

# The Last Word™

Issue #553

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## Go west, young man!

I goed to the beautiful national parks of Colorado and Utah!

This fact-finding mission lasted from October 3 to 10. It was nearly dashed to detritus on the very first day. We devoured lunchage at a restaurant in a St. Louis suburb and lost a credit card at this eatery. After lunch, we traveled another 20 miles before we found out the card was missing. This forced us to drive all the way back to the restaurant to retrieve it—wosting a whole hour.

That was the same day we noticed someone drew a mustache on Flo from the Progressive ads on a small advertising sign at a Kansas Turnpike tollbooth.

Between our visits to fine national parks and monuments, a guest at our motel in Monticello, Utah, complained at the front desk about a broken toilet. Plus, the toilet in our room kept flushing by itself.

On Tuesday, a loud-and-proud bunker blast was overheard at Canyonlands National Park.

On Wednesday night, while we were watching some political garbage on TV at our hotel in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, a group of about 10 people partied in the parking lot! I was ready to join them, but they left. The whole evening had a party atmosphere, with other guests having foot races up and down the hall all night!

Here I'm resting in a common area of the motel on Thursday...



Later on Thursday, we traveled an unusual and scenic road that runs from State Bridge to Kremmling, Colorado. When we got to the end of the road, another motorist flagged us down and told us we had lost a hubcap at a sharp curve miles back. We spent a half-hour going back and retrieving the hubcap.

Beedle-eedle-eed!

## Geez, not gentrification again!

It took an unelected police state to knock gentrification off our front page, but there's nothing worse than having to deal with both.

After Bellevue spent years rubber-stamping every gentrification land grab, I thought we'd at least get *one* thing out of it. There's a few public policies we *might* agree on, but for different reasons. Some policy stances scare the living daylights out of the gentry only because these stances would discourage people from spending money in town. I care about justice, but some people care about money—even if we would ultimately support the same policy. Now I don't think we're getting *anything* from gentrification, because the pandemic has revealed the worst in people.

Not long ago, a luxury apartment complex opened in Bellevue after the city rubber-stamped that project. Neighbors who dared to complain about luxury noise created during luxury construction were luxury silenced. This complex has on-site parking for its luxury residents. But some residents of the building insist on parking on the street in front of nearby houses—taking parking away from folks in the neighborhood. When confronted about it, the gentry became hostile and ranted about their “rights” being violated.

The parking situation was supposed to be handled by the city before the apartments were even approved.

And may I remind you that the luxury development got an exemption from property taxes. So you're paying for free Toy Money it gets.

## A person brang beer to school in 7<sup>th</sup> grade

Sometimes you'll recall something so ridiculous that there's no way it could have possibly occurred. But it did.

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, one of my classmates actually brang beer to school. The best part is that the teacher saw it and didn't do anything about it. It happened one day at St. Joe's near the end of the school year. That afternoon, we were in homeroom, and my school chum opened his bookbag or backpack and extracted a 6-pack.

It was some minor brand, not any brand I had ever heard of. But rest assured, beer it was. It wasn't tomato juice. 'Twas beer and a force to be reckoned with!

The student talked with a couple of his close pals about how they were going to have a party where they were going to imbibe this delish beer!

Our homeroom teacher was sitting right there at her desk when the kids gathered around the cans of beer. She not only saw and heard the whole thing but seemed to encourage it. She laughed and smiled as the beer loomed.

This is a county that raided video stores that let adults rent porn, yet 7<sup>th</sup> graders could bring beer to school in plain sight?

There was supposedly a separate incident that school year in which the school left some beer laying around and some 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls found it and drank it. Why did the school just leave beer sitting there?

Interesting stuff, beer is.



## A bunch of UK students partied

A bunch of students from the University of Kentucky partied hard. It was mighty badass.

And when the Masters of the Universe found out, did the world ever hear about it!

It was late September, and college football was getting under way. Neighborhoods around campus swelled with students, some of whom partied in yards of friends' homes. These parties were off campus of course, but the Unified Command acted like the students set off dynamite right in the middle of the library.

