

The Last Word™

Issue #548

June 2020

Trust science. Live your life. *But don't panic.*

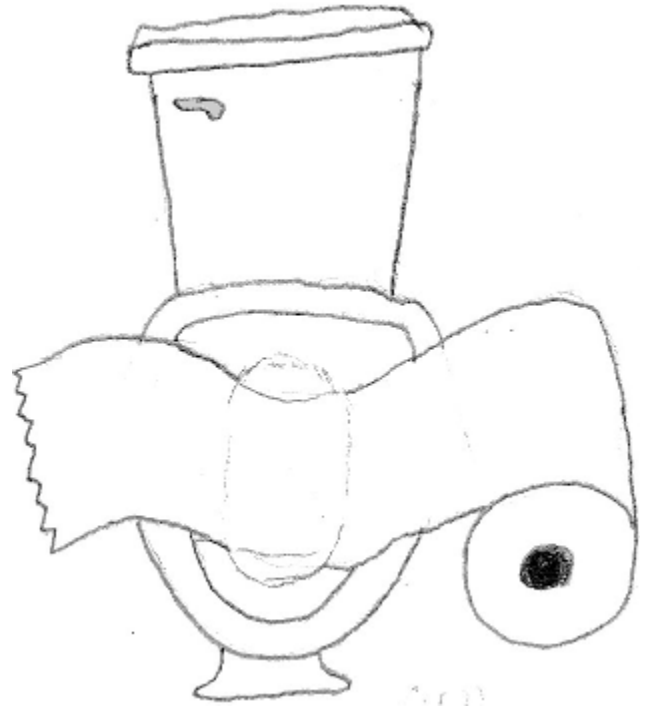
Gym toilets get workout from paper towels

Toilets. We all love 'em. They're big and bulbous, and that's where all the pee and the poo (or at least most of it) goes.

This story out of New Jersey is mighty toilety, and you're gonna peep it until your navel gets bitten off in public (as a wise man would say). There's a gym there where somebody clogged the toilets with gobs of paper towels. This caused the restroom to be flooded.

Here's the best part. The gym's owners say they don't even keep paper towels in the bathroom. That means somebody must have gone through the trouble of bringing in their own paper towels and using them to upset the poopot.

In an article about this incident on a blog, people bombarded the comment section with sexually explicit remarks and far-right commentary, even managing to work right-wing venom into a comment about how someone kept going into Wawa convenience stores and slashing all the milk cartons.



A roadmeet happened

Roadmeets. We all love 'em. They're big and bulbous, and that's where all the pee and the poo (or at least most of it) goes.

May 30 was an ordinary spring Saturday. Except that day saw the long-awaited Cincinnati roadmeet—which I hosted. A half-dozen people showed, coming from as far away as Missouri, Tennessee, and Illinois. As Roads Scholars, we drove about the roads of Cincinnati like the unassailable superpeople we are. *Sesame Street* was discussed, and the “SEND POO” sign made its obligatory appearance.

The event began with a picnic at Bellevue Beach Park. We didn't get to everything in the beautiful itinerary I compiled, but we did perhaps a majority of it: downtown roadliness, the weird left-hand ramp from Gest to Linn, the abandoned part of 5th Street, the 8th Street Viaduct, the Dreman Street (keek!) ruins, the ancient bridge over disused Duck Creek Road, and more! If roads could talk, it was 6 hours of nonstop conversation!

Best all, as we gathered in the parking lot at Buckhead Mountain Grill as we prepared to leave, I briefly detected the unmistakable bouquet of a silent-but-deadly bunker blast.

As we try to build a reimagined society, my roadly interests still loom large!

People brang gum to protests

There's a lot wrong in this world, and that's why we need to protest. I write a lot about whimsical, frivolous topics—but every day I also deal with serious business. On the other hand, you can't go through life in a somber mood all the time—despite all the sadness and evil that surrounds us. Unending sorrow will destroy you.

On May 31, I went to the peaceful Rally for Justice at Inwood Park, where we protested against yet another terrible and racist killing by police. I met up with my comrades. They brang bubble gum. We protested, we chanted, we bubbled.

