

The Last Word™

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Shoplifters put Shell through hell (aaaaaww!)

Aw, poor Shell. It's been through hell. Let's give it a big huggy-muggy to make it feel better.

It was Tuesday, April 7. I went to the Circle K convenience store that accompanies the local Shell gas station. And people shoplifted. Just like in the old Maureen Teefy scare film.

While I was in there, there was a woman and a teenage girl obtaining orange juice and maybe one or two other small goodies. I thought they were going to, you know, buy them.

Instead, they stole them! They abruptly darted out the door and skipped eastward into the springtime yonder.

The cashier witnessed this ghastly event in plain sight. She chased after them on foot. But she could only keep up for a few seconds before she gave up and skedaddled back into the store.

Some have debated the wrongteousness of the shoplifters' doings. They said that in this time of desperation, the shoplifters needed the orange juice much more than Shell did, so who cares if they stole it? Not I! But what this really shows is that our social institutions have declined so much since March that there's many more people desperate enough to steal. Right now, because of the ongoing martial law, our society is nonexistent. Although very oppressive, it's evolved into what's been likened to a free-for-all where everyone just takes what they need or want. Tyranny breeds chaos. You can also compare the shoplifters to the Atlantic pirates of 300 years ago—many of whom were not brutish thugs but were heroes who fought against regimes that were not compatible with life.

My faith in leaders at every level of government is shot to hell. It's at an all-time low—and isn't coming back. After a lifetime of hearing lies, that says a lot.



Psychologist recommends beegie bustin' to fight virus

According to KGW-TV in Portland, Oregon—yes, I know it isn't exactly proletariat media—a Portland psychologist recommends that couples try bubbling as they're whiling away the conservavirus crisis. (How about not having this crisis in the first place?)

She suggests that people take something that they're good at and teaching it to their partner. She recommended things like "a certain recipe or learning how to tie a fly fishing hook or doing origami or making paper airplanes and seeing who can fly the farthest—even blowing bubbles with bubble gum and seeing who can manage the largest bubble."

"Manage" it? I didn't know a bub needed to be "managed." I guess that means you write up a schedule for its work hours.

The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* also spoke highly of gum of the bubble variety. It says chomping the zesty confection relieves anxiety and noted that's why baseball players often gnash it. But I don't agree in all circumstances. In my day, bubbling was taken seriously enough that it required some amount of mental energy. You didn't just casually blow a bub. You would choreograph it carefully. With the current state of exhaustion, not everyone can accomplish this.

An article on the Religion News Service site recommended adding bubble gum to this year's Passover Seder plate. In light of the current crisis, beegie represents "sticking together."



Martial law still hasn't been lifted in much of America. (Big surprise.) Yet people have been bubbling in public more and more!

April's cardiac incident

I knew it would come to this, but nobody listened. I'm just lucky I'm still around to tell about it.

Around 5 AM on Tuesday, April 28, I suffered a cardiac incident and a pulmonary embolism (blood clot in the lungs) and had to go to the hospital. They said I was very close to either a heart attack or a stroke. I think it may have actually been a mild heart attack. Someone in a chat room said that an "embolism is near death." The condition was aggravated by prediabetes.

I actually remember very little of being in the hospital, as I drifted off peacefully thanks to whatever drug was being administered by IV.

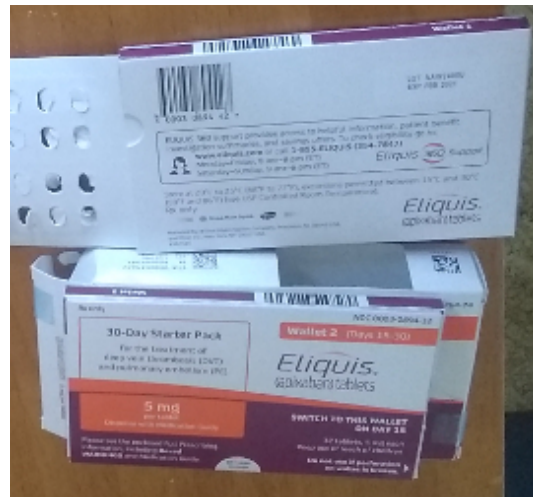
I was very weak for the next 3 days and laid down in bed all the while.

