

The Last Word™

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Home town fakeover

I'd thought our side was the world champions of not following through on anything. We're like that town in Texas that banned fracking but then legalized it again because some jackbooted state officials "made" them.

Lots of talk, no action. No bubbles, big troubles. Our side rightly spent 20 years criticizing "Meow Mix Mike" Bloomberg for his racism, homophobia, and classism—but now we're about to let him steal the Democratic nomination from Bernie Sanders. Just to "get along" with the Russian-funded Internet trolls who support Gloomberg.

Nothing but cave, cave, cave. For decades on end. A few years ago, I had to actually coach some of my allies on how to fight, because they wouldn't do it.

The other side was the ones that yelled and carried on until they got their way. Or so I thought. Now, however, the gentrification land pirates have folded like a cheap pair of Underoos—just like our cohorts do.

They spent all of January bombarding Bellevue and Dayton groups on Facebook about *Home Town Takeover*—a goofy upcoming miniseries on HGTV. I'm glad I don't have cable, because much of what appears on HGTV is a celebration of gentrification. *Home Town Takeover* is a spinoff of *Home Town* that will involve visiting a small city and "renovating" the entire town.

The usual suspects encouraged Bellevue and Dayton to submit photos and videos for this show—in the hopes that one of these cities would be selected. Why is this so bad? Because we don't need to be "renovated." *Home Town Takeover* truly is a takeover. A TV show doesn't get to make a ratings stunt out of us by stampeding into our town and making "improvements" that will just drive up housing costs.

HGTV must assume I hate my life.

Predictably, I and others opposed this. But its supporters kept on talking about it and calling people names if they dared to disagree with them. All they had was bravado and name-calling. They also accused me of being selfish because I didn't want to pay more when the cost of living skyrocketed because of this stunt. As I said last month, although they have more money than me, they expected charity from me so they could spend it on projects that price me out of the city. It's like being forced to build your own coffin—like the forced charity that we pay through exorbitant utility rates. Spectrum, Duke Energy, and AT&T are some of the biggest Republican donors, but they are monopolies, so we've been forced to buy their product and fund the GOP.

What's worse is that many who supported having Bellevue and Dayton enter this contest don't even live in Bellevue or Dayton. Most of those who do haven't lived here nearly as long as I have. Yet they have no regard whatsoever for me, after I've invested 23 years of my life in Bellevue. I rent, but I'm satisfied with my home. To "renovate" the entire city and artificially drive up costs for me and others would be a particularly odd circumstance because its supporters are usually the ones yelling about how we should "let the market decide." If they want the market to decide, why did they expect others to finance their project? The project was also very ham-handed, acting as if a small number of privileged busybodies represents the whole city.



This effort's backers asked if anyone had experience with making videos. I do, and so do others I know. But we refused to squander our talents on this.

After they lost this argument, they moved on to whining about stores selling bongos. After being almost laughed off Facebook for that, they started posting about the HGTV project again—as if that grogan hadn't been flushed the first time. This time, they told me to move out of the city unless I got on board with it.

Then the deadline passed without a whimper. As far as I know, they never submitted any photos or videos. If they did submit them, they surely would have been gloating about it from now until the end of time. Many other towns did participate. The city of Monroe, Louisiana, even announced its intent to join—even though the city is bigger than the 40,000 population threshold allows. But in Bellevue and Dayton, the project fell on its face with such a spectacular thud that all you can hear is people pooing.

Bellevue in 2020 is not Highland Heights in 1997. If there ever was a dying town, it was Highland Heights in the '90s. Count all the boarded-up buildings in the 1993 video posted on YouTube. It was a city in need of emergency surgery. But could we have truly trusted a TV gimmick to revive the city?

Meanwhile, how does Bellevue move forward? By...bipping! Just joking! The future is in green projects. It would be utterly fi if Bellevue could become a "zero waste" city by having a project where items that would otherwise be thrown away could be repurposed as something useful. I got the idea recently when I saw a story on the news about newly released prison inmates learning how to repurpose discarded items as they return to society. But I'd be afraid *Hoarders* might show up to use us for ratings.

Holes in Kroger bags will drive you bananas!

The freshness of bananas—or anything else—at our local Kroger stores ain't what it used to be, but that's no excuse for letting them go wastage bastage.

If Kroger can spend all that money removing the oval from its logo, it can at least invest in better grocery bags. That way, we can avoid a repeat of the Great Presidents' Day Banana Smashing. In that ghastly incident, I buyed bananas and other goodies at the friendly commune Krogie-Wogie. When I got home, I discovered the bag with the bananas had torn along the seam, creating a hole in the bottom—and one of the bananas was missing.

