

The Last word™

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Like an urchin...Stabbin' feet for the very first time...

Like it or not, I go on a fact-finding mission to Fernandina Beach, Florida, from September 12 to 17! (Notice how smug pundits often begin articles with “like it or not.” Usually it’s about things nobody likes.)

This road trip got off to a flying start that Sunday when we zipped down to Columbia, South Carolina. The motel there nearly earned itself a log. Among other things, the swimming pool was closed entirely. Plus, the drain in the bathtub was clogged, and the drainer was broken. But at least it offered square toilets...



Our dinner at a nearby Shoney’s was akin to poo. The crackers that came with the meal were stale. The outside of the restaurant smelled like rotting Gaines-Burgers.

Lunch on Monday in Walterboro, South Carolina, was much better. Someone had shoved paper into the urinal at the restaurant, which is the stuff of cool people. I also heard someone in the kitchen yell, “Heeeyyy yoooouu guuyyys!” in the same manner in which it was exclaimed on *The Electric Company*.

We got to Fernandina Beach later that day. When I was swimming at the ocean, a sea urchin stabbed my toe, making it sore For The Foreseeable Future™.

On Tuesday, I waded at the beach as long as I dared. I saw a couple gray fins bobbing along the surface of the agua not far away. Were they dolphins? Or were they sharks? You decide! Wait, no, I decide! I was there, and I say they were sharks.

Wednesday saw an altercation with a jellyfish, prompting us to use the motel pool instead. But then it began to rain. It was over. Every vacation of the past 40 years was ruined. Just joking about that part! Also, during supper that evening, I saw a man accidentally walk into the women’s restroom.

We started heading home on Thursday, a disastrous day indeed. On Interstate 26 heading back into Columbia, we were stuck in a traffic jam that cost us 3 hours. We lodged in Cherokee, North Carolina, that night, but the delay caused some plans to sink into the sunset. You don’t even want to know how much of a calamity that evening was. It calammed, and then it calammed some more.

Friday was anticlimactic, but this trip—my sixth overnight trip since mid-2020—now snakes its way into the history books!

People beered on the streetcar

Although funny, Ploptoberfest ploppings have usually been covered by The Online Lunchpail more than by this zine. That’s because blogs can cover things right away, while this zine is only monthly.

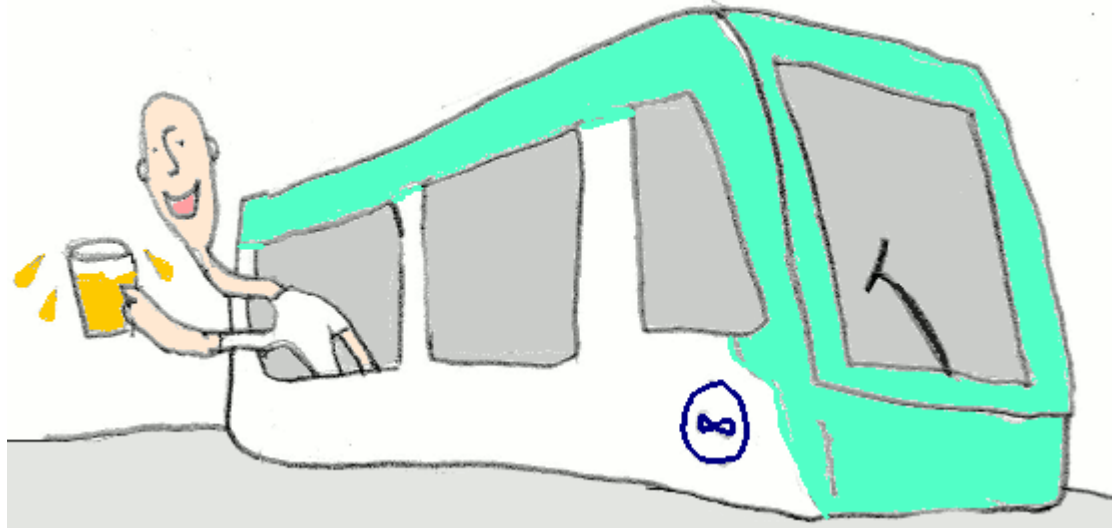
Ploptoberfest is my name for Oktoberfest in Cincinnati. This annual festival went wastage bastage last

year, but now it's back, even as the glory of a decade ago evades it.