These events have been met with yet another naked power grab by sociopathic narcissists in charge of Kentucky's long-broken education system.

Some folks on both the right and left were inexplicably surprised that I oppose lockdowns, even though they oppose them too. They apparently thought this is a zine for fake wokesters, and that the only people besides themselves who would oppose lockdowns are right-wingers who would puff up and bluster about it. But this is a simple concept: Real leftists don't support totalitarian policies. Yet did you know the right-wing Koch Foundation supports lockdowns? The Koch Foundation bankrolls the Institute for the Study of Free Enterprise at the University of Kentucky. This is one of many examples of Kentucky schools' dedication to advancing far-right causes. In April, this institute released a preposterous study claiming the stay-at-home order had already saved 2,000 lives in Kentucky. That's hogwash, as the novel coronavirus has only caused about 1,400 deaths in the state so far—after stay-at-home has been abandoned for 5 months.

In this era of social media totalitarianism, which amplifies elitist narcissists' shrill cries, it might not be too surprising that Kentucky's so-called public universities would try to punish students for off-campus activity unrelated to their schooling. After hearing of the parties, the university collaborated with city police to share reports of (gasp!) large gatherings. The school threatened to issue penalties up to and including expulsion. In fact, the university had already found about 100 students guilty of violating these rules since the semester began.

When October came, UK said it would patrol for off-campus parties. But I *guarantee* you the parties are still going on. I'm hoping the school gets sued if any students are punished.

Things have ruled even more at the University of Oregon. Students have held off-campus parties where drunken revelers were found in yards blocks away and mooned the police. But police say that if a student's only "crime" is not practicing social distancing, they will approach the case lightly instead of giving out citations. Plus, a recent look at Snap Map seemed to reveal students smoking marijuana at Penn State, and SUNY-Fredonia has been plagued by trash being thrown in toilets. Snap Map also unearthed an empty Miller beer carton hanging around at the University of New Mexico—meaning someone once again beered at school. I tried looking for news reports from other colleges, but every time I see a news site with the standard Gannett template, I can usually

predict the article is going to have more whining than reporting.

In April, I cared about social distancing. I haven't worried about it since. So why should college students be expected to follow it for 7 months?

## Watch out where the huskies go...And don't you eat that red saliva...

A Frank Zappa poster got wasted—not unlike the Morton Downey Jr. poster, Jimmy the Greek cutout, and Donald Trump board game.

A fella sent me this story, and it's a beaut! He said that one day, he and his girlfriend visited a popular record store. A poster featuring music legend Frank Zappa was spread out on the counter.

The man's girlfriend was drinking a red slushie. You may think you can see where this story is going—and you'd be close but not quite right. The girlfriend leaned over the counter to view some merchandise. Then—for no apparent reason—she drooled on the Frank Zappa poster. The poster was stained with red saliva.

After the pair left the store, the man said to his girlfriend, “You drooled on that poster in there.” But she kept denying it.

The \$98.26 question is: Why did she drool? For most of us, when we're about to drool, we zip our lip tight to prevent it. How did the woman in this story just let it rip and not even notice? Was she a cool person or something?

I remember how during the Occupy years, I kept seeing a Frank Zappa look-alike at the Cincinnati courthouse.



## A bunch of people had a great time at a football game!

I've never cared about college football, but hot damn, some folks have found a way to have a great time at games lately!

A few weeks ago, Southern Methodist University hosted Memphis, and a huge crowd of students gathered on a knoll at the stadium to cheer their team! Social distancing was a thing of the past!

But lo! They didn't get to see the whole game! Around halftime, police ejected the crowd because they failed to practice social distancing. Media reports also say the students were not wearing masks. Gee, ya think? Ya know, it's only been 7 months since we were told wearing masks for 2 weeks would stamp out the pandemic. It's grown tiresome. I don't appreciate it when the Unified Command keeps moving the goalposts.

After the students left, other folks got to enjoy the game too! News photos revealed unmasked families spread out on the lawn, viewing the game to its very conclusion!

