

# The Last Word™

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## Slip inside my waterlogged sleeping bag...

How come radio stations never played the verse of “Sleeping Bag” by ZZ Top that sang about how the zipper got stuck on the sleeping bag and the stuffing flew out and how later it got waterlogged when the tent leaked? I’ve heard it wasn’t on the album either.

Road trip season (which coincides with bubbling season) started to wink into existence from April 10 to 12 when I went on a little camping trip to Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area—a terrific little area on the border between Tennessee and Kentucky. The first half of the trip bipped along niftily. As a bonus, when I used the men’s room at the abandoned mining town of Blue Heron, I noticed that there was a big wisp of poo on the floor in front of the urinal.

But on the second evening of the trip, disaster struck. The zipper got stuck on my sleeping bag, and when I tried to unzip it, it tore the lining off, and all the stuffing came out...



Later, a monster thunderstorm blew through. The tent tumbled upward and the musty goo towered atop Si’s pointy noggin. It was over. Si was no more.

Seriously, this downpour lasted all night, and it caused water to seep through the tent. The already pulverized sleeping bag got more and more waterlogged throughout the night, much of that just from humidity. These conditions were not compatible with sleep. They were barely even compatible with existing.

Best all, the sleeping bag was practically brand new when it self-destructed. It couldn’t have been much more than a year old. I probably hadn’t used it more than 3 other times.

‘Twas roodledy-doodledy beyond all hope.

Throughout much of the trip, there was also a pee smell that seemed to follow my camping equipment around. What a stupid time to be alive.

## Time for a school change...

Fourth grade was probably my worst year of school—except for the ones at schools where I had to be expelled in order to get out. It seems to stand Head & Shoulders above most others—even my junior and senior years of high school when they wouldn’t let us use the restroom and kept calling the police on us. The rest of my family might rank 4<sup>th</sup> grade as my worst year altogether, because some of the schools I got expelled from were deemed to be beyond criticism.

Little River Band used to sing, “Time for a cool change...” For many years, when I was trapped at one bad school after another, I would sing, “Time for a *school change*...” But 4<sup>th</sup> grade was the only time I asked my parents to find me a better school for the following year and they agreed.

I was reminded of my 4<sup>th</sup> grade travails when I recently saw the Facebook page of an organization that

was affiliated with the school praising a law firm “for working to prevent child abuse.” That’s rather ironic, considering how much child abuse was committed by the school when I was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The school hired several new teachers that year. Two of them were lazy and incompetent, and they were my main teachers that year. Of course, this problem wasn’t limited to that school. Schools, the media, public officials, the legal establishment, and other parties connived to protect bad teachers.

One day, my first teacher that year threatened to tie me to a chair and stuff a gag in my mouth—like a hostage—because I kept talking in class. These days, this would be par for the course, because the new thing in schools now is stuffing cloth and paper in students’ mouths just for shits and giggles—a practice cheered by the media. Not long after the teacher made her threat, she made good on it by tying me to a chair in front of the entire class and shoving a handkerchief in my mouth.

That winter—on one of the coldest days of the year—the school intentionally locked me out of the building for the entire day.

The second teacher I had that year once approached me in the hallway and said that somebody told her that I had been cussing. So she dug her fingernails into my arm, dragged me into the restroom, and shoved a filthy bar of soap into my mouth. There were big scratches on my wrist for weeks.

I also had a battle with this teacher during our field trip to the Kentucky Horse Park that infamously went awry. A museum there had a bear that had been killed by hunters and was stuffed and on display. The bear was standing upright. A schoolmate noticed that the bear was rather well-endowed and laughingly pointed it out. I couldn’t stop giggling. So the teacher violently grabbed me in front of numerous visitors of the museum. An elderly woman gasped at the spectacle the teacher was creating. The instructor dragged me out to her car and forced me to stay inside the hot car for the rest of the afternoon with another student who had misbehaved.

A few years later, I noticed a glut of new public policies that seemed maliciously designed to mollycoddle bad teachers and schools. Call it the gentrification of Kentucky schools, if you will. Among other things, even disagreeing with anything a school does has been criminalized. There are still new proposals like these in other states. That’s in addition to the federal government’s recent attempt to use the Patriot Act against parents who speak out against schools’ draconian and fascist policies.

