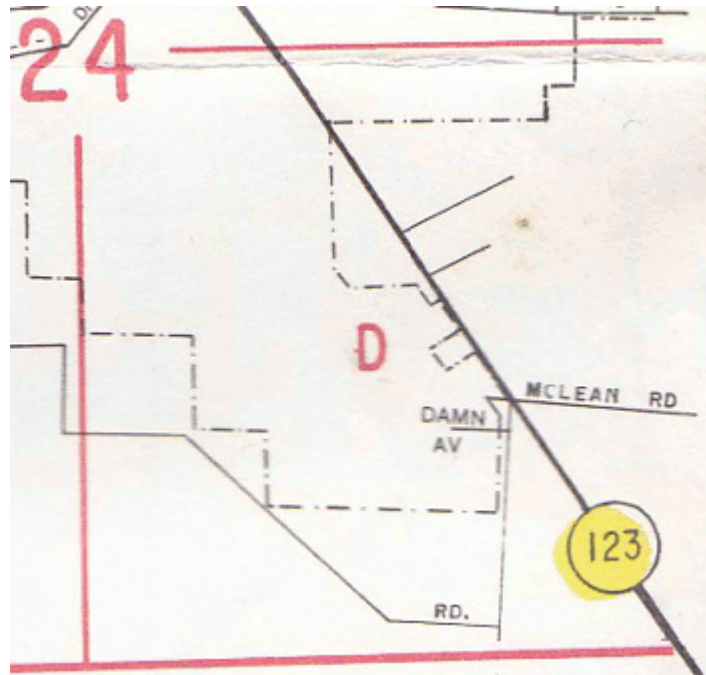
This happened only months after a security guard at a Florida hospital was fired because he kept filming

himself loudly passing gas and posting it on social media sites.

## Damn Avenue blazed a trail

Lately, I've been sorting my collection of road maps, and I noticed I have some fairly recent maps I didn't know I had. I also found some I remember buying a long time ago, and I relived the excitement of unfolding them for the first time! That's what a staycation was like before Google Street View. Now I remember how I managed to survive the Brossart era.

I found my 1987 street map of Butler County—made by the Champion Map Corporation—and recalled this little tidbit from it...



Look closely. Do you see what I see? Or are you afraid a walking stop sign is going to pop out of your computer screen and pie you? That's right, comrades! There was a Damn Avenue!

Damn Avenue was on the edge of the town of Franklin where the map overlapped into Warren County. The blueprint-like lettering common on maps of that era couldn't be wrong. I mentioned this street on a local BBS back then, and a man replied that it was no misprint. The street really was called Damn Avenue. He said he was on that road back when the area was being developed.

Not many other street names include cuss words. I checked Google Maps, and there's a business called Asshole Food & Drink somewhere, but that's not a road.

What ever became of Damn Avenue? It apparently was renamed to Dawn Avenue—at least according to Google Maps and MapQuest. It's nameless on OpenStreetMap.

My map sorting endeavor has also unearthed an official Delaware highway map that takes the rare step of touting the state's tax-free shopping. Economic royalists always go around barking about Tennessee having some of the lowest taxes, but that's a load of roo gas, because the Volunteer State has some of the highest taxes in the country. By contrast, Delaware really does have very low taxes.

I also found my 1984 Rand McNally street map of Cincinnati that has more serious mistakes than perhaps any other map I've seen from a major publisher. I'm shocked it even got published. This map has quite a few street names that were off by several blocks, Silver Grove being almost completely devoid of any streets at all, a major divided highway off I-74 that went on for many blocks but actually never existed, and other examples of stinking. I actually had this map hanging on my wall when I was about 14.

## Blame “education President” for lost license over student loan

Even if we didn't have an incredible idiot in the White House now, you can bet your bottom dollar the media would still be trying to rehabilitate the failed, criminal legacies of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush. That's what the media does. They were doing it even before Trump was in office to compare them to. I had a discussion recently on an Internet forum about why progressive candidates don't run against the

media. We determined that the main reasons are that it would reduce faith in credible news outlets and that the Democrats would have to confront right-wing elements in their own party. Nobody said it was because the media doesn't have a right-wing bias—because it's obvious it does.