And people plopped stuff. This year, I noticed a plastic Hawaiian Punch bottle and a Kroger bag had been put in the toilets in the portable outhouses. Items like these may waste toilets in short order, but it's nothing compared to the metal pickle jar lid, Geico gecko fan, phone book, and pair of jeans that were seen in the toilets in years past.

A suspected gallbladder infection put a damper on the event for me. I vomited on a curb that evening. This was right across from the *Cincinnati Enquirer* building—which is suitable considering the propaganda the *Enquirer* puts out.

Best all, the streetcar was finally put to good use when people beered. Until then, the streetcar had been just another gentrification boondoggle. But when I was leaving Ploptoberfest, I noticed the streetcar was full of people guzzling beer—in stark violation of an Allowed Cloud. I think it's the only time I've ever seen people riding the streetcar. Most of those who weren't beering were just smiling their asses off as they breezed by.



America is coming back! Or at least it is in America. A few totalitarian states, regions, and institutions are exceptions, of course. But we don't go by the corrupt, classist diktats imposed by the tyrannical ghouls who think they own us.

When big bubbles make big troubles

The Gum Fighter was one cool peep!

A couple weeks ago, Western actor Don Collier died at the age of 92. One of his roles was the Gum Fighter in the Hubba Bubba bubble gum commercials of the 1970s and 1980s.

The Gum Fighter was a big, tough cowboy who demonstrated the bubble bustin' capabilities of this brand of beegee. He would always puff out a colossal bub to show that Hubba Bubba wouldn't stick to your face when it burst. Then he declared, "Big bubbles, no troubles!"

I remember when Hubba Bubba was first introduced. This was at the height of the bubble gum wars. The most widely advertised brands were of the new soft variety like Bubble Yum and Bubblicious. Hubba Bubba joined this field in 1979. These brands contrasted with older products like Dubble Bubble, Bazooka, and Super Bubble that had a chewier feel and very little if any TV advertising.

The entire point of Hubba Bubba was that it wasn't supposed to stick to your face when you blew a biggie. That was it. That was the main selling point in almost all its ads.

When I first heard about Hubba Bubba, I asked myself why anyone would even want bubble gum that didn't stick to their face. The *whole point* of bubble gum was that it would stick to your face when you bubbled. Back then, everyone would let bubs burst and stick to their face, because people thought it was funny in an obnoxious sort of way. Even today, cool people still do it, but they've added theatrics such as stumbling backwards when it occurs.

But those initial news reports failed to make an important distinction. It was one thing to let a bub pop all over your face, but it was another to leave behind big strands of gum. The former was funny because it was so obnoxious. The latter was just messy. Yet when the Gum Fighter's ads appeared, the ads indicated that Hubba Bubba did the former quite well—without the mess associated with other brands. At long last, you could finally have your cake and eat it too!

All of this brings to mind a question that has never been answered. *Why* does bubble gum behave in the way that it does? *Why* does it pop on your face when you blow a bubble? For the most part, I can't figure out the science that makes this occur. Someone on the public Internet once noted that bubble gum blowing was a much harder sport for people with a large nose, because their prominent nozzle could easily bust a big bub. It's easy to see how this could happen, but it's clearly not always a factor, and it's hard to think of anything else that would cause a bubble to pop all over your face.

Whenever you ask why bubble gum does that, you just get blank stares.

Bubble gum connoisseurs say some brands—usually ones that are softer and less sticky—don't do this as much. Some brands are more likely to simply wilt when the bubble gets too big. My theory is that bubble gum pops on your face because it sticks to itself. Depending on how sticky the gum is, a bubble simply has nowhere to go except all over your face when it busts.

It has also been noted by bubbling experts that most brands of gum will warn you when a bubble is about to burst—not that cool people pay any heed. An exception is Fruit Stripe, which busts when you least expect it.

Big troubles.

Hangin' out by the state line...Turnin' apple juice into wine...

During my Fernandina Beach trip, I accomplished something that defied an Allowed Cloud. Imagine that!

I bring along cold apple juice in a thermos-like flask. These containers have limitations. They keep beverages cold for a good long while—but not forever.

You know what happens when juice that is supposed to be cold stays warm for too long, don't you?

Once that happens, it ain't juice anymore! It's wine!

The biggest fear most of us have about juice getting warm is that it will spoil. But a glance at the unashamedly public Internet reveals that when apple juice spoils, it's actually fermenting. So if it's spoiled, it's also fermented. That means that once it gets warm for too long, it's wine.

