

The Last Word™

Issue #583

May 2023

A special '90s flashback issue!

Ahoy! A Columbus roadmeet!

Ready for a roadmeet? I is!

This is a special '90s flashback ish, but first, I need to tell you that I went to the Columbus roadmeet in April! I actually had a couple trips in the '90s centered on Columbus. This included the college trip where we almost broke a vending machine at COSI, and the Ohio State Fair trip. I also went on a family trip to Columbus in 1985 in which COSI had an exhibit about how CompuServe was the wave of the future. Someone on the Internet said I was making this up, as they falsely believed CompuServe didn't exist yet in 1985, but this is sort of like how someone denied that WCLU played "Bop" even though I distinctly remember that it did.

The weather on the recent Columbus roadmeet was like the reverse of my trip to Virginia Beach back in 2000. When I went to Virginia Beach, they said each morning that it was going to be warm and sunny, but the moment we got down to the beach, it started raining, and it remained cold and rainy for the rest of each day. Thus—in all the days we spent in Virginia Beach—we never once got to use the beach. One day, we went to the mall instead and found our tires slashed. Yet, for the Columbus meet, they said it was going to pour down rain through the entirety of each day, but it barely rained at all.

For lack of a better option, I took Greyhound to the Columbus meet. The main transit terminal in Columbus is deceptive. The building has a nice, inviting facade, but when you walk through the

door, you see the station is actually a dump. It's nothing but a platform with a few pee-drenched portable restrooms that are way too small. I had booked a motel on the west side of Columbus. It didn't get great reviews, but it wasn't dreadfully bad either. I brang earplugs because reviewers talked about drug dealers making noise all night. On the first night, I heard a man outside yelling at someone, "I'm gonna fuck you up!" Both nights, there was somebody making a weird gurgling noise.

The real biddoodle came when I tried to get dinner on the first night. When I booked the inn, I noticed on the map that it was directly across the street from several restaurants and—best all—a huge gas station with a store where I could buy food to make a meal. I was looking *so forward* to it. But it turned out that the hotel was inside sort of a fenced-in compound, and there was no crosswalk on that busy road within a half-mile. After walking for hours, I had no energy left to walk a mile just to get to a gas station across the street. So I didn't get my meal. Just a small snack from the near-empty shelves at a different station a couple buildings away.



What sort of idiot designed that road? A dumb one? I was all set for a good dinner – and didn't get one.

The next morning, I was woken up early by two guys on the other side of the street pacing back and forth with leaf blowers—even though there were no leaves anywhere in sight.

The roadmeet itself ruled! The meet drew 6 peeps, and I discovered a secluded area with an abandoned roadbed along a ravine. Near the end of the meet, we stopped at Kroger, and I guzzled a 52-ounce orange juice to help with hydration and energy, but still I felt very lightheaded.

Then I heard it. The bunkeroo! The following day, I swaggered into Columbus's disappointing transit station to catch the bus home. While I was there, I detected the uproarious audio of a loud-and-proud bunker blast! A guard glanced around for possible suspects. Another LAP loominsky soon followed. You may also remember that last year, I had to go through this terminal on my way to the Chicago meet, and a woman who worked there announced to travelers that smoking carries a \$1,000 fine. She was still there during my recent trip, and she made the same announcement. However, this time, there was no marijuana smoke in response.

Up, up and away!



Monty Burns meeting wasn't "exxx-cel-lent!"

Remember the '90s?

Remember grunge, Pogs, *The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air*, helmet hair, the Congressional Post Office scandal, and dial-up Internet?

This edition of this zine is a special 1990s flashback issue! It was the decade of incoherence, but you were lucid through it all—except when you were high from the fumes of all the bubble gum you burned. After all, it was the decade of our famous Environmentally Sound Fourth of July Bonfires—not to mention the menacing "Bank without boundaries" and "Pick up the *Post*" commercials. And who can forget the Frisch's ads with the guy with one eye bigger than the other?

The Last Word is now 30 years old—its first issue being dated April 1993. What better time to do a '90s nostalgia ish than now?

What was one of the most gnawing news stories in Campbell County in the '90s? Let's bip on up to Highland Heights—my hometown!

Highland Hi—as computer bulletin board system users called the city to make it sound friendlier—has long been plagued by controversy enveloping Gateway East and Gateway West, a series of commercial development projects. It erupted at a public meeting at city hall one evening. We've pinpointed it to the meeting of May 21, 1996. The #1 record in the land that week was "The Crossroads" by Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, and it was only a week before a disastrous tornado outbreak ravaged the area. The Gateway developments necessitated the city abusing eminent domain to seize houses and giving the land to developers. This did not sit well with, well, almost anyone.

