

The Last Word™

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Domino Rally toppled yet again!

Each winter around this time, I try to get in the Christmas spirit by searching on the public Internet for stories of toys received as holiday gifts getting broken right away.

This year's search yielded a steady stream of stories about one particular toy, which for years has provided us with a seemingly bottomless supply of fodder. Can you guess what it is?

Here's a hint: Its name rhymes with "romino dally."

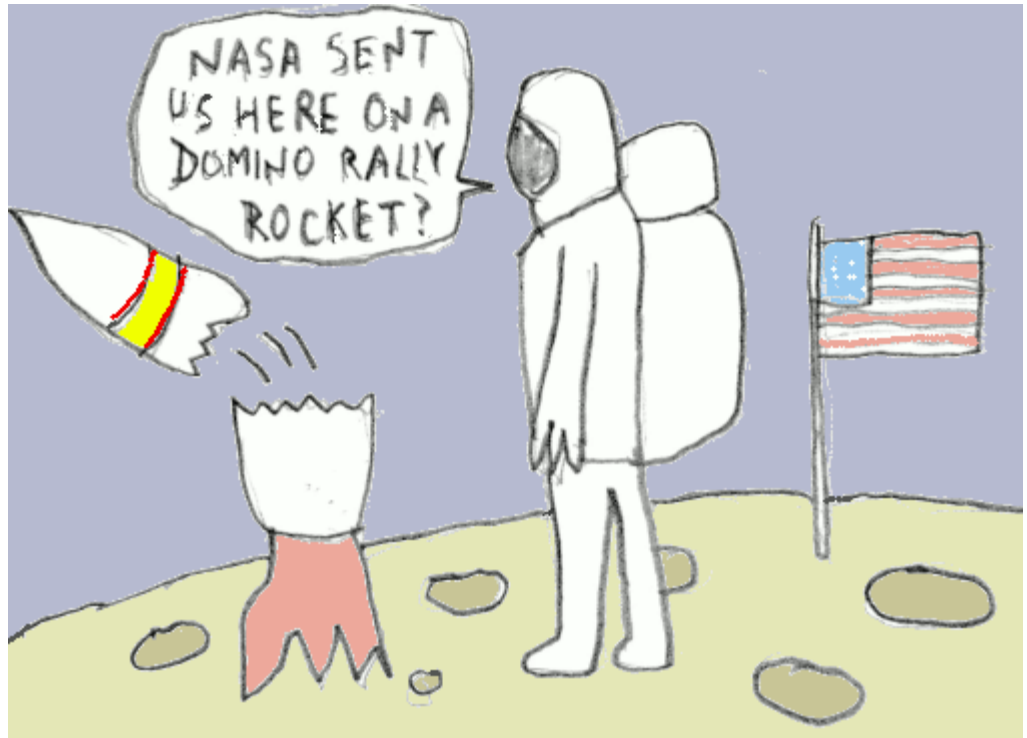
When we think we've milked Domino Rally—a 1980s-era toy featuring plastic dominoes that would break if you so much as breathed on them—all we can, more Domino Rally commentary gushes our way.

Here's some of the comments about Domino Rally that I recently found posted in cyberspace...

- "Man, I wanted this so badly and when I finally got it I realized it's junk."
- "I wanted this so bad when I was a kid. Received it for Christmas. I also got very ill with food poisoning on that same Christmas (shellfish) and I threw up on this exact gift. I never even played with it. It sat in the basement for years after and I never touched it knowing that I puked on it."
- "Mine snapped in half on the first go at setting this up. Honestly, I don't think I ever used the thing again after that. Big let down."
- "I got a set for Christmas one year and played with them once or twice. Definitely didn't live up to the hype, or even come close."
- "Man I was so excited to get this set for Christmas. Set it up once, took hours [to] build and 30 seconds to knock down. Never played with it again."
- "One of the biggest disappointments I can remember."
- "My foam rocket snapped in half the first time I launched it."
- "Had it, took way too long to set up all the little dominoes, just for 10 seconds of action. And they were a bitch to accidentally step on."
- "This toy was my first experience of disappointment as a kid."
- "Hours to set up, seconds of amazement."

One commenter said their dad had to sand down all of the dominoes just to get them to stand up because they all had rough chunks of plastic hanging off of them.