Apple juice is not milk. It is not mayonnaise. You can't make milk or mayonnaise into wine. If mayonnaise or milk spoils, it does nothing but stink away. By contrast, apple juice produces the aroma of the finest libations.

My thermos was like a handheld moonshine still. Yet during this trip, it was transported through or into communities that are dry—i.e., alcohol is prohibited. Some of this do-it-yourself wine was probably even consumed in dry territory. Granted, that wasn't what I intended to do—for a change. I actually have a flutter of guilt about it. Not much though—and there's reasons for that. Unless it escalates into dangerous or violent behavior, drinking in dry territory is a victimless crime, and I live by the axiom that individual bodily autonomy should be the default. That's in contrast with the authoritarian foot soldiers who have taken over Daily Kos, who lately have resorted to making racist comments while assailing others' choices.

Online recipes for wine and other alcoholic bevs are absurdly complicated. I managed to brew wine the easy—if not hilarious—way.

TikTok on the clock...But the ploppings don't stop...

I run a lot of stories that are not intended to make you laugh, and my stories are also not designed to encourage bad behavior. Many articles simply document such conduct and are meant to shock rather than amuse. But let's face it. America's schools are so bad now that they had this one coming.

There's been a new trend lately in which students from primary school through college have been vandalizing restrooms and other things at school and posting it on TikTok. I feel bad for a person if their belongings are lost, but I can't say I feel sorry for the school itself in the least bit. Schools have been asking for it—and their response to it proves it even more. All our hard-won progress against the school-to-prison pipeline has been maliciously reversed by our schools in less than 2 years.

In Florida, a soap dispenser was stolen and a sink was pulverized. At many schools, toilets have somehow been stolen. In the San Francisco Bay Area, toilets were clogged repeatedly—presumably by ploppings—and mirrors were ripped off the bathroom walls. At another school, red dye was sprayed all over a restroom wall. It's not just lavatory goodies. Exit signs, phones, lockers, and microscopes have been pilfered too.



Why? It's because our schools are run by Nazi shock troops. The pandemic has made this clearer than ever. The schools' tyranny and misrule actually promotes misbehavior like this—so I have zero sympathy for the schools. *Zero*.

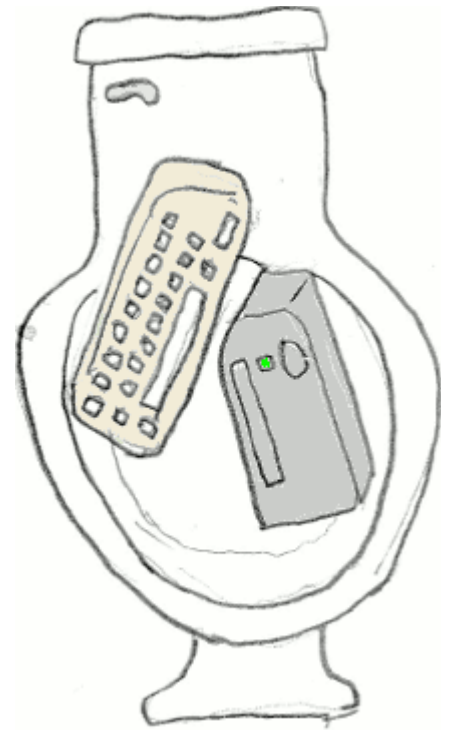
The biggest mistake students are making is posting their acts on TikTok. TikTok has begun deleting these posts. TikTok deletes a lot of stuff, including posts that support gays, criticize the Chinese government's genocide against the Uyghur people, or are posted by individuals deemed "too ugly, poor, or disabled" or who supposedly have "ugly facial looks." TikTok is owned by the Chinese Communist Party. Early in the pandemic, TikTok hosted COVID-19 misinformation promulgated by the party. This propaganda influenced the totalitarian pandemic response of other countries, including the U.S.

School officials keep grandstanding about how the latest hijinks will affect students' future. But what really affected it was closing schools for a year.

Wait! There's more! A Kentucky school official complained, "Toilets have been filled with ridiculous amounts of toilet paper." An official in the same district called it "ridiculousness" and said, "We are hoping parents will jump in and help us stop this silliness." A Texas school said students were taking apart toilets. Schools in California found mirrors covered with soap. In South Carolina, soap dispensers were thrown in the toilet. The same happened in Maine, where a principal said, "At our school, students have been ripping soap dispensers off the wall and putting them in the toilets." A TV station in Texas showed what appeared to be a computer resting in a commode.