This isn't the first protest I've attended where people chomped beegie or even blew bubs. When Occupy Cincinnati flourished, some of its regular participants regularly indulged. It was not obligatory for me to blog about it as it would have been if perfect strangers had done it, but bubble they did. After all, that's what cool people do. People blew bubbles during general assemblies—indoors and out. During one protest at Piatt Park, a

man walked laps around the intersection the entire time and bubbled all the while.

A couple years ago, when I attended a rally at Washington Park supporting immigration, a participant puffed out a bodacious bub and made a big issue out of it.

A trained memory can recall the strangest details—whether it has to do with gum or not. I remember at one Occupy event, a Kindle got accidentally dropped on the hard pavement. When I was a high school junior, we were required to attend a rally supporting the 1991 Gulf War (which I opposed), and I remember a couple “sucking face” (to use a classmate’s term). If I saw someone years ago wearing unusual clothing, I still remember it. Once—also way back in 1991—I was at a Quincy’s restaurant in Alabama and saw a man wearing a pink t-shirt with bright green overalls. I remember him to this very day.

The heat and humidity at Inwood Park were stifling, so I left the protest early and zipped down to the riverfront. As families enjoyed the cool river breezes, the airy vapors of a certain smokable herb wafted through the air!



Fear factor

This story is why I’m an alt-left populist. I have been for decades—and still am. But now, for the first time in my adult life, I can abandon the liberal label—which is a bit different from alt-left, as you’ll see.

I never thought I’d live to see the day when major liberal websites would try to profit from the fear and panic of a major crisis. Lately they’ve done exactly that. I thought that was Tea Party conduct. Never in a gabillion years did I expect to see anything so seismically irresponsible and selfish from once-respected sites.

My activity is the polar opposite of the pile of anti-science garbage they’ve been selling lately.

Why are they also so hellbent on advocating authoritarian, unrealistic responses to the coronavirus pandemic like longer lockdowns? As part of their money-grubbing scam, they use outright propaganda, negationism, and alarmism to promote this view. They’ve done it since March, and it continues. In early May, when a confidential government report that seemed to predict an unrealistic rise in coronavirus cases was suspiciously leaked to the media, Johns Hopkins University and the *Washington Post* quickly discredited it, as it was merely a hypothetical model. But a staffer of one of the so-called liberal sites posted *two* entries spreading the debunked story in the hopes of extending the martial law regime. Both articles were instantly moved to the site’s front page. (This rise in cases went on to not occur.)

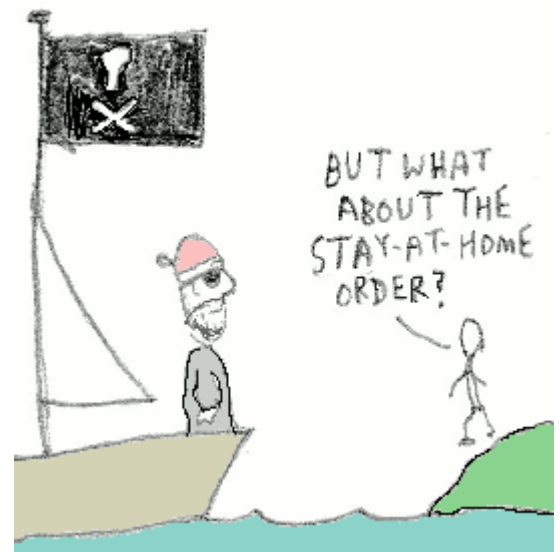
Don’t get me wrong. There was pushback from multiple commenters on the site. It’s impossible on a historically liberal site for there not to be. What’s liberal about placing entire countries under house arrest? On the other hand, this was a rare policy that managed to generate extreme revulsion across the political spectrum.

Except from the self-anointed intelligentsia that runs the so-called liberal blogosphere. These fearmongering grifters are liberal only when it’s to their benefit. I got mighty fed up with reading about what horrible people we are for living in the Midwest and having crooked teeth and strabismus. Yep, it’s just miserable living in a state where I *didn’t* get hauled straight to jail just for exercising outdoors during a completely ineffective and harmful stay-at-home order. Terrible.

