

# The Last Word™

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## A bunch of antiracist books got banned

The American Library Association has put out its list of most challenged or banned books of 2020, and it's stunning how many titles appeared on the list for *opposing* racism.

I don't understand what's controversial about opposing racism. I hope we can all agree that racial tolerance and justice should be a basic value held by all of society. Yet the book burning continues unabated. In fact, the ALA said antiracist books were challenged more in 2020 than in previous years. This is especially true of books that criticized racist police violence.

One of the volumes on the list is a *New York Times* bestseller titled *Something Happened In Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice*. The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association wrote a letter to the governor of that state demanding that he ban the book. (A vast majority of governors would probably go ahead and ban it. It's not like most of them care about freedom or anything.) The book was also banned by a Nebraska school district, and a TV station in Omaha was sympathetic to the censors. (It seems counterintuitive, but the media is oddly an even bigger threat to a free press than our elected officials are.)

A few months ago, the ALA released a longer list of the most banned books of all of the 2010s. Obviously, I'm not familiar with every title, but the list includes classic novels, series of kids' books, and items whose authors I recognize from other works. But the report says as many as 97% of challenges to books nationwide are never even reported—kind of like the *Circle Of Life* incident I described last month.

The selfish social media neckbeards we discussed last time share more in common with classic right-wing censors than they're willing to admit. That, my friends, is why we call 'em fascists. They're not woke. They're a joke! There is no bigger disconnect than the one between social media shitlibs and true progressives you meet in real life. Folks you meet in person have real progressive energy—unlike the dumb social media recluses who claim to be liberal but are no different from the racist right-wing book burners who we all love to despise. If the hood fits, wear it, losers.



## People didn't wear propeller hats at a concert

Something utterly pibtacular happened at Tower Park in Fort Thomas in early April!

I went to a free bluegrass concert there. I tapped my toes to the music, devoured a picnic dinner that included a sub sandwich, and relaxed on the lawn overlooking the stage! But I noticed something funny. Not tee-hee funny but weird funny. Alright, I admit, it was tee-hee funny too.

I saw that somebody had painted social distancing circles on the lawn with the standard 6-foot space between each. They were still obsessed with social distancing *in April 2021*? What year is this again? People used to get mad at me if I mentioned an altercation that was a day old, but talk about living in the past! (Yes, I'm vaccinated, so I don't care to hear about how I'm spreading a virus just by leaving my home.)

If I was hired to paint the circles on the grass, I would have filled them in with a pattern from a helicopter cap and painted a nice big propeller right in the middle. Social distancing aged like warm milk, and it's hard to see how anyone who ventures into any public place still cares about enforcing it that rigidly. The positive rate for the novel coronavirus in the U.S. peaked on April 3, 2020—over a year ago.

A website announcing the concert warned, "Social distancing will be enforced." At a show where only about 10% of fans wore masks, I can tell you how that went.

The idea that people would religiously practice social distancing ranks up there with Major League Baseball's demands that spectators

wear masks. I've seen photos from most ballparks this season, and guess what? At least half the fans don't give a damn about masks. Someone on Reddit commented that most stadium employees and team owners don't care either, but they put masks in their rules just to impress public health officials. Somehow, Major League Baseball also has this stated rule for minor league teams that are affiliated with a big league club, but I'm sure minor league fans violate it too.

Those who really lost out over the concert are the doomsday preppers who truly *expect* social distancing to be followed perfectly. Not people who *say* they expect it, but actually do. How many people really expect it? Sometimes you'll see a news report about an event or new business where the reporter ends the piece with, "And of course, social distancing is required." They don't seriously *expect* it, do they? That would be a miserable way to live. I bet all these columnists who write about how they follow all the virus rules actually don't, and if you see them in a public place, they'll be bopping around like normal times.