I retraced my steps to try to find the missing gourd. I've done this before when I've arrived home to find a broken bag and items missing. I distinctly remember once finding a bottle of juice I had lost—sitting upright on the sidewalk in pristine shape. Well, I found the banana—just not in the condition I had a constitutional right to expect.

It turned out the banana had fallen out of the bag at Fairfield and Berry, causing it to be run over...



Now I know why it's called Berry Avenue! Bananas are berries.

I had a good mind to bake the wosted banana into a pie, find out who designed the bag, and smash the pie plumb-bob in their face. This task would be performed in public for maximum humiliation.

Instead, I went on the Facebook page for the Bellevue store and posted this message—accompanied by the above photo...

"This is unacceptable, Kroger.

"The photo depicts what used to be a banana. It is no longer, because Kroger - not for the first time - used a grocery bag that tore along the seam and got a hole in the bottom.

“We are working people, and we cannot afford to have food wasted by Kroger using bad bags.

“If Kroger doesn’t get its act together, we will have no choice but to take our business elsewhere.”

That wasn’t even the only complaint like that posted there. A woman had posted, “Two broken bags before getting them in the house. AGAIN!”

Kroger later replied to my post, apologizing for the fact that their bags “rip at the seams occasionally.” Occasionally? It happens all the damn time!

In another thread on the grocery chain’s Facebook page, someone inexplicably responded with a big pro-Trump rant, and someone replied to that by posting a photo of a pair of underpants containing a huge streak of shit.

Dumbasses ruined a bunch of records

A message board on the public Internet shows just how many weirdos are out there. I found a thread from back in 2003 in which they bragged of wasting rare records.

Remember, 2003 was a low point in American history, and if you mentioned vinyl, a face would be laughed in. That face was yours. People at the time thought records—as opposed to CD’s—were worthless, so they could get away with boasting of destroying them.

One person said they ruined an album when they used glue to repair the sleeve. Another said they saw 3 copies of a rare 78 RPM record at a shop. Within only a month, they purchased and accidentally broke all 3 of them. Another stuck a pin into the grooves of a record as it was spinning to try to make their own stylus. Someone replied saying they did this as a class project in grade school—but the good news is that they only ruined the school’s records. Another loaned their parents’ Simon & Garfunkel album to a friend, and the inner sleeve got ruined when bong water was spilled all over it. Another used a sharp letter opener to open an envelope containing records they got in the mail—thus laying hulk to the records.

Others say they tried to clean records with rubbing alcohol and regretted it later. I did this a couple times a long time ago and it didn’t seem to hurt the records. But I wouldn’t recommend it either.

On other message boards, people talk about how they worked at radio stations where records were frequently mishandled. One person worked at a station in the 1970s that would keep playing a record until it “got broke.” They put “got broke” in quotes. That means the DJ’s got tired of hearing the record and broke it on purpose and made it look like an accident. Another person said they worked at a station while Rick Nelson’s version of the Bob Dylan-penned “She Belongs To Me” was a hit. The station kept replacing this record because every morning it would be found to be cracked. It turned out that one of the other DJ’s was on a crusade against “dirty” lyrics. A line in the song says, “I bow down to her on Sunday and salute her when her birthday comes,” but this DJ misheard it as, “She goes down on me on Sunday and screws me when her birthday comes.” He admitted that he intentionally ran over the record with a chair each day.

I remember how VJ’s on MTV would always refer to new albums by recording artists in love with their own ideas as an “effort.” Often it was just because other celebrities appeared in one of their videos. Most of the above stories did not specify what records got ru, so I wonder if any of the ruined records were an “effort.” Shadove Stevens of *American Top 40* would call then-current albums a “CD”, even when hardly anyone had a compact disc player yet. As CD’s are now known to have a much shorter life than what was advertised, the recording industry had as little respect for “efforts” as anyone else.

A bunch of stuff got ru...supposedly

Some people go spoony over stories about rental properties getting torn up. They think it’s either funny or something to be viewed with shock like a reality show. But—to be quite frank—I don’t believe a lot of the stories people tell about damaged rentals. I’ve resided in apartments I’ve rented for as long as I’ve published this zine, and out of dozens of households I’ve shared a building with, I remember only one or two that intentionally left the place a pigsty.

However, the main reason I don’t believe all the stories is that I’m used to the old BBS’s where swaggering braggarts would exaggerate events. Those who’d falsely accuse someone of uploading pirated



software would probably also wrongly blame someone for damage to property they owned.