The elder Bush called himself “the education President.” That was bullshit. He never cared about education, and American schools declined under his reign. Bush cared so little about education that in 1990 his Department of Education urged states to take away professional licenses and driver's licenses of people who were unable to pay back their student loans.

Predictably, some states followed unquestioningly. Naturally, Kentucky is one of the most aggressive states at revoking licenses over unpaid loans. What? A state that allows politically connected bullies to do whatever they want ruins the livelihoods of people who don't have money? Say it ain't so! A *New York Times* piece says a public records request to Kentucky's nursing board found the licenses of at least 308 nurses revoked or flagged for review.

Other states are guilty too. Tennessee officials tried to revoke the professional licenses of about 5,000 people in a 5-year period because they defaulted on student loans. Texas tried revoking the licenses of over 4,000 in just one year. South Dakota has revoked the driver's licenses of almost 1,000 residents.

A couple states also revoke hunting and fishing licenses and camping permits over unpaid student loans.

There have been bills in Congress to address this unconstitutional blackballing. But these license revocations never would have happened but for the Bush regime's right-wing extremism.

Nationwide, student loans are now the biggest source of household debt except mortgages. Like too much else, the license revocation policies are tougher on those with the least economic means. Zillionaires don't need loans to begin with, and folks with more lucrative occupations are more able to pay off their loans.

The dogfuckerness is endless. In an America full of bait-and-switch occupations and extreme bullying, this evil, discriminatory attack against working people is par for the course.

## Fight over gum wrapper led to broken glasses

Bubble gum. Broken eyeglasses. Flying fists. Game day bucket go boom!

It happened last year in Sweden at a symphony concert. An altercation over a bubble gum wrapper led to busted spectacles and other misbehavior.

It all started when a woman in the audience crumpled the wrapper as she chomped a morsel of gee. It's unknown whether she blew bubs. The sound of the wrapper rustling angered a young man, who grabbed the pack of gum from her and threw it onto the flinty floor.

After the gum was seized, the woman sat quietly for an hour until the audience applauded the orchestra. Then she opted to knock the young man's glasses off his face. Then the man got into a rock 'em sock 'em brawl with the woman's male companion—who subsequently punched him in the stomach.

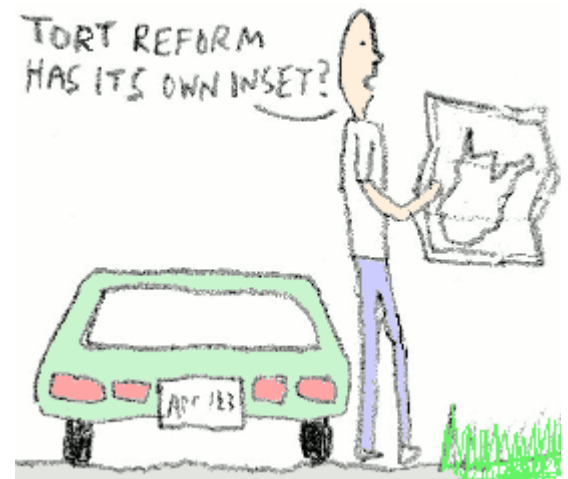
The concert hall made an announcement about proper behavior by patrons—seeming to side with the man who grabbed the gum from the woman. One concertgoer said the incident was “very unpleasant actually.”

## Truths, damn truths, and statistics vindicate year-round school opponents

Let's take a trip back to the bubble gum bustin' year 2000. Enrique Iglesias and 3 Doors Down ruled the music radio airwaves. George W. Bush stole the presidential “election”—after his brownshirts assaulted dissidents at Devou Park. And it was the year I went on my fact-finding mission to Virginia Beach where it rained nonstop. To accompany this trip—I'm pretty sure it was in this very zine—I exposed West Virginia Republicans misusing the official state highway map to endorse their ideological agenda. As part of their program, the map featured a small blurb praising Piedmont Elementary School in Charleston as the first school in West Virginia to adopt a year-round calendar.