Sixteen months into the pandemic, people can't possibly still be serious about social distancing, can they? That's why I almost burst out in laughter when I saw the social distancing circles. There's nothing funny about COVID-19, but it's hard to take the park board seriously when it humiliates itself by obsessing over painting circles on a lawn. I have bad kidneys, but it would be tough to take it seriously if I tried to fight it by getting a kidney-shaped swimming pool and clogging the filtration system with rocks to mimic kidney stones. That's about what the circles are like.

To quote an intelligent person: Reals over feels!

## iTunes becomes profanity police

You may have heard of iTunes. Developed by Apple, Wikipedia says iTunes was "well-received in its early years" but has recently been criticized for its bloated software.

Just last year, someone posted on the public Internet that iTunes now has a new problem: censorship. The post is titled "iTunes Match Ruined My Collection." (The magic word!) iTunes Match is a service that charges a fee for people to scan their CD's and match them with tracks on the "cloud." They think people still talk about the "cloud" all the time. I'm surprised they don't have people upload their music with a flip phone.

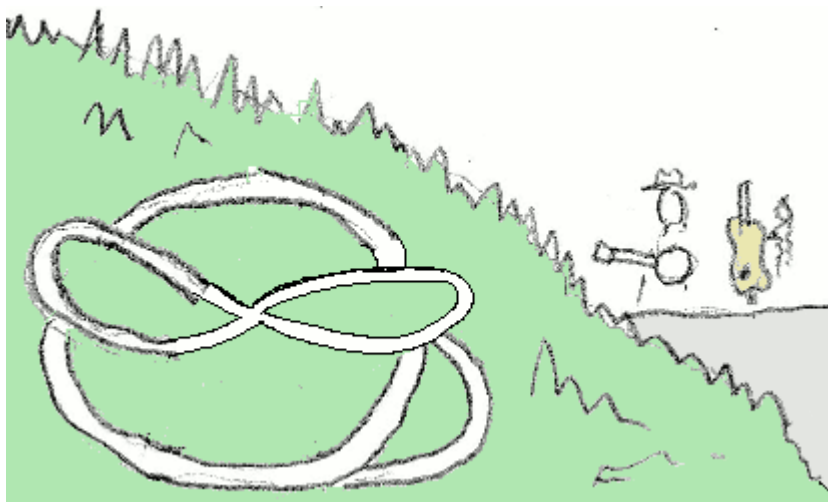
This story shows the only "cloud" we need to discuss is the Allowed Cloud—and not in a positive light. According to that post, the commenter used iTunes Match to scan all their CD's and match them with tracks. It appears that they then got rid of their whole CD collection, believing all the music was safe and sound on the "cloud." Alas, it was not to be! They discovered many songs now "had all of the profanity bleeped or silenced out."

They said, "All of these albums were music that I purchased and own, and Apple ruined them. It's not up to them to decide what a grown adult is allowed to listen to, especially since they don't own that music."

I guess iTunes thinks it doesn't really matter because someday—maybe trillions of years from now—the sun may expand and engulf the Earth and fry everything on it, even the all-important "cloud." iTunes encouraging people to store their whole collection on the "cloud" is like someone telling me I should throw away all my old records because some of the music now appears on YouTube.

## Home of the Bruins gets reduced to ruins!

April was a spectacle before it even began, as this happened at the end of March!



Given the abject failure of California state government so far this decade, some of you might think anyone associated with UCLA would be spending their entire spring holed up at home wearing 3 hazmat suits. But I've got news for you!

To celebrate a stunning athletic win, folks at UCLA lit up the campus in a big way! A crowd of hundreds of students formed. Revelers set couches on fire, stood on top of cars, and rode down the street in a Target shopping cart. Fireworks were of course detonated. Somebody even played the school's fight song on a trumpet!

It's possible that someone even mentioned gum—or blew a bubble.



## You guessed it! More stuff got ru!

Know what you need? A Filaribit, my little woocap!