During the meeting, one of the executives of one of the development companies took the stage. He was an arrogant dickwipe. This kleptocrat angrily pointed at townsfolk in the audience and yelled at them for opposing his plans.

Here's the best part. He looked just like Monty Burns—the wealthy power plant owner on *The Simpsons*. And he was just as greedy. In fact, he was even worse. His level of greed and meanness was more like that of R.J. Fletcher of *UHF*. One almost expected him to pound his fist, scowl, and exclaim, "**BECAUSE OF SOME FLY-BY-NIGHT UHF STATION!!!! A U-H-F STATION!!!!!!!!!!**"

This developer boasted that he would tear down two entire streets.

Almost every resident who spoke at the meeting blasted the Gateway gentrification boondoggle, and the only one who gave even a mild defense of the zoning board was critical of another

plan that might have reduced our quality of life: the proposal to make I-471 part of I-71 and reroute more traffic there.

Monty Burns took the stage again and complained that he had personally made an offer to all the residents of the Gateway West area but they weren't satisfied. Tough toilets, Burnsy. His argument was that the public shouldn't be taken seriously all because they opposed his ideas. This gaslighting was like having the 2020s in the 1990s!

When asked why affordable housing wasn't being proposed instead of a commercial development, C-Mo said it was because of terrain. They why were there houses already there? And why was new commercial space needed when the city was just letting the nearby shopping center rot to its core? If they wanted commercial space, they should have used the space they already had but had refused to use. The shopping center was only about 15 years old then, and the city was already letting most of it sit vacant.

I know all this poo-poo because I was at this meeting—just doing my job. I even remember the woman sitting in front of me playing with her gum the whole time. I also recall that Monty Burns used the contraction *shan't* when condescendingly addressing the angry audience.

Unchecked greed and selfishness like this is why people in some countries have to scrounge in mines for a dollar a day. Their entire villages were bulldozed for these mines, and now it's the only place they can find work.

In more recent times, NKU has tried to pick up the land grab mantle. There have been reports that the university wants to level the entire residential neighborhood behind Gateway West to build new sports facilities. So, not only have colleges become prisons and indoctrination centers that spew Charles Koch Foundation propaganda and promote a Social Credit System, but they've also become bad neighbors. (The Charles Koch Foundation finances ideologically driven projects at state universities in Kentucky, including a study that backed the failed COVID lockdowns. This shows that some right-wing organizations actually do support the COVID authoritarianism that would have been expected from them all along. Plus, that they advance their ideas through our state universities proves just how dedicated Kentucky's education system is to promoting an ideological agenda.)

The world doesn't revolve around you, C-Mo.

Professor found restroom mess as clear as mud

We call them the Eliminati!

Remember that pile of shit someone left on the sidewalk next to your neighbors' '75 Fury? It had to be the Eliminati! Over the past couple years, tourists on Waikiki Beach have found big logs on the floor in the restrooms there. Yep, the Eliminati again! Every decade in between had its share of Eliminati action—and that includes the '90s!

In fact, the '90s may have been the era in which the Eliminati dug in the most. Maybe I only noticed it more then because that's when I went to NKU.

Folks at NKU seemed to have bad aim. It's not like it made much difference, because some of the restrooms smelled terrible even at their best. Early last year, when I went up to NKU to make my video that humiliated the school, I noticed the men's room next to what used to be the game room on the lower floor of University Center had that same awful stench it had 30 years ago. I hadn't used that restroom since the '90s, yet I could still remember the odor.



Back when I attended NKU, there were a couple times when I noticed someone must have had a bad case of diarrhea in which they hovered over the toilet instead of sitting on it. This wouldn't have been a problem if they didn't have such poor aim. But one incident stands out.

One day—I don't remember if this was when I was a student or if this was during my later outside agitation campaign—I went into a restroom and noticed there were huge gobs of shit on the wall above the urinal. I have no idea how this feat was accomplished.

Later, I was sitting on the floor at the other end of the hallway. I must have been waiting for a class or some presentation. I saw two professors exiting the beethoom at the same time. One said to the other something like, "I hope that's mud above the W.C."

The other replied with something like, "I'm afraid it isn't."

Must have been the Eliminati!

There was also a time a professor—some say it was at UC, some say NKU—wrote a hilarious letter to the student newspaper about people leaving restrooms a wreck.