It's even spread outside of schools. In a restroom at a Kansas splash pad, someone smashed toilets and sinks.

Is our children learning?



Lots of aloha for Hawaiian Punch gum

You may remember the Hawaiian Punch commercials in which the animated man asked, "How about a nice Hawaiian Punch?" and slugged the unsuspecting antagonist squarely in the kisser with all his might. If there was a commersh like this in the early '90s, it could have involved doing a Wright brothers with that punch.

Road trips often nix carrying along carbonated soda, because these bevs explode in a thermos and can't be frozen beforehand. Instead, you may opt for juice, ade, or punch—such as Hawaiian Punch. (Notice how news articles on self-help topics always coo about how financially secure readers "opt" for stuff, while everyone else has to take what they can get. Also, Hawaiian Punch is not completely exempt from unexpected explosions, as my Wind Cave trip showed.) But do you recall when Bubble Yum made a Hawaiian Punch beegee?

I remember seeing packs of this bubble bustin' gum back in 1992. The wrappers were blue and had a drawing of the Hawaiian Punch mascot. Best all, my business partner recently told me you could blow some mean bubs with it. They were the meanest!

She said the gum did indeed taste of Hawaiian Punch, and it was a slightly darker pink than the usual bubble gum color. She recalled prancing into Taco Bell while chomping a huge plug of the stuff. A trained memory can remember a lot, and cool people are good at sharpening their long-term memory. She also said there was one evening in her youth when she stuck thumbtacks in the soles of her shoes and dangled her foot out the door of a car and dragged it along the pavement as it sped through the restaurant's drive-thru so it would create a shower of sparks. But since that has nothing to do with bubble gum, I'm sure you don't care about that.

An Internet search reveals that Hubba Bubba made a Hawaiian Punch bubble gum just within the past few years—and maybe still does, though I wouldn't bet that it does. (Maybe I should see what my bookie says.) It has several vague reviews from the mid-2010s but no details about its bubbleability.

Gum is cool.

More ruined reference books (imagine that!)

Last month's story about encyclopedia sets getting spoiled when volumes were lost or ru prompted much adulation from fans.

One dredged up a vague memory of a wasted encyclopedia. According to this story, his family once got a brand new, very expensive encyclopedia set that came in a big cardboard box. They used a knife to open the box.

You may be able to guess how that ended. Or maybe not, since it doesn't have to do with bubble gum. In any event, the knife sliced off the cover of one of the gorgeous volumes.

Another fan said her brand new road atlas got decimated by prying hands. She said that when she was in college, she had some time off work and school to go on a big road trip across the good ol' U.S. and A. She bought a road atlas to facilitate this gargantuan endeavor. Her parents noticed that the atlas contained some coupon or form that they could send in to get some really good deals on something like tickets to a light saber fight or the spinning toilet ride at the state fair. The problem with this is that the form was on one of the pages that had a map on the other side.

If I have to tell you how this story ended, that's a smoking gun that you completely skipped the last paragraph. When the cooltagonist of this story was packing her things for her trip, she opened her brand new road atlas and found that a big rectangle had been cut out of one of the pages.

When I was about 8 years old, we got one of those little promotional address books from the Yellow Pages people. Even phone books are somewhat promotional, because if you think utilities such as phone companies give away anything *completely* free, you really do need to get out more. The oldsters had planned to use this booklet to copy down all the phone numbers of relatives. But I grabbed it and instead filled it out with *Dukes Of Hazzard* characters. I'm surprised Flash didn't end up getting invited to my birthday party.

An Amazon seller offers a vintage 15-volume set of children's reference books, but there have been repeated complaints by buyers that volumes are missing or ruined. One buyer got only one book for \$83 even though the seller advertised all 15. Another buyer got the whole set except one missing volume. Another said some of the books were full of water damage and mildew.

They were rooned.

'C' is for cereal

"He needs to write about *Sesame Street*."

"No, he needs to write about cereal."

"Nope. *Sesame Street*."

"No. Cereal."

"*Sesame Street*!"

"Cereal!"

"Hey! Guess what! They just came out with Sesame Street cereal! Now he can write about both!"

"Say, Sesame Street cereal! There's something he can write about! Now that's cooperation!"