Seriously, you need another collection of stupid-fire stories of expensive or irreplaceable things getting destroyed or lost. One commenter on the public Internet said his dad was a high-ranking Air Force man, and the family lived in France for a while. The commenter said that when he was about 11 or 12, the family went to a friend's house for a wedding reception. He was horseplaying with other kids at the event and crashed plumb-bob into a table full of fine crystal stemware and several open bottles of champagne. Needless to say, all that glassware and champagne went wastage bастage.

Another commenter said they spilled oil from an air freshener all over a wooden nightstand at their pastor's house—ruining it. Another said their grandfather worked for a company that made satellites and a worker there knocked over a \$15 million satellite. One person said they saw a woman pay a 5-figure amount for a vase at an auction and then accidentally break it. Another person broke a bottle of cognac worth over \$4,000. Another lost their brother's autographed John Elway football. Another wasted a \$20,000 laser microscope—squandering their whole grad school stipend. Another said they knew some woman who worked at a SillyCon Valley factory and once fried \$5 million worth of circuit boards.

Another said their boss was so enamored of iPhones that he bought an iPhone 5S—which cost hundreds—as soon as it was released. Then his son promptly dropped it in a harbor. The boss jumped in the harbor to try to find it so he could get the discount on a replacement, but couldn't find it. In the process, he cut his fingers all up. He had to pay full price for a replacement, but when he did, it wouldn't recognize his fingerprint from the backup because his hands were all cut up. Within days, he dropped that phone onto a sharp rock and broke it. So he purchased a third iPhone 5S.

A commenter said their grandmother broke a very expensive gaming laptop by standing on it because she thought it was a scale. Another said they were babysitting for a wealthy family and crashed through a valuable painting. Another said that when they were growing up, they shorted out a \$20,000 mainframe at their dad's workplace by playing with a circuit board.

Another person heaved their own laptop out of a fifth story window. Another said their stepdad smashed a perfectly good 52-inch plasma TV because he was mad that the Yankees won the World Series. Another said they angrily broke furniture when the Seahawks lost the Super Bowl.

A woman said her then-husband got her a very expensive custom-made vase as a gift. The couple was expecting a child via in vitro fertilization, and the vase had a man, woman, and baby on it. But she smashed the vase on the doorstep when she discovered her husband was cheating on her.

Another commenter spent weeks filling in an entire Etch-a-Sketch to try to see the inside of it. But when they were almost done, they threw a temper tantrum, and the Etch-a-Sketch went completely back to gray. Another person threw a beer bottle at a TV at a sports bar—breaking the TV.

*Highlights for Children* magazine it is not.

## Will cicadas blow bubbling season?

I think I'm coming down with something. Why, it's bubble gum bustin' fever! It spreads every spring as bubbling season inevitably gets under way! Even last year saw the amazing bub that crossed city lines.

But there's a catch. Every 17 years, we're confronted with the invasion of the 17-year cicadas—and this is the year. The media has a field day and runs endless annoying stories about the weeks-long event. They focus on every aspect of it—except the most important, which is how cicadas will affect bubbling. You don't want to be hanging out at Marathon or standing around at a festival blowing a beamy bub only to have a cicada flap along and burst it.

So how has bubbling been affected by past cicada appearances? Let's take a trip back to 1987. It was the year *Hooperman* starring John Ritter debuted. Whitney Houston, the Beastie Boys, U2, and Bon Jovi had the bestselling albums, while WCLU departed from our local airwaves. The Minnesota Twins eked out a World Series victory. And the bubble gum world was ruled by neato flavors like bananaberry split. It was perhaps the peak era for bubbling, and cicadas were no match for this time-honored sport.

Bubbling blasted along fluently. Anyone who socialized with friends or family remembers their peeps climbing out of a car with a mammoth bubble bouncing from their piehole. Words of frustration were uttered about the screeching din of the cicadas, but no cicada dared to venture near the expanding orb. People bubbled at parking lots. They bubbled while browsing the menu at restaurants. They bubbled at baseball games. Bubble, bubble, bubble. That's all anyone in 1987 ever did. And the bubs were big.