The restrooms at NKU didn't have nearly as many intentional ploppings of unusual items as Brossart did. The only one I can think of offhand is the magazine with a clown on the cover. But NKU did have the normal messes that we have a right to expect in school lavatories. That assumes the plopping of newspapers that were just going to get thrown out anyway is classed as normal. I distinctly remember one day when I went into the men's room down the hall from WRFN, and there was an entire newspaper floating in the toilet. Somebody had apparently tried to flush it and ended up overflowing the toilet, as there was water all over the floor.

You read that right. *Somebody tried to flush a whole newspaper down the toilet in college and overflowed it!* Let that sink in.

At least the Eliminati seemed to be tied up somewhere else that day.



Boy! It's bad!

Ready for another '90s memory? This one has to do with gum.

I famously went on vacation to Memphis in 1990, when I was 17, and I'm pretty sure this is the only trip I've ever been on that we were forced to postpone after the plans had pretty much been finalized. The circumstances surrounding this delay were an outrage. I've monitored the Facebook pages of some of the narcissistic, greedy, argumentative pieces of shit I fought that summer. I've noticed since 2020 that their "likes" have slowly gravitated from "Being Conservative" and Ronald Reagan to ostensibly liberal pages—even as they remain on the far right by any traditional definition. It's a realignment I've watched in real time. This evolution was more noticeable when Facebook sorted pages in the reverse chronological order that people "liked" them.

These are highly paid professionals who in 1990 showed zero remorse over their atrocities and lies. If the Memphis trip had been delayed any longer, I wouldn't have been able to go at all, because of some very obscure and malicious ukase from an unelected state bureaucrat that I'm not going into detail about here. The monsters I dealt with smirked and brushed aside my protests about this diktat, and if it had canceled my family trip, they would have been just as arrogant. Until they are punished for what they did do, our society is meaningless.

Anybip, I heard a funny radio commercial on this fact-finding mission. We were careening in a southwesterly direction on the Western Kentucky Parkway near Leitchfield when this ad crackled

across WKHG. Prominently featured in the commersh was something called Phil's Gum City—a business that sold nothing but gum. At first, I thought it was a real business, but it was actually a fictional establishment in a gum commercial.

The catchphrase in this ad: "Boy! It's good!"

A post on the public Internet not long ago said the commersh was for Trident gum—not any brand typically associated with bubble busting. This post said Al Franken did one of the voices in the ad.

Who was this Phil who ran Phil's Gum City anyway? Was he related to Phil the Purex Man? Was he Phil Collins? Phil Gramm? Dr. Phil?

Why it matters: Sometimes when I get a form or questionnaire, I fill it out funny. It started with suggestion cards from restaurants, but by the time I was in college, I was fed up enough to start doing this with documents that were much more important. There was some very important form I had to fill out—I think it was a couple years into college, when I was *really* fed up—where I wrote "Phil's Gum City" in the space where it asked for my city.

That was funny because it's about gum.

Stuck on you...Got this feeling my baseball cards are covered with glue...

Because this is a day ending in *y*, more baseball cards and comic books got doodled of the roodledy sort.

Just last year, someone on the public Internet posted that a priceless comic book got wasted. According to the title of this thread, some person or committee "ruined my book during private signing." The magic word!

Apparently, they had a brand new, very valuable comic that they sent somewhere to be signed by someone. This service cost \$150. The book was in mint condition before they sent it in. But when they got it back, there was a mysterious stain on the cover. The post said, "I didn't pay \$150 to have my book 'stained.' "

They said they also heard from some agent in the biz who said someone's comic book "had recently been ruined" when someone spilled hand sanitizer all over it.

Even with Google manipulating search results so professional "news" organizations rank ahead of message forums, it's still easier to find stories like this than good YouTube videos now. We searched on YouTube—owned by Google—for some good videos pertaining to some things that have taken place in the past few years. Dozens of videos from major TV networks and stations came up before anything from average people came up—even though the latter used to show up right away. However, we did find a recent series of videos that showed baseball cards that had been ruined using various methods. These included fake autographs, tape stuck on cards, glue stuck on cards from being pasted to walls, spilled coffee, and cutting the cards in half and taping them back together.