So take this story with a grain of salt.

I found a story on the public Internet from someone who rented out a house and farm they owned because they were living abroad. The tenants simply stopped paying rent after a few years and tried to claim ownership of the home through adverse possession. The owner may have been out of luck on that unless they had someone maintain the property in the meantime. But let's assume the owner still had rightful title to it and that the tenants did not gain title. During the years they lived there, the tenants reportedly vandalized the house and stole from it. They stole a coin collection that the owner inexplicably left there. They allowed a horse to trample shop tools. They tried to kill the owner's friend's father and used their clout to avoid criminal penalties. When they were sued over this attack, they sold items they stole from the house to pay for it.

When the owner returned from overseas and moved back into the house, they immediately changed the locks—but the tenants quickly broke in by kicking in the door. They continued to steal from the property.

The owner found other damage from the tenants, including cabinet drawers that their kids had used as a step stool. The tenants had even changed the road sign to rename the road after themselves. (It's unknown whether they also vandalized OpenStreetMap, like Brossart's apologists did.) When the owner had it changed back to its proper name, the tenants retaliated by dumping nails in the driveway. The tenants also flagged down FedEx and UPS drivers to steal the owner's packages.

The long and short of it is that the tenants who rented that property appear to have been criminals, losers, and outright poologs. Of course, that assumes the story is completely accurate. Maybe I'll find another message board, where the tenants accuse the owner of impersonating a Bell System security officer or selling water on eBay and saying it was perfume. I haven't found any allegations like that, but if I do, I'll have to give these accusations just as much weight.

How to annoy people when the movie industry is mentioned

Do you want to annoy someone?

I mean, do you want to *really, really* annoy them?

It won't annoy *me*. Things that merely annoy me would be enough to kill most people. My friends and I are always sharing laughs about cool things. But some people are not only easily irritated but have earned it.

Here's how to annoy them. Wait until they start talking about movies—i.e., motion pictures or the film industry. For as long as they're talking about it, hold your hand to your eye as if to mimic a cameraperson looking through a movie camera. Take your other hand and act like you're turning a crank on the side of the camera.

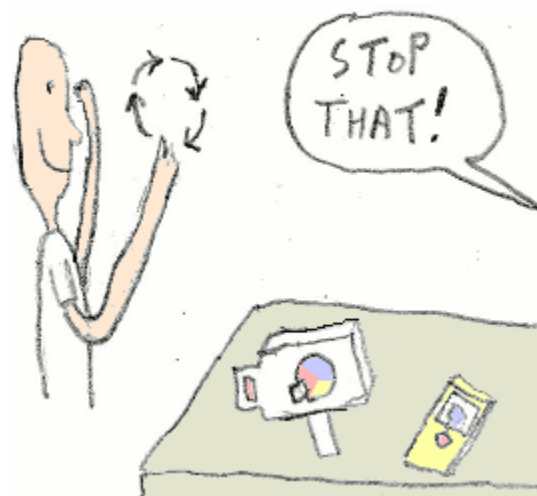
Do this for as long as they're talking about movies.

It will *really* piss them off! It's not as annoying as when family members dance around to commercial jingles in public places and shove their hands in your face, but you bet they'll get mad!

I'm sure you've seen people doing this before in regard to movies, but I don't think camera crews for movies actually turn a crank on the camera. Maybe in the silent film era they did, but probably not in modern times. This gesture probably derived from the Fisher-Price Movie Viewer. One website says this relatively simple toy came out in 1973 but is still available today. You could insert cartridges that contained short films which you could watch by turning a crank. Some of them were *Sesame Street* films. You knew there had to be a *Sesame Street* connection, didn't you? There always is. They used 8 mm film, so people have removed the film from the cartridges and viewed them with a home movie projector and uploaded them to YouTube.

But camera crews for modern theatrical releases probably do not operate cameras by turning a crank.

So go ahead! Look stupid! It will annoy someone who's been begging for it!



Oh the humanities!

As far back as preschool age, I've been interested mostly in clunky, concrete, project-centered fields. I clunk through life with little interest in the event-centered. Instead of a humanities field, I majored in radio/TV in college.

But some of the biggest critics of humanities majors are also some of the biggest hypocrites. They chortle, they brag, they bluster, they swagger. All you hear from them is how humanities majors must be looking to live

off the system because they'll never be able to find a job. People who say this don't say it with a feeling of sadness but rather a gleeful tone, as if they're laughing at someone for the misfortune that looms.