As for 2004, despite the national stupor that was evident on other matters, you didn't hear much about cicadas. And my writings from that spring and summer reveal gobs of public bubbleblings, including on the Fourth of July and on a visit to a Golden Corral restaurant. Three people even bubbled at a small festival on the Purple People Bridge, and a woman who was shopping at Kroger bought a big bag of Super Bubble—a brand of beege known for producing huge bubbles that bust everywhere. Someone was even loudly cracking bubble gum in the movie theater when I went to see *Fahrenheit 9/11*—back when Michael Moore was still good, before he became the sellout hack he is now.

I need to talk to folks who were around during the cicada appearances of 1970, 1953, 1936, and 1919 to see how bubbling was impacted then.

## YouTube really steps in it with horseshit theory

Still think Big Tech censorship isn't a crisis?

You may have heard of the horseshoe theory—the idea that the far right and the far left are more similar to each other than they are to the political middle. But as our technocratic overlords claim to represent a moderate “consensus”, these sanctimonious propellerheads follow the horseshit theory.

Google-owned YouTube has begun removing videos that oppose COVID-19 lockdowns or any form of lockdown culture. They did it again in early April by taking down a 90-minute video featuring an ideologically diverse group talking about virus-inspired expansion of government powers. The roundtable discussion was hosted by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a diehard conservative—not exactly the type of politician I'd typically support. The event featured Oxford epidemiologist Dr. Sunetra Gupta, Harvard's Dr. Martin Kulldorff, Stanford's Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, and former presidential adviser Dr. Scott Atlas. Bhattacharya and Atlas are associated with a conservative think tank, while Gupta and Kulldorff have been linked with more progressive ideals. A Daily Kos diary once featured Gupta on a list of “trailblazing women”, and Gupta has claimed to be “more left than Labour.” More significantly—in an interview with the left-leaning *Jacobin* magazine—Kulldorff said, “As a public health scientist, it is my duty to fight for public health independently of partisan politics.”

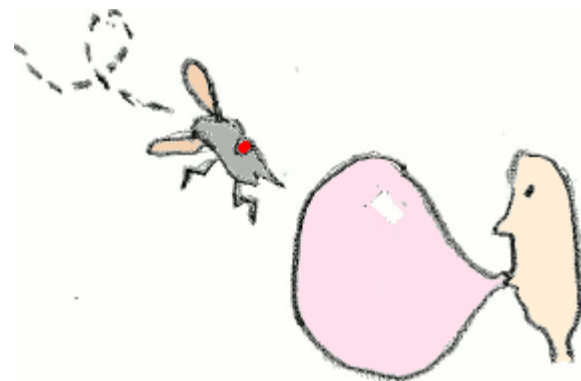
After the *Jacobin* piece, a Twitter user said of lockdowns, “There is no way to reconcile progressive values with a containment strategy that leads to such widespread destitution.”

All of this underscores that public health should not be politicized. We should be dedicated to health, not a desire to embarrass political rivals.

Yet YouTube removed the video of DeSantis's event because it “contradicts the consensus of local and global health authorities.” What “consensus”? The fact that both Ron DeSantis and *Jacobin* have assailed lockdowns proves the *real* consensus is *against* lockdowns. You can't get much more politically diverse than that.

The claims made in the video didn't even contradict most health experts. One of its key points was that young children do not need to wear masks—a stance supported by the WHO. In fact, the WHO even suggests only limited maskage by adults. One thing is for damn sure: If you tried to physically force a mask onto any kid of mine, I'd see you in court. Shopping bags have a warning to keep them out of reach of children because of the risk of suffocation, and the same applies here.

Bhattacharya also noted that it is “developmentally inappropriate” for children to wear masks and that



experts found no evidence supporting masks only a year earlier.