This had been building up for 6 weeks because of the ongoing crisis. It was 6 weeks of sheer terror. My heart raced all those weeks. The nurse said I had a heart rate of 133!

In my Facebook post about this, I only made a brief mention of what caused this health scare, yet someone was petulant enough to drop me from their friends list. Some people are not true friends. They're just lying, science-free, idiotic bullies.

It was back around March 17 or 18 that life began to feel...different. That's when I suffered a half-hour spell of uncontrollable trembling and horror, the likes of which I've never had before. Due to PTSD, I'd had spells of unmanageable anger about other things for decades, but this was more intense and scary than anything else I'd ever felt. For many weeks after, I had a feeling of sadness I'd never before experienced for that long. It's probably not over.

Just to prove I'm not making up any of this, here's a photo of the medication the hospital gave me to take home...



When the pandemic is allowed to end, there should be a ticker tape parade for the healthcare workers who put their lives in danger to save others' lives.

Keep me bubblin' in the right direction...

People bubble. That means they buy bubble gum and they blow bubbles with it.

But what songs or music are best for people to bubble by? What music is evocative of bubbling and binds northern Kentucky (or any other place) together as a unique community?

Bubbling should accompany all music. Blowing bubs really is that hilarious! But I can think of one song that stands Head & Shoulders above the rest: the very minor 1980s hit "Give It Up" by the Steve Miller Band.

Imagine that! An '80s song to bubble by!

This song has a combination rockabilly/polka feel that brings to mind the image of a person decked out in '80s garb—including a polo shirt, mirror sunglasses, and surfer shorts—and blowing a mean bubble. You can envision the person bobbing their head to and fro as the inflated bub looms in front of their face. You can even imagine a celebrity who was popular in the '80s—such as Erin Moran or Aldo Nova—doing this.

With the surprising increase in public bubbling in recent weeks, maybe I'll bring my laptop with my MP3's down to Bellevue Beach Park sometime soon so folks have some music to bust beegie to.

A bunch of Navy toilets got ru

Hot damn, toilets are funny!

But there's nothing funny about government wosting the taxpayers' hard-earned dough.

The Navy's 2 newest aircraft carriers—the USS Gerald R. Ford and the USS George H.W. Bush—have been plagued by clogged crappers. For me, Bush's very name evokes memories of ruined donickers in high school. But the toilets on these new ships get stopped up so much that specialized acids must be used to clean the ships' sewer systems—costing the taxpayers \$400,000 each time they are flushed. A congressional audit said the Navy underestimated the toilets' maintenance costs by \$130 billion.

The new toilets are said to be similar to those found on commercial airliners—thereby stinking. The report said the toilets are experiencing “unexpected and frequent clogging of the system” that will result in heroic maintenance actions “for the entire service life of the ship.”

It appears as if the toilets got wasted through normal use—not by anyone intentionally clogging them with items like bowling pins, Dr Pepper cans, and underpants.

One government official said, “The pipes are too narrow and when there are a bunch of sailors flushing the toilet at the same time, like in the morning, the suction doesn't work.”

When you buy an expensive new device like a printer or an Amaze-a-Tron, you should know it has its limits. Navy officials apparently didn't know the limits of toilets.



A person insisted on people watching them bubble

We've all known peeps who have insisted on bubbling in front of everyone else and demanded that everybody watch them, even though nobody made a single mention of bubble gum. Usually, people who do this are adults.

Like many others, I witnessed this very occurrence in college. One day, I was sitting with about 5 other students on the lawn where we used to hang out. Along bopped a female student who was about 30—she was much older than the average college student—who sat down near the edge of the group so she was facing the rest of us. Recently it occurred to me that she resembled singer Lene Lovich. I only ever saw her on campus a couple other times.