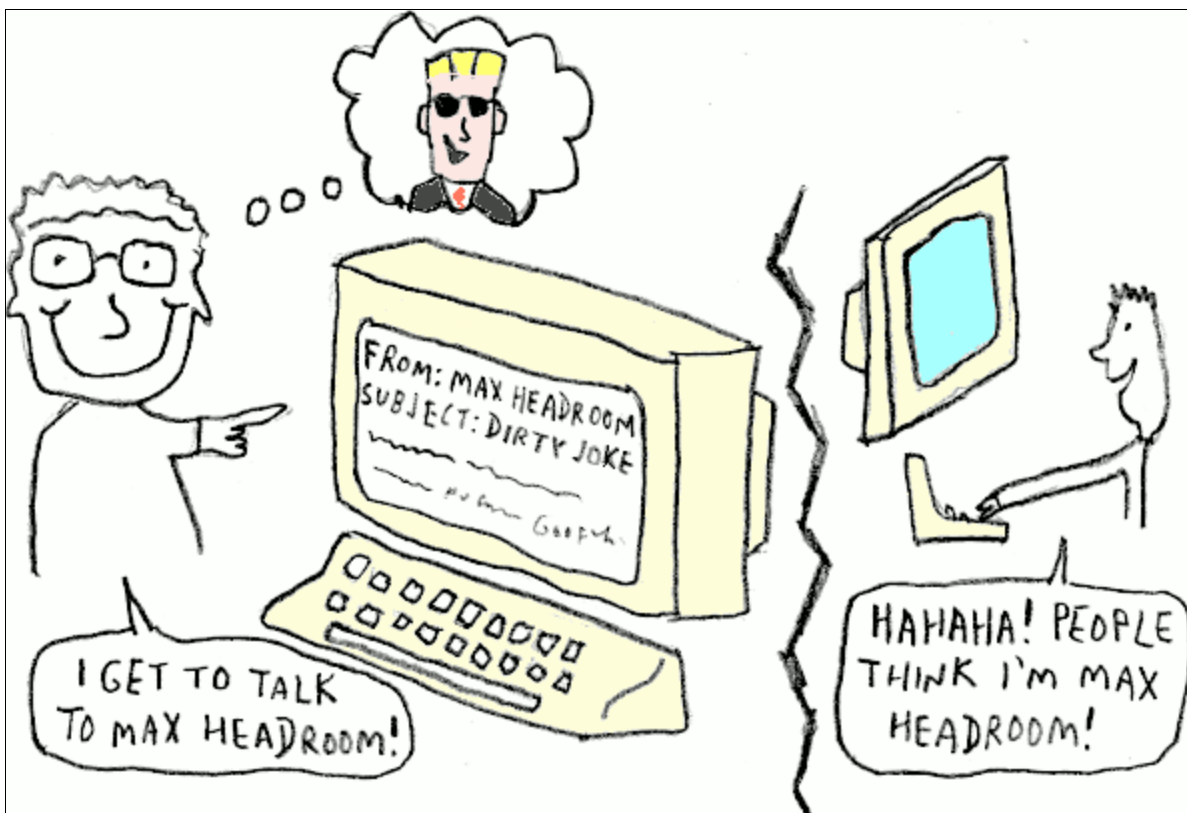
A stamp collection got ru too. An online commenter said their collection got waterlogged, and they needed to salvage it. Somebody replied saying "the gum on mint stamps is already ruined" upon getting wet. That quote is funny for two reasons. Can you guess what they are? This respondent said the stamps could be soaked "to wash off any remaining gum." They talk about it like it's Bubblicious or something.

In an online post from 2010, a commenter said a faulty drain backed up into their garage, and an entire collection of Dungeons & Dragons magazines was "ruined." Somebody responded saying a flood in their basement pulverized their whole comic book collection, including an autographed copy of the debut ish of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

At least the Eliminati seemed to be tied up somewhere else that day.



We've got the shit on shitposting!



All of my projects throughout my life seem to be somehow woven into each other. People are not cut out for endless school or work assignments that have nothing to do with the outside world. I was a terrible student, but I stuck with many of my own projects with the same level of interest as my dog poking his snout into the floor gratings to try to catch a mouse. This has simply gotten to be the way life is, and I've had to adapt to it. At my age—especially because of all the pain and letdowns I've had in life—I can no longer adjust to anything else.

This story takes us back to the '80s—and it's good and long! Lately, I've had a memory in my mind of being in 6th grade and majestically bopping through the school cafeteria. I don't remember exactly what I was doing. I may have been headed to the drinking fountain so I could plug it up with clay so water would shoot out horizontally and make it look like people peed their pants. This wasn't the time I incited the whole class to pound their fists on the tables. This wasn't when one of the school's videotapes got taped over with *Sesame Street*. But this was around the time a lot of what I did was based on TV scenes, since that was considered interesting and scenic back then, and there must have been some element of that.

This had to have been before the real chaos that came later. The only chaos surrounding this scene occurred almost 15 years later when I wrote about it online and was confronted by petulant crybabies. Nobody objected to my routine of the era until these bastewastes stepped in.

