

The Last Word™

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Kroger cries over spilled milk

Saturday, April 13. The permacloud was lifting, we were smiling our asses off, and milk got wosted at the friendly neighborhood Krogie-Wogie.

As usual, I was sauntering about the dairy section looking for some refreshing, frothy mill-mill. But my eyes detected something very unusual in front of the milk cooler. A gallon-sized plastic carton of whole milk was resting on the floor—split completely open. A huge puddle of milk coated the floor.

An entire gallon of milk, wastage bastage! Wyyystage byyyystage! Wyyyyyyyyyyystage byyyyyyyyyystage!

It's a damn shame it was the good Krogie Red instead of Krogie Blue or any of the 30 zillion varieties of watery skim milk they have. I figured out right away what had probably happened. I bet the store actually had more than 3 gallons of whole milk in stock that day, which was rare. So they tried to cram all of it onto the shelf for whole milk, which is about one-fifteenth the size of the skim shelf because they usually carry about 15 times as much skim milk—which nobody buys. If this is what they tried to do, it was a losing proposition.

Recent Kroger history is rife with wosted mill-mill. A photo posted on the public Internet in 2022 shows that a gang of teens marauded through a Kroger and purposely smashed 4 cartons of milk on the floor in the fabric softener aisle. Someone replied saying some kids went into their Kroger, opened up tubs of ice cream, licked the ice cream, and put the items back on the shelf. The store had to throw away all its ice cream because they didn't know which tubs had been licked.

A 2021 photo showed the shocking aftermath of a stack of about 15 *entire crates* of milk falling over in front of the milk cooler at a Kroger.

Not long ago, someone posted about a Kroger repeatedly selling stale milk and their local health department not doing anything about it. Guess where? Monroe County, Indiana—the so-called “county of science” that had some of the most draconian COVID restrictions in the entire Midwest. Monroe County went full lockdown but won't do a damn thing about stores selling spoiled food. It was a perfect melding of broken windows policing and “new normal” fascism. That was also the county where a teacher was fired for opposing the illegal Iraq War, so that figures.

In 2013, a man was arrested because he intentionally laid hulk to 2 gallons of milk at a Kroger in Michigan and danced among the resultant debris.

Also, since this is the good ol' U.S. and A., we measure milk in gallons. According to Wikipedia, solids can be measured in gallons too, but the only time I remember a solid being measured in gallons



was when we were out on the ballfield for gym class in elementary school and a kid kept kicking dirt. The teacher warned, "If you don't stop kicking that dirt, I'm gonna make you eat a gallon of it."

Down proctoscope

Schools I attended were often pretty far removed from academic endeavors. Sometimes we'd spend weeks on a project designed only to impress parents who visited the school, while we learned nothing. We'd make slick posters and spill glue, while we fell behind all the other schools.

Literature was one of my weakest subjects, but it's amazing how there were some novels that I had to read for class but I still don't even know what they were about. These books were either required reading or I selected them for an assignment I had to do. I had to read them—yet I didn't know what they were about even after the assignment was over!

There are several reasons for this. It could have been because my copy of the book got destroyed when I was only a few pages in and the school wouldn't replace the book. There was at least one time when someone stole my copy and spread the pages up and down the hallway. Sometimes the school loaned me a copy that was in terrible condition to begin with—often with pages torn out or covered with bubble gum or mucus—and I gave up because the book fell apart altogether.

I didn't finish a book I had to read in 7th grade, because I got expelled. I also had to write an essay for that class as a separate assignment, but I had never even started on it, even though it was long since due.

Probably the biggest reason I didn't read a book that I was required to read was that I got in trouble for something at school right at the same time and got sidetracked for weeks. That tended to happen with great frequency. A lot of time went wastage bastage fighting the tyrants at school every time they took it out on me when something went wrong. That's what happened with *Up Periscope*. In that case, however, I at least know the book was about a war. I just don't know which war. I don't know *anything* about some of the other books I had to read.

Many times, I didn't finish a book simply because I couldn't get interested in it.

That's not to say schools didn't have their thumb on the scale all the while. In 5th grade, I was assigned *Moby Dick*—though I could never get started on it—while some other students got to read books for little kids like *1 Is One*. That's because I was sent to an accelerated class on Mondays, and even my regular class got harder books than the other regular class. The latter point is particularly aggravating, because we were assigned to our regular classes randomly. Plus, I was sent to the gifted class on Mondays only because the school district automatically sent you there if you scored high enough on entrance tests. I wasn't asked if I wanted to be there. The school system said I had to take that class whether I liked it or not. That unbelievably gnawing stunt was repeated for 6th grade, but I was elated when I was told I wouldn't be in that class for 7th grade.