The WHO has even recently criticized lockdowns. In fact, the CDC recommended against lockdowns until just last year. Even if the video only opposed the stay-at-home orders that have destroyed so many lives, that wouldn't contradict the WHO. Plus, the CDC has recently contradicted itself on some measures, which has led YouTube to pick which stance it wants to believe in deciding whether to remove videos. There has to be *thousands* of videos on YouTube that don't do anything except spout idiotic conspiracy garbage, yet YouTube deletes a serious panel discussion featuring people with actual medical credentials.

Science means future events are open to debate. We know the climate change disaster is real because of past data. We know it's real not because of future modeling but because of what's already taken place. We use clean energy because we've seen what happens when we don't. But how do we know for sure how what we do today will affect the future of COVID-19? If anything, there's enough past data to show that stricter lockdown culture actually makes it worse, not better.

There's also been some speculation that Google has used its clout with government officials to prod them into investigating services that might compete with YouTube and enable folks to challenge corporate control of information.

The stance of Big Tech and the media has been right-wing on economics and war but is actually more of a weird goo than a pure ideology. I guess the Democrats stopped supporting 'Net neutrality because this goo is pretty much their stance these days too.

Monopolistic Internet services like Google, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter should be regulated as common carriers—much like phone companies are supposed to be. Much as a phone company can't disconnect someone for views that they transmit, this would prohibit these tech giants from policing the flow of information. It's sad to think that in less than 40 years we've shifted from media outlets allowing equal time to huge corporations smugly censoring facts. In addition to making Big Tech giants common carriers, they should also be broken up—much like how Major League Baseball and the NFL should have their antitrust exemptions revoked (though for different reasons from what some Republicans believe).

Narcissistic losers shouldn't get to silence doctors.

## Rolls got wasted

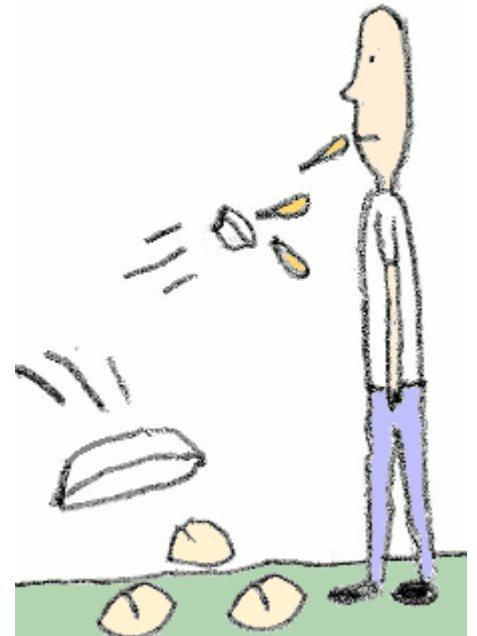
All those rolls, wastage bastage!

It was late April when a group of us goed to a nearby restaurant for lunch. Winds were whipping. Boogers were dripping. Somewhere in the world, bubs popped and flopped. And the eatery grew more and more crowded as the afternoon wore on.

Finally, another group of peeps plunked down at the table right next to ours. The waiter promptly brang them a plate of rolls with cinnamon butter. But then he did a strange thing. He somehow dropped the plate of rolls onto the flinty floor! It sounded like glass breaking!

It was like being at a Gallagher show! Hunks of butter flew everywhere! I think there was even butter on my shirt. And now we know why they call them rolls. It's because they rolled across the floor! The rolls were ruined, but the waiter remained calm as he stood there smiling his ass off.

I'm a guy who usually cries when food gets wasted, but this was more like people getting pies in the face or the baker on *Sesame Street* falling down the steps in that there was an element of physical comedy.



## A person maked a funny about Merkel

Let's be serious. This is funny!

After the harassment against me that was started by my local school system, we should respond with just as much vulgar speech. Our foes long ago forfeited the privilege of being met with civility.