In recent years, one of my old 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers got busted for domestic violence. The other took a job at one of the other lousy schools I had been forced to attend. On her website blurb, she talked about how much she hated her old job. Evidently, she’s still around and now works at a different school.

Some folks say we should just let old acts of abuse slide because they wouldn’t be tolerated today. Even if this was true, it wouldn’t change history. And we know it’s not true, because over the past couple years, physical abuse in schools has not only become worse than ever, but the media has become brazen enough to say the quiet part out loud—which is that they support this abuse. They run one-sided “news” articles full of propaganda supporting it. They run editorials supporting it that are signed only by their nameless, faceless “editorial board.” Nobody knows who is on these editorial boards, yet they’re being propped up by state taxpayers. That’s because state law says public notices must appear in *specific* newspapers depending on the county. Yet we don’t even know who is responsible for the cockamamie editorial stances of these periodicals. This is as bad as state colleges broadcasting their sporting events on radio stations that are full of right-wing talk the rest of the time.

It is folly to think schools and the media have meant well by backing ongoing physical abuse. Their support for child abuse is malicious and evil. They act with bad intentions in mind. And why wouldn’t it have gotten worse, especially after the public has been cajoled so much into tolerating it? Do bullies ever stop once they get their foot in the door?

When you trust the media, you’re actually supporting hate, violence, child abuse, bullying, bigotry, and antiscience. You may be supporting cruelty to animals too. Most American newspapers endorsed the despicable Mitt Romney for President even after it was revealed that he tied his dog to the roof of his car.



Also, even if you're lucky enough to live in one of these rare places where authorities allow charges to be filed against abusive teachers, there are programs that pay for the teachers' legal defense. There's nothing like that covering families' legal expenses. In addition, many school systems allow personnel files to be scrubbed of any wrongdoing once a teacher leaves their job.

Schools in America—and perhaps in much of the world—are the biggest organized crime racket in history, bar none. I think it goes even deeper than it once appeared. Plus, this con game is nothing short of a cult—and there are some who try to distort mainstream religions to support it. The Religious Right never really went away, but they rarely call themselves right-wingers now. They think hiding behind religion gives them license to run their mouths and spout ideas that any objective observer would deem evil, bizarre, and detrimental to community welfare. Furthermore, they make personal attacks against anyone who disagrees.

Keep your children away from the monsters who control our institutions, and avoid media outlets that cheer their abuse.

## The toilet got clogged

This is a song about toilets. Toilets! You see 'em all around!

After my Big South Fork trip, it's easy to forget that my tinkletorium got accidentally clogged just a week earlier. I was forced to buy a plunger at the miserable Family Dullard—a store that has become as much of a neighborhood joke as some of our “favorite” establishments near our old digs. But what are some more memorable toilet cloggings?

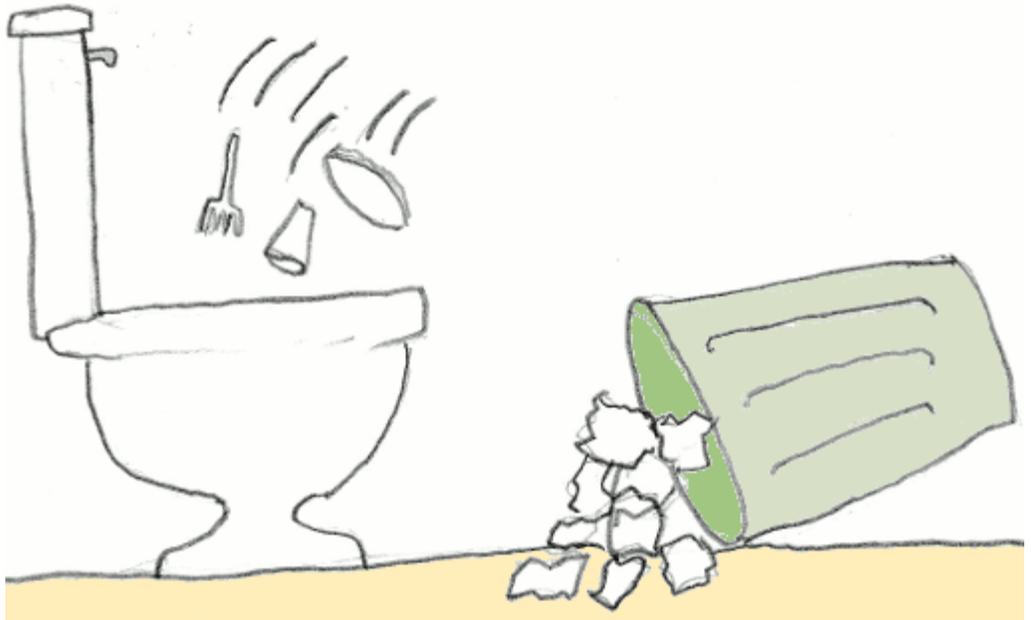
One of my favorite took place late in 7<sup>th</sup> grade after I had just been forced to start attending St. Joe's. Let me tell you, by 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I was *fedddd up!* So toilets were considered fair game for destruction. I'm pretty sure this incident was on Holy Thursday, and I was assigned to throw away all our used styrofoam plates, cups, and plastic forks.