A 2007 document by the CDC says, when confronted with a pandemic like this one, we should only “consider” postponing “indoor stadium events.” So why do people lose their minds when college students don't sit far enough apart at *outdoor* games? Extreme social distancing for a pandemic like this wasn't even in the playbook—let alone distancing for months on end.

## Not all bubble gum tastes the same

When most folks buy bubble gum, they're interested in the texture, because they want to know how good of a bubble it will blow. I've mentioned before that some beegie has small chunks in it. Other brands are grainy, while others are smooth as silk. Some blow clear, flimsy bubs, while others produce thicker orbs. There are some brands that blow mean bubbles, but they're so gooey that after the bub pops all over your face (like what cool people always do) you still find strands of pink goo stuck to your face, hair, and glasses days later. Other peeps simply enjoy gunking up their crowns and fillings, and they want the stickiest gum for it.

But what about the taste? Some brands come in many flavors, but this article deals with the default pink flavor generally associated with gum of the bubble variety. Some gum experts say that even within the same brand, pink bubble gum doesn't always taste the same. This piece recounts a host of experiences, but does not name the brands, because the situation is volatile enough that it could change by the time you read this. One day in the gum world is like one year anywhere else.

In my day, there was a small range of flavors associated with pink beegie, but the differences were wide enough that I could usually tell each brand apart. One popular brand tasted a tiny bit like root beer. I commented

on it once, and a family member thought it was hilarious. The formula seemed unchanged for years. Another bubble bustin' brand of gee was said to have tasted like the grainy substance the dentist used when working on your chompers. The person who claimed this in my youth then proceeded to blow a bubble the size of their head, so this brand wasn't completely useless. Another common brand was just as sweet but subtly distinct from the others—though this brand would vary slightly. A high school acquaintance was chomping a wad of an unspecified brand one afternoon when she pulled it out of her mouth and declared, "I swear this gum tastes like Dr Pepper." There was also an unpopular but widely available brand that was laden with artificial sweeteners that were said to make it taste like medicine and caused chewers to gag.

How has the taste of bubble gum evolved in the past 40 years? We asked our panel of gum connoisseurs, which includes a hospitality worker, a small business manager, and a dental assistant. The first brand listed above is said to taste nothing like root beer now—though it seems to vary quite a bit depending on the batch. It is reportedly much too sweet and tastes nothing like a traditional beegee flavor. Although the taste isn't fabulous, it is said to be addictive. After discarding each wad, there's always a craving for a fresh piece. One of the other brands seems to be pretty consistent with its illustrious past. A major brand not discussed above has a tart quality reminiscent of some cereals but is eminently within the usual pink gum range.

Of course you can bubble big with each of these brands, and the bubble gum bustin' brigade will march forward as long as they dare!

## Lawmaker accused of putting used mask in popsicle display case

Longtime readers of this zine—which is your road atlas to being cool—may remember the story of a Republican state legislator in northern Kentucky who allegedly plunged her dirty finger into a tub of chip dip at a supermarket and licked her finger to see if it was fresh.

Now there's a similar story from our friends north of the river.

A Republican state representative in Ohio was reportedly seen doing something just as filthy as the dip caper. According to this story, she was seen shopping at a grocery store while wearing a disposable mask. The big story here isn't that somebody actually obeyed a mask order—even though it's quite possibly the most violated order in the history of orders (except IDEA, which the Nazis who run our schools have violated with impunity for 40 years). The real story is that as the lawmaker was leaving the store, she allegedly removed the used mask and flung it inside a popsicle display case.

The soiled mask rested on some popsicles, smiling its ass off.

## QuikTrip made a quick trip to getting ru

More stuff got ru! Can you believe it?