Then she whipped out a morsel of beegee and began chomping it. When the gum inevitably got to the point where it was bubbleable, she told the crowd, “Hey everyone, watch.” You'll never guess what she did then. Why, she bubbled!

There was no prompting for her to do it. Nobody called the shots and said when. She just did it.

Nobody said anything in response, but they did pause what they were doing to view this spectacle.

She kept on doing it. She blew mean bubs that busted everywhere, because that's what mature college students do.



I cussed at school and got away with it

I remember when I thought Guardian Angel School in Fort Mitchell was the worst school I'd ever have the misfortune of attending. Those were the days, huh?

But when I first started there, I thought the school was (to use the expression of the era) out of sight! I thought the school was bright and magical. But it got progressively worse over the years. (Imagine that!)

Let me take you back to an uproarious incident that took place sometime around 2nd grade. One day, at the end of the quarter, we got our report cards at the end of the day. This was lower elementary school, so many of the grades were for behavior, not academics. As I was waiting alone in the hall at the top of the steps for the school bus, I looked over my report card.

One of my behavior grades was rather mediocre. So—at the top of my lungs—I yelled out, “**SHIT!!!!**” I

tried to disguise my voice.

Remember, I was alone. But there were other kids occasionally bopping down the hall. There was an older nun who taught there who once launched a hilarious tirade because someone defecated on the toilet seat. She was probably still at this school during the cussing episode, and her classroom would have been just down the hall. So I'm pretty sure she heard me yelling—as did other folks.

I fully expected teachers to put out an all-points bulletin to try to catch who had loudly cussed in the hall. But I don't remember ever hearing anything about the event.

It turned out that the grade that elicited the cussing wasn't as bad as I thought it was. Still bad, of course. What a shock!

Local man arrested in gum-related O'Charley's theft

A Newport man was a one-man crime wave throughout March. According to press reports—when the right-wing media isn't trying to stage-manage public opinion like it's been doing more than ever this year—this fella was arrested in Hamilton County twice in only 5 days. The man had already amassed a history of criminal convictions going back to 1988.

And his recent crime spree has a gum connection.

According to court records, the man stole a wallet from a bartender at an O'Charley's restaurant. How did he accomplish this feat? A court document says he entered the restaurant carrying a dry cleaning bill. He asked to be reimbursed “due to his clothing being blemished by gum on the table.”

Hear that, everyone? Gum!

The manager actually went back to the office to get money to pay this bill. The thieving customer then ordered an iced tea. Somehow, he then reportedly managed to steal the bartender's wallet from her purse.

What a beezweezer.

Rock me...Show me that trick now...

“Do your trick!”

Those 3 words loomed large in 6th grade at Cline Middle School. That was when Robert Martin kept picking his nose and eating it and calling it his “trick.”

Ol' Robert was a little punk. And I don't mean that in the good sense of the term. But heaven forbid anyone fight back against him.

Every time he started harassing you, there was one way to get him to pause for a few seconds. All it took was to say the words, “Do your trick.”

Then he'd stop what he was doing, jam his finger into his nose, extract a big, green boogly-wooglum, and lick it off his finger. Then he'd go right back to what he was doing (which was never anything good).

CNBC slide looks like it's bubbling

CNBC is for people who enjoy latrine garbage. Among other things, it was CNBC's Rick Santelli who gave us the Tea Party—along with the authoritarian selective outrage that defines it.

This channel is one of perhaps 10 to 20 national networks owned by Comcast, a right-wing company that also owns America's biggest cable system. Gee, that's media diversity!

Recently, someone on the public Internet used CNBC's “breaking news” slide to accompany a story...



Take a look at that slide. Do you see what I see?

Yes. You do. It emerges from the bottom right of the *S*. Why, that looks like a bub!

You may remember the Bubblicious logo that appeared to be blowing a bubble at its lower right. This is sort of like that.

In my day, Clint Eastwood's catchphrase was, "Go ahead. Make my day." These days, it should be, "Go ahead. Blow a bub."

Move on from MoveOn

The purpose of a progressive advocacy organization is to advocate for progressive causes. As far as I can tell, MoveOn no longer does. I think they've forgotten what the word *progressive* means.