So there is a connection with the rest of this article—which is about online trolls and shitposts. This too was something I first found in the '80s. I was 13 when I first used computer bulletin board systems—a fact that blasts a cavern through efforts by the modern-day PMRC to legally require age limits on social media sites. In my teen years, I noticed hilarious shitposts appearing on BBS's. One of the first I remember seeing was found on the evening we arrived home from a family vacation—probably our Iowa trip. This post—which was in all capitals—attacked the sysop of that BBS because he liked pro wrestling. It implored him to "WRESTLE MY DICK!"

There were a few other accounts like this that used similar language on various local BBS's. Every time my family and I went out somewhere and started heading home, we'd start looking forward to discovering what these accounts may have posted while we were away. We were rarely disappointed.

I admit I made one fake account by myself—just to see if anyone could figure out it was me. One day, I made an account using the name of a publisher of a porn magazine. I don't think I posted anything under this account except maybe one brief message that just said something like, "You stink." The weird part is that a family member was in the room when I did all this, yet somehow didn't notice. Later, I pointed out that someone had logged on and pretended to be a porn publisher, and I was met with just a shrug.

Folks often made phony accounts pretending to be famous people, fictional characters, or even people associated with some minor event who weren't that well-known and had no local connection. They expected everyone to think that some nobody who appeared in a *Real People* segment about a toilet throwing contest was going to make a long-distance call to a Cincinnati area BBS. Worse, they expected folks to care if they really did. Even more embarrassing was when they actually thought people would believe a fictional entity like Max Headroom or Alfred E. Neuman had logged on.

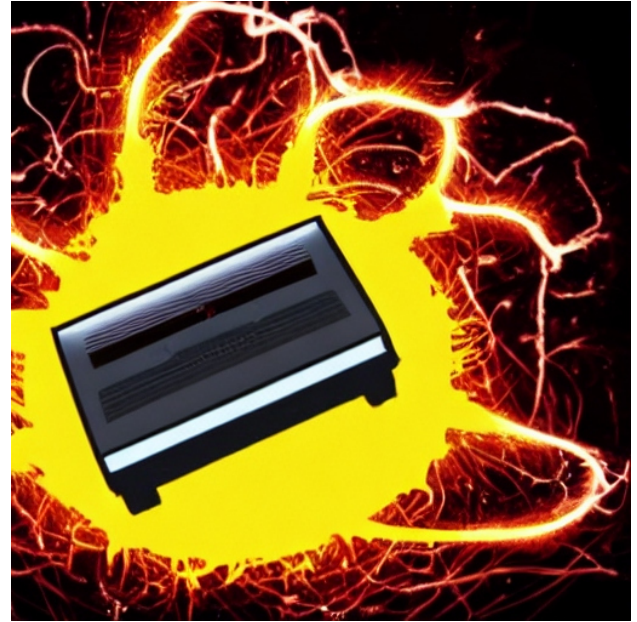
The heyday of local BBS's had other notable incidents as well, such as the time a sysop impersonated a Cincinnati Bell security officer and called me up to falsely accuse me of abusing his BBS. I don't even remember what form of abuse I was accused of. I think it was just posting a few profanities, even though I don't think I even had posting privileges there. A couple years later, this Republican sysop got busted for distributing pirated software—something he had accused others of doing. When I say he was Republican, I mean he was Republican before the propellerhead exodus. If he started voting now, he'd probably be a Democrat.

In keeping with the lousy utility service that the area is known for, I also remember that a lot of our calls to BBS's just went dead. This was around the time the Cincinnati Bell wiretapping scandal was revealed. These days, if you bring up that sorry episode, somebody will inevitably scowl and try to change the subject, because big corporations are considered sacred and above criticism. The story has been essentially flushed down the memory hole. But the mysterious dropped calls continued in the '90s. After Donnie Wahlberg of *New Kids On The Block* was charged with arson for allegedly pouring vodka on a hotel carpet and igniting it, I tried making a post consisting of disjointed sentences listing various crises and jokingly attributing them to *New Kids On The Block* members. As I got up to "Jordan Knight caused the Exxon Valdez spill", the call went dead, and I never got to finish this important, enriching post.

I limped back to BBS's near the tail end of the BBS era, but people on BBS's were even more irrational, extreme, and arrogant than before, and I was already out of patience with some things that were going on out there. One time, I was woken up in the middle of the night when a drunken man knocked on my apartment door. He demanded I give him a pair of pants, even though he was already wearing pants. Then he saw I had a computer, and he insisted on setting up an account on a BBS. He used this account to make shitposts about Jerry Springer paying for a prostitute with a check. I let him use one of the shittiest BBS's in town for this, because this BBS deserved to be abused.