I hated being in that class so much that one day I didn't show up for it. This incident was in 6th grade at Cline, when I had this class on Tuesdays. One Tuesday morning, I arrived at school and began going to my regular classes instead. It didn't take long before one of my teachers realized I wasn't supposed to be there and made me go to the gifted class.

I think the only reason I wasn't assigned to that class again in 7th grade is that the teacher I had for it in 6th grade absolutely hated me, and he didn't want me back.

Schools are generally geared more toward students who are better at reading skills than at math or Atari BASIC, and they give more weight to your grades in literature than in math. But schools themselves commit projection by claiming the opposite is actually true. They've claimed this for a long time—perhaps an early rumbling of the unrecognizable authoritarianism of academia today.

Time for a school change (as Little River Band would say)!



When it wasn't such a beautiful day in the neighborhood

Back in 2008, I wrote about an unsavory bunch who were being evicted from the apartment next door to me. I wrote that in the 15 years before, "not once did I ever have neighbors who came close to the level of naked fartpipery that they exhibited." I had to put up with them for 3 years.

The trouble began the day they moved in. It didn't take long before I began keeping a log of the things they did. That lasted only a few months before I couldn't keep up. They kept stealing my mail and vandalizing my bicycle. They once did so much damage to the bike that getting it fixed cost almost as much as a new

bike would have. I don't remember if this was the time they flipped the bike upright. They cut the brakes once too and stole a spare inner tube, and they once shoved trash between the spokes of the wheel.

All of this was for no apparent reason. I didn't know them before they moved in, and never talked to them. But there was one time during a snowstorm when I was standing right there and the woman exclaimed, "That damn asshole next door won't clear the fuckin' street!" I didn't have a salt truck, you idiot. She also kept leaving the door to the building open in freezing weather, which ran up energy bills. I'd close it, and then I'd hear her running back down the steps just to open it again.

They also kept repeatedly slamming doors in the middle of the night. A single door slamming session might consist of 15 or 20 slams, each of which shook the whole building.

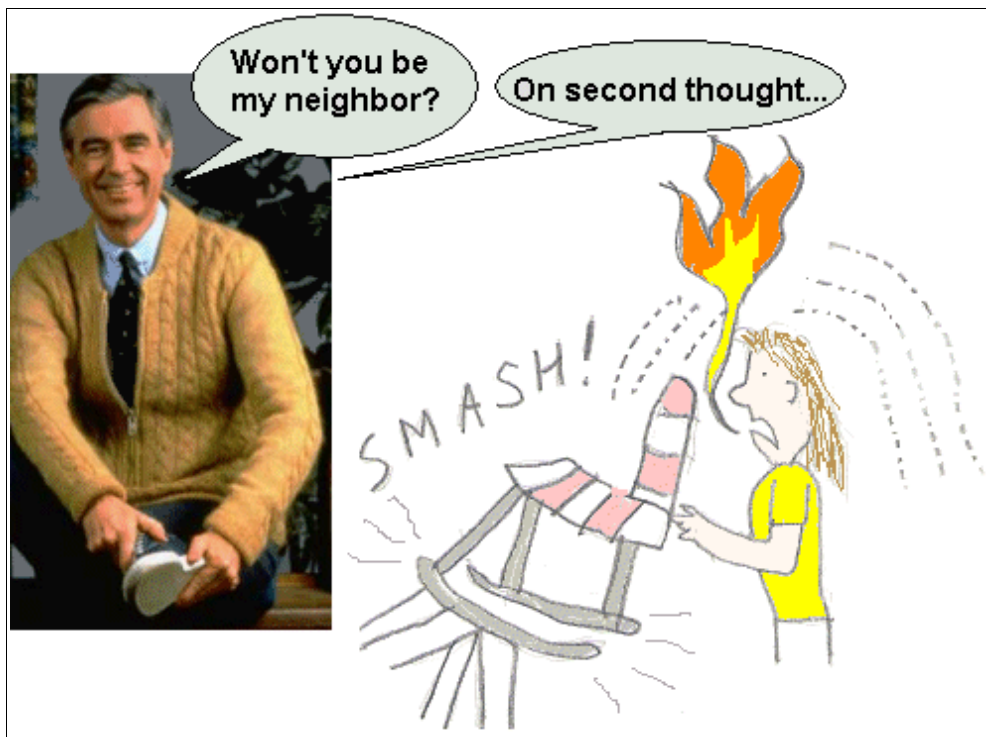
They kept throwing my lawn chair into the side yard, so I began chaining it to the porch railing. When they found they couldn't throw it into the yard anymore, they smashed it.