Recently at Kroger, I noticed something funny. The mere fact that it's Kroger is funny, because people bubble a lot at Kroger, and bubbling is funny. But I saw something else funny too. Skipping through the breakfast food aisle, I glanced over at the cereal, and a white box caught my eye.

The cereal box featured that familiar green sign that has Sessified my surroundings my entire life. The sign has long marked our favorite TV alley. Imagine an 8-foot-tall talking bird strolling along and bumping his head on the sign. *Sesame Street* isn't just the name of the show, but also a place, an avenue where most of the show's main characters reside. That's why the admonition "I'll go back to *Sesame Street*!"—uttered when competing shows are preempted—makes so much sense.

There are two kinds of Sesame Street cereal, put out by General Mills. One of the boxes features Elmo and Cookie Monster. The other has Elmo and one of the newer Muppets who I don't recognize, because I don't watch the show that much anymore. Because of my intolerance for cereal, I have declined to test out Sesame Street cereal myself.

However, I did a little bit of research. It turns out this cereal was introduced early this year. A cereal review website makes no mention of it, because the site hasn't been updated lately. But it does mention a *Sesame Street* product from 2013 called C is for Cereal, made by Post. The box described it as a "natural apple flavored oat and corn cereal with other natural flavors" and said the cereal "contains nutrients that help support healthy brain development" and was "ideal food for little ones!" It appears there was also a variety of this cereal called Cookie Monster Banana.

A commenter called the 2013 creation "one of the strangest cereals I've ever tasted."



The operator of that website provided his own review and said that eating the cereal dry “felt like eating styrofoam.” Someone replied saying, “My one year old will eat one or two and then [sic] throw them at my dog who sniffs them and walks away.”

The General Mills cereal available today appears to be a different product. Today’s Sesame Street cereal has two flavors—cinnamon and berry. The morsels of cereal are shaped like letters or numbers—sort of like Alpha-Bits or alphabet soup. A press release says the back of the box “opens like a book” and includes simple Elmo stories. The box also says the cereal is good for “little tummies.”

I hope it’s better than the media content *Sesame Street* puts out these days. The show has moved so far from its original premise that it’s unrecognizable now. I wouldn’t let any child of mine watch the COVID-19 indoctrination clips it puts out today. The DVD’s of 1970s sketches that are sold to 50-year-olds who grew up with the show would be much better.

I definitely hope Sesame Street cereal is better than the Pac-Man cereal General Mills had, whose odd chemical taste I’ve lamented before. Strawberry Shortcake cereal reportedly had that same weird taste. When I heard about that, it appeared as if General Mills was using that same formula for all of its cereals based on popular characters. Their cereals like Cocoa Puffs and Count Chocula were better (and would sometimes include bubble gum as a prize).



Admin is a fascist!

If you want to see a crapper of a Facebook group, peep what has become of the “Bellevue Alliance” group. It used to have piles of useful material—often promoting festivals or exciting community projects, announcing new construction, or unearthing problems plaguing the city. Now I don’t know what it’s for, as almost anything of value gets deleted the moment it’s posted. Think what Nextdoor would be like if it only allowed spam, religious tracts, and backslapping of local big shots.

I don’t even know who runs it anymore. But whatever the weather, a user seems to have had his fill of posts being deleted, as he made a post consisting of 4 simple words...

“Admin is a Commie!”

Nah, the admin isn’t a communist. They’re a fascist! Somehow I don’t think *The Communist Manifesto* has a chapter that shows people how to delete Facebook posts they disagree with. Maybe communism has additional “core books” like *Dungeons & Dragons*, and maybe those mention it. Or maybe there’s open source communism now that has it, but probably not, since social media groupthink has gutted the open source movement.

Yep, let’s face it. The admin is not a communist, but a fascist.

‘All In The Family’ mentioned ‘Sesame Street’

I remember when *All In The Family* aired in its original run, my parents watched it all the time, but I was too young to understand what Archie Bunker was always haranguing everyone about. I didn’t comprehend any of it until I saw it in reruns later.

Considering Rob Reiner’s praise of the disgraced George W. Bush lately, maybe he instead of Carroll O’Connor should have played Archie. Sort of like Alyssa Milano.

But did you know *All In The Family* once mentioned *Sesame Street*? The mere mention of the ol’ Ses can make any sitcom even funnier! In a 1977 episode, Meathead announced his intent to watch *Sesame Street*, letting his life be filled with the antics of lovable Muppet characters like Big Bird, Oscar the Grouch, the Count, Ernie, and Bert. But as he plunked down in Archie’s chair, he promptly broke it.