Around the same time, **The Last Word** ran an article about a comical and insightful shitpost that someone had recently made on a local BBS apparently impersonating a well-known sausage magnate and complaining about something or other. After we ran this piece, someone actually accused me of making that post myself.

Then came the Internet. The public Internet was already being brigaded, and after I got into a confrontation with some online masters of disaster when I was about 23, someone I went to school with found it and e-mailed them with a bunch of trash talk about me. Now *that's* maturity! Thus, we ended up with these living battering rams spamming the Internet with this unceasing garbage. I recently found an old exchange where someone lamented this abuse and how it caused their favorite venue to be "bombarded" with hundreds of off-topic posts daily. Some of the replies to this post were from people stampeding in from other venues and attacking me, even though I didn't start this thread. In



other words, the attacks on me were completely unprovoked.

If they can post, and I can't, we don't have free speech. Their view of free speech was like that of Parag Agrawal, a Twitter bigwig who said that "our role is not to be bound by the First Amendment" and that Twitter's goal was to "focus less on thinking about free speech." The decades-old controversy described above is probably why we have so much Big Tech censorship now.

Some of the attacks on me were stupid enough to be unintentionally funny. I'm not going to tell you where to find them, because archives accessible to the public have been deluged with so many fake posts that they're almost useless. This brings us to the issue of people posting crap under my name using an anonymous remailer or putting in a request to change the archive to modify my posts or make others' troll posts look like they were posted by me. By the time I discovered some of these posts, such requests were no longer being honored, so I couldn't have them changed back.

A smoking gun that they were impersonating me was that some of these posts were made while I was on vacation out of town – years before hotels even had Internet access. My all-time favorite was when I arrived home from a road trip in 1997 – the one where I visited Mount Mitchell – to find that I had been accused of hacking an ISP and knocking it offline while I was out of town. That's strange, because I don't remember lugging my Power Mac and 2400 baud modem into a motel room in Townsend, Tennessee.

Another user complained about someone abusing a remailer to defame and impersonate them. This user rightly reported the abuser to police. Somebody responded agreeing with this complaint and urged them to go to court with proof. But the best part was the closing sentence: "If you don't have PROOF, fart real loud."

Someone made a post using a made-up word and told a foe something like, "You invented that word." The rival replied with something like, "You invented shitting your pants." Posts like that continued in the 2000s. I vaguely remember an interesting thread on the failed Iraq War. If I remember correctly, someone said the Iraq War was justified because Iraq "is a sponsor of terrorism", and somebody replied, "I'm a sponsor of fucking your mom."

The fun lasted even into the 2010s. When somebody posted a comment on The Online Lunchpail asking why I was using a shitty service like Google to host my blog and serve my ads, someone replied in all lowercase, "because your face fell on it."

The above events are a tiny sample of decades of troll posts, which can appear in response to posts from both the left and the right, and in reply to posts with no political implications or any controversy at all. They might even be spontaneous creations that were not posted in reply to anything. Some are roll-on-the-floor hilarious, but some are completely uncalled for, like if it's from a trash talking gang trying to hound someone out of their community or livelihood.

The latter overlaps with what I experienced on the ground for many years, which unfortunately was an '80s and '90s staple. Life today has serious problems – wokewashing by corporations and schools, COVID fascism, more widespread Big Tech censorship. But at least now we don't experience nearly as much of the violent mobbing that ruled the roost 30 years ago. You really had to be there to see how out of control it was. It was so pervasive for so long that it's hard to believe it's so rare now.

Social Credit System, '90s style

A recent headline in the *Guardian* blared, "A California journalist documents the far-right takeover of her town."

A few years ago, we would have gotten worked up about a story like that, but after reading the article, we see it's nothing compared to what we experienced. That doesn't mean a real far-right



takeover today is good. But anyone who thinks the situation in Redding, California, is any worse than what we were force-fed would be in for a rude awakening here. In Redding, a “far-right takeover” is defined as a gathering that exceeded draconian COVID limits. We can only wish that’s what it meant around here.

Our local situation was well-documented in these pages for decades. We covered in hairy detail our area’s long slog through a well-funded ultraconservative tempest. Remember in the mid-’90s when we had to carry tear gas everywhere?