They especially enjoy saying this about certain fields that might have some overlap between humanities and social science—for instance, ethnic studies, feminist studies, or gay studies.

How is their opposition to these fields hypocritical? It's because a vast majority of the time, those who oppose these courses fully support private schools that require students to take religion. Unless you're planning to become clergy, how does religion help you find a job? I had to take religion when I attended Catholic schools, and regardless of whatever else the class was, I never felt it would help my economic advancement.

If you're not interested in humanities or social science, don't major in them. It's that simple. I was and still am a progressive populist, and when I was in college, I supported projects that fought against racism. But radio/TV was my academic field, so that's what I majored in. I didn't lob ill-informed, hypocritical attacks against other fields.

Back when I decided to major in radio/TV, I encountered a bit of hypocrisy in my own family. I was lectured about how that field didn't have much job security. But it wasn't my decision to have gone to high school at Brossart, where religion class is required.

One of the big talking points trotted out is that there's no "market" for majors in certain fields. Who cares? In my America, the "market" doesn't get to decide what people are allowed to be interested in. Plus, humanities majors have found a wide variety of well-paying jobs, and make more money on average than those with no college degree.

The quality of debate has truly gone downhill in recent years.

Facebook blocks all Twitter access

Starting just a few weeks ago, there is now no longer any way to automatically crosspost messages between Facebook and Twitter—and it's all Facebook's doing.

In late 2018, Facebook disabled the ability to automatically post there from Twitter. It was also noted that Facebook had shut off the ability to post via text message—so one could no longer text to Twitter and Facebook simultaneously. Facebook did this because it wanted people to log on to their site and use it to post to Twitter—rather than the other way around.

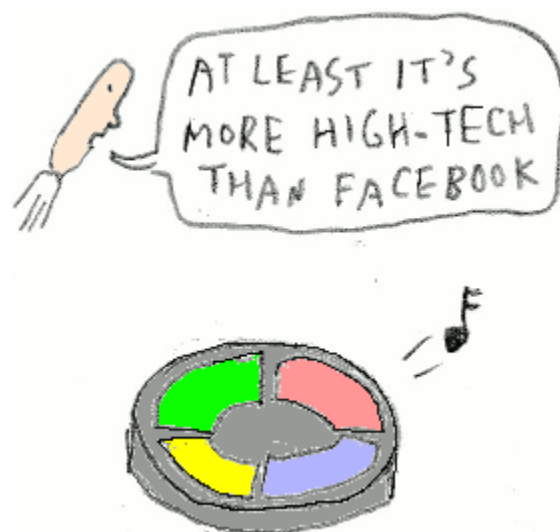
Now Facebook has disabled that too. You can no longer post from Facebook to Twitter—or vice versa. If you need your message posted on both sites, you have to manually post it on each.

This is particularly poo-caked because it prevents emergency messages from getting out. What if someone is in some sort of trouble and can't get their message out because they have to post it separately? I'm sure Facebook can get its rocks off on that thought.

Now—because of Facebook's assholeism—we can't do things that we could do with a flip phone 10 years ago. Talk about advancing backwards!

How do we stop this crap from hap? I'm *certain* someone can write an app that allows simultaneous posting on both Facebook and Twitter. If you can post there manually, it's possible to write a program to do it automatically. Maybe not with Atari BASIC and its POP command, but I know it can be done. A few years ago, Internet browsers were locked up by websites like those of the Gannett media empire that were full of ads. Everyone said there was no fix. But now there's add-ons that block the ads. Now we don't have to worry about Firefox locking when we go on *USA Today's* website to read its right-wing editorials that repeat ableist canards in support of Trump's illegal plan to review disability cases more often, or its smug articles gloating about how people no longer tip at restaurants.

The fact that we have such great technology but can't even use it is like how the FCC issued a report saying this area can receive more radio stations than anywhere else in the state but didn't mention that they're mostly lousy ones.



In the land of the free, land should be free

Welcome to Greenland. It's just a few smiles from home.

The plan by Donald Trump (an idiot) to buy Greenland from Denmark caused a face to be laughed in. That face was Trump's. Greenland is an autonomous land of the Kingdom of Denmark, not something that can be sold or purchased. The only administrative powers Denmark even has over Greenland are those prescribed by law.

Denmark has no more power to sell Greenland than you do to sell the sky above your apartment.

But Trump's serial stupidity helped highlight Greenlandic life. It turns out you're allowed to do lots of things in Greenland you can't do in Trump's America. Greenland has free public healthcare, and the territory's budget funds human rights projects. Even the smallest towns there have high-speed Internet, and Greenland has its own democratically elected government.

