

The Last Word™

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Historic building to be torn down for Burger King

By the end of December, the Bellevue gentrification rubber stamp was once again swinging with all its might!

Even the construction of a business like a fast food restaurant that has a mainstream customer base can be a part of the rotten right-wing process of gentrification—an illegal manipulation of the market. Not all gentrification projects attract exclusively a rich clientele. The Newport Pavilion land grab is a prime example.

Obviously, I wouldn't automatically oppose a business that caters to people of normal means. But I would if I knew it involves gentrification. And the latest one does. There's a historic building on Donnermeyer Drive in Bellevue that has a bar or restaurant on the first floor and an apartment on the second. Recently, a

restaurant operator purchased this 1957 building. They plan to tear it down and build a Burger King in its place.

Since when does Bellevue allow historic buildings to just be torn down willy-nilly? Bellevue zoning officials hurriedly rubber-stamped the proposal. By the time the public knew of it, it had already been approved.

When the nearby Arby's building was built, you heard considerable talk about how it had to follow the city's "form-based code"—even though that building was just replacing the old Arby's on that site. Kroger couldn't build a gas station on its lot because of this code—even though it wouldn't have replaced any historic buildings. But when Burger King wants to demolish a historic structure, the plan sails right through.

City officials say they approved the Burger King so they could make Donnermeyer Drive as "exciting" as other streets. But we don't want "exciting", because we've seen what "exciting" has done to quality of life and the cost of living. I'm tired of hearing about how Bellevue is becoming "the place to be." The place to be what? The place to be living on the street because of gentrification? Despite being such a small city, Bellevue already has a homeless encampment, because so many people have lost their homes to this scourge.

There's a staggering disconnect between city officials and the general public regarding gentrification. As with the laughable Marianne condo plan—which was rejected because it was so unpopular—public opposition to the Burger King proposal is almost unanimous. One person called it "blasphemy." But one of few supporters said on Facebook that the new Burger King is necessary for Bellevue "to not end up being a impoverished successful." What's "a impoverished successful"? This is like the time we got an e-mail about an "unpatriotic patriotic bubble blower."

Stories like this are so stupid you just can't make them up. Yes, a company actually spent about \$600,000 buying a historic building just to tear it down. If you don't want the building, don't buy it. It's that simple. Since it had commercial space on the first floor, they should have just used that for the Burger King. This is like when the Monty Burns look-alike wanted to raze practically the entire city of Highland Heights to build new restaurants because he refused to use any of the many boarded-up buildings elsewhere in the city.

I guess Bellevue officials learned their lesson when people found out about the Marianne condos before they could be approved. The city made damn sure that didn't happen again this time.



Gum cigarettes get utterly smoked!

A cool person Chewed Gum And Thought It Was Funny. *You're* gonna think it's funny too! After all, gum stories are automatically funny because they're about gum.

I have a cooler comrade who—once in a great while—chomps a confection known as gum. They recently volunteered to masticate a slab of exotic beegie just to test its capabilities. It took the form of bubble gum cigarettes. By that, I don't mean a cigarette with bubble gum flavoring. Rather, it was bubble gum that was

packaged and shaped like a cigarette.

I hadn't seen any form of candy cigarettes since the early 1980s. Very few places in the U.S. ban them, but I had thought candy makers had opted to stop making them, for fear they might encourage kids to smoke. The box for the bubble gum cigarettes said they were imported from what is now North Macedonia. However, they were purchased at a party goods shop right here in Bellevue. I guess some people throw weird parties!

Make no mistake, it's gee. Each piece was wrapped in paper that looked exactly like a ciggie. But it's gee. At first, the volunteer for this project found the pink stick of gum to be a bit crumbly—as if stale—but it became eminently chewable.

Our volunteer described this gum as “a satisfying chew” with a fruity flavor that lasted for hours on end. But gum isn't goodgum unless it bubbles reliably. In that regard, this gee was said to be no more bubbleable than a piece of leather—despite being labeled specifically as *bubble* gum. Bubbling with this gum was a bust!

Although this gum could not be bubbled with, repeated attempts to do so resulted in many laughs. That's because each attempt caused the gum to stick to dental work—which threatened to ruin it. Ruin dental work, that is—not ruin the gum. Ruining gum isn't funny. But ruining dental work is a laugh-out-loud riot! That's why Freedent is no fun. Ray Parker Jr. should record a new version of “Girls Are More Fun” titled “Freedent Is No Fun.” (Now *that's* a lost hit!)