There are some aspects of this that it seems we once covered a lot but we rarely do anymore, because if we do, we’d be portrayed as essentially a bunch of babies, even though we have legitimate concerns. There are even constitutional issues involved. I not only lost the zip code lottery but was born at the wrong time. Credit scores were not instituted until 1989, so I was among the first generation of Americans to start their working life saddled with this tyranny. Some folks wonder why Americans my age have done so much worse in life than those who are only a few years older, and credit scores are a big reason why.

The Chinese people are constantly monitored by a Social Credit System and suffer punishments based on it. Today, there are real fears that a Social Credit System will be implemented in America. But Kentucky already has a Social Credit System – of sorts – that started around the same time the familiar credit scores did. Your school record is equivalent to a Social Credit System. In Kentucky, for over 30 years, school records have been a state-managed blacklist that tracks people for their supposed trustworthiness for every action, even acts that are completely unrelated to what takes place at school.

Some of the policies that were enacted sound more like the stuff of a middle school debate assignment. You can picture some stuck-up hall monitor type arguing for something like this in front of the class, while the rest of the class slouches and scoffs at the ridiculousness of it all.

Years ago, I refused to hold my tongue about this, and I didn’t give a shit who was responsible for it. The Republicans were usually worse than the Democrats – at least back then – but public figures of any party who were responsible for it deserved every bit of scorn they got and worse. But over time, the matter seemed to become less pertinent, and I sort of resigned myself to the idea that no progress was ever going to be made at restoring our rights in this regard. For me personally, it could have been remedied soon enough, but now it’s festered long enough that it’s become a serious issue again, and it’s too late to fix it.

Last year, there was actually a bipartisan push to fix the law so future generations aren’t robbed like this. Just not in Kentucky. Our young people would have to move to another state to enjoy this effort.

I’m not the only person who was shafted by Kentucky’s Social Credit System a long time ago. From what I hear, *a lot* of people are still angry about when it happened to them. Most of them at least were lucky enough that they had the support to pick up where they were forced to leave off. I didn’t. I was left to my own devices. It eats me up inside. And public officials who were responsible for it were rewarded instead of shunned.

In some states, this program is still expanding, which suggests our rulers have been playing the long game all along. Young people in some states are now receiving marks on their social credit file that we didn’t even dream of being an issue just a few years ago – much less 30 years ago – and the punishment is the same.

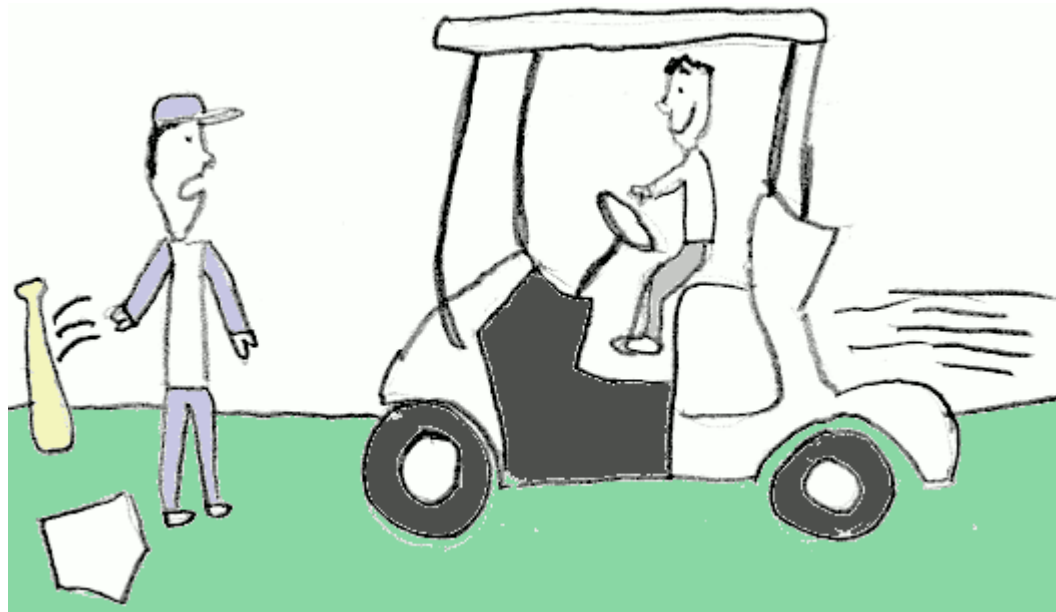
What a mess! Too much mess for a single issue of a monthly zine.



A buncha kids got expelled from school

Because you kick so much ass, you get to inspect another of our famous stupid-fire rundowns of students getting expelled from school. This one is short, but read it and peep!