But one thing you can't do in Greenland is become a real estate agent.

That's because the territory has no privately owned land. All land is owned by one of Greenland's 5 municipalities. That means you don't have to shell out \$500,000 for a house—and rent there is precisely zero. Farmers who want to expand their farms can just post a notice, and they may expand as long as nobody objects.

I'm sure you won't go to jail if you try *buying* land there. But if you try buying land, the next face to be laughed in will be yours. That's because Greenland simply has no system for private land ownership—so you just can't do it. I'm sure it's not a *crime* to attempt it, but it's just not something their legal framework has.

How do we import Greenland's successful model—which has protected affordable housing and freedom of movement—into the United States? Of course it can be done—and *should* be done to the extent that we can smooth out America's existing realities. Greenland should inspire an American solution to fit American circumstances. And that's the basting elephant in the room. How do we protect private parties who already own real property? I don't care about big corporations—who as far as I'm concerned do not have rights. I'm more concerned about individuals and families who own real property. What about the money they invested in it?

Just as Greenland has no framework for private land ownership, America has no framework for forcibly transferring land from people who own it. But we can maximize the amount of public land by not privatizing any more land. Is that too much to ask? Land was free *everywhere* before feudalism began. If people from some past civilization could see the effort that modern America puts into ensuring that big corporations control land, I don't know whether they'd cry or bust a gut laughing.

If we can't enjoy completely free land like Greenland has, even instituting small user fees would be more economical than the ballooning housing costs America now faces. It would work sort of like national parks or fishing licenses.

America is supposed to be the land of the free, but our liberty has been consistently nibbled away at for 40 years. Capitalism is the main driver of this oppression, as economic injustice is a form of tyranny. Our overlords offshore our jobs, steal benefits from seniors and the disabled, and create hostile communities that encourage hate crimes and other discrimination. Why let them deprive us of land too?

Card thief wasn't playing with a full deck

One of the best parts of any newspaper is the police reports. Don't worry, this article will mention gum—just not as its main topic.

Browsing the Internet—which I hear is public—I stumbled upon a 1991 ish of the *Northerner*, NKU's student newspaper. In the police blotter feature, it was reported that an unidentified male stole a deck of playing cards from the university bookstore. It appears as if the suspect was not apprehended.

What sort of idiot shoplifts playing cards, of all things? A dumb one.

I seem to remember a brief period later when I attended NKU when the bookstore was like an armed fortress where everyone was assumed to be a shoplifter. Maybe the theft of the \$1.35 deck of cards is why.

But at least the bookstore sold goodgum. I think it was the last place I saw Hubba Bubba before its long hiatus. One day, I was in the checkout line at the bookstore, and the guy in front of me was buying 2—count 'em, 2—packs of pink bubble gum. He must have been planning on bubbling some mean bubs! The cashier was an older woman. When the clerk was ringing up the beegee, she said, "Two gums."

This is noteworthy because the cashier referred to gum in the plural. She didn't call it "2 packs of gum" but "2 gums." We usually think of gum as a *substance*, not something countable as individual items. However, she didn't call it "2 *bubble* gums", even though it was clearly labeled as a bubble bustin' variety.

When you come back around after number-paintin' the town, I'm almost Grover NKU.



Carter wasn't quiet as a mouse over mouse infestation

It's a tragedy of our political history that Jimmy Carter wasn't reelected as President even though the economy was better back then compared to what it was at the reelection of at least 3 later Presidents. I'm sure you

agree that Reagan didn't exactly improve American life.

But the mild-mannered Carter rarely got angry—and he swore even less. One day back in 1977, however, the amiable commander-in-chief was pushed to his limit.

A mouse had crawled inside the wall of the Oval Office and died there. The decomposing mouse proceeded to stink up the President's office for days on end. This was particularly worrisome because Carter was about to host foreign diplomats at the Oval Office.

A Carter aide asked the General Services Administration—an agency that administers government buildings—to remove the dead mouse from inside the wall. But the GSA kept insisting they had already cleared all mice from the White House. This meant the mouse must have come from the White House lawn, which was administered by the Department of the Interior. But the Department of the Interior said they had no responsibility for a mouse inside the executive mansion.

President Carter decided enough was enough, so he summoned GSA and Interior officials into the Oval Office. "I can't even get a damn mouse out of my office!" he fumed.

The agencies continued to fight over responsibility for removing the mouse. Finally, they decided to go through the trouble and expense of creating a special interagency task force—just for one mouse!