Coincidentally, just days after this endeavor, someone repeatedly posted on Facebook—with no prompting whatsoever—a photo of a whole stand of this brand of bubble gum cigarettes at another nearby store. Despite this gum's lack of bubbleability, the stand bore the words, “Blow great bubbles!” It's sort of like the time someone neatly arranged their empty Budweiser cans on the floor of the boys' restroom at Brossart, and the school included a photo of it in its newsletter.

Chewing bubble gum, trying to blow bubbles, and laughing uncontrollably about gunked-up dental work are all part of a mature day in the life of a comrade over 40!

They'll take Manhattan

Be still my beating heart! Dayton finally started making Manhattan Harbour construction trucks use Manhattan Boulevard instead of careening right through town. Some were concerned that this would merely relocate the pain, and that now Manhattan Boulevard would get dirty. Good. That street is part of the construction project, so what should they expect?

Manhattan Fubar's gentrification banditry has also uprooted mice, which have infested others' homes, so it deserves everything it gets.

But the rerouting of the trucks lasted all of a week before they began tooling through the city again—bringing more wastage bastage to homes and vehicles than ever.

Antique comic books got ruined by a leaky toilet

This zine is very carefully worded, and in order to appreciate it, you must read every word of every article instead of just skimming through it like you're doing a book report at Brossart. When E.F. Bandit talks, people listen. It's especially true when some of our favorite topics—in this case, toilets and ruined comic books—make a joint appearance.

Recently, someone posted on a website what appears to be an account of foibles at a storage facility where they worked. According to this lengthy narrative, “Finding pee at this location was the daily norm.” Apparently, people placed pee in storage.

The writer goes on to say, “The worst of it all, is the poop.” Feces filled the hallways of the facility.

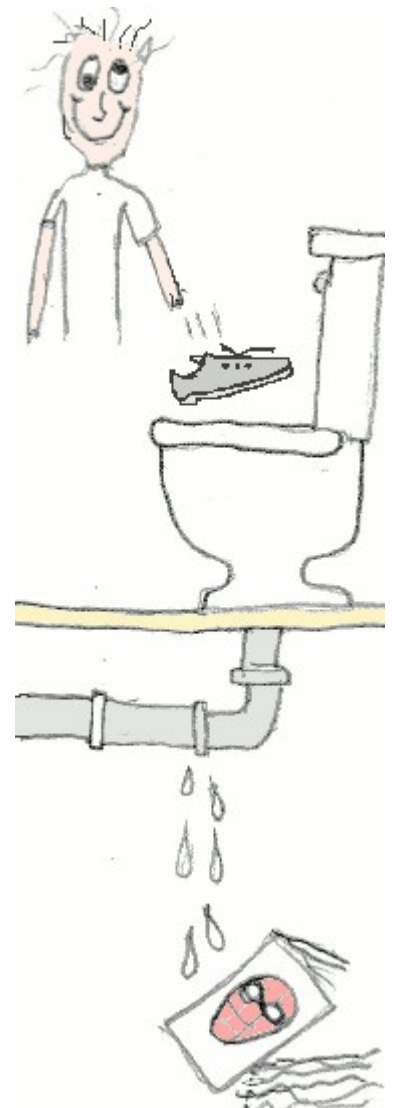
According to this story, customers kept clogging the toilets at this facility with towels, socks, and other goodies. This caused a toilet to leak into a storage unit—coating everything in it with poo water. This included a customer's antique comic books and his sofa: “His very expensive and vintage comic books were ruined, his couch ruined, and everything in there was probably ruined.” The magic word!

Faster than a speeding bullet, the comic books got ru by a leaky donicker!

‘Star Trek’ cards got ruined by bubble gum

“He needs to write an article about bubble gum.”

“Nah, he needs to write about ruined trading cards.”



“Nope. Bubble gum!”

“Ruined cards!”

“Bubble gum!”

“Ruined cards!”

“Hey! I have an idea! Why don’t we cooperate?”

“Yeah! Let’s ask him to write about cards getting ruined by bubble gum!”

For this article, I found a story where a man boldly went where no man had gone before by writing about how some *Star Trek* trading cards got utterly ru when exposed to beeggee. The story was posted on the public Internet back in 2013.

A feller posted about some *Star Trek* cards that were sold in a pack of bubble gum in 1969. It was a British-made set of 55 cards. He said it was one of the toughest sets of cards for collectors to find. And when they did find them, they were often ru.

One collector said the blue border of the cards faded easily. Another collector said he got this set, but “to my horror”, one of the cards “was ruined by staining from the stick of gum in the wrapper.” He unwrapped the other packs and found that “all cards attached to the gum were stained, meaning that 48 cards were ruined.”