I threw them away, all right! But I didn't throw them in the regular garbage can. Rather, I threw them in the funny garbage can (the one that flushes)! The floor of the boys' restroom became a lake by the end of the hour thanks to the overflowing donicker. The bathroom trash can was also dumped all over the floor.

Later, I saw a class lined up to use the restroom as water seeped into the hallway from under the door.

There have been some cloggings in the news recently—for example, at a sports complex in Freeport, Florida, where toilets have been clogged with sticks, straw, and whole rolls of toilet paper. Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, saw some action late last year when toilets in residence halls were clogged with huge amounts of toilet paper—which completely backed up the sewer system. A student said, “It kind of ruins the things at the school, and we need to use those bathrooms and stuff, so it's not funny at the end of the day.” Ruins! The magic word!

More much-deserved humiliation for academia!



## Playing ketchup

As this ish recounts 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the field trip to the Kentucky Horse Park prompts this important question: Does ketchup ruin paper?

I remember schoolmates misbehaving on the way to the park and throwing toys out the window of the school van onto the highway. I also recall a man at the park showing us how horseshoes were made. He reminded me of Cooter of *The Dukes Of Hazzard*. Plus, I received a small square of wool that had been dyed green.

We each got a small, green booklet of tickets that could be used at each of the park's main attractions.

(The color and logo made it look like a Brossart document.) The teacher dragging me out of the museum was the real test of what those tickets could withstand. My memory is drawing a blank regarding *exactly* what happened, but I do know that the teacher squirted a packet of ketchup onto my remaining tickets. I can't remember this specific moment, but I know it happened and that I must have seen it.

When I got home, I stored the ketchup-coated tickets and the green piece of wool in a small box in my bedroom. I think it was an antique file box. By that time, the ketchup had dried.

The \$98.26 question became: Were the tickets ruined by having dried ketchup caked all over them? The definition of "ruined" was: Would the Kentucky Horse Park refuse to accept tickets covered with ketchup?

We were actually going to find out. My parents were furious at the way the teachers treated me on that field trip. That was the event that led them to find a different school for me. They also said we might visit the Kentucky Horse Park sometime soon and use the rest of my tickets, because I didn't get to use my tickets when I was locked in the teacher's car. It's like how in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I was expelled right at the end of the school year and didn't get to go on the class trip to Fort Knox, so we visited Fort Knox one day over the summer.

My family ultimately did not visit the Kentucky Horse Park, but I did go there on a field trip in 5<sup>th</sup> grade with my new school. This trip didn't go amiss nearly as badly as the 4<sup>th</sup> grade trip did. Of course, not everyone was a perfect angel. I remember the teacher warning us beforehand not to bring some sort of contraband on the bus—I think it was a cassette player with headphones—yet somebody did anyway. Back then, people didn't comply unquestioningly with rules like they do now. I can't remember whether I brang my ketchup-stained tickets from the previous year or attempted to use them.

Time for a school change!