Year-round school is a corporate-backed right-wing gimmick that peaked in the last decade. Nowhere has it ever improved the quality of education. As the media cheered it, it was implemented so school districts could shirk the responsibility of making real improvements to our schools, or because big corporations encouraged schools to enact it to boost sales of their products.

Piedmont is also reportedly the *last* school in West Virginia to still be year-round, after another school dropped its year-round schedule when the principal noted it was a failure. After I recently found the map that





endorsed this cog in the school-to-prison pipeline, I wanted to know how it worked out for Piedmont. So I did an Internet search, and the first thing I found was this: “In 2019, Piedmont Year-Round Education ranked worse than 98.2% of elementary schools in West Virginia. It also ranked 41<sup>st</sup> among 42 ranked elementary schools in the Kanawha County Schools District.” A review site gave the school an average of 1 star.

Meanwhile, a TV station in Charleston owned by the far-right Sinclair Broadcast Group recently ran a one-sided story praising Piedmont because of its calendar. Wow, what a shock!

After 20 years, perhaps the dumbest thing ever to appear on a road map has been statistically dashed to smithereens.

## Yet more money flies up Spectrum’s rectum

Northern Kentucky has never been known for low utility bills, but Spectrum’s Internet monopoly sure isn’t making life any cheaper. And make no mistake, Spectrum doesn’t have a real competitor for Internet service here. Trust me, I’ve checked many times.

Now Spectrum has raised our Internet bill yet again—this time to a mind-blowing \$74.99/month. I’m starting to lose count, but this appears to be the fourth time they’ve raised it since they promised to regulators that they would not.

We’re paying 30% more than the national average for less-than-spectacular Internet service because regulators won’t do their job. To them, the purpose of government is to regiment bodily autonomy and foist their beliefs on everyone else—not do anything useful.

Because of the Republicans’ ISIS-like approach to governing, that’s another \$5 every month that grows wings and flaps away, never to be seen again.

This is why I science.

## I didn’t fold up my tent over “bubble tent” comments!

You wanted me to write about bubble gum, so I will! After all, we can all agree that I don’t write about it nearly enough.

Even in elementary school, literature wasn’t my best subject. Textbooks for reading class were difficult stuff. People are puzzled that I can quickly churn out a detailed street map of Latonia Lakes but would flunk an SRA Reading Lab quiz with 5 questions. When I would read any written story, I saw just a group of words—not a story.

Reading class was so tough that I had to add some secret herbs and spices to it. One day, a tutor came to our class. She was probably a local college student. We were assigned to read aloud from a short narrative about the astronauts’ space missions. I had to read part of the story that mentioned a “bubble tent.”

Ahem.

Yes, I said it. More than once, I called it a “bubble gum tent.” Bubble gum is that stuff you blow big bubbles with, you know. That’s why I mentioned it.

The tutor interrupted me and said something like, “I don’t see the word *gum* anywhere.” I didn’t see it either. That makes it all the funnier! Laugh.



## How to annoy people who don’t listen

Not long ago, I bemoaned mumblers and mouthers and described how I deal with them. Mumblers are ignored. Mouthers—like Sully from *Sesame Street*—are not only ignored, but I also walk away and don’t waste my time watching them sit there and lip-sync what they have to say. If someone has something important to say,

they don't mumble it, and they say it out loud. They should go on *Solid Gold* if they want to lip-sync.

But what's the right way to react when you say something and people don't listen and try to get you to repeat it? If they'd put on their listening ears (as Judge Judy would say), they would have heard you the first time.

In situations like this, the person who doesn't listen usually says, "What?"

When this happens, you should just blurt out, "Nothing!" Don't even wait until the "what" is completely out. Go ahead! Be a 13-year-old again!

If they miss something you said, it's their fault for not listening. Later, if they realize they missed something important, remind them that they should have listened.

There's a few more rude things people do besides mumble and not listen. Sometimes, if your voice gets anything above a whisper, some people go completely bananas. They either start flailing their hands to silence you or they declare, "**NOT SO LOUD!!!**" When they do this, I start talking even louder. Paradoxically, some of those who try making you repeat everything are often the same people who get mad if you talk too loud.

Immaturity works!

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