Also, after seeing the jaw-dropping failures of both major parties at “fighting” the coronavirus crisis, I’m done with both of them. I’m never voting for either one again. Why am I registered as a member of a party that won Beverly Hills but not Appalachia? I’m changing my party affiliation to Socialist as soon as I get the chance. I’m finished with major parties that only offer scraps. Narcissistic milksops vote for “ideals”, but we must vote for *survival*. In addition to being an alt-left populist, you might also say I’m a pirate socialist. Imagine how an 18th century pirate would react to a crisis like this. You can see a pirate opening the newspaper and reading about a smallpox epidemic. But instead of being locked down for 3 months, all they’d do is just ask the deli clerk to bring them their fish and chips outdoors, and buy extra lime juice.

But never, ever, ever would a pirate be locked down. Inconceivable. Outrageous. Ridiculous! The great pirates fought for better conditions—which can’t be achieved under lockdowns.

The regulatory powers to fight this virus shouldn’t be all or nothing, but in recent weeks, even the economic damage of these restrictions has become more apparent as public officials refuse to provide an economic remedy. The social damage has been clear all along. By instituting lockdowns and other draconian measures, government officials engaged in an astonishing amount of malpractice. They left so many people without hope, and it was based on bad science. In addition, policies



that were completely unthinkable outside a police state before March were normalized by websites that I *never expected to normalize them*. Good science gives us data, and our values tell us what to do with the data. Shutting down society values budgetary concerns over life and the quality of life.

The evidence is convincing that we're being governed by a secret international regime that stage-manages news outlets and commandeers public officials. There's absolutely no doubt about that. This only encourages irresponsible swindlers to use panic and propaganda to deceive donors. I also think people are tired of their entire lives being placed on hold for months for a *totally ineffective* policy because the media is being such screeching babies. The prevalence of this virus in the U.S. today is not what it was in March. Even the IHME model says it peaked way back on March 29.

Before anyone accuses me of not taking this virus seriously, I got the NOVID contact tracing app. The 18th century didn't have apps, but it did mark the first known instance of contact tracing. Contact tracing is a much more effective way of fighting contagious diseases than the authoritarian measures that we're expected to unquestioningly follow forever.

Think. Do. Be.

Towelettes in the toilet

Toilets keep being funny.

In Ammanford, Wales, something ridiculous happened that has to do with toilets. A woman flushed gobs of cosmetics and hundreds of wet wipes down the dumper. This completely clogged the town's sewer system.

A work crew had to spend hours unclogging it, and water had to be cut off to numerous homes. They had to confront the woman about the headaches of flushing unflushable items. One sanitation official said only urine, feces, and toilet paper should be flushed: "This incident in Ammanford is a stark reminder that only the 3 P's should be going into your toilet: pee, poo, and paper."

The Earth is a sphere

I can't believe this is even a story.

People across the political spectrum should be able to agree the Earth is a sphere, not a flat plane. In recent weeks, some of the rank-and-file of the right seem to be finally realizing that those of us on the left don't have horns and cloven hooves. I'm sure they agree the Earth is spherical—like a big ol' bub. In fact, when you blow a bubble with bubble gum, it's less of a perfect sphere than the Earth is—especially if you produce a Dallas/Fort Worth.

But it's hard for some to fathom, and there's a literal flat earth society that seems to be gaining clout in society.

Pirates and explorers even in antiquity knew the Earth is a sphere. They knew it because, when a ship approached, the sail appeared bobbing above the horizon before the hull did. The ship didn't grow from an infinitesimally small dot as it got closer. When I was about 4, I had seen globes but I thought we were on the inside of the sphere and the sky was like a dome. But it didn't take long to figure out the facts.

The flat Earthers think otherwise. They think the Earth is a flat circle—not unlike a record album. According to this belief, the North Pole is at the very center of this circle, and the South Pole stretches along the circle's entire edge. They believe a 150-foot-tall wall of ice runs along the entire rim of the Earth, and that NASA personnel constantly guard it to make sure nobody climbs over it and falls into an endless nothing.

They claim both the sun and the moon are only 32 miles across and are only 3,000 miles from Earth, and that the stars are 3,100 miles from Earth. To explain the fact that the sun and moon don't collide during an eclipse, they say the sun is actually obscured by an "antimoon." They've also been known to say the moon produces its own light.