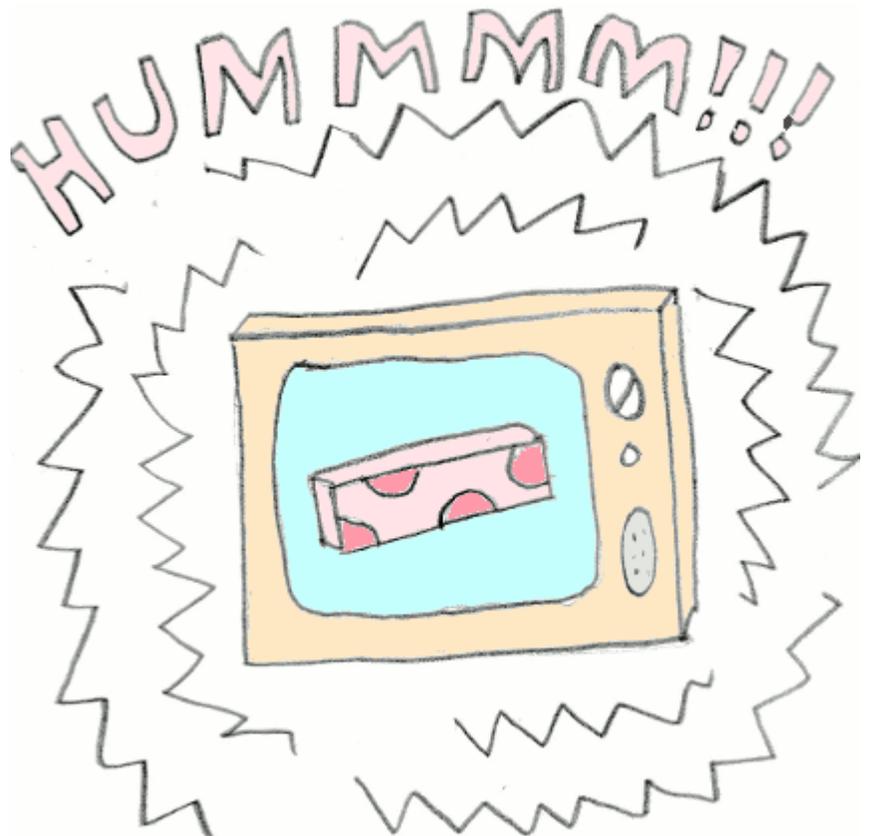
## Bubble hum

Storer Cable infamously loomed large as northern Kentucky's cable TV monopoly in the 1980s. But did you know Storer Cable was afraid of bubble gum?

I've mentioned before that there was a period of several months when Storer did not know how to use a low-pass filter, which caused the picture to bleed into the audio. Certain images—such as the comic book animation in a-ha's "Take On Me" video—caused a horrendous rumble to fill the room. But there was a similar scandal perhaps a couple years before that.

I settled in one evening to watch one of my favorite shows. I believe it was on Lexington's WKYT, which Storer carried at the time. Unlike Power 94½, the only way we could get WKYT was on cable. One of the Cincinnati stations may have aired this show too, but it was in a bad time slot, so I watched WKYT instead (even though WKYT often needlessly preempted my shows). As I tuned in that night, my heart sank. The picture was crystal clear, but the sound was just a constant hum. So while I could *watch* my show, I couldn't *listen* to it.

It stayed that way through the entirety of the program. But during a commercial break,



I noticed something funny. Not ha-ha funny but weird funny. Alright, I admit, it was ha-ha funny too. This was when Trident gum had a gargantuan advertising campaign for its bubble kaboomin' variant. I remember that they had a couple different commercials where they interviewed a young woman at an amusement park or carnival, and she talked about the supposed greatness of this bubble gum. When the voice-over man was talking, the interviewee bubbled. It's unclear why the Trident people thought these ads were effective, because the bubble was only about the size of a ping-pong ball. Back then, trying to blow bubs as big as your head was the national sport.

Anybip, the commersh would periodically cut away from the amusement park scene and show a pack of bubble gum just floating around in front of a light blue background for a few seconds. On that particular evening, this caused Storer Cable to go completely bonkers. During every shot of the gum in front of a blue background, the hum would mysteriously become much louder. I didn't see the need to point it out, because it was obvious, but a family member said something like, "The bubble gum is making the TV act up."

These ads also had a jingle that went, "Taste the one that'll win you over." Whenever these commercials came on, someone would inevitably sing, "Taste the one that'll smell like Grover," a reference to the lovable *Sesame Street* Muppet.

That's cool.