Did they actually expect the President of the United States—only hours before a meeting with important dignitaries—to carve a hole in the wall himself to extract a dead mouse? Unlike some other Presidents, Carter took his job seriously, so he didn't have time to do the job of agencies that refused to do theirs. Presidenting is hard.

This story has been featured in political science textbooks to show the perils of too much bureaucracy.

How I long to return to the Carter/Bee Gees years, when the cookies were fresh and bubble gum was only a penny per slab!

Hardee's food got wosted

Hardee's was one of the giants of fast food for many years—especially after it was allowed to take over Burger Chef and Roy Rogers and lay hulk to those chains.

It appears as if the closest Hardee's to us now is in Hamilton. When the chain was at its peak, we'd stumble upon them on various outings. Once around 1991, we stopped at a Hardee's in Stanton, Kentucky—a location that apparently still exists. I think this was the time we visited Natural Bridge but didn't stay for very long. And I saw a couple weird things at this Hardee's.

Most fast food restaurants are almost an "anything goes" environment for customers. They use lots of reds and yellows in their decor because they want you to act crazy. Judging by all the restaurant fight videos on YouTube, some establishments might be taking it too far. (One of the most action-packed is the one where a McDonald's customer yells that there's no beef on his "Big fucking Mac!") But Hardee's back then had lots of browns and blues in its color scheme. They wanted us to be staid and mellow. And the Hardee's in Stanton actually had a list of *rules* for customers.

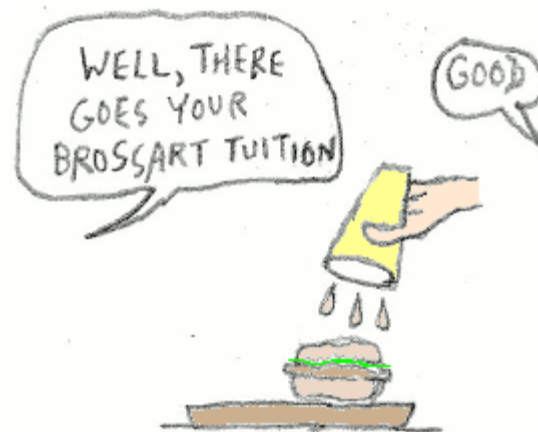
One of the rules prohibited profanity. Damn right it did! It was clear there must have been some sort of incident that prompted this rule. Whatever it was, it must have been awfully hilarious!

But that wasn't the only thing notable about the World-Famous Profanity-Free Hardee's. Food also got wosted. There was a family eating at a table inside the restaurant. It appeared to be parents with a small child. I don't remember any other kids. I don't even remember whether the child was a little boy or a little girl. Anybip, the kid would take just one small bite of a burger and then set the rest aside. Evidently, the child did this repeatedly—ruining many sandwiches.

The parents grew exasperated. Finally, the mom said something like, "Well, that's another burger you're paying for." The child was only about 4, so why would the kid even understand the concept of money? I didn't understand money until I was about 6, when a teacher (who didn't know that minors can't enter into contracts) forced me to sign a contract saying I'd be fined if I misbehaved.

So that kid got money taken out of their college fund to pay for Hardee's food they wasted when they were a tiny tot. When they were a teenager, they probably chomped at the bit to buy the latest Rage Against The Machine CD, but couldn't afford it because they were still paying for those hamburgers.

Unlike the Hardee's in Stanton, most McDonald's locations appear to have no rules against cussing. A few years ago, an Arizona mom found profane graffiti and rotting food all over a plastic slide in a McDonald's playground. The discarded food prompted her to launch a campaign against unsanitary conditions in restaurant play areas.



Broken glass, complete disaster...

If you've seen some of my text blasts about songs in old *American Top 40* shows, you might guess that this is yet another story about the incredibly idiotic things that happened at Bishop Brossart High School.

This incident occurred right before Christmas one year. The school had set up a huge Christmas tree at the hallway intersection next to the office. It was adorned with lots of expensive glass ornaments.