Hear that, everyone? *Ruined!* It’s the magic word! Best all, they were ruined by bubble gum! You know, that stuff you blow big bubs with. For 48 out of 55 cards to be ru is a mighty high rate.

The piece says *Star Trek* fans will notice that the cards include a number of major errors about the characters. For instance, one card gets Capt. Kirk’s first name wrong, calling him Roger instead of James.

And that ain’t all! I found an Amazon seller who sells packs of vintage baseball cards. This seller got some bad reviews—many of them very recent—largely because of the destructment of the cards. People kept saying that the packs had already been opened and resealed when they arrived, and that any valuable cards were taken. One person said that because of the way they were sealed, “One deck of cards were ruined.” The magic word again!

It gets even better! One person posted on a trading card site that they bought a rare 1993 set of baseball cards from another source. They said almost all of the cards were stuck together—not because of gum but because of their glossy coating: “Almost a total loss.” Another poster said they saw a 2001 Topps set whose coating was so sticky that it had become one big brick. Another noted that the shiny coating that baseball cards began using in the ‘90s was worse than the earlier “gum problem.”

One guy recently posted a lengthy YouTube video in which he opens packs of 1994 Topps cards to find them stuck together. The description says, “1/3 Of The Cards Were Ruined.” He sounds so excited when he first opens the box—only to be disappointed by the wasted cards.

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

An Elmo toy got just plain ruined!

Although Elmo was a later addition to the show, *Sesame Street* recently celebrated its 50th anniversary by releasing an Elmo toy that gives big hugs to today’s tiny tots. To be fair, this toy usually gets good reviews. But not always.

Make me feel crazy, make me feel so mean.

One reviewer said after only 2 hours, Elmo’s arms became dislocated. They said, “I don’t know why you would design a toy for children to get ruined when they hold it by the arms.” Yep, it’s the magic word. Keek! Ruined!

Another gave it a poor review because it arrived broken. The replacement also broke before they could use it.

Much worse than this, a few right-wing droids have abused Amazon’s review feature to promote the Trump campaign. Some right-wing mailing list is encouraging followers to log on to Amazon and give this toy bad reviews that stovepipe Trump’s fascist propaganda.

All together now, let’s get out the air guitar and sing our speed metal *Sesame Street* song from high school: “Sesame Streeeet! Sesame Streeeet! Can you tell me how to get to Sesame Street!”



Balloon launcher story isn’t just hot air

Some people think it’s hilarious when I talk about cereal, so this article is yet another that is cross-pollinated from more than one of our most requested topics.

A couple years ago, I wrote about how when I was growing up, a neighbor kid and I planned to use his parents’ hydrogen pump to inflate a wad of bubble gum. We abandoned this plan because hydrogen is flammable. I just thought of another devious plot like this. It wasn’t nearly as dangerous but it was just as ridiculous.

In my day, one of the prizes I got from a cereal box was a small, round, orange balloon launcher. It was

maybe an inch or two wide and looked like a basket that carries passengers of a hot air balloon. The Internet has a picture of a Super Sugar Crisp box that had a Fly-Hi launcher that looked like it. You could use this toy to inflate balloons, and they were supposed to somehow “launch” and float away—though I never saw it doing this. I don’t remember it doing anything except the inflation—which was useless because you could blow up balloons even without this toy.

Because you’re a cool person, you can see right away where this story is headed.

When I was 11, I got a nifty idea: What if? You’re asking, what if what? You *know* what if what! I was confined to my bedroom one day because Cline Middle School accused me of misbehaving (which probably meant I looked at someone funny), and I was required to complete a written test for gym class I had missed. As I was working at my desk, I opened the drawer and found the balloon launcher. But dammit, I couldn’t find any bubble gum!

I wanted to see if the launcher could inflate a wad of beegum and “launch” it. The problem was that bubble gum was usually the last thing on my mind when I was in middle school. I was too old for trick-or-treating, so I didn’t have any hoarded. Whenever we went to the store, I didn’t think to buy any.

I yelled to my mom, “Do we have any bubble gum?!” She got angry and demanded I get back to work.

Because gum of the bubble variety had been made scarce for the Time Being, I resorted to what I thought was the next best thing: Silly Putty. Silly Putty is already in a viscous state, so it did not need to be chewed. But it has one major drawback: You can’t blow bubbles with it. I stretched out a ball of Silly Putty and placed it over the launcher, but then I realized that Silly Putty could not inflate, so my work was wasted.