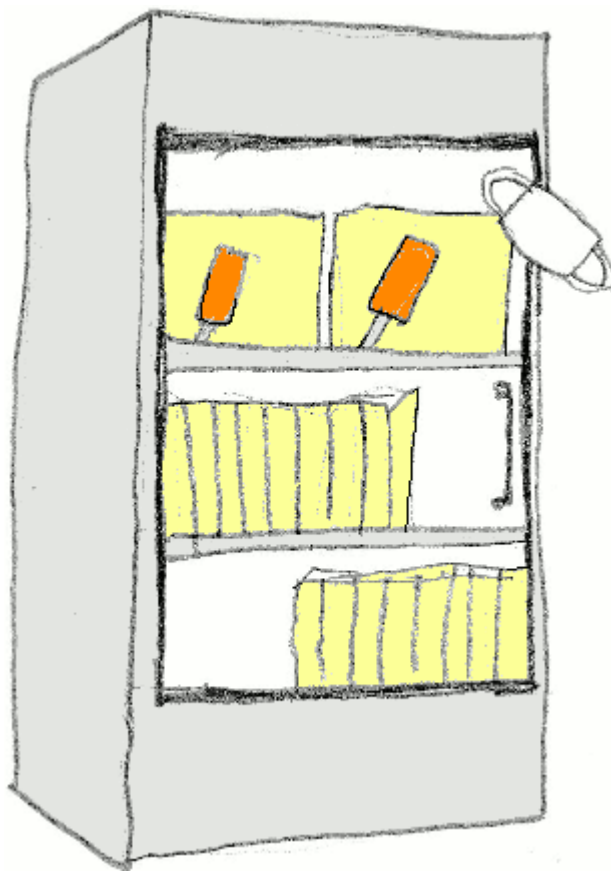
This is yet another set of rapid-fire stories I found on the unambiguously public Internet about valuables getting ru, wosted, or bustaroony. These destroyed items aren't ever coming back. They're gone. Let it sink in.

One commenter said they were angry over something that happened at work, so when they got home, they smashed a bunch of records that they thought had been left behind by their old roommate. It turned out the records actually belonged to the new roommate—and one of them was worth \$200.

Another said that when they were 8, they ruined the stucco walls of a house that was under construction by throwing mud at it—forcing the walls to be completely rebuilt. They threw the mud because they were angry that their favorite woods were bulldozed to build the house.

One person said they worked at a pickle factory that used \$25,000 computer terminals. One day, the commenter decided to roam the factory and invented a game to see how high they could throw the brand new monitors into the air over the pipes in the ceiling. That didn't end well.

Another said they accidentally set fire to a QuikTrip by wrapping cotton balls in an old t-shirt, setting them ablaze, and throwing them into a garbage can. Another said their friend went into a Dunham's sporting





goods store and began playing with a huge bow, causing part of it to break off and fly into a huge mirror that probably cost thousands. He dashed out of the shop and never got caught. Another crashed their car while trying to spit gum out the window. Another person dropped their brand new iPad into a puddle of dog urine that their roommate refused to clean up. Another accidentally broke an ear off an antique glass bunny at the home of some relatives while slathering soap all over it as a prank.

Another commenter said they worked at a restaurant where one day they made over 5,000 prank orders for kiddie beverages—which locked up the computer, lost all customers’ orders, and cost the eatery \$7,000. It turned out that these bevs came in novelty cups, and the bogus orders caused a delivery truck to come by with cups every day for weeks—costing the restaurant even more.

*National Geographic World* magazine it is not.

## Cut your cost of condoms...

I went to high school with a wild and crazy bunch!

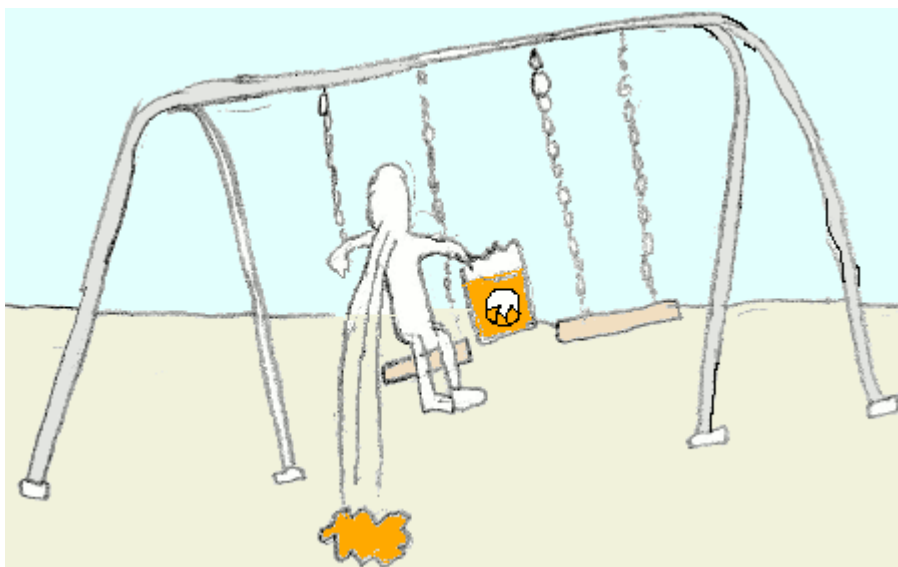
They farted. They peed. They chewed bubble gum.