## Students wosted their scholarships

I've been scouring the public Internet for stories about college students getting scholarships that pay for most or all of their education and then squandering the entire scholarship by quitting, flunking out, or getting expelled. My preference is for stories about getting expelled for reasons that will make people sympathetic to the student, but with all the gaslighting from the fascist media these days, everyone automatically assumes the student is wrong, and the student will be treated as a pariah forever. There is no counterculture these days. Hell, I *am* the counterculture these days!

I didn't find much, but when scholarships get wosted, they really get wosted!

A Stanford alumnus said he had a classmate who had a full scholarship. He had won what is now known as the Regeneron Science Talent Search, a prestigious science contest for high school seniors. Many winners of this competition have gone on to win Nobel Prizes. This student got to enter Stanford when he was only 16. But once he started college, he didn't do anything except lollygag in the student lounge all day. He almost never went to class. The online comment about him said, "He flunked out and wosted his scholarship."

Wasted! (Shoves drinking cup towards viewer.)

A commenter on another website said her son became an utter poolog in his late teens. Despite his poologgery, he somehow got a college scholarship. But he "wasted his scholarship" in an unspecified manner. It sounds like he mostly just lived off his girlfriend.

A blogger said she had a scholarship to get her master's degree, but she wosted the whole thing by dropping all her classes right when the semester was over. A reviewer on a review website said she had a scholarship to attend any college she wanted, but she frittered it away at a college that was lousy. You mean like most colleges these days?

It sounds like people who flunk out, quit, or get expelled are often smarter than those who graduate and "make something of themselves"—especially because these days, "making something of yourself" means nonstop sloganeering and red-baiting on social media sites. The young man who lived off his girlfriend doesn't sound too bright though. Verywell probably hired him as a fact checker.



## File History out of its element

When you have a computer that's 8 years old, you need to take a hard look at how to properly back up all your irreplaceable files. That means outdated files you deleted should stay deleted. Of course I was already

making frequent backups, but the age and heavy use of this computer has Thrust This Issue Into The National Limelight As Never Before™.

First of all—for no apparent reason—File History that comes with Windows doesn't always automatically back up your files, even if you have it set to do so. Sometimes you have to manually tell it to back them up.

But if you quite rightly want deleted files to not pop back up, there's another problem you must contend with. If you use an external drive for backup, you can set File History to delete old backup files when space is needed, or after a backup file has reached a certain age, such as 3 months. The problem is that the latter option doesn't work. One website says it doesn't delete these backup files until space is needed—which makes it no different from setting it to delete them when space is needed.

Other websites say that in order to get rid of outdated backup files before the external drive is full, you must manually tell File History to delete them. This doesn't work either, because everyone who attempts this is confronted with an “element not found” error message.

The only elements we can find are nitrogen and oxygen, because they're the main components of hot air! Folks on the public Internet say File History has had this problem for years now, and Microsoft won't patch it. This feature worked years ago, but at some point, this bug was introduced. Microsoft knows about this bug but still won't fix it. There's plenty of posts online from a year or two ago begging Microsoft to fix it, yet it continues. Microsoft once promised to release a patch, but that was years ago.

Some say they have reported this issue on Microsoft's worthless community forum only to be laughed at by an “independent advisor” who claims to be a support expert.

Here's the best part. Microsoft has just come out with Windows 11, and this bug reportedly isn't fixed even on Windows 11! In addition, Microsoft has introduced another new bug with Windows 11 that lets you back up only the contents of your Documents folder.

Somebody speculated that Microsoft is just abandoning File History because they want people to buy cloud storage space instead—like it's 2011. They probably expect people to use a flip phone too. In addition to forcing people to pay for a basic service, using cloud space would also expose their files to being hacked, or snooped at by Microsoft or the government.

I went on the community forum in a last-ditch effort to solve this problem, and one of their specialists did reply and admitted that File History is indeed no longer supported and has been allowed to become full of bugs. He warned that File History has gotten so bad that it can lose all your files if you try to restore them. He recommended not using it anymore, but his reply had no alternatives that were any good. As well-intended as this reply may have been, it also didn't answer my specific question. Yet the reply was still more intelligent than anything else their “experts” have ever spewed.

Several websites suggested Duplicati. I downloaded it, but it's so slow as to laugh.

A faster fix is needed, yet it doesn't appear to be forthcoming. So what's a mere mortal to do? Stink?