Once when I was younger, I did bite into a chunk of Silly Putty, but I didn’t chew or swallow it. I was quick to destroy the evidence. It’s sort of like how criminals have been caught because of tooth marks they left in a wad of gum.

My goal of seeing bubble gum being “launched” was shattered because I couldn’t find any beegum. Items in my room might have gotten run in a hilarious spectacle. Might it be the clock radio? A jigsaw puzzle? Maybe the gum would have floated out into the kitchen and hovered over the dinner table. Maybe it would have flown out the front door and into the sky, prompting a fine from the FAA—not unlike the man who tied weather balloons to his lawn chair and floated 16,000 feet into the air.



Bellyaching bureaucrats got mad because they lost the Civil War

You’d think all these educated university people would be pretty wise. I don’t have a degree, so I shouldn’t be expected to have as much book knowledge as them. I have a certificate in geographic information system technology—but not a full degree. Despite not having a college diploma, I guarantee you I’m more forward-thinking than some people in high places.

When I attended NKU, some school officials were neo-Confederates. I didn’t realize it back then, or even fathom just how out of step they were. I realize it now. I know they weren’t *all* neo-Confederates, but *some* were. I’m not talking about something like a Confederate flag controversy, or Southerners merely expressing pride in their region. What I’m talking about here is actual support for a regime that was built on discredited principles.

In hindsight, I now see that these officials were stewing mad because their side lost the Civil War. They couldn’t get over it—130 years after losing. The Confederacy had a government that was dedicated to slavery and racism—yet university officials in recent memory were angry that it lost the war. I’m sure some folks will deny that it was a regime built on unjust ideas, but make no mistake, it was. I don’t see how it can be portrayed in a positive light. Defending discredited regimes isn’t exactly a hallmark of wisdom. The wise thing to do is learn from history—not repeat it.

Most people—north, south, east, and west—grow, build, and become wiser. Why should I root for the Confederacy when it was dedicated to inhumane and unjust policies? You’d think campus graybeards would be held to at least the same standards as everyone else.

These officials actually made statements in support of the practices found in the South before the Civil War. They tried to soften their statements a bit, so I had to use suspension of disbelief when thinking about what they said. Besides, I was willing to be challenged by a wide range of ideas. But they said what they said. As long as they haven’t said otherwise, I have to assume that’s what they still believe.

Plus, why were university officials from Kentucky saying this, when Kentucky didn’t even join the Confederacy (provisional government notwithstanding)? During the war, 125,000 Kentuckians served as Union soldiers, but only 35,000 fought for the Confederacy. In an election held during the war, candidates with Northern

sympathies won 9 of the state's 10 U.S. House seats. Such candidates later won smashing majorities in the state legislature.

I know the modern Republican Party is bad too, but historic figures and regimes shouldn't be free from criticism just because they were around before Ronald Reagan took office.

Who's really the fool? Me, or the educational elites who couldn't accept losing the Civil War?

They fought the law and the law won

When I fight the law, I win. But when you fight Tim's Law, you lose.

Hardly a day goes by when local right-wing elites on Facebook don't post a living monument to their own greed, ego, or stupidity. As these spoiled crybabies try to launch yet another pogrom to "remake" Bellevue, I of course am among those who dissent. So they said I was being "selfish" and "self-centered" by opposing a TV ratings stunt that would decimate affordable housing.

Yes, this is their argument: Although they have more money than me, they expect charity from me so they can spend it on forcing me out of town.

At least one of the people attacking me was actually a fake Russian troll account.

Here's the best part. When they realized they were losing the argument, the rightists claimed that anyone who agreed with me was a phony sockpuppet account themselves. This was predictable, because right-wingers have made the same argument on various online venues about numerous people for decades. They can't comprehend that there's more than one person out there who disagrees with them. It doesn't matter how much proof there is that those who agreed with me are real people. They've got a story and they're sticking to it.

This is just like how when I went to Washington, D.C., for a human rights conference, naysayers claimed its organizer wasn't a real person—even though she appeared in oodles of YouTube videos in plain sight. They claimed the organization itself was something I just made up. This is especially ridiculous because I had to take a Delta flight that cost hundreds. Where was I going to find money in my budget for a commercial flight unless an organization helped fund it? Did people think I had gold secretly hoarded somewhere? Plus, why would I make up a reason to go to D.C.? Did people think I had a strange secret desire to fly on a commercial airliner and needed an excuse to fly?

I'm proposing something called Tim's Law. According to Tim's Law, when you falsely accuse someone of being a sockpuppet, you're conceding the argument, and the debate shall be considered over. Over, Grover! You will be informed that it's over—and that you've lost.