How do they explain gravity? They believe objects do not fall downward to the ground, but that the Earth shifts upward.

Not long ago, a group of flat Earthers planned a cruise to Antarctica to try to prove their ideas. But they blame the United Nations for trying to make it illegal to explore that continent. They also argue that the UN using a world map centered on the North Pole on its flag is an admission that the Earth is flat.

Why do they believe all this poo-poo? Some of it seems to be because flat maps need to flatten the Earth to depict the whole world. But that doesn't explain the rest of their beliefs besides merely thinking the Earth is



flat.

There's a variant of the flat Earth theory that says the world is not a flat circle of a finite size but that Antarctica actually goes on forever in every direction—so that the Earth is of an unlimited size.

There's other false beliefs out there related to geography that seem to be gaining traction. One is that Australia doesn't really exist. Another is that Finland doesn't exist and was made up to justify fishing quotas. Another is that there's a whole region of Brazil still inhabited by dinosaurs. Yet another is that there's a secret dorm building for astronauts standing on stilts in the Pacific Ocean that's 5,000 miles long but only the width of a narrow hallway. Another is that you can go further north than the North Pole by heading into outer space.

With the blatantly dishonest and propagandistic frame of mind that the media has these days, you almost expect to turn on the news some evening and hear: "Tonight, startling new evidence that the Earth is flat." It would be like the day they ran their "greed is good" story. You can imagine the "listen to the experts" crowd disregarding basic knowledge that's been known for thousands of years as they try to decide who the good people and the bad are. I wonder why we even spend tax dollars on science and health agencies run by actual professionals when the noise machine can just give us their take for free. "Experts say pee-pee poo-poo" isn't proof of anything without data to back it up.

(A postscript about one of the media's "medical experts": It turns out he has no medical background and is just a millionaire industrialist who serves as one of the top executives of an online schooling program. Most of the time, he just writes about *Star Wars*. The media didn't even bother to research his background before they had him on.)

A buncha Bazooka got wosted

Hey! Is that Bazooka you're chewin'?! Down into the fiery pits of level 1 with you!

One of my readers e-mailed me a gum story from many years ago, which is automatically important because it's a gum story from many years ago. She would chew the stuff, don't ya know.

She says that one day, she buyed several whole boxes—not just packs, but *boxes*—of Bazooka bubble gum. To chew? To chew! To blow some mean bubs with? To blow some mean bubs with! She says that one of her favorite things to do at the office where she worked was take the wrappers and the little comics that came with them and carefully place them on the floor when nobody was looking.

It was fun to see the reaction of other workers when they found the Bazooka comics on the floor. They could never figure out who put the wrappers there—or why.

But sometime later, she decided to dig into another box of this precious beegie and chomp it. Alas, it was stale. It wasn't some ancient artifact. But it had already passed its window of freshness. Therefore, it was wosted.

It's unknown where she was when she discovered the ruinment of her priceless bubble gum. I wonder if it was at the office, and if the spoilage of the gum caused her to drool in front of fellow workers.

Coronavirus? There's a bubble gum for that!

Researchers at the University of Central Florida are working on a new product to stop the spread of coronavirus. Can you guess what this product is?

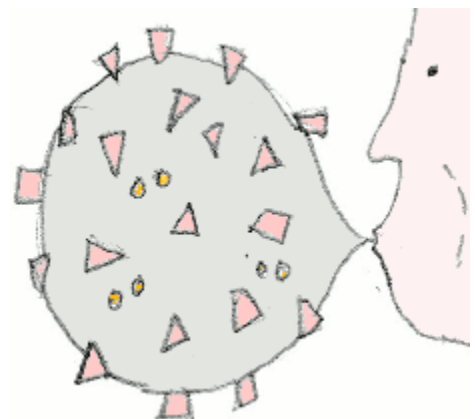
Here's a hint: You can blow bubbles with it. You can probably puff out a biggie if you just lay down your tracks!

Why, I'm talking about bubble gum, of course!

The researchers recently received a \$200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to make this beegie. News reports call it a "gum-like compound" that contains cornstarch. The advantage of this gum is that it makes the droplets that carry the virus too heavy to be spread.