The Domino Rally peeps also made a battery-operated miniature truck called Domino Dealer that pooped out dominoes in an upright position. But a recall was issued on this toy because it kept overheating and creating a fire hazard. Somebody made an online comment saying this truck was useless because the dominoes were so flimsy and unstable that they would prematurely fall over anyway. Someone replied to agree...



"That was always my problem. The 'domino dealer' machine that would place them would get almost done with a huge row, and then that one shitty domino with the crappy casting mark would tip backwards and fuck up the whole goddamn thing.

"Then 6 year old me would yell out 'fuck' and I'd get sent to my room."

More recent toys that are part of the Domino Rally empire have received bad online reviews. Here's a sample...

- *"My soon to be 9 yr old son really wanted this for his birthday. I tried to discourage him based on some of the reviews. He still wanted it. After opening it on his birthday...it didn't take long (one attempt) before the plane ripped and the rocket broke. After supergluing the rocket back together...the rocket launcher wouldn't launch."*

- *"Rocket broke before launch and couldn't get the plane to fly without manually launching it."*

- *"I purchased it twice—the first time the cheap rocket was broken in 2 when I received it. And it was missing a piece so I couldn't build the launcher so I returned it and ordered a replacement figuring I just got a bad one." (Spoiler: the second one was bad too.)*

- *"Wow is this toy crap."*

- *"My son is careful with it, not rough on it, yet pieces broke the first time he played with it."*

- *"This is the worst toy we have ever purchased."*

- *"Some of the pieces broke within the first hour."*

- *"So glad this wasn't a gift from Santa, or my kids would be calling him a Cheap Ass Toy maker."*

- *"My 4 year old got it for his birthday and was thrilled. Less than 10 minutes after putting it together for him, he said, 'Daddy, we can throw it away.'"*

- *"So cheaply made, things broke during assembly. Instructions were awful, and when it was finally put together, it never worked. Just put it out to trash, the day after Christmas."*

(Pointless note that doesn't fit anywhere else: I also found a mildly humorous bad review of a Hawaii road atlas. It seems strange that someone would buy a road atlas to visit Hawaii, but this tourist said they intentionally left their perfectly good \$50 atlas on their cruise ship with a note that said to just throw it away.)

As you may know, my only experience with Domino Rally was when I had a basic set growing up. The first time I used this toy, the snaps broke off the dominoes when I tried to place them in the tracks. I was then treated to an angry lecture that the brand new toy was "ruined", even though it was "ruined" by being such a shitty toy, not because I abused it. Yes, the magic word was used. The toy was then famously stashed away under an old green armchair. The chair had a broken spring poking out the bottom that ground back and forth into the cardboard box, carving out a big hole that obliterated the face of the girl on the box. This was the same chair where I once spit a huge gob of chocolate mixed with saliva under the cushion and stained it purple.

Brand new Domino Rally sets went wastage bastage.



People threw pizza on the floor because it tasted soapy

Here's a blast from the past from the days of helmet hair, Vanilla Ice, and *Full House*!

In my later years of high school, the school had occasional outings at a certain local chain of pizza restaurants. Students found it to be a rather dull—even frustrating—event. Sometimes we also

stopped at a few stores just to ponder the shoddiness of their merchandise, but most of my classmates would have rather been back at school breaking things.

We were all hungry. Times were tough. And we left even hungrier than we arrived. That's because the pizza tasted of soap. Thus, it was inedible. This was different from the early 2000s when the fries at fast food restaurants tasted soapy. The soap flavor in this story only afflicted pizza, and it wasn't *exactly* the same as that later found in fries, as if the soap taste came from different ingredients.

Anybip, more pizza went on the floor than in people's mouths. Folks would cut or tear off a small bite of pizza and smuggle it onto the floor when no teachers were looking. That's what mature 17-year-olds did. Sometimes they braved the soapiness and tried to actually eat a bite of the pizza. But more often than not, they secretly spit the pizza into a napkin and dropped the chewed hunk of pizza onto the floor.

Nothing could mask the soap taste. We tried peppers and Parmesan cheese, but it was futile.