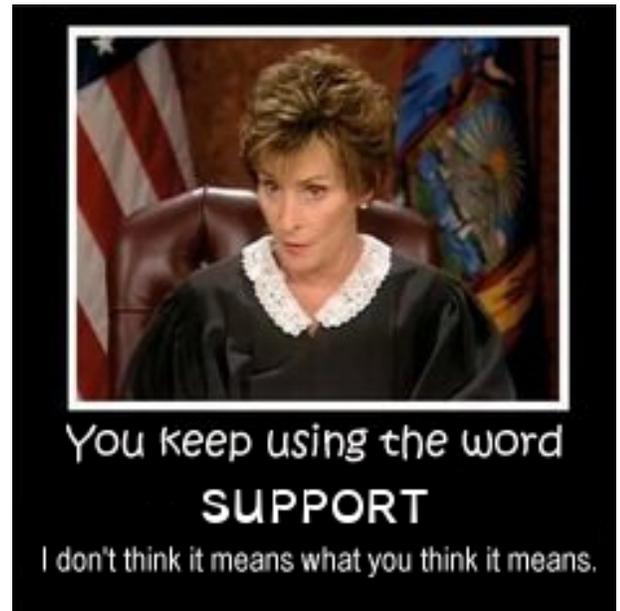
## People stole a bunch of bubble gum (imagine that!)

I have several folders on my computer full of news stories I've hoarded, and most of them are serious stories. The reason I stockpile stories is that our overlords have generally gotten more and more extreme, and public policies have gotten so much more oppressive and ridiculous that by the time I'm able to fight these policies, there are gobs of new happenings that are even worse. So it just piles up.

Now that I'm able to start on my Big Cleaning, I've found a folder that has over 4,300 items, dating back to 1999. That was before the opening of Paul Brown Stadium, which is already demanding another \$500 million in free Toy Money from taxpayers for upgrades. For context, if I had found a folder with files that old when this zine started, it would have files from 1970. This particular story has been backlogged since 2006. But it's not a serious news event. Rather, it's about bubble gum, which makes it automatically funny.

A TV station in central Florida repeatedly reported on a man they called the “Bubble Gum Bandit.” He had been caught on video robbing money from gumball machines at almost 20 businesses and agencies, including a video store and a driver's license bureau. In some cases, he stole entire machines. A caption on a video on the station's website read, “ ‘Bubble Gum’ Machine Thefts Baffle Police.” They put “bubble gum” in quotes, as if it's not the proper term for the piquant confection. The man was eventually caught and charged with burglary.

People were mystified that he focused only on bubble gum machines. They said the machines only



contained beegie and \$40 in coins. “For whatever reason, he didn’t take anything else from the store, nothing,” a woman who worked at a pool supply store said. “Maybe he has a bubble gum fetish.”

A restaurant owner said of his stolen machine, “There is never more than \$30 or \$40 in it, so I don’t think it is for the money.”

An attempt to learn how the case was resolved revealed a 2016 case in upstate New York in which a different man was lovingly dubbed the “Bubble Gum Bandit.” This man was suspected of stealing \$4,000 worth of bubble gum and other items from a supermarket. Think how big of a bub you could blow with \$4,000 in gum! The article also described other weird thefts in the area, such as a man stealing \$750 worth of Pokémon cards from a Walmart. A vacuum cleaner was stolen from a Walmart in a different case. Also at this store, a man drank a whole bottle of male enhancement formula off the shelf and put the bottle back on the shelf after it was empty.

That item was from the same folder that included the story about the man who tried to cheat on a drug test by using lemonade instead of urine. The problem for him was that it was pink lemonade.

## Gum on your gafas!

It’s hilarious when people ruin their eyeglasses. But there’s no funnier way to ruin them all up than by bubbling.

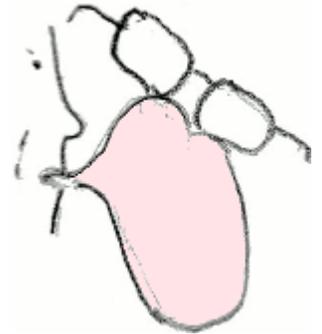
A woman actually went through the trouble of contacting me to tell me that she did so just this past month at work. According to her account of the event, she was chomping on a big, pink plug of beegie as she was sitting at her computer. Then she did something very useful: She bubbled.