They're also working on a lozenge—like a cough drop—that does the same thing. Some people think cough drops are hilarious, but there's really nothing guffawy about 'em. Indeed, they're mighty sad. But this isn't just any old Halls.

Both these products may be ready for mass production by July. So when July comes, we need to see a sea of big bubbles out there at the beach to fight this crisis!



Burger King gentrification plan dead

Remember a few months ago when Bellevue rubber-stamped a plan to let a historic building be demolished to build a Burger King?

Now that proposal is dead.
Reimagine!

The politics of masking...

If you don't go close enough to strangers to spread a virus, is it necessary to take a precaution that is rejected by the WHO and poses risks of its own? Do folks on the right and left share a consensus that it's security theater? Is the real split between the rank-and-file and the chattering, technocratic elites? The growing "LockdownSkepticism" group on Reddit supports this consensus. After all, masking wasn't practiced much in America until recently—and a majority still don't practice it.

Masks have long been part of industry practice for medical workers. But this piece deals with usage *outside* this field. I have a bandana that can double as a mask—but it's *never* to be used as one outdoors or in uncrowded areas. *Ever!*

Is there a correlation between political views and wearing a mask to fight coronavirus? It was hard to say for sure, because so few wear one—especially outside. On May 12, I counted people I saw in public spaces, and masked people were outnumbered 79 to 1. On May 16, it was 122 to 1. Although the WHO and many health agencies around the world say masks have no benefit outside the medical field, some state and local governments have ukased that customers of indoor businesses must wear some sort of covering until these orders are revoked many centuries from now. This is moot when most folks just don't visit indoor businesses anymore. Indoor establishments look like death now.

My impression was that those who trust the WHO are less likely to mask up. A major source of constipation is the anti-science virtue sigmunds of the poopots of the Internet who start confrontations when they see people unmasked—even though the WHO isn't on board with masks. Those who behave this way are entitled bullies—certainly not leftists, as I've read other vitriol they post. They attack the George Floyd rallies as much as they attack joggers and picnickers. They have no real plans or ideas. But there's no statistical proof that leftists are less likely to wear masks—as I've noticed *hardly anyone* wears one. Mask usage seems equally low regardless of political views.

It's not that we're throwing caution to the wind. Quite the contrary. There's several valid reasons why masking isn't a widespread practice. One is that it's usually unrealistic—especially during outdoor activity, eating, and exercise. It also impedes breathing and social interaction. Another is that it's dystopian. Another is that most folks don't violate others' personal space in the first place. Most people don't go around shoving their faces where it isn't welcome, so how likely is it that they'll be within 6 feet of a stranger? I've observed that the left and the right have come to peaceably agree to a populist consensus on this, as "LockdownSkepticism" shows.

The WHO isn't alone in advising against masks for most activities. Many health departments worldwide—notably Denmark, Wales, Sweden, Australia, and Finland—agree. So does *New England Journal of Medicine*. Few agencies except Trump's CDC recommend widespread maskage. The CDC didn't suggest it before the Trump era. Why do few others recommend it? It's not just because masks use up materials needed by medical workers but also for other reasons, including masks being easily misused. The WHO just reviewed its recommendations in April and stuck by them.

Even conservatives are starting to agree there's plenty of reasons to trust the WHO over the Trump regime on a long litany of matters. I'm flabbergasted that even more people don't follow the WHO. Should we really take medical advice from Trump after he endorsed injecting Clorox?

Plus, Dr. Anthony Fauci even told *60 Minutes*, "There's no reason to be walking around with a mask"...

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/preventing-coronavirus-facemask-60-minutes-2020-03-08>

Fauci also runs outdoors maskless. Wow, he's living on the edge!

What if?

If one is worn, what would we on the left use as a mask? Healthcare workers I know might use a mask like the ones at work. If you're not in that field, you might acquire a bandana. I was able to get an old bandana, but it—like most masks—is only for buildings where a regulation might muscle compliance, and lately I've avoided most indoor spaces. Cowboys and pirates used bandanas as protection from dust and wind. I'm waiting on the edge of my seat for some media scold to decide they don't like people substituting a bandana for a mask and tries to legislate that out of existence like they do with everything else. Wait, they're already trying! The media has had a particularly hard time hiding their disdain for the masses lately.