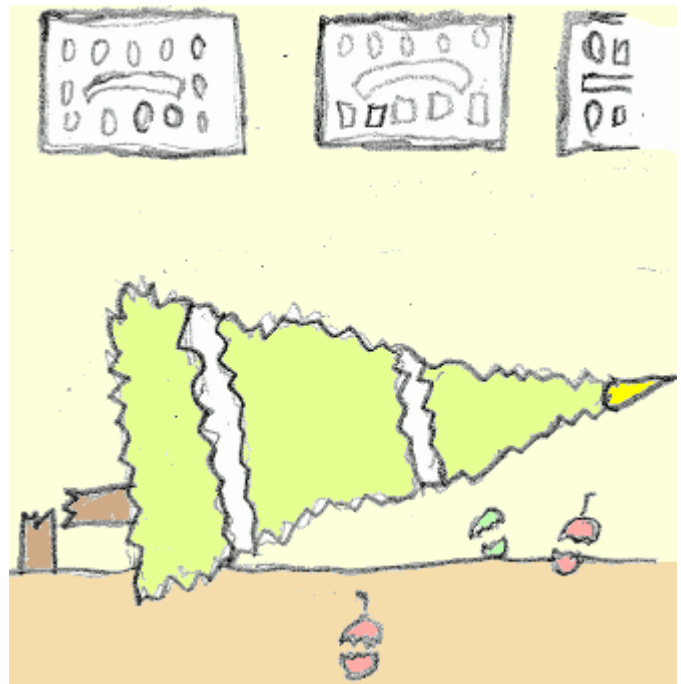
You can see right away where this story is headed.

One afternoon, I was in religion class when we heard an incredible smash coming from the hall. Why, it sounded like the Christmas tree falling over!

But it wasn't. It was actually the tree being intentionally *pulled* over! It turned out that two students got in a fight in the hall, and one pulled the enormous tree onto the other. The ornaments shattered, sending glass everywhere. The student hit by the tree was actually injured by the broken glass.

It's not unlike the time at Brossart when I was in the library and one of the usual suspects kept harassing me from behind a shelf of books. So I reached up to the top shelf and knocked a whole row of books onto him.

The school where people would fart on command strikes again.



Aaaaah! Rest!

Aaaaah! Rest!

Every catchphrase has an origin story. One battle cry that's been bobbing around these parts for the past 30 years or so is, "Aaaaah! Rest!"

Every human being living today—in any country, of any race—is descended from a historic king, queen, or chieftain. But in a world of downward mobility, hard work is the rule. It was inevitable that I'd finally have something to say about this relentless drudgery. I'm guessing it boiled over when I was a high school junior—or perhaps the following summer when I started working at the library.

I came home from a long day of work or school. I was tired. I didn't realize yet that my thyroid was failing, because health insurance often only covered quackery, as that's where the money was. At home, there was lots of work to be done. We had some big chore to do that day. This wasn't ordinary work but some huge task.

After busting my bippus at this job, I finally collapsed in a heap in the den and—in a sigh of relief—declared, "Aaaaah! Rest!"

The response: "Aaaaah. Work." I didn't have a shred of energy left but still had to keep working. But I just couldn't do it anymore. This was long before the phase early last year when I had to take 5 naps a day, but my body just couldn't hold out.

For decades thereafter, it wasn't uncommon to say, "Aaaaah! Rest!" But it was always just a joke, because the rest would only last a few minutes.

I've read that the average age of the Atlantic pirates of the 18th century was only 27. Unless they're very privileged, it seems like most people I know who live much longer than that are really just creaking along aimlessly. They might as well be chasing the wind. (Now *that's* a lost hit from my junior year!) Their bodies are broken. We're like 18th century pirates who managed to survive the dangers of their profession but only barely.

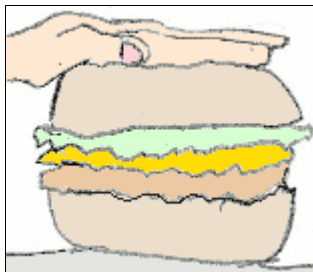
Many people I know who are my age are so weary that they're ready to say, "Aaaaah! Retirement!" The main thing stopping them is that it'll be decades before they can collect Social Security—and most of them won't live that long.

It's a good time to lay waste to more fast food ads

Many of my childhood memories are not of going to the beach or playing ball but of things I saw on TV. It rains a lot here.

I noticed something very interesting about commercials for fast food restaurants. It's like how gum commercials would always show people neatly folding the stick of gum as they put it in their mouth instead of

just shoveling it in the way everyone in the real world does. In almost every commercial for a restaurant that sold hamburgers or similar sandwiches, something very strange happened. As the narrator spoke over the background music, you'd see a brief close-up shot of the burger. A person's hand would place the top bun on the sandwich. Then—here's the weird part—after the top bun was on the burger, they'd pat the bun with the palm of their hand...



This Arby's commercial—voiced by Casey Kasem—shows this technique used for a roast beef sandwich...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGGi-1TWH98>

It looked ridiculous!