It seems MoveOn used to be a very solid operation. A few years ago, I pledged to donate \$1 to progressive groups whenever I caught former schoolmates posting right-wing propaganda on Facebook. (Notice I said they were only schoolmates. I didn't say they were my friends.) MoveOn was one of the groups I donated to. I halted this practice because someone I knew had a bit of an issue shortly thereafter that ended up costing me a significant amount of money. I suspect the Tea Party set up that situation because I had announced I was donating to progressive groups, and they wanted me to go broke. Now I'm glad my hard-earned money stopped going to MoveOn. Karma is rough, right, Tea Party?

It has been alleged that somebody mistakenly joined a MoveOn-related organization and found their credit card being automatically billed every month for a donation. The complainant was unable to contact the group to get these charges to stop. Allegations of false billing have been made in at least 3 different website comments.

I was unaware of these allegations until recently—which was after MoveOn's growing elitism soured me on the group. I was on MoveOn's e-mail list for years, and I became very disappointed with the way the group drifted from its stated stances and with its misunderstandings of simple matters. At best, you might say it represents milquetoast "liberalism." MoveOn does not stand for true grassroots progressivism—which I fondly think of as a 3-legged stool—despite what the group claims. It's mostly advocacy for self-centered upmarket "liberals", not progressive populists.

MoveOn today sounds like a bunch of scolding, out-of-touch, elitist bullies and sellouts—like the Red-baiters on Daily Kos. (Regarding Daily Kos's recent attacks on Bernie Sanders, one Internet commenter wrote that Daily Kos is "a fake progressive outlet for centrists to gather and insult the left, insult Bernie and 'Bernie Bros' in the comment section.") The battle now isn't just between those who claim to be right or left, but between those who are privileged enough to toss our values aside and those who are not. How can any political guild be on the left if it represents shrill, antiquated voices of privilege who have never opened a civics book in their lives? They're literally as bad as Donald Trump. Not *almost* as bad. As bad.

Recently, after getting another of MoveOn's e-mails, I decided to unsubscribe. Where the website asked me why I was unsubscribing, I typed, "Because you suck."

In hindsight, it's hard to see what MoveOn has actually accomplished in recent years.

Because MoveOn has been a deceptive bait-and-switch, I think they should pay back donations I gave them. It's false advertising that they still call themselves a progressive group.

At least I still receive useful educational e-mails from Avaaz, which MoveOn co-founded back when MoveOn was still worthwhile. I'm waiting on the edge of my seat for Avaaz to sell out too, just like so many other organizations and public figures have done in recent decades (including all the Occupy pages that began rebroadcasting Tea Party propaganda years ago).

My very first Atari BASIC program?

Do you like computers? Remember the days when any time you'd first meet someone, the first thing they'd ask was, "Do you like computers?"

In my day, we weren't exactly made of money, but we toyed around with computers until our faces flew off in public. I was only 9 when we got an Atari 800. Atari BASIC—replete with the celebrated POP command—was on the cutting edge of programming back then.

I lapped up Atari BASIC faster than Daily Kos can insult "the dirtbag left" and working-class Midwesterners. One of the first programs I wrote was a simple simulation of a TV set. Recently at an important family gathering, I started talking about this, and a family member knew where I was going and said, "Bert and Ernie." I'm sure the *Sesame Street* comedic duo figured prominently in this program, but this game did more than just Sessify our humble digs. This program took advantage of the Atari 800's different graphics modes and its ability to show oversized text in different colors. You could type in a channel number, and the text and color

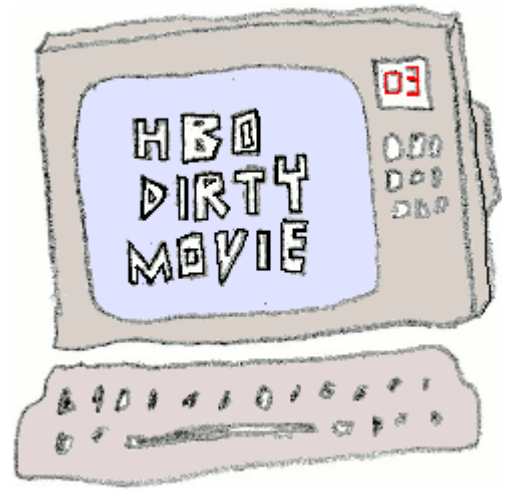


scheme would simulate what might appear on that channel in real life.