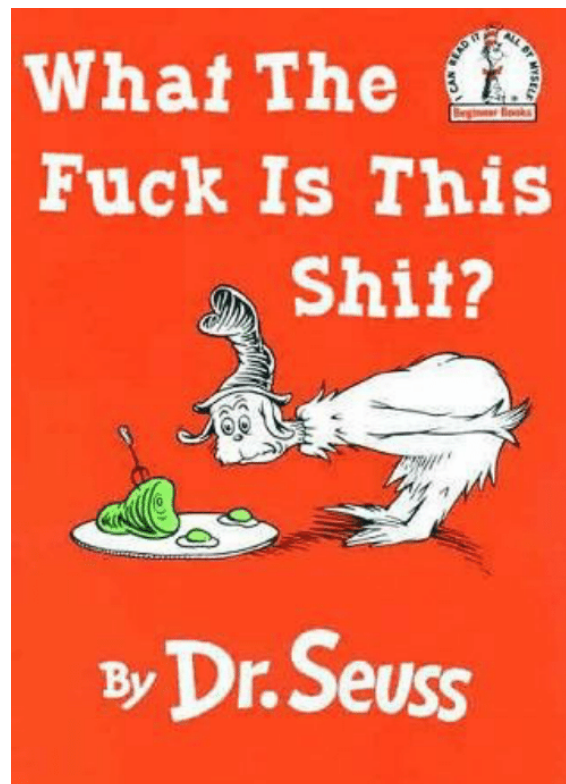
I'm fed up with those who angrily thrash themselves about the room because they saw a poll that says



nobody in Montana wears a mask outside. I know the lockdowns have driven people to the edge of their sanity, but that's no excuse for the attacks. I guess it's tough for some to bear that they lost months of their life to a house arrest covering half the world's people and didn't accomplish its stated goal—so they try to trade it for a different bad policy based on what the media covers. People complaining about maskless joggers are the same ones who demand to see the manager of a store because they're not allowed parking in front of the driveway. If so many people disobey a mask order, one of the biggest reasons is that a faceless society doesn't fit with human nature, which relies on some social interaction. Instead of bullying them, the best way to react is to actually do your homework about the virus. We have loads—loads—of data on this virus we didn't have in March, and each new item brings us closer to understanding it and stamping it out—or at least learning to live with it while letting life get back to normal.

Incidentally, a Pew survey reveals that 62% of Democrats feel the WHO has done a good or excellent job of dealing with the pandemic—while only 28% of Republicans agree. Not that the parties' leaders are any different from each other, so I can't blame one party any more than the other.

Lost semester looms



Recently, schools and colleges all over America canceled the last 2 months of in-person instruction and instead offered distance learning. But schools are an important element of society and can't stay closed forever. However, it appears that educational institutions are already botching their late summer reopening so badly that there's no point.

Most of America is not like Montana, where some schools reopened way back on May 7 and reportedly inched almost back to normal. Some school officials there say everything will be business as usual after summer break. (Will it be *Cargo* too?) In the rest of the country, the debate is whether schools will come back for the new school year with in-person classes or just rely on distance learning. Many have already settled for the latter. Yet most students want the former—to some extent—because that's part of the school experience.

But trust me, they're not going to want the mess that's being made of it. I guarantee I wouldn't want to set foot in a school until the foolishness ends—which it probably will eventually, but not quickly enough.

Nobody knows better than I do that schools are not always stellar examples of sanitation. I attended a couple of schools that should have been shut down by the health department. But you can't have a school that has the extreme social distancing guidelines that have prevailed this spring. It's unworkable and unrealistic. Sanitation measures like better access to sinks should have been in place long ago, but it's not possible to have rigid distancing and a lack of some level of socializing. It's a logistical and social nightmare. You might as well just have distance learning. If the school is so laden with viruses, shouldn't it close anyway? How can someone learn in an environment that's so contaminated? A school is either safe or it isn't.

One of the things schools and colleges are supposed to teach is teamwork. It can't be taught under extreme social distancing—which is antithetical to education.