Right-wing German Chancellor Angela Merkel was profiled by the old Conservative Fool of the Day blog back in 2005 because—as a candidate for that office—she supported the illegal Iraq War and plagiarized a Ronald Reagan speech. Now Merkel is exercising dictatorial power in dealing with COVID-19. Four months after vaccines were introduced, she's still doubling down. The Daily Kos sellouts had already praised her botched COVID-19 response (so much for being a liberal site), but Merkel keeps getting worse.

Now here's where the humor blasts in. A *U.S. News & World Report* article is headlined "Merkel Urges Germans to Accept 'Tough' Virus Restrictions." Someone on Reddit posted this response: "She should accept sucking my dick."

It's like the time at Occupy Cincinnati when two guys started arguing. One of them said, "I propose we ban" the other man. The other replied, "I propose I kick your ass."

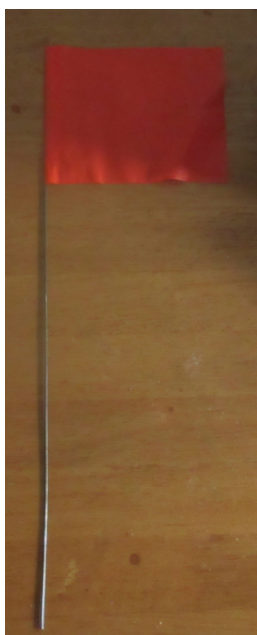
Don't like the crude tone of the comeback to Merkel? Tough shit. Apologists for officials who weaken the public's morale by punishing them with more restrictions don't get to practice tone policing when these officials are called out on it.

## Waving the flag of social distancing

A couple weeks after the bluegrass show at Tower Park, I went to a free concert at Yeatman's Cove held by NKU's orchestra and choir. Because it was no longer 2020, most fans again acted as if the pandemic was a distant memory (despite a sign outlining the usual COVID-19 rules).

But one of few such differences between this and the Tower Park concert was that the performers at this show wore masks. That included those who played wind instruments, who sported masks with holes cut in the middle—which defeats the stated purpose of masks. (Notice I said *stated* purpose, not *real* purpose. I'm convinced at this point that the real purpose of the past year's mask mania is to inflict as much social harm and humiliation as possible, because I think there are some in the media crazy enough to want such unrest.)

Also, instead of circles, the lawn had small orange flags in a hopeless attempt to enforce social distancing. So I grabbed a little souvenir from the show...



## The incredible edible Eggums

Despite the rise of public bubbling of late (with Kroger still being among the biggest bubbling venues), I went through Easter season without seeing Eggums. In fact, I haven't seen Eggums in years.

Eggums was a brand of small, egg-shaped gumballs that came in a miniature egg carton. There used to be lots of Eggums in circulation each Easter. I first saw Eggums in high school when somebody smuggled some into school. People on the public Internet say they used to chomp a whole carton of them all at once. And you can bet your bottom dollar they bubbled!

One of my fans contacted me and said that when she was a teenager, her mom issued an executive order against gumming of any description. But her little cousin received a basket of candy that included Eggums. This made our correspondent annoyed enough to take action! So she snuck one of the Eggums out of her cuzzo's basket and chomped it.

She later felt guilty about it, but she paid him back several years later by not taking a quid of bubble gum from him on a family outing. That may be for the best, because he probably had his snot-coated bare hands all over the gum.

It's unclear why this writer was disallowed from enjoying beegee, but I suspect it was because of furniture being spoiled by chewed wads. I get an image in my mind of a teenager who is old enough to know better sticking bubble gum on a sofa, and a dog bopping along to gnaw it off. (It's like when somebody kept wiping boogers under our bamboo table and the dog would try to lick it off.)

You may recall that one day up at NKU, I noticed that someone had blown a green bubble and tossed it in a snowdrift, and I initially thought it was a green Easter egg. It's unknown however whether this bub was

produced with an Eggum.

## Couches not so lucky in Kentucky!

I thought I was done with this issue, but something hilarious happened at the last minute! When you see a headline that reads “A bad night for couches”, you know some laughs loom!