Do people ever do this in real life? I don't think I've ever seen people do this except to ridicule these ads.

As long ago as the 1970s, I noticed this in commercials, and it continues to this day—having survived at least 7 Presidents and many economic recessions and societal changes.

Every time you blow that bubble...You take a piece of me with you...

For years, I've kept a list of ideas for this zine that I've hoarded, and one of them is listed only as "Paul Young urination."

?????

Well, I'm gonna tear my former high school's playhouse down! For the last 2 years of my 5 years of high school, I attended an alternative class that was an academic wasteland but could be mighty uproarious at times. We often had a blast—except when they called the cops on us.

Perhaps most hilarious of all, people bubbled. I don't remember any other school that had such a high percentage of students who regularly gnashed beegies.

One day, a student kept misbehaving. The teacher—we may have had a substitute that day, but I think we had our regular teacher—finally decided she had enough, so she sent him to "time-out." "Time-out" was a desk behind a partition in the corner of the room. We were high school students, and we were being treated like 6-month-olds. This wasn't the only way the school condescended to us. For example, the school once flew into a tizzy because of the way I held my scissors. We also weren't allowed using the restroom unless a faculty member took us, so sometimes we had to wait the whole day. They once argued with us over whether the word *bathroom* meant the same as *restroom* and wouldn't let us go until we used the proper term. It was like being in kindergarten all over again.

Anypoo, the student in this story happened to be chewing bubble gum—in violation of class rules. He kept on chomping even in "time-out." We couldn't see him because he was behind the partition, but we could hear him. He kept blowing bubs and popping them loudly. Boom! Bang! Pow! Kablammo! Mighty mature, huh?

Finally, the teacher's aide—sitting at her desk across the room—warned, "Every time you blow that bubble, it's gonna cost you." So I guess instead of blowing *that* bubble, it was fine to blow a different bubble. Just don't blow the same bubble more than once.

And what was blowing "that bubble" going to cost? It's not like the school was going to fine someone for bubbling. Did the school have a secret gum detector that mailed students a bill at the end of the year?

Right-wing complaints about school lawsuits destroyed

For being such champions of "limited government", the Far Right sure does like to defend schools from lawsuits stemming from schools' own irresponsible and malicious practices.

However, an op-ed has cropped up that reveals that lawsuits against schools are actually far less common than they used to be. This piece says that in the years 1967-76, there were 10,503 state and federal suits against schools nationwide. That's almost 3 per day!

How often do you hear about schools being sued now? In the 1980s, I heard about lawsuits against schools quite a bit. That used to be a thing. But now, it seems like the only time schools are sued is when some right-wing legal foundation concocts some frivolous claim. These days, it's almost never because a school deserves it.

Oddly enough, that editorial was actually a right-wing criticism of suing schools too much—as if it's become more common.

Right-wing school systems have people cowed into submission. Sadly, it's part of a trend against glamorizing teenage angst. If we still had the society we had in the 1970s and 1980s, we'd see a lot more exposure of threats to youth rights. *Most* of these threats—perhaps not all—are more common now, but nobody discusses it anymore, let alone fights back. For example, I've scoured the Internet for stories about schools withholding report cards over unpaid fines incurred when the school falsely accused the student of breaking something, and I've come up empty. Same for accounts of students angered by parents making them attend a shitty private school. There's also too few stories by parents who defend their kids after they were wronged. These days, when a school tells someone to do something, the school enjoys unquestioning compliance.

This is 2020, and this is what America has to deal with.

People set off firecrackers at Ontario

Ontario was a chain of stores with a general selection of goods, with a format similar to Kmart.

Someone on the public Internet said he used to go to the Ontario in Newport and engage in all sorts of mischief with some other kids. They used to grab some cigarettes from home, bip on down to Ontario, and use the cigarettes to light firecrackers that they crammed into the clothes bins. The cigarettes burned slowly, so by the time the firecrackers ignited, the kids were all the way across the store.

When the firecrackers went off, customers screamed to holy high hell!

Another person said he filled a large plastic garbage can with water and hung it from a local bridge over a railroad. A train plowed into the trash can, smashing it into a zillion pieces. The look on the conductor's face as the train hit the garbage can full of water was priceless!

One person said that a *Cincinnati Enquirer* newspaper dispenser in Bellevue fell to rack and ruin because someone kept using a cigarette lighter to melt the push button and because people kept drawing male and female genitalia on the dispenser.

This is like the time someone stole all the beer out of the back of a delivery truck parked at a grocery store and hid it in different places all around town—most notably under the bleachers of high school stadiums.