The Facepoo elites utterly, completely, totally lostamundo!

In the meantime, they're starting to move on to grumbling about stores selling bongos.

'Super Fuzz' memories no longer super fuzzy

I've been getting gobs of requests for more articles about bubble gum. But this isn't just a gum story. It's also a Snuffleupagus moment! And you're going to read every word of it! You can *think* about skipping over this article. But don't *do* it!

I enjoy saying there's "gobs" of something, because it reminds me of an unintentionally funny incident in 6th grade that had nothing to do with gum but showcased Cline Middle School's pettiness. I was required to be in the gifted class—the whole point of which was to make projects that impressed visiting parents. The school assumed that because I did well in a few subjects that I would fare well in this class, but that was a load of roo gas. One day, the teacher assigned us to use file cards for a "product." He said something like, "I know it looks like there's gobs of file cards, but we should try not to waste them."

So guess what? People wasted them. I'm usually a guy who cries when perfectly good paper is wasted, but I couldn't help but snicker because the school's wishes were not met. This wastage bastage prompted a tirade from the teacher.

Anybip, back to gum. When I was about 7, I saw a movie on TV in which bubbling figured prominently. This was before we had cable. As we were trying to decide what to watch, a family member reading aloud from



the TV listings said something like, “A bungling cop blows a giant bubble and rescues hostages.” I burst out laughing, but nobody else seemed to think that statement was funny. But we watched the movie anyway.

In that film, a friendly police officer gained superpowers that enabled him to blow a huge bubble with bubble gum, float over the city, and save lives that were in danger. I remember people climbing around on the gigantic, yellow bubble as it bobbed above the city. This was during the height of the bubble gum busting craze that inspired countless contests and TV segments.

Any time I mention that there was a movie like that, someone always says, “You’re making that up!” Well, guess what? It was real. Recently, I finally found out it was a 1980 release titled *Super Fuzz*. Still don’t believe me? Here’s proof...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7r6ULMndNw>

Lest you’re afraid that big bubble will expand out of your computer screen and burst on your glasses, the movie actually just used a balloon to simulate a bub.

I hope the cop in that movie didn’t try to keep chewing that wad after he bubbled with it—because everyone walked on the bubble with their filthy shoes.

Super Fuzz gained a cult following when it kept being shown late at night on HBO. Sort of like *Sesame Street*.

Complaining is cool

I love it when people complain! Unless it’s somebody like the Tea Party, because they don’t just complain, they *whine*. But no revolution has ever been won by not complaining.

With the Internet rife with articles like “How To Deal With A Child Who Constantly Complains”, I remember how my parents started portraying me as a complainer when I was elementary school age. But there was no truth to it. I only complained because I had reasons to. One reason is that I was always getting yelled at for stupid stuff—things nobody else would ever get in trouble for. I wasn’t allowed to do things every other kid got to do. Another is that when we went on family outings, the rest of the family always chose the activities, no matter how unenjoyable it was for me. Another is that I was always unfairly singled out at school.

Later, when I was 12, I had a shirt that my parents were obsessed with. I absolutely hated this shirt. It was hideous. But they kept forcing me to wear it to various events. I told them a billion times how much I detested this shirt, but they still wouldn’t listen. On the way to one event, they harangued me the whole way there because I had complained about this ugly shirt. Later that evening, I refused to go out to dinner with the rest of the family because my parents wouldn’t let me change into a different shirt.

It wasn’t just my parents who didn’t let me do things everyone else did. Throughout elementary, middle, and high school, there were a lot of things I couldn’t do just because my school decreed it so. Kids at every other school got to do these things. We didn’t. Another reason to complain.

I remember the Gaines-Burgers commercial in which a dog tolerates all sorts of humiliation “without a single complaint.” *Of course* he didn’t complain! Dogs can’t talk!

The very word *complain* sounds like it’s complaining: *complaaaaaaaaiin!*

Go ahead! I wanna hear you complain!

‘Sesame Street’ wosted desserts

Sesame Street in the 1970s was edgy!

While the Number Painter taught how to write numbers, the Baker showed how to count with them. I don’t know who was the protagonist and who was the antagonist. So I just consider each to be the cooltagonist!

The Baker appeared at the end of each of a series of *Sesame Street* segments about a number. In every skit, he was standing in front of a building that looked like the White House—carrying a fine dessert, usually cakes or pies. Then he fell down the steps, splattering his baked goods everywhere—thereby wosting them.

The Baker was played onscreen by the late Alex Stevens but was voiced by the late Jim Henson, who designed these skits. And you can find all 10 Baker appearances in this convenient equipage...