Brossart? Nope! I’m talking about later when I went to a class for “bad” kids instead.

To celebrate the end of the school year when I was a junior, the school had a little picnic outing at Sharon Woods. While we were at this picnic, my schoolmates bragged of their many escapades. One talked about how he stole condoms from the Kroger supermarket in Covington. I don’t remember exactly how he accomplished this feat, but here’s a rough outline. Apparently, this store kept condoms in a locked glass case. So this student waited until the clerk opened the case for another customer, distracted the clerk, and reached over and pilfered the condoms.

But I doubt this kid would have had any occasion ever to use the condoms. During the picnic, he used the playground equipment like a child half his age. He swung on the swing like an elementary school kid. He had brought along a bag of Doritos, and he kept shoveling huge handfuls of Doritos into his mouth, chewing them up, and deliberately letting huge hunks of chewed Doritos fall out of his mouth into the dirt around the swing. A real ladies’ man!

The school program itself was a living example of the bottomless corruption and delusions of grandeur plaguing our education system. I bet the school had lots of orders for the best swivel chairs and most advanced computer equipment—and that all of it was hoarded instead of being used for students. All we had was that one computer in the back room next to the photocopy machine that someone copied cigarette butts with. The school-to-prison pipeline became ever more congested because of power-hungry ghouls who shirked their obligation to operate real schools.



## Life of the party

Some people have weird ideas for parties.

I noticed something odd in high school. People brag bubble gum to school, and I noticed that as they whipped the gum out of their pocket and crammed a few chunks into their piehole, the wrapper often bore strange phrases.

One of them was “party size” or “party pack.” Must be a weird party! Imagine being invited to a party and the first thing you see when you get there is a bunch of people gathered around a coffee table blowing huge bubbles with bubble gum.

At most parties I attend, there’s beer, pretzels, loud music, maybe even fireworks. But I guess some people consider the main draw at parties to be...bubble gum.

Another phrase on bubble gum wrappers was “fun size.” It was as if there was also a “just sitting there feeling sorry for yourself size.” Any viand formulated for blowing bubs should automatically be considered “fun size”—or at least “funny size.”

You just laughed because I wrote about bubble gum.

## Another trip full of posh crowd ownage

On my trip to Colorado and Utah, many folks continued to take exception to mask mania. Pandemic? The pandemic was as unknown to people on this trip as it was to those on my Ocean City tour.

If the media wants me to write about this topic less, the ball is in their court. These ghouls can end the pandemic. I can't.

Inside a gas station store in Effingham, Illinois, most customers declined to don a mask. Best all, someone had stuffed toilet paper in each of the urinals.

At a restaurant near St. Louis—the same one where the credit card was lost—many customers and employees were maskless. I felt the lack of masks created a better lunch experience, as masks don't exactly raise confidence in our surroundings.

A gas station near Kansas City also yielded few masks. A man declared his intent to enter the shop unmasked and say he didn't see the sign.

It initially appeared that a restaurant in Hays, Kansas, would reveal that town to be the most compliant in the nation, but eventually I did see barefaced customers milling about. Plus, social distancing was absolutely out the window at this establishment. As in most other places, social distancing hasn't even survived as long as masks there. How much do you even think about social distancing anymore? A gas station in Hays had even less maskage.