Peeps at the University of Kentucky celebrated a volleyball championship by gathering closely and burning some couches in the street! A scooter was burned too!

This happened after a watch party at the university coliseum where students crammed together, breathed on each other, and probably bubbled.

Where else can you do a half a million things all at a quarter to 3?

## 2 nights at Babcock and the world's your oyster...

(The title of this article is from the song that was on the radio the first time I ever received a harassing phone call. Yes, the school system kept up its ridiculous feud against me for *that long*.)

I went on a fact-finding mission to New River Gorge National Park in West Virginia from April 26 to 28. We camped out a couple nights at Babcock State Park. Lots of smiling faces greeted us at the region's parks and eateries, and even this short vacation had a few comical moments.

At the parking lot for one of the trails, a young man tried to unlock our car, because he mistook it for his own vehicle. This incident established him as a voovler of the vivvly variety. Plus, it seems like bunker blasts are heard overnight during every camping trip, and this outing was no exception! Each night at Babcock was Bunker City. Loud-and-proud air biscuits reverberated throughout the campground repeatedly.

## Reverse orthodontics!

Tired of boring, straight teeth? Sad that you weren't blessed with the crooked chompers that cool people have? Do you want to channel your inner teeth punker and defy all of society? With this latest idea of mine, you get to join us in the wonderful world of crooked teeth! We'd love to welcome you! Hot damn, crooked teeth are amazing, and we want you to be a member of our teeth punker club! Membership has its privileges. (It has its dangers too, but this isn't an X-rated zine.)

Our November 2018 ish talked about a proposed invention called strabismus glasses—a pair

of eyeglasses designed to cause strabismus (an eye disorder lots of coolsters have). Similarly, there should also be something called reverse orthodontics—so people can finally have the jagged gnashers they've always wanted!

Aren't you excited by this? Now you get to be just like me (your hero) and have an overbite and a Lucky Seven! (A Lucky Seven is a crooked upper right lateral incisor. When my dentist first found cavities, I learned that dentists assign each tooth a number, and 7 is the number for that one.) You can even cut a tin can with it!

Best all, teeth punkers can blow some ferocious bubs with bubble gum. Crooked teeth have been known to improve bubbling skills, making a Dallas/Fort Worth easier and allowing you to grip the gum tighter.

But don't break out the Yellow Pages just yet! These miracle workers we call reverse orthodontists are so far just an idea, not something that we know to exist in real life. What schools are giving anyone a degree in this field? Maybe we should start our own school. There can even be a specialty field for reversing orthodontic work of people who have already had orthodontic work. (Because orthodontic treatment is expensive, and this is a zine for the working poor, that would be a minuscule percentage of our readers.)

Think. Do. Be.



## Letting the chips fall where they may

Something funny happened once in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. (Imagine that!)

This is a story I may have told before in some venue, but it's so uproarious that it needs to be told again and again—like the oaptag lecture and the time I spit soda across the table at McDonald's. One day, a girl in my 8<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom at the insufferable St. Joe's brang potato chips to class. She was shoveling them into her mouth with unparalleled dispatch.

Then the funniness began. She began grabbing each chip, putting it in her mouth, chewing it up, and sticking out her tongue coated with chewed-up chips. Each time she did this, she looked over at me, and I burst out laughing! As these potato chips were all of the same stackable shape and size, they fit a human tongue perfectly, so she began placing each chip on her tongue, crushing it on the roof of her mouth, and sticking out her tongue with the broken chip on it.

It gets even better! She then crammed a whole pile of chips into her mouth and chewed them up. It appeared as if she was trying to blow a bubble with the chips. She stuck her tongue out as far as it could go, pushed the chips to the front of her tongue with her upper teeth, and allowed a huge pile of chewed chips to rest on the tip of her tongue as she made a funny face.

Here's the funniest part. This mass of chewed-up chips then fell off her tongue and landed on the floor! Then she smiled widely at her accomplishment.

Some people have big goals in life, don't they?

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