I particularly enjoy the music that plays while the clumsy Baker is announcing the dessert he's about to ruin. It sounds like horns with perhaps an organ. I've always associated that couplet with slapstick hilarity like this. Even with incidents in real life that are equally silly, I hear this music playing in my head. For example, I hear it when I see something being stupidly broken. I hear it when I think about a college schoolmate walking on the coffee table in the student lounge. I hear it when I think about a family member grabbing a cereal box and spilling cereal everywhere so they could look at the prize. I hear it when I think about the time the Visine fell in the toilet. I hear it when I think of the mischievous young people in my day who squealed with laughter because they thought their friends had been humiliated by something—when the real fools were themselves.

The music in that sketch is a muscular, looming force, but it underscores the scene's humor. It's sort of like a laugh track or the *Price Is Right* losing horns.

The Baker skits were filmed in 1969 but enjoyed regular rotation on the show for years. They reportedly vanished because someone complained they were "violent." How exactly were they "violent"? Did anyone seriously think these segments were "violent", or was it only some malcontents who needed something to gripe about who thought that? Yet I could have sworn I saw a Baker skit at least as late as 2005 as I was watching TV while packing up my belongings in a motel room. So it must have been the George W. Bush regime or the Tea Party that got them pulled.

People homesteaded and people got mad

There are federal and state statutes called homestead laws that let you take possession of a property after inhabiting it for a certain amount of time. It doesn't apply to a renter whose home is regularly maintained by the owner or someone the owner hires. But you can receive title to a property—for free—if its owner neglects it for years. These laws help fight blight and boost the housing supply, but it would be a drop in the bucket compared to other policies we should also enact (like reining in the glut of luxury housing, like this zine has been demanding for 27 years, only to see it get worse).

Some people don't grasp this. YouTube is rife with news stories from local TV stations griping about someone taking adverse possession of a property. The previous owner never cared about the property before, but now their whole world lights up when someone else takes possession of it after it was abandoned. To hear them talk, you'd think homesteading was the country's biggest crisis.

Someone actually submitted a question to a legal advice column in the *Los Angeles Times* about how their California townhouse they neglected for 13 years was taken over by "squatters." They said they intentionally kept the home vacant all those years. They didn't even visit it. But they were horrified to find that strangers had moved into the townhouse and received title for it—without having to pay them for it. The new owners even paid the homeowner association fees and voted at the association's board meetings.

The writer allowed a vacant house to blight the neighborhood for 13 years and then had the nerve to complain when someone else moved into it! All this in California, a state whose housing crisis is even more severe than elsewhere because of gentrification, classist zoning rules, and Tea Party-backed laws that criminalize the poor and working class.

Even the *Times* said the writer had no case and was being a spoiled baby. The columnists politely informed the writer that the burden was on them—not the neighbors—to maintain their property and keep it from falling into shambles. The only way the writer might prevail is if the homesteaders refused to pay property taxes.

Unfortunately, many jurisdictions have little tolerance for homesteading—even in the face of laws that permit it. Douglas County, Georgia, announced in 2012 that it was cracking down on the practice, saying the law



wasn't meant for people to get houses for free. Uh, yes it was. That's because it's better than letting the homes fall apart. Recent laws in some cities and states have attempted to nibble away at homesteading.

It's important to make the distinction between homesteading and criminal land grabs. Gentrification is like a burglary, and common burglars who break into occupied dwellings and claim to live there are a bit like the gentrification thought police. And they often vandalize these homes. What they don't vandalize, they trash. In one California case, someone broke into a house, clogged the toilet, rubbed dog shit into the carpet, and poured tar in the garage. In Memphis, someone broke into the garage of a house and defecated in a cooler. Sometimes, the cost of the damages is so high that a greedy bank stomps in and forecloses—launching a land grab of its own.

Although these appear to be actual burglaries, lawmakers and the media used these events as excuses to crack down on homesteaders. They act like they don't know the difference. I'm sure they do but just don't care. They just like to amplify the usual feudalist whining about "squatters." One article even seemed sympathetic to a mob that committed a home invasion at a homesteaded house and threw the homesteaders' belongings into the street. When does the media ever get both sides of the story on this topic? They always interview those complaining about the "squatters", but never those who are being complained about. Plus, some other stories I've found are from news outlets that I already knew had credibility issues, so I'm not even touching on them here.