An eatery in Aurora, Colorado, had few customers, but (you guessed it!) some were maskless. A Colorado rest area unearthed almost no maskage. And people were chewin' bubble gum! They didn't bubble. But they were chewin' bubble gum! The posh crowd's seemingly bad week continued in Grand Junction, where a restaurant saw considerable unmaskage, and the lobby of our motel included a maskless clerk and guests despite the prominent sign.

One of few places with high mask compliance on this mish was the Utah welcome center on I-70 where the restroom smelled of green Hubba Bubba. But things were closer to normal in southeastern Utah, thanks to unmasked guests in our hotel lobby and workers and customers at 2 restaurants (one of which served scrumptious fry sauce). This trend continued to some extent at eateries in Montrose and Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

The posh crowd hardly stood a chance at a gas station in Kremmling. And they could forget about Sterling. Our friendly motel clerk there laughed and smiled, and she sported no face covering anywhere in sight. ("Anywhere in sight" is a favorite phrase of news outlets criticizing barefaced people in swimming pools or mountain climbing.) A restaurant in that city wasn't any more masky.

The clock continued to wind back to 2019 at a gas station in North Platte, Nebraska, and a restaurant in Kearney where a man kept cussing. A fuel station in St. Joseph, Missouri, not only had few masks, but the men's restroom had pee everywhere—which was a nice touch. But no town on this trip was more unmasky than Hannibal. Motel clerks and restaurant workers there were all maskless. You can't beat it! I'm sure Mark Twain, who was raised in Hannibal, would approve of this characteristic of this city.

A filling station in Urbana, Illinois, also drew significant unmaskage—and the floor of the men's room was covered with urine-soaked toilet paper. A restaurant in Greensburg, Indiana, also wasn't a total loss.

Like I said, if the media wants me to write about this less, it's their call. We're on the downslope of the test positive rate, so you'd think they'd want me to write about it less, so I wouldn't be able to point out that there's fewer reminders of this pandemic that they've enjoyed so much. Even at the entrance to several national parks on this trip, the ranger at the booth was completely unmasked, and they greeted us with a wide smile and good cheer. Even if they had sported a dour, grumpy frown, at least we wouldn't suffer the dystopia of them hiding their faces. Ya know, some people really enjoy being able to read facial cues. The elitist media doesn't get to gaslight us into thinking it's not important. If they want to live in a robotic, faceless society, that should be their problem and nobody else's.

We can't tell people "we're all in this together" if every person we meet is treated as an enemy or a biohazard.

## We all scream for yogurt

Recently, a family member observed that some prepackaged yogurt these days isn't very good, and it got me thinking about the destructment of a local ice cream parlor that served delicious yogurt in my childhood.



My memory came alive to recall this parlor, which was located in a downtown Cincinnati department store. We used to visit these stores often, but never bought hardly anything, because their merchandise was rather high-end by our standards. I remember my family buying a kitchen table and chairs at one of these stores once, but not much else. This was back when department stores had, well, departments. They had departments for books, musical instruments, records, you name it! And back then, records meant *records*. You could buy a cute little 45 of your favorite new songs that you heard on the radio.

I faintly remember that the ice cream parlor looked out over some wide corridor or walkway below, and the parlor linked other departments of the store. The parlor was right next to the store's shoe department. For a while, the shoe department had a little TV screen where you'd press a button and it would show a lengthy commercial for a brand of shoe. We'd press the button repeatedly so the TV would go haywire.

And the yogurt was out of this world! I still remember the thick, luscious yogurt emerging from the dispenser, which worked a bit like a soft drink fountain.

But soon it all came crashing down. This amicable ice cream parlor was converted into an upscale restaurant. It reminded me of those places on soap operas where aristocrats socialize. After this occurred, every time you walked through this area to get to other departments, snooty patrons would stare at you as if you had a giant piece of poo-poo with Tinkertoys embedded in it growing out of your forehead.

I don't think that idea lasted too long, but the store itself didn't last much longer after that. Apparently, the city gave free Toy Money to a very high-end competitor. This store somehow forced the other store to shrink its loading docks—which hurt business.