Were people actually expected to eat soapy pizza? We all lived a humble existence, so we didn't expect caviar. But there were limits on what we'd tolerate. Most people who run schools are pretty incompetent, and this school was no exception. Thus, I think this was another situation where the school didn't feel like putting any effort into its activities, so they just threw something together—sort of like how they kept showing us random videos intended for 6-year-olds because they were easier to grab off the library shelf.



Do it or dye

It's time for what the world has been waiting on the edge of their seats for: the battle of the bubble gum dyes!

In October, a small news article disclosed that many scientists are urging that the FDA remove a certain pink dye from its list of approved coloring additives. This dye is found in many foods, candies, medicines, dietary supplements, and even one brand of bubble gum. The scientists say there is evidence dating back 40 years that this dye is linked to thyroid cancer.

I'm a strong consumer advocate, and I'll trust the claims of these great men and women of science—unless I find that they're behind the COVID antiscience of the past few years. If I find that they cheered the pandemic "new normal", here's what I will do: I will sneak up behind them, wad up their letter, and deposit it squarely in the recycle bin. As I write the preceding sentence, I'm imitating my 8th grade science teacher when he dramatized what would happen if students talked during a quiz. **The Last Word** is based on belief in science, and we trust scientists—except those who destroyed their own credibility by demanding martial law to fight COVID.

Indeedity-doodledy, this dye is prohibited in cosmetics. Many other countries ban it in gum and most other food. The FDA announced in 1990 that it would ban this dye in food—but never did. It isn't even used in most American gum brands, because most gum makers prefer other dyes—if they use dye at all.

Why does *anyone* use this dye? Gum uses it because blowing bubbles is considered funnier when it involves brighter colors. But that doesn't explain why some brands of mashed potatoes and ADHD medications also use this dye. I haven't seen anyone blow a mashed potato bubble lately. Besides, there are other pink dyes available, as that's what other brands of gum use.

Some websites have said that dyes limit the size of bubbles you can blow with beegee—and that it's intentional, because there are lifeless killjoys out there who are annoyed when people blow massive bubs in public. But pink dye may be less common than before simply because of the current trends in bubble gum busting. Gum in the 1980s was dominated by bright colors like hot pink and fluorescent green. You may notice that so far in the 2020s, when you see folks bubbling in public, the color is more likely to be a soothing, muted shade such as booger green or white. Cletus of *The Dukes Of Hazzard* was 40 years ahead of his time when he blew gray bubs.

Another article says many brands of bubble gum do not use added colors because it might stain dentures. With America's aging population, that's important.

Have some gum! You'll be glad you did! Just make sure it doesn't have any dangerous dye.

Excuse me if I start to play...With your digital TV...

It's another month of science at **The Last Word!**

The good old days of analog TV weren't always good. When I was growing up, our TV set was in the shop much of the time. There was a long time in the early 1980s when most objects on the screen would turn green. I always knew the TV was turning green when I was in my room and I could hear people stomping their feet in the living room to try to fix it. The set we bought to replace it worked great for years—until CG&E fried it.

But at least analog TV had much better reception of over-the-air stations. Digital TV is plagued by reception that is so bad that some stations are lost entirely. Decades ago—years before digital TV became standard—I warned everyone that this would happen if we went digital. I warned them point blank. It didn't take a genius to figure this out, yet our rulers kept denying it.

Stations that were fuzzy but watchable in the analog era now can't be seen at all. With digital TV, the signal has to be perfect to get any usable reception. Even with the biggest stations in town, the signal breaks up. This is an inherent problem with digital broadcasting. It's like how if a CD gets even one small scratch, the disc is done. It won't play, period.

This is a simple concept. I explained it clearly, and our overlords did not listen. They insisted it wouldn't happen—but it did.

Imagine spending \$150 on a new set only to find that all you can watch is a plain blue screen. I just tuned to Channel 12 and can't pick up a thing. Imagine trusting the FCC only to find that it's run by smoothbrained idiots who think digital TV improved reception—despite real world proof that it got worse. They claim to be the smartest people in the world, but they can't even figure out something that somebody who barely even graduated high school could see coming 25 years ago.

Our rulers are so hitched to digital TV that even after we've spent years seeing how bad it is, they dig in on their stance. Then, when somebody points out they have bad reception, our "leaders" always say it's because the person must have their TV or antenna set up wrong. If something doesn't work, it's always because the person is "doing it wrong."