If you typed in 19, you'd get a simple version of Channel 19's slide that listed its daily cartoon lineup. HBO also had a number, and I tried to have my program mimic the big buildup HBO had before each movie. Back then, before every feature, HBO showed an extravagant intro that featured a man fiddling with the cable box in his living room and sitting down with his kids to watch an R-rated film. Then the camera soared over an elaborate model city and into the sky, revealing a giant, metallic HBO logo floating in space. This intro included majestic orchestra music that sounded like the beginning of "Dreaming" by OMD. (Another lost hit!) But my program would just print the words "HBO FEATURE PRESENTATION" in white letters on a blue background. Then it had a parody of the big warning spiel that HBO showed before "dirty" movies. I'm talking about the warning that said HBO "will show this feature only at night."

Of course, the Atari 800 wasn't advanced enough to recreate everything on TV. I remember seeing a horror movie on cable around that time in which the main character was a teenage boy who turned into a monster whose head slowly inflated and exploded. I couldn't recreate that with computers of the era.

I'm sure all the Roblox spam on YouTube can recreate it, but I couldn't.



Another cause ruined by irresponsible idiots

The lockdowns have got to go. But you don't get to act like an ass about it.

Every time I join some worthwhile cause, it gets infiltrated. Every single time. Occupy is a good example.

I'm horrified at the current martial law policies. Frankly, I never even dreamed America would sink to these depths. This sheer terror is what led to my cardiac emergency. But the "protests" lately are counterproductive and idiotic, and are a scam. These events are being put together by interests that just want to exploit public sentiment and recruit for unsavory causes instead of effectively fighting the lockdowns.

A real rally for freedom wouldn't look like the bar scene in *Star Wars*.

What I'm fighting against is primarily lockdowns. That's not the same as business closures or some other emergency government powers. Yes, our public officials have a responsibility to quantify and remedy economic loss from these closures. But you can't put a price tag on the horror of societal loss resulting from martial law.

The media won't cover my perspective, because they want to equate opposition to lockdowns with these "protests."

America is full of brave medical workers who don't need their work insulted by idiots who don't even give a damn about the cause they claim to support.

I guess I call you nonessential...

This article is one of few that even acknowledges the absolute despair caused by conservavirus lockdowns—and does it from a perspective that doesn't con those who might agree (unlike the counterproductive "protests" that exploit this view). Numbers don't lie, and you can't sugarcoat the death toll. It's a dagger through the heart. If this many deaths are considered a "success", what does it say about our world? This isn't propaganda. It's hard data. Not for the first time, the media has not only gotten things horribly wrong, but they've repeated misinformation so much that nobody dares to question it. Before mid-March, hardly anyone in America would have gone along with it.

By late March, most of the country—indeed, much of the world (especially Western countries that brag about how "democratic" they are)—slogged through a conservavirus-inspired lockdown. Milder measures may be necessary for a limited time and scope, but full lockdowns destroy our social institutions—and I don't mean just the economy. These absolute lockdowns are unethical, ineffective, unscientific, and harmful, and they're unconstitutional under U.S. law. In fact—seemingly to the surprise of many—these collective house arrests were followed days later by spikes in new cases. This is proven by the graphs on Worldometer, so I don't understand why anyone insists otherwise. This increase is like clockwork. The spike seems to be explained by a new study funded by the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong and the National Natural Science Foundation of China that reveals that 80% of cases are spread indoors. Plus, a Japanese study revealed that "the odds that a primary case transmitted COVID-19 in a closed environment was 18.7 times greater compared to an open-air environment."