## Scholaring gets the old college try!

There's nothing in my contract that says I have to write about it here every time I go Roads Scholaring. Do I have to build a time machine to go back to when I was in kindergarten to write about seeing a yellow stop sign during a carpool on the way home from school?

A couple Fridays ago, I Scholar'd at Cincinnati's public colleges and universities. I've heard so many stories about partying on America's campuses lately that I wanted to witness it firsthand. I'm past the stage in life of *participating* in college parties, but *writing about* these parties is a different matter, as that's part of my *job*. But I didn't see much.

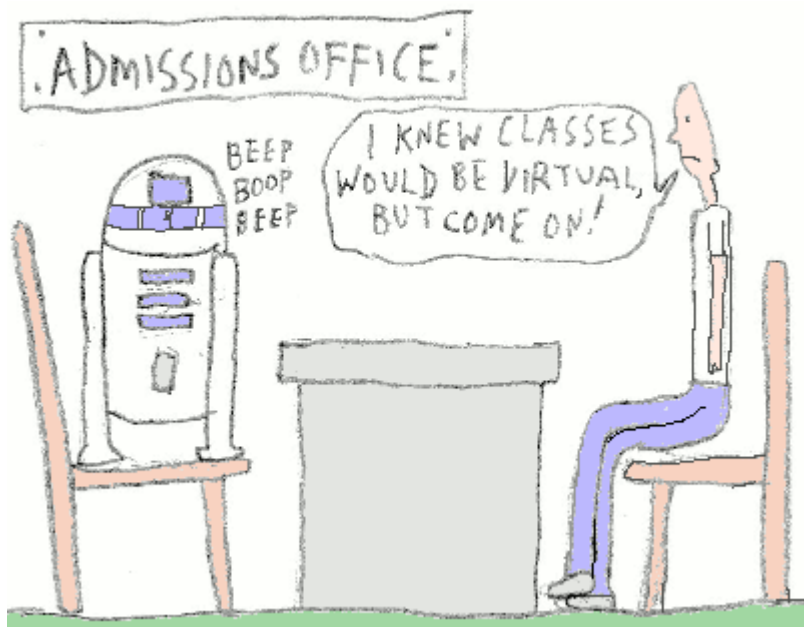
The University of Cincinnati wasn't nearly as bleak as the Unified Command hoped, but it wasn't the undisciplined party pad that a self-righteous Channel 12 story tried to depict either. It just sort of...existed. There weren't nearly as many students on campus as I'd expect to see in a normal year, but a few congregated fluently. Somehow I doubt that many of them have been obeying the idiotic rule that requires them to get permission from the school if they travel.

It appeared that there was a lawn that was roped off, but I didn't get close enough to rip down the yellow caution tape. Surely, there must be someone on campus with the guts to regularly do so.

I zipped down to Cincinnati State, but it was dead. The main building had been closed for months after being heavily damaged by a pipe break, but I had thought there were some in-person classes in another building. You may remember the massive "It all starts here" ad campaign Cincinnati State was running a year or two ago that portrayed the school as progressive and exciting. Now it's all for naught.

The following Thursday, I similarly examined NKU. I didn't expect much, because it's NKU. The discovery a while back that NKU tried to pin another man's crazed rampage on me hadn't exactly improved my opinion of the university. During my recent Scholaring, NKU lived down to expectations. There were a few individuals bopping about campus like normal. Notice I said *individuals*—not *groups*. It's college. You're supposed to *gather*. In total, I saw very few people there. That would have been unthinkable back when I attended NKU. Back then, we would *congregate*. You know, *make friends*. Do shit *together*. People need to socialize, not live like hermits.

It was a beautiful day in the neighborhood, a beautiful day for a neighbor, but most folks wosted it. It's great that there was a little normal activity that day—a middle-aged woman smiled admiringly at me as we



squeezed past each other on the sidewalk—but what a letdown this campus was otherwise. If so many people these days weren't brainwashed into having unwavering, cult-like trust in The Media, I'd have more to write about.

Party on!

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