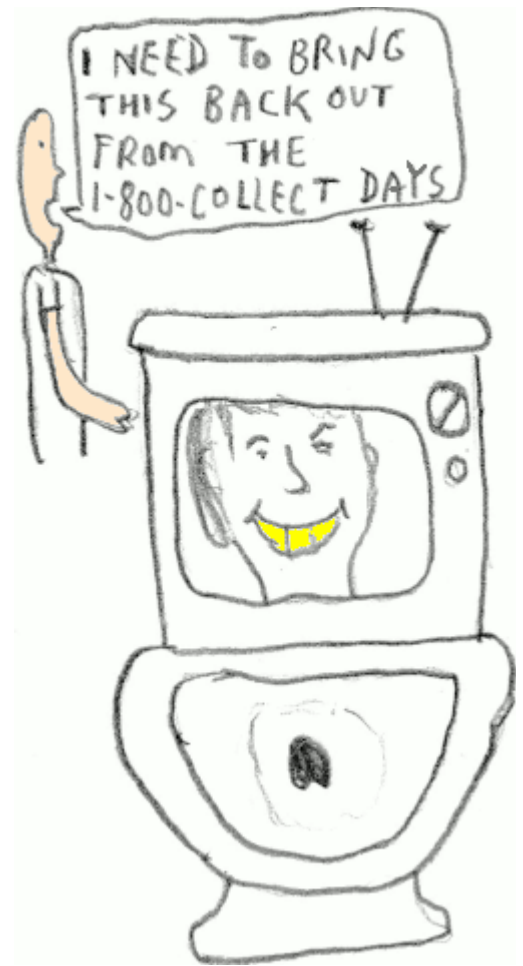
Does this sound familiar? Based on scientific evidence, I warned something would fail—and it did. Yet those who implemented the failed policy arrogantly insisted it was successful and doubled down on it.

You'd think the FCC of all people would understand the limits of digital TV. But apparently not. I think they know but just don't care. Maybe they'll write an article begging for amnesty.

Here's something else that sounds familiar: The media participated in a sweeping propaganda campaign to promote the switchover to digital. Years before the switch was finalized, I saw many newspaper puff pieces about how great it was going to be. They often used a drawing of a digital TV with a comedic scene from *Seinfeld* featuring Jerry and Kramer conversing on the screen, contrasting it with the same scene on an analog set. The message to the public was always to shut up, get with the program, and don't complain.

I don't remember voting for this, do you?

Now they're talking about how in a few years they will be introducing a new digital TV standard that will supposedly correct all the reception problems. But current TV sets won't work with this new standard—so you'll have to buy a new set again. If they had listened to the past warnings about poor reception, they wouldn't have to come up with a new standard now. Besides, they've lied to



us so much before that I don't believe the new standard will improve reception. As George W. Bush drooled, "Fool me once, shame on, shame on you. Fool me, can't get fooled again."

I think we'd be better off if we could just return to analog TV. I'm not sure how this could be done, after the FCC gave away the old TV frequencies to other industries just for the asking, but the idea at least needs to be floated.

Information on disinformation

With all the hue and cry lately about *misinformation* and *disinformation* – two terms that the media often applies to what is actually accurate data—we should note the difference between these words. A comment on the public Internet said *misinformation* is the unintentional spread of falsehoods. *Disinformation* is when they do it on purpose.

With the war on alleged false information, shouldn't it be considered a two-way street? One of the biggest healthcare providers in the area has been spreading medical disinformation on its own website and even more obviously on its Facebook page. This provider has most of the business in the area because it has lots of clout with local politicians. Unfortunately, I don't expect our public officials to challenge its disinformation. After all, one of the biggest cities in the region has a mayor who has revealed himself to be flat-out fascist. I'm not using that word lightly. I mean it literally. Anyone so extreme in his own pronouncements has forfeited the privilege of being trusted on anything.

The state of California recently passed a law to punish doctors if they are accused of giving their patients false information. The law was actually passed to go after providers who give *true* information, because the state deems true data to be false. On an increasing basis, we're being governed by a power structure that rejects proven facts, accepts demonstrably false info as true, and refuses to consider science that might contradict their preconceptions. Their conduct is not what science is about. The only things we can truly accept as fact in science are real world data. Anything that *might* happen later is only speculation and can still be honestly questioned.