South Korea, Sweden, Iceland, Taiwan, Costa Rica, and Hong Kong are among the places that have managed to tamp down this virus without a total lockdown—thus far. This proves the virus can be controlled

without measures that are too draconian. Yet lockdowns have continued in the United States.

In addition, an article that appeared on the website of Socialist Alternative on April 7—when enough was known about lockdowns—said “there is no scientific data whatsoever to support total lock-down measures.” The article is a response to an Imperial College study that was ripped to shreds by peer reviews. You cannot have draconian policies that are demonstrably harmful. The rush to completely shut down society is contrary to science. I don’t know how else I can put it.

I had predicted that the pandemic would be used as an excuse to curb-stomp civil liberties. That prediction came true. About the only thing that hasn’t happened yet is the Trump regime’s proposal to revoke habeas corpus—though one Oregon county has. However, we can tolerate certain regulations that temporarily suspend certain activities while leaving our outdoor spaces open and permitting smaller private gatherings. Concerns over full lockdowns are basic constitutional law—not just science. I’m shocked that there is never any mention in the media about constitutional concerns.

It’s easier for them to whine that the masses aren’t “complying” than to approve drugs like remdesivir. If it was a drug for ADHD to keep me from laughing because someone spread pee-soaked toilet paper all over a toilet seat in 5th grade, it wouldn’t have taken so long to approve. Drugs are often approved based on hype, not science.

Just before lockdowns began in the U.S., Kentucky began to prohibit work that was deemed “nonessential.” But some firms remained defiant. Among them were construction companies involved in the Manhattan Harbour disaster. I went outside for a stroll, and noticed the trucks flying through Dayton—spilling rocks on the street like they always do. With less traffic around, the trucks were speeding even worse than usual.

They’re out there spreading conservavirus while anyone who roams alone is considered a disease threat?

There is not any stretch of the imagination that would permit this construction to be considered essential work. No way, no how. In fact, they were taking a hostile, warlike stance by spreading a deadly virus.

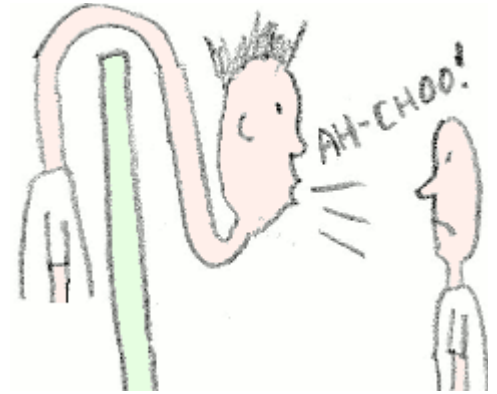
Few U.S. states have been as inept at fighting the pandemic as California, as Gov. Gavin Newsom repeatedly praised Donald Trump and gave a bizarre speech in which he admitted he wanted to impose martial law. He even called it martial law. That’s why we call him Martial Grover. He’s governed like the third term of “Poopypants Pete” Wilson. Like many other public officials, he won’t come up with creative, effective solutions to conservavirus. Like other governors, Gruesome Newsom placed the whole state under a draconian lockdown for an extended period. But he also decreed that real estate services were considered essential activity and therefore exempt.

How are real estate services more essential than outdoor activities that people naturally need? This is yet another case of “lockdowns for thee, not for me.” But some real estate agents disagreed with classifying their business as essential, because of the risk of dealing with customers visiting properties and spreading germs.

Many religious congregations stepped up to the plate by suspending services and finding other ways to serve their members. Some even held drive-in services. Exceptions to this careful social distancing policy include some of the right-wing checkbook clergy who think rules shouldn’t apply to them. Similarly, most of the sports world suspended games. Sports are supposed to build character, and much of the sports world at least had enough backbone to make fighting this crisis a priority. But there’s an exception in sports too: Construction of the unmasked-for FC Cincinnati stadium that has displaced residents is continuing throughout the crisis. How is this essential?