One online commenter said they were expelled for somehow breaking into the principal's e-mail account and sending e-mails to teachers saying they were fired. They became the first minor in their state ever to



be convicted of computer fraud. Another commenter threw a model car at another kid in kindergarten. Another was expelled from high school for stealing a golf cart and driving it all over the ballfield during the middle of a well-attended baseball game. A student at Southern Illinois University was dismissed for 2 years for smashing numerous car windows with rocks. A student was expelled from a New Orleans high school because he had to crawl under a parked train while walking to school.

A 4th grader was expelled for dancing naked on a table in a classroom. A 5th grade student was kicked out of school for getting in a fight with a mean, incompetent teacher who grabbed their arm, dug his nails into their skin, and broke their brand new watch. A high school freshman was expelled for returning a misplaced Mardi Gras knife to a school pal. A preschooler was expelled for throwing a toy giraffe at a kid who had just eaten a booger. A high school gave a student a permanent vacation for a series of incidents including placing a dissected frog in a sandwich in the cafeteria. A 6th grader was suspended for breaking a mechanical bull in a saloon on a field trip.

And this is why we call our show *Press Your Luck!*

What does the future hold for the '90s?

How do we preserve the third-worst decade of our lives for posterity to ogle (beep)?

Much of the '90s lives on only in our memories. If you wrote about your doings in the era, your documents were likely lost because the dominant brands of personal computers changed so much in the '90s. Instead of developing standards to make computer formats more easily compatible, our overlords would rather dance around and sing, "Guh-pwipe, guh-pwipe!" They waste no time in enacting bad responses to other situations over data they refuse to properly interpret or understand, but they sit on their hands for years while important, irreplaceable documents become lost to planned obsolescence, saying that's just part of the "free market." Plus, I could have transferred more of my documents if I wasn't forced to squander so much energy fighting people who couldn't cope with their own stupidity. I had to deal with obnoxious, miserable people who visited their own problems on the rest of the world.

I'd like to be able to gather up all the past issues of this zine, store them neatly, post all of them online, and leave copies with friends and family for when the clock stops ticking. This would be a tough task, not only because I would need to convert each ish I wrote with ClarisWorks, but also because everything has become so scattered that it would be hard to figure out what's what. Furthermore, some articles—even an entire issue—are now *banned*. Seriously, if it's not because of the violent retaliation that would be sure to follow, it's because of actual *laws*. Unconstitutional laws, but still laws. In addition, there's some issues I should probably wait until just before I die before posting again just because they had those lists of license plate numbers that were assigned in 1988, which are

sure to elicit some sort of pushback. But it had to be done at the time. After I die, the most they can do is harass a computer that stores all the old issues.

Do you remember that this was a typewritten zine for its first couple years? I couldn't use a dot matrix printer for something like this. So if I ever do scrounge up these editions, they will be scanned and posted that way, not retyped with a word processor. If it was a typewritten ish, it's always gonna be a typewritten ish, so it should be read that way.

You probably wish you could print out each page of each ish, glue them to your ceiling, lean back in your chair, light up a toker, and wait for the pages to fall on your face!

Gum and rocks: together at last!

This is another '90s memory that's automatically funny because it's about gum.

One day in college, I was relaxing outside at what had become a favorite gathering spot. As colleges were widely traveled open spaces, and this was the '90s, odds are that somebody was going to engage in some principled bubble gum busting. There wasn't anything you or I could have done to stop it.

True to form, someone bubbled. It was a college woman in her mid-twenties. She was sitting on a wall and goin' to town with some pink beege! It was as if she was trying to show off her bubbling skills to all passersby.

Central to this story is the fact that the '90s were a closer world than we have today. If schools had tried to impose social distancing back then, they would have been laughed at so hard it would have broken their brains. People were expected to have enough common sense not to sneeze on each other, but that was about it. The cooltagonist in this story was accompanied by a small cluster of other students.

After a few minutes, she puffed out a pink bub almost as big as her head. Here's where things went from funny to uproarious. One of the male students standing next to the wall promptly grabbed a small, sharp pebble off the lawn. It might have actually been a hardened wad of used gum, but from where I was sitting – about 15 feet away – it looked more like a rock. He held it aloft and poked it through the expanding orb. In other words, he did a Wright brothers – also known as *Bazookacidal tendencies*. As he pulled the rock away, the burst bubble gum stretched from the cooltagonist's mouth.

Isn't that ridiculous? College students picked rocks off a lawn and used them to pop each other's bubs. In the '90s, we had a single word for this: *maturity*.

The woman just laughed and continued chomping.