As the bub quickly expanded, she wanted to avoid the hazard of having it pop and stick to her expensive specs. So she reached up and tried to bust it in her face before it got that big. Now that’s professionalism!

However, this effort went awry when she accidentally knocked her glasses off. Instead of defying gravity and flying into space, the glosses fell and became bogged down in the remains of the bubble—weighting it down and stretching the gum away from her visage.

Best all, the gafas were likely wasted.

The rest of the office crew probably got a good laugh when they saw a stretched-out wad of bubble gum leering at them from the top of the pile of rubbish in the trash can.



## A bunch of luxury cruises got ruined

It isn’t just baseball cards, comic books, and autographed posters that get ru. It’s events too!

I found some stories on the Internet of high school proms getting ruined. I feel it would be unethical for this zine to profit off of these stories, because the soulless sociopaths who run our school systems have spoiled proms for entire classes for 3 years running in some districts. They show no remorse or shame over it. Someone did post a lengthy story about how her older brother tried on her prom dress without permission, broke the zipper, and refused to replace it before the prom took place. But that was a single incident where somebody had their prom spoiled by something being physically destroyed. This was not an instance in which school officials folded their arms across their chests and gloated as they gutted the prom for the whole class.

I never attended a prom, but I’m sure a prom is cheaper than a luxury cruise. Thus, luxury cruises are fair game for ridicule. I found a webpage titled “These cruise itinerary changes ruined my trip! I want a refund.” It describes how a woman went on a Baltic Sea cruise that failed to stop at all the places on the itinerary. Suing over that would be like if I sued the Cincinnati roadmeet because we didn’t get to stop at all the places I had scheduled for that. The vacationer also complained because the cruise line didn’t give her a complimentary glass of wine on her birthday. Well, I didn’t receive a room-size trampoline for my birthday when I was 8. So tough toilets. The author of that page said the woman was not entitled to a refund for her cruise, because the captain is allowed to change the itinerary for a wide variety of reasons. The writer said that the tourist’s effort to be refunded was “one of the most misguided self-advocacy attempts I’ve seen in some time.” That’s because cruise ships are actually a “floating hotel”, and the price of the cruise only covers that—not the ship’s actual location. Upon being told this, the vacationer threatened to take her case to 20/20.

In 2018, ABC did report on a different cruise that supposedly went roodledy-doodledy because there was some construction work on the ship. One, two, three—aaaaaaaaawwwwww!!!

A British newspaper recently reported on a cruise that had “awful” entertainment and—worst of all—no lobster. Waaaaah. A tourist complained, “The ‘make a flower’ workshop was just a 2-minute explanation of how to turn a Kleenex tissue into a flower. We didn’t even get craft tissue paper.” In one amusing episode on this cruise, the host of a karaoke night failed to show up, so guests unlocked the equipment and started it themselves.

However, a man who posts YouTube videos about cruises called the article “garbage” and said the photos with it were just stock pictures from Getty Images.

Another luxury cruise went awry when the toilets broke and guests were told to pee in the showers. A couple said they went on a honeymoon cruise that was decimated when raw sewage bubbled up through the shower drain.

An Atlanta TV station reported that a vacationer demanded a full refund after going on a luxury cruise where another guest snored loudly. A woman who replied on Facebook said her cruise was ruined by people vomiting in the middle of the night.

Unlike a lack of lobster, toilet troubles can indeed ruin cruises, but these incidents aren’t the only culprits in truly laying hulk to these trips. One family said they lost their daughter’s birth certificate just days before an overseas luxury cruise—which they couldn’t get a refund for. Another family said their cruise line put all their luggage on the wrong boat—including all their clothes and medications. The magic word was again used in the title of the thread, which said the cruise line “ruined our cruise.” This forced them to spend all their time in Nassau buying new clothes. Someone replied saying this cruise line once dropped their suitcase in the ocean.

Another online commenter said they found a shard of glass in a drink at the bar on their cruise. Another said somebody stole their father-in-law’s expensive watch. When security personnel came to the room to investigate, the investigators had him open the safe—and they snuck the watch into the safe. Yes, the investigators were the ones who had stolen it, and they tried to say it was in the safe all along. A tourist on another luxury cruise whined because the cruise line let children use the hot tub.

Complaining about children using the hot tub ranks right up there with the time someone whined that an entire cruise was ruined because ESPN went out.

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