Sometimes, it shouldn't take years to homestead. Take the ongoing case of a group of women who moved into a vacant house in Oakland. After only a short time, the women were evicted and arrested. This house was owned not by an individual but by a powerful company that deliberately kept it vacant and sought only to resell it at a higher price than what it paid. In my opinion, when a corporation leaves a home vacant and wants only to resell it, it forfeits the privilege of being allowed to evict people who move in. However, the women have plenty of supporters. Because of the work of these women and their supporters, it has been announced that the house is now being sold to a land trust to make it affordable. In addition, the real estate firm that owns the house has agreed to give affordable housing organizations the right of first refusal on all its Oakland properties.

At the rate housing prices have been soaring—and with cities intentionally trying to price out the working poor—more and more Americans are going to have no choice but to homestead. But the real estate industry could go bust like any other, and only then might homesteading be reduced.

A People magazine got waterlogged

I witnessed a perfectly good *People* magazine getting spoiled once when I was about 7. For 40 years, I've stored the incident in the back of my mind—like a squirrel does with food—but I've gone from seeing it as sad to funny to surreal to hilarious.

This ghastly event occurred at the now-defunct Thriftway supermarket in Highland Heights. As we were leaving the store and walking out into the parking lot, there was a youngster about my age with his mommy who were heading out right at the same time. The woman was carrying a big paper bag full of groceries, while the boy lazily slogged behind.

The boy suddenly reached up into the grocery bag and extracted a fresh copy of *People*—as if he wanted to read the latest celebrity stories. He opened the magazine and then threw it into a puddle on the parking lot. The corner of the magazine rested in the puddle while the rest of it flew aloft and free.

Then the woman angrily thundered, **"PICK IT UP!!!!!"** The kid started snickering as he grabbed the waterlogged periodical off the ground.

This is a stupid story.



A law professor got mad because people bubbled

Michael Froomkin is a very distinguished, bowtie-wearing law professor at the University of Miami (Florida). And even he has mentioned people blowing bubbles with bubble gum.

Froomkin blogs. He blogs with all his might! And he's made repeated references to bubbling. Back in 2005, he posted this entry...

https://www.discourse.net/2005/01/a_classroom_etiquette_question_im_asking_my_students_in_administrative_law

In that post, Froomkin said he posed a series of questions to his students regarding beegie. He asked whether it was proper for students to chew gum in class. He further inquired, "Is your answer the same or different for gum chewers who blow bubbles in class? Why?" We all know the right answers are "If poo" and "Because it bips." But he elaborated that the answers could be different depending on whether it's law school, traffic class, or other classrooms.

Someone commented saying they'd allow gum unless someone blew a bub. They said they "tend to take a pro-civil liberties position unless it becomes unworkable."

Froomkin reopened the can of gum worms in 2011...

<https://www.discourse.net/2011/09/next-time-im-going-to-mention-the-bubble-gum>

Froomkin said he was writing a list of class policies and wondering whether he should have a rule against bubbling. He wrote, "I don't particularly want my students chewing gum, but I draw the line at big pink protuberances suddenly appearing in the front of their faces." He was reluctant to have such a rule because it would have put off students who are too mature to be told how to behave in class. But he vowed to put it in the following year's list of policies because "yet again, we had a bubble-blower this week."

Future lawyers actually bubbled!

Someone replied that Froomkin himself should bubble in front of the class to demonstrate how silly it looked. Someone responded to that, saying it's "the sort of thing a 9th grade teacher does, not a law school prof." Yet somehow I can't imagine the nuns at Brossart bubbling in class.

10 Zingers, 9 Zingers, zero (yummy!) Zingers!

A person wosted a raspberry Zinger and thought it was funny.

My business partner who critiques this zine told me she had a friend back when she was about 13 who ruined a perfectly good Zinger snack cake in the stupidest way imaginable. My bizbud had this comrade over at her house one day. She let her use her phone in the den (which wasn't a separate line but was hooked up to the main line).

As the friend was talking on the phone, she grabbed a raspberry Zinger. She took one bite and spit most of it onto the outside of the box. The box was adorned with a drawing of Charlie Brown, and the chewed-up Zinger landed squarely on Charlie's face.

Then she took the rest of the Zinger and smashed it on the mirror.

My bizbud didn't say anything to her friend about this display of immaturity until she was off the phone. Afterward, she asked her why she devastated a perfectly good Zinger, and was met with an "I don't know." It wasn't quite as illustrious as "Weird Al" Yankovic smearing a King Don all over his face.

My future business partner cleaned off her mirror with toilet paper but left the mess on the Zingers box intact. I wonder how her family must have reacted when they saw a chewed-up portion of a Zinger resting on Charlie Brown's smiling visage.