I read an article that suggested that the conservavirus pandemic will wipe out the “renaissance” that has recently defined northern Kentucky’s river cities. This “renaissance” has artificially jacked up the cost of living. It shouldn’t have taken one of the worst pandemics in history to halt gentrification. Maybe if taxpayer money had gone to developing medicine instead of handouts to gentrification projects, things would be a lot better now.

The pandemic has been disastrous for almost all countries—but it’s *shattered* America, because the response by every level of government has been so jaw-droppingly bad. Mid-March to mid-April was a completely wasted month—and I’m not sure it’s improved much since. I don’t think the country is coming back.



USA Today is yesterday’s news

Anyone who pays attention to *USA Today*—admittedly, that’s not as many people these days—can see that the paper has taken a sharp turn to the right since last year’s takeover by GateHouse Media.

USA Today has long been known as a media giant. This daily nationwide newspaper was first rolled out in 1982 by the Gannett syndicate. The broadsheet was known for its colorful graphics, brief headlines, and being printed on fun-to-burn paper. It was also known for transmitting each ish by satellite so it would be ready

anywhere right away.

It was never a voice of left-wing populism, perhaps because its readers tended to be wrapped in yuppie privilege. Its fans were the type who would dart from city to city for business. The proletariat that was holed up in industrial centers weren't big *USA Today* followers. Despite this, *USA Today* wasn't completely without redeeming value. It ran some worthwhile, scholarly pieces. However, it also carried embarrassing hogwash such as an op-ed by Jerome Corsi, a right-wing conspiracy theorist who *USA Today* laughably called an "investigative journalist."

USA Today's importance didn't excuse Gannett's takeover of so many local newspapers. Gannett purchased the *Cincinnati Enquirer* in 1979, and that paper remained just as right-wing as before. The \$98.26 question is: How can Gannett own 2 dailies covering the same market? *USA Today* is widely distributed in Cincinnati as it is elsewhere. It's not called *USA-except-Cincinnati Today*.

Gannett's founder was a staunch conservative. Overall, it remained a right-wing company. In 2012, it punished 25 employees because they dared to sign a recall petition against far-right Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin. But everything really came crashing down late last year when Gannett was purchased by GateHouse—though it retains the Gannett name. GateMouth is another very conservative company. An editorial page editor of one of its papers accused the media of engaging in "liberal activism" regarding Russian interference in American elections. The company also vowed to add a conservative editorial cartoonist to appease right-wing complaints. GateHouse also gained criticism for running an editorial in many of its papers endorsing a lower minimum wage. The company's stance was based on a report that was completely discredited.

Before we go any further, remember that the American media in general is tightly managed and centralized. Many facts are never reported, while many lies are. The media has downplayed the climate crisis for a long time, and has laughably claimed that the economy under Donald Trump was the best in 50 years. This is the propaganda operation we're fighting. It speaks with one voice, and it's a very shrill one. It regards everyone else as stupid and unsophisticated. Its botched coverage of the current crisis is inspired by what can only be an international clandestine government that rules us.

USA Today though has become another animal altogether. In January, the paper ran a right-wing editorial supporting Trump's plan to pulverize disability benefits by splitting up a category of beneficiaries. The piece even admitted that many people would lose their benefits, and trotted out the debunked far-right canard that claims beneficiaries are faking their disability.

Not long ago, the paper falsely claimed that the most recent government stimulus checks before this spring were issued by George W. Bush. That is incorrect for a couple reasons: President Obama issued checks later, and Bush's so-called stimulus specifically excluded low-income workers.

More recently, when Trump gave an address that talked a lot but said nothing, *USA Today* ran an editorial titled "President Donald Trump takes the right way forward on coronavirus." Uh, what?

This virus brings out the very worst of the media's gaslighting and negationism. *USA Today* is of course no exception, as another article echoed Trump's false claim that Sweden's lack of a lockdown is a deliberate attempt to expose the public to this virus. Of course, the co-owned *Cincinnati Enquirer* is just as bad, having recently made a couple similar false claims. One is that South Korea used a lockdown to stamp out the virus—which is patently untrue. The other is that Hong Kong is facing a second wave of this outbreak. Look at the Worldometer graph. Where is that second wave?