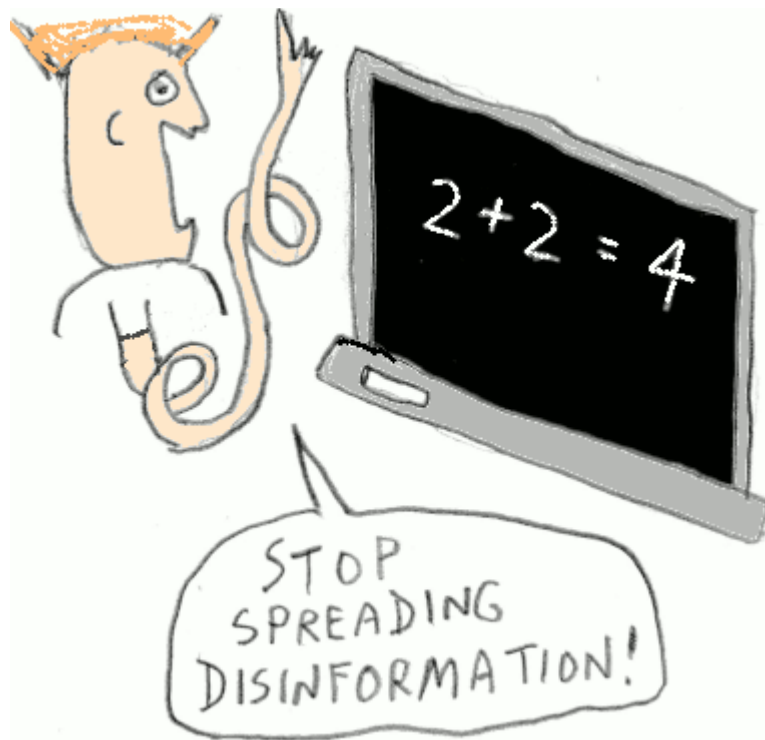
The climate disaster is confirmed by real world data on what has already taken place. But in the 2020s, medicine has been corrupted by disinformation on medical events that have occurred and bad methodology to theorize on what *will* occur. When our rulers' hypotheses and claims are proven wrong by real world occurrences, they say the real world is wrong. These bullies then censor those who disagree. It's like how for years before, they rejected real world data on the economy.

Even some of the things I believed just last year about recent medical developments have been refuted by later science. Instead of digging in on past beliefs, I accepted these new findings.

This isn't a conspiracy theory. This is how the scientific method works.

Those who were behind the California law are as ignorant of law as they are of science. One of its sponsors reportedly said that travel even within your own state is not a right. This is despite the fact that travel is a constitutional right. The government may enact reasonable regulations—e.g., it can require that you stop at stop signs—but it can't prohibit travel altogether. If lawmakers are so wrong about something as elementary as this, why should I trust them on anything else?

If California can punish doctors for giving accurate medical advice, why can't we penalize medical facilities that spread actual disinformation? Usually, it isn't doctors and nurses who work directly with patients who seem to be at fault here. Instead, it seems to be people who actually run these providers, many of whom are not medical professionals. The boards of directors are full of zillionaire bank executives, developers, business leaders, academics, and chamber of commerce pooploops. It doesn't work like it does on TV, where the directors just allocate money. In real life, they



also help direct facilities' other doings and hire the folks who run their websites. This means boards of directors have some responsibility for information posted on these sites. At best, it sounds like these providers get their medical information from sound bites on morning TV talk shows.

But we can't always revoke the medical licenses of those who serve on boards of directors, because many are not doctors. Instead, I think we should look at taking away their other professional licenses—maybe even their driver's licenses. If you think no authority has the right to police disinformation like this, remember, California opened the door to it by trying to shut down valid medical advice. If there's one thing I hate, it's a bully, and these disinformation barons should be treated the same way I think other bullies should be treated: They should be turned into pariahs.

A student bought pot at school

It started with bubble gum. Why, kids start out blowing bubbles, and before you know it, they're smoking pot! What is this world coming to?