Instead of the Zinger Zapper, maybe they should have had the Zinger Waster!



More vacations went wastage bastage

As you're shoveling snow and huddling under blankets this winter, you're longing for the few hours of good weather that arrives here in the summer. Everywhere else, there's already sunshine, endless beaches, and warm breezes. Can we have that here? No. Of course not.

But if you like fun in the sun, you'd have better luck waiting than trying to fly to the Caribbean. It's not just because you're not made of money. After all, this is a zine for the working poor. It's also because of airlines' incompetence—as shown by a narrative someone posted on the public Internet a couple years ago. You may remember when Delta Airlines spoiled a blogger's New York trip with a series of inexcusable delays that resulted in "wasted Rockettes tickets." In this story, this airline pulverized a vacation to Barbados.

The post was titled "2 delayed flights, extremely delayed bags = ruined vacation." The magic word! According to this account, a couple booked this trip almost a year in advance. That didn't stop Delta from destroying it beyond hope. Not only did Delta make numerous schedule changes after the trip was booked, but the flight was delayed *twice* on the day of the trip. Delta told the couple that if they ended up missing the connecting flight because of it, that was too bad.

Somehow, the writer's bags didn't make it to Barbados until over 2 days after the couple arrived there. Instead of putting the bags on the flight from Atlanta to Barbados, Delta inexplicably sent the bags to Toronto—hundreds of miles in the opposite direction. The bags sat in Toronto for well over a day.

The writer wrote that because of this, "Out of a 7 day vacation, 3 were wasted waiting on a bag to be delivered." That's right, it was wosted. Just like the Rockettes tickets. The writer went on to say, "Delta has ruined our vacation." The magic word again!

Delta should have been obligated to roll around in soil. But—just as shocking as Delta sending the

luggage on a 2-day side trip to Canada—someone replied that it's really not that bad of a delay. Another told the traveler they should have purchased insurance—that tired catch-all response every time a company acts irresponsibly or when losses occur for any other ridiculous reason.

It's not just Delta. What a shock! United Airlines is guilty too. A man posted on Facebook that his trip from Newark, New Jersey, to Charleston, South Carolina, was spoiled by that airline. He said he and his wife were "busy professionals", so you know they were floating in dough. But somehow they still didn't have much time for vacations—so they had to use what little time they had. United canceled their flight at the last minute. The airline blamed weather, even though the weather was just fine, and other airlines with flights in that region were running on time.

United put the man on hold for 1½ hours as it rebooked the couple on a USAir flight that was a whole day later. But then the couple discovered there were no seats left on the second leg of the USAir flight. The man demanded compensation from United for making him and his wife miss their vacation. United replied in part, "We don't like to ruin anyone's vacation at all." Uh-huh.

And I thought it was bad when Zelman v. Simmons-Harris put a damper on my San Francisco trip.

Trump's Department of Transportation is cracking down on passengers who have service animals, but it won't crack down on airlines' unending follies. Delta was barely even punished for discriminating against a local Muslim couple, so what makes you think airlines will face significant penalties for anything else?

We had a lot on our plate...including gum!

Saturday, January 18. It was cold, damp, and stinky. We went to a local tavern restaurant for a little family dinner.

Now, this was a high-end affair. I spent a whole \$12! That's big bucks by my humble standards. This eatery even had butter instead of margarine! I cringed with the feeling that I was violating my class consciousness. I have the integrity to practice what I preach.

Needless to say, I didn't order a steak. Not only is steak for teeth people. It's also for money people. And did I ever hear about not ordering a steak! It's like the time in 2015 when I refused to go to dinner at a fancy restaurant altogether, preferring instead to invest my hard-earned dough in a useful GPS receiver. The surprise was that anyone in my family could afford to eat at that establishment.

Why should I try to impress people with more money than me by ordering the finest steaks or eating at the most expensive restaurants? I'm not here to act rich.

Anybip, at our recent dinner outing, something occurred that satisfies one of the most requested topics for this zine. A family member noticed that one of our small plates was stuck to our table. They pried it free, turned it upside-down, and found a certain confection stuck on the bottom of the plate. Can you guess what it was?

Here's a hint: You can blow bubbles with it.

That's right, comrades! It was beeggee. Singapore contraband. Yes, it was gum of the bubble variety!

We notified the waiter. He declared, "That's not good. I'll bring another one." It might not be good, but it sure was funny!

Days later, it occurred to me that the plate was probably on the top of the stack of the plates we got. That means *the germ-covered chewed bubble gum must have touched the surface of one of our other plates!*

This story is automatically funny because it has to do with bubble gum.