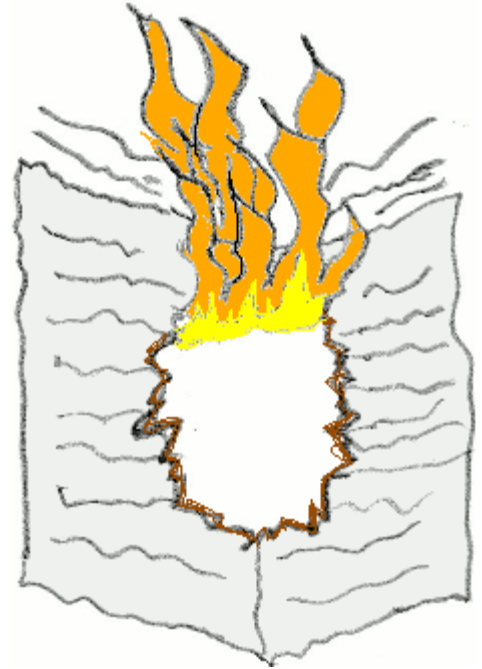
To spread falsehoods that can be so easily discredited seems outright *stupid*. But who dares to challenge it?

When writing about conservavirus lockdowns, *USA Today* and its ilk should consult the numbers. They should also consult thoughtful articles about the subject by Socialist Alternative or the Revolutionary United Front. Instead, most of the media relied on the Imperial College report that gave unrealistically high forecasts for the death toll that would mount if the world didn't lock down completely for 18 to 24 months. When that report was released, the media had a hard time containing their glee. In each article, it looked like they had just guzzled a nice, big pitcher of blood.

I'm planning a detailed report on lockdowns to be issued later.

It seems like the media is trying to elevate bad ideas just because giving them more space than good ideas makes them moderate heroes. They act like it's noble middle ground. But it isn't. Facts are facts. You can't just make up your own information to counter facts.

Media monopolies need to be broken up—not just TV and radio but newspapers too. Radio and TV



stations have something called a *city of license*. These days, it's a dog-and-pony show, but it used to have some weight. This meant a station had to locate its studio in or near the city specified on its license and make that city its biggest focus. This concept should govern newspapers too. Instead of huddling in gleaming skyscrapers and sprawling suburban campuses, media outlets should be spread into industrial cities and smaller communities. Media organizations are so far removed from the public that they just don't grasp realistic, scientific ideas on anything. They lecture, they self-congratulate, and they spread misinformation that can be debunked within seconds. The American media today is largely at odds with the basics of democracy and humanity. It's undemocratic to have media concentrated in so few hands.

And before anyone accuses us of opposing the ideas of economic or scientific "experts", remember that it was also "experts" who gave the world pemoline and the wealth gap. Their track record stinks.

Home of burgers, breakfast, and broken websites!

Imagine there's a chain of restaurants in your area that everyone makes fun of called Gish's Fat Boy. Imagine this eatery was a big deal 50 years ago, but now any mention of it results in everyone bursting into uncontrollable laughter.

Its mascot is a festive image of a thickset youngster smiling and holding a hamburger. His grin looks like the one people have right before they release a big, loud fart. The *F* on the sign outside the restaurant is shaped like the mascot's Ronald Reagan-like pompadour.

Anybip, I know a cool person who recently heard a radio commercial for this restaurant that advertised how you can use its website to order food and have it delivered. But when this cool person tried using the site, the site said, "This restaurant is not taking online orders, but will be soon."

Oops!

Later, the cool person used the restaurant's smartphone app to have food delivered. This worked, but it worked funnier than you might think. Days later—after the meal had long since been devoured—it was found that the app didn't complete the order, so it hadn't been charged to the cool person's credit card. In other words, the cool person got a whole lunch for free.

Best all, after this lunchage was consumed, googly eyes and fangs got drawn on the *F* on the box. The defaced box was then placed on the top of the garbage can, where it leered at all comers.

Advertising works! It just doesn't always work the way advertisers want it to. Badeedle-badeed indeed!