At the beginning of my junior year of high school, students kept secretly passing around sticks of gum in class. Eventually, the teacher caught on to the clandestine bubble busting, and she issued a ukase against the zesty confection. I think that's when people took up smoking instead. I remember one time, kids were passing along cigarettes in class. The teacher caught them red-handed, and she angrily grabbed the ciggie from them and threw it in the wastebasket.

But I've been informed that at some schools, they don't use tobacco in their cigarettes. Instead, they use *wacky* tobacco! I'm talking the wackiest!

A reader of **The Last Word**—your road atlas to freedom—said that when he was in high school, he purchased a marijuana cig right there in class. He knew that a classmate regularly smoked pot, and one day in class, he asked him where he got his stuff. He didn't get an answer, but he did get a sales pitch. Joints were going for a quarter apiece.

So the cooltagonist of this story shelled out 75 cents for 3. One for yesterday, one for today, and one for tomorrow!

According to this story, he smoked one of the joints as soon as he got home. But he didn't finish it, because the quality of it was quite poor. Books and *Ranger Rick* magazines had been disappearing from the classroom, and he suspected they were being shredded and used as cut for the marijuana. What can you expect for only 25 cents per joint? He buried the remnants of this joint in his backyard before his parents could get home from work and catch him.

He secretly hoarded the other joints for special occasions, but the ultimate fate of these joints could not be recalled.

The world rolls the way it rolls!

Cadaver capers

Continuing with our proud tradition of bringing you the latest in blood, guts, and gore, we've found some stories on the public Internet about medical school students being expelled for abusing cadavers in various ways. Abra-abra-cadaver, they're gonna reach out and grab ya!

One student was expelled for opening the window in an anatomy lab and using a cadaver's severed arms to wave at pedestrians. Another student removed a cadaver's penis and went to a party with it sticking out of his pants.



Another student carved their initials into a cadaver during anatomy lab. A whole class apparently got in trouble for leaving cadaver tissue on an overhead light. Another student was kicked out for using a severed cadaver arm to wave at the professor — right after the professor gave the class a big talk about how important it was to respect cadavers.

Another student was expelled for licking a cadaver and chewing a removed trapezius muscle to satisfy a bet. Another removed a cadaver's eyes and showed them off to everyone. Another threw a cadaver lung in class. Another stabbed a cadaver in the eye with a scalpel and left it sitting there just for the hell of it.

Not all stories of med school permanent vacays are cadaver-related. One student was expelled for drinking beer in class. Another was kicked out for masturbating in class. Another brang marijuana brownies to school and left them on a table, and a classmate ate one.

Another got his graded exam paper back, erased the incorrect answers, wrote in the right answers, and told the professor it had been graded wrong. But the professor had made a copy of his test before he changed the answers, and the student was busted. This is the exact same thing that one of my college professors said happened once.

After a student was caught for criminal behavior he committed at a school function, it was discovered that he never graduated from undergrad because he did the same thing there. He had been kicked out of undergrad after he had already been accepted to medical school.

Somebody replied to these stories, "Imagine doing all that hard work to get into med school just to be a dumbass." I can't imagine, because I've never seen it firsthand. But I have seen people doing no work at all to get into high school just to be a dumbass.

NKU gets schooled again

Most people don't go to college just to chew bubble gum.

Now that I've gotten your attention with that keen observation, it's time for another dose of ridicule of NKU. The school earned it. It earned every smidgen of it and then some.

With the current president of the university leaving 5 years before his contract is up, it behooves us to inspect perks he got while he served. Keep in mind that he's not alone among college presidents in getting such absurd privileges. Sort of like how he's also not alone in making a complete spectacle of himself and bringing derision on all of academia. There's plenty of blame to go around, so if he's reading this, he's probably breathing a sigh of relief that he's actually getting off easy in these pages.

According to a recent article, the prez's employment contract gave him benefits that you and I can only dream of. The university provided him with his own car. It provided him with his own cellphone. He got 5 weeks of vacation and 12 sick days each year. The school covered all his business expenses and gave him a housing allowance worth over \$70,000 per year. The school even paid for his memberships in exclusive clubs.

That was in addition to his \$450,000 annual salary — which is \$50,000 more than the President of the United States makes. But this is actually less than what some other university presidents make.