You read that right! Meathead broke Archie’s chair by trying to watch *Sesame Street*!

The next few scenes involved the family trying to hide the damage from Archie. *Sesame Street* was cool.

People sold garbage

*People sold trash, people sold garbage
People sold waste to a fellow man...*

Either one person's trash is another's treasure—or there's a sucker born every second.

Ever see obviously broken items being sold at yard sales? I don't mean items with just a damaged part that was useless or easily fixed. I mean things that were completely broken and of no use to anyone. Some of them even had a label saying "broken."

Yard sales have actually been successful at getting people to buy these items. They literally sold *garbage*—and people bought it!

One website actually recommends selling broken costume jewelry. The same website talks about giving away a broken camera at a garage sale—but at least it was given away for free instead of being sold.

There are numerous websites that tell people how to sell broken and defective merchandise on eBay. And eBay probably puts up with it, judging by my experiences with that site.

There might be valid reasons to buy broken items. For example, someone once said they purchased 2 broken Speak & Spell off eBay and put the parts together to make a working Speak & Spell. Usually, however, ru is forever.

A person posted on an eBay message forum that they bought a toy off eBay and it turned out to be broken beyond repair: "I have never come across a seller this dishonest. They purposely left out the fact that the item was broken and eBay is supporting their dishonesty." The post criticized eBay for not offering help after this ripoff.

Last year, a person posted that they ordered a mug off eBay but it arrived in pieces. This customer never received a refund—prompting them to point out that eBay covers for scammers.

Gibzz of the biddle variety!



LeBron James bubbled

I didn't care that much about sports until last year when they took sports away from us, but I used to care just enough that I would watch the Super Bowl each year.

Back in 2005, I plunked down in my living room for Super Bowl XXXIX. This was probably just before I started boycotting the NFL because it began treating fans like criminals. I may have viewed the game on that monstrosity of a TV set I had in the mid-2000s where the screen kept turning blue and which lasted only about a year. I didn't pay much attention to the game or the ads.

But I did happen to catch one commersh. It began with basketball legend LeBron James strolling across an otherwise empty court. Then all of a sudden, he bubbled. Most of the ad was in black-and-white, but the bub was pink.

This commersh was for LeBron's Lightning Lemonade—a flavor of bubble gum put out by Bubblicious. It was the first time in years I'd seen a Bubblicious commercial. Later, I saw this flavor in grocery stores. It was in a yellow wrapper that had a drawing of the basketballer himself on it. But I didn't buy any of it, let alone test its bubbling capabilities.

A website described the commersh as one of the worst Super Bowl ads that year.

Sometime after all this, I saw a clip of a press conference in which LeBron James talked nonstop about bubble gum and blowing bubbles.

The connection between bubble gum and the sports world runs deep!

DHS gets out its See 'n Say

The Department of Homeland Security might as well have "fascist" emblazoned across its headquarters.

The DHS was like George W. Bush getting out a box of war toys to unleash on his Fisher-Price village—except it's all too real. Since last year, I've been working on a report summarizing the many failures of lockdowns and the idiotic "new normal"—and I keep having to add to it. This report is going to rip the DHS a new one.

Just before this issue went to press, I logged onto Facebook and found an ad placed by the DHS that

read...

“You play a role in keeping your community safe by reporting suspicious activity. Join us on Sept. 25 for #SeeSayDay and share why you #SeeSay.”

It’s nice that they ran an ad on September 28 that told us what to do on September 25. More significantly, this ad was spam that clogged my Facepoo feed.

Isn’t that the stupidest ad? People who report their neighbors to the DHS are like those who turned in their neighbors in Nazi Germany. But I’m sure Nazi Germany didn’t have a hashtag that sounded like a 1970s toy. Maybe next year, the DHS will have #SpeakSpellDay or #ClosePlayDay.

I posted this public reply to the ad...

“I play a role in telling the Department of Homeland Stupidity to go fuck itself.”

I have a very low tolerance for fascism. Did you know that?

The way things have gone lately, it’s surprising that some busybody didn’t harass the wrong person and find themselves turned into another vintage toy: Rock ‘Em Sock ‘Em Robots. A lot of people don’t even have the patience that I have. In fact, a vast majority of people are out of patience, and if they let some crybaby have it, I wouldn’t shed a tear.

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