Open schools the right way—or just don't open them.

There'll be pushback against this extreme distancing for sure. Who wants to walk around in a hazmat suit at school like it's a toxic waste dump? There's certainly no way this should be allowed to become a normal part of life. If I was a high school senior who had selected a college only to see it head in this direction, I'd cancel my enrollment pronto. This isn't the sort of society I want to live in.

Many college students agree. A stunningly large number of students are just going to skip a semester—maybe even take a gap year. There won't be much employment out there during this time off, but they have no desire to go through a semester without face-to-face learning. One survey said 63% of high school seniors don't know if they'll be able

to attend the college of their choice, and that was even before it appeared the rollout of the new school year would be botched. A more recent poll says 33% of high school seniors plan to cancel college instead of taking all-online classes. ABC reported that a parent said of the college experience, "All of that's gone."

What about primary and high school? It appears to be just as much of a twisted mess—and kids can't avoid it without breaking the compulsory education laws.

The number of schoolchildren forced to attend summer school reportedly increased dramatically this year, though this too will be administered via remote learning. But the fact that so many students flunked is evidence that a lot of schools used the crisis as an excuse to write off these kids. Now some districts are using the "lost" days to justify starting the next school year earlier—although that would be riskier if the goal is to avoid the pandemic.

I wouldn't have been able to carry out my greatest academic achievements in the "new normal" schools and colleges. It simply wouldn't be possible. Such extreme, prolonged social distancing has very real negative effects on lives.

Meanwhile, polls continue to speak volumes. A new *USA Today*/Ipsos poll says 1 in 5 teachers are unlikely to come back if their schools reopen, and 9 in 10 say extreme social distancing guidelines will be unenforceable. A separate poll of parents says 6 in 10 say they're likely to let their kids continue remote learning.

We're all excited that house arrests are lifting. Beaches up and down the coasts are opening, and news photos of New York's Central Park, Los Angeles beaches, and gobs of places in-between show people out and about. You'd never guess there was a pandemic. Coronavirus cases across the U.S. are now estimated to be less than one-fifth of what they were in April, based on the case count weighted with the number of tests given. The pandemic *will* end—sensationalism by agenda-driven doompansics notwithstanding. Scientists have been working overtime on vaccines since January, and similar preventative antibody treatments may be ready surprisingly soon. But this feeling of joy is tainted by the disaster that lurks in our schools in a few months.

Our schools are well on their way to adding another chart-topping smash to their "we screwed up" greatest hits collection! Sometimes the light at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming train!

Hallo-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh...Bandana bubbling...

In early May, the region's great outdoors shed the musty cologne of despair and death. People were out having picnics, riding bikes, and smelling the dairy air!

So why not bubble? After all, it was perfect bubble gum bustin' weather. Just before that, a woman was seen bubbling while walking across O'Fallon Avenue—meaning she bubbled in Bellevue and Dayton at the same time. The sport of bubble gum blowing is sure to continue its comeback, so why not prod it along?

I don't regularly bubble. I mentioned once before that I tried to bubble with medicinal gum that the doctor prescribed when I was in 7th grade, but this gee wasn't bubbleable.

My bizbud and I are part of a quaranteam. Recently, when May rolled around, we goed outside, we got fresh air, we bubbled—in public! Why? Because it encourages the public to bubble. Bubble gum entrepreneurs used the same technique as World War II was winding down.



Days after this endeavor, it was proven that it's possible to blow a bubble with a bandana over your face. With care, the bandana appears to inflate—but anyone who witnesses this uproarious spectacle knows it's bubble gum, thanks to its smacking nature. Best all, it doesn't ruin the bandana. Because of this devious plot to bubble under a bandana, the media technocrats' calls for a crackdown will surely materialize.

A fine, fine day

Pizza Hut ain't what it used to be. People used to go there, devour pizza, spill Pepsi, bubble, lean back in their chairs until they tipped over, break shit, and be cool.

For some poology reason, Pizza Hut no longer delivers to Bellevue, thereby undermining your Casey Kasem Sundays. We used to eat at Pizza Hut's now-defunct dine-in locations in Highland Heights and Newport.