After the early termination of his contract, he received \$1.3 million in compensation.

All of this is as NKU is facing a budget deficit of almost \$25 million.

This story of wastage is especially maddening because of the austerity regime that otherwise prevails at NKU. When I attended NKU — before I was expelled over politics — we always had to hear about how we had to abolish program after program after program because of budget cuts. It was always cut, cut, cut, slash, slash, slash.

Meanwhile, one of the university's dorm buildings has been taken over by poisonous mold, and the elevators keep breaking. The school told students to just scrape off the mold with their fingers. In addition, the ceiling in the basement is so unstable that students have been told it's safer to stay in their rooms if there's a tornado warning.

NKU encapsulates not just the humiliating downfall of academia but of society overall. Society limps along with no uniting goals or values, digs in on failure, rejects all sense of history and individuality, and curb-stomps basic liberty. If the school wasn't already doubling down on failure decades ago, maybe I wouldn't have had to use this zine to take to task parties who couldn't be bothered to fight it.

I want my Cool People Channel

Rights are like muscles: If you don't exercise them, they go away. Now that we've woken up in an America we don't recognize—which for 25 years I warned would happen if people didn't fight back—I've come up with an idea for a cable TV channel or even an over-the-air network.

We can call it the Cool People Channel. Media offerings for us cool people have become so skimpy that we need our own media to call our own. It's sort of like how Oscar the Grouch had his own grouch postal service and grouch computer.

This channel would of course show programming geared towards cool people. But how would we kick off this beautiful channel? Perhaps we should start with an audit video marathon! Not *adult* video, but *audit* video.

Lately, I've become spoony over audit videos that appear on YouTube. The clips are sometimes called "First Amendment audits", but they also help safeguard other liberties. In these videos, citizen journalists visit municipal buildings, motor vehicle offices, police stations, post offices, libraries, and other public facilities to test the right to make videos on public property. Sometimes they visit supermarkets or other large privately owned stores to challenge other public policies.

The video I made at NKU in March was sort of like an audit. I did not want, expect, or receive confrontation, but one of the reasons for the clip was to see if the university was doing its job of providing an education and doing it equitably. Years ago, when I saw that the Purple People Bridge—which is public property—had a rule against taking photos for commercial purposes, I took photos and published them. That was also like an audit. Similarly, during my Philadelphia trip back in 2000, I tried taking a photo on a New Jersey freeway where a sign banned photography. When I took the film to a store to be developed, the store suspiciously lost that picture. Also on that trip, I walked on a public beach without the required "beach badge" that was granted only to privileged beachfront residents, but I don't think I have any photos of that either.

Last time I looked, the Purple People Bridge had a sign saying the bridge is privately owned, but this is simply incorrect. I've done my homework on this. Similarly, some audit videos have caught personnel at motor vehicle bureaus and public libraries claiming the facility is private property. One clip shows police saying a library is privately owned and then in the next breath saying it's owned by the city—as if the city is a private entity.

Authorities often challenge these auditors, but there's quite a bit of hypocrisy going on. They accuse auditors of violating others' privacy, but this accusation falls on its face when you consider that we live in a society that already has video cameras everywhere. If you blew a bubble at a craft shop in 1991, there's a chance the footage from the store camera could someday crop up on YouTube.

A few audit videos include the arrest of the auditor or police breaking their video equipment. Many show other official misconduct, such as an angry, rude postal supervisor ejecting a customer.

The Cool People Channel could start out by running a whole series of audit videos back to back. It could even build a regular show around them. This show could narrate each video with an electronically modified high-pitched voice, like when I added narration to those shoplifting scare films. This in turn was inspired by somebody buying erotic videos and uploading them to YouTube with added high-pitched narration.

Each year, Channel 48 has its *Action Auction*. This PBS member station preempts everything else for this fundraiser in which it auctions off items to viewers like you. The Cool People Channel could have something called *Action Audit*. This would be an occasional week-long barrage of audit videos that includes a telethon to sell shares of the channel to cool people—like in *UHF*. We could even have Cool People Channel stores in airports—like the oft-ridiculed CNBC shops.

As we always say when talking to or about other coolsters: Think. Do. Be.