When I was about 13 or 14, there were several times when I went to the Newport restaurant with my grandmother and an aunt. By that time, I had to avoid the Highland Heights restaurant because I kept getting attacked. One day, something absolutely uproarious happened.

We sauntered into the eatery like usual, and the woman who worked there led us to a table. We noticed some issue with the table. I can't remember what it was. The table might have been dangerously wobbly or shockingly dirty. So we politely asked for a different table.

Then—for no apparent reason—the restaurant employee became enraged at us! She slammed a stack of menus down on the table and exclaimed, “**FINE!!!**”

What a sight to see! You had to be there! Other customers looked on in horror!

After being treated so rudely, my aunt quite rightly said to the woman, “We'd like to talk to the manager.”

The woman replied, “Lady, I *am* the manager!”

My aunt said in return, “Well, what a manager!”

Later, as we were downing our lunch, this sad sack of a manager approached our table and started chitchatting with us as if nothing had happened. But we never saw her working there ever again!

'Twas kinda neat!



People didn't wear a mask at a convenience store

Unmasked convenience store employees. Good or bad?

During the Cincinnati roadmeet on May 30, some of us stopped by a convenience store. Not only did the customers not wear a mask, but the employees didn't either—even though a health order mandates that workers and patrons mask up. People didn't even have a mask down around their neck.

That was the first day I *really* felt the pandemic was letting up. Health regulations exist for valid reasons. But was I offended by the lack of masks? Well, um, not really. I almost feel guilty about this. I know the WHO is on my side, and my default stance is personal autonomy. But what if Trump's CDC got it right and the WHO got it wrong? Nah. It's still not enough to outweigh my principles in this case. I think it's time to move past the pandemic and let scientists work their magic. Realistically, that's about the point where we're at.

Usually, nobody is more wary of germs than I am. Oddly, that's probably why I'm less afraid of coronavirus than many people are. To me, a pandemic is like any other day—at least from the standpoint of epidemiology.

A mask also stymies social interaction, even for someone like me who has a very dark personality. Seeing a sea of masks would reduce morale and confidence. It would make it look like the whole world is contaminated. It's very dystopian.

Yes, since the WHO is on my side, I shouldn't have to discuss it again. Yes, these regulations are very unpopular. But they're also unenforceable. People aren't built to use masks for very long—so they don't. The Internet is full of folks who say hardly anyone obeys mask orders in their state or community, because it's simply impossible to do for too long. This may be why many of these orders expire without a whimper, or the officials who issued them eventually start rephrasing them as mere suggestions. They'll issue a mask order, but then allow places to be reopened to maskless users. Even news outlets manage to get away with showing photos and videos of unmasked people at these places, and not portray them negatively.

From coast to coast and around the world, mask orders are simply not followed by most.

Most Americans today fall into one of 4 political groups: the left, the right, the center, and the virtue signalers. The fourth group controls the media narrative more than the rank-and-file right does—and *certainly* more than the rank-and-file left does. Vulture sigmunds are gripped by fear, not by realistic views of a crisis. When you see someone on Facebook or Twitter haranguing the rest of the world because they can't stay at home 100% of the time for 5 years, that's them.

On the other hand, even those who ostensibly oppose masks don't get to exploit the pandemic just to advance less innocent political goals. Nor do big companies get to exploit the crisis in their advertising.

More Magic: The Gathering cards got ru

It's weird how the only time I ever hear about Magic: The Gathering is when I stumble upon websites that mention rare cards getting ruined.

I found a thread on the public Internet titled "Black lotus magic the gathering card destroyed accidentally." It's about a guy who shoved dozens of these valuable cards underneath the hub of the tires on his Ford Escape so they would make a cool sound. "Destroyed accidentally"? What did he think was going to happen to the cards when he used them to line the tires of his car?

Someone pointed out that one of them was a Black Lotus card—which is valued at \$8,500. Oops! The man tried to brush it off, saying, "Who would pay 9k for cardboard." But the damage was done.

Somebody responded that they had a friend who wasted a \$3,500 card as cut for some marijuana.

Somebody also sent their rare cards to a shop to have them appraised, and the shop cut all the cards in half because they thought they were counterfeit and sent them back.



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