They kept dumping garbage in front of my apartment. One day, I found some of my mail they had stolen mixed in with it.

They often fought with each other. One day, I heard the woman say to the man, "You break my shit and I can't afford to fix it!" The man replied, "That's because you break my heart and I can't afford to fix it."

They also destroyed other neighbors' belongings. They threw the neighbors' patio chair into the side yard. They tore the wheels off the neighbors' other chair and threw them in the street.

They demolished the porch railing in a drunken



My lawn chair after being smashed by the neighbors. Note the bent frame and the shards of plastic from the arms.

rage. They repeatedly smashed the window of the front door to the building. They smashed their own glass table on the porch and left broken glass all over. They even switched around two of the doors in the building without permission, and the woman threatened to smear dog shit on the other neighbors' door.

Stealing mail is a federal crime, and I reported my neighbors to the Postal Service when they stole my mail. Predictably, the Postal Service didn't do anything about it. Other people stole my mail before and after that, and the Postal Service didn't give a shit.

When these neighbors moved out, they left the water in their apartment running all night and stuffed rotting food (and possibly vomit) in the refrigerator drain.

In 2015, years after they moved out, I found a Facebook post from the woman complaining that someone had just stolen the pillows from her porch chairs. That's called *karma*.

They're the worst neighbors I've ever had in the same *building*—but not the worst in the same *neighborhood*. In my youth, when I still lived at home, there were folks a couple blocks away who were somehow even worse than the later neighbors. This was in Highland Heights. The trouble centered on an apartment complex that was up the street from me. The real problems began when the properties were sold in the late 1980s. Those were nice apartments before then. Not every individual who lived there before then was a perfect angel, but a vast majority never caused trouble, so we coexisted most of the time.

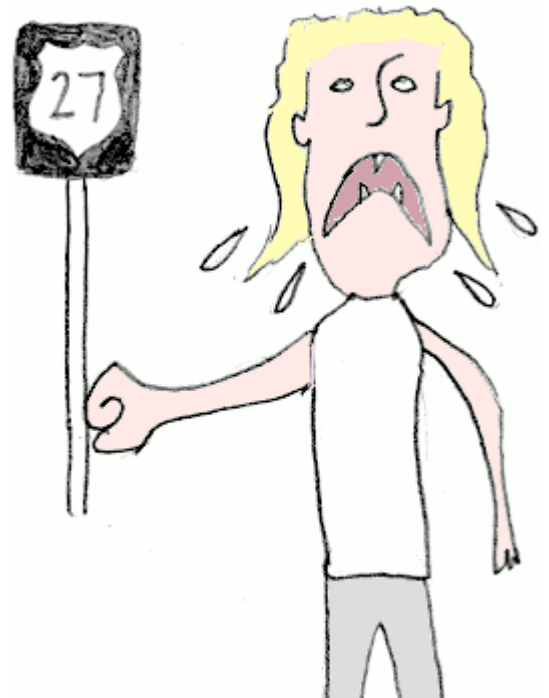
When those buildings were sold, the existing residents were apparently thrown out. They weren't evicted for cause. The new owners simply didn't like them. From what I recall, these displacements violated their rental agreements. And the new tenants laid waste to the entire neighborhood.

After the new owners took over those apartments, the county kept dumping criminals there when they got out of prison. I'm not talking about small-time violators who deserve a second chance. I'm talking about violent felons. And they were allowed to stay there for years and years.

Starting in high school, I had to ride the school bus each morning with their kids, who they didn't raise right. Damn, were they brats! They were of varying ages and went to several different schools. That was in addition to characters who lived elsewhere such as the spoiled brat from St. Joe's who crawled under my seat and tied my shoes together. I got in trouble once because of the time I felt him tugging at my shoe and I stomped on his hand.

Even after I stopped riding their bus, I continued to encounter some of the budding criminals from the nearby buildings. A couple times, they stampeded onto my block and attacked me in front of my home. In the summer between high school and college, while walking along U.S. 27, I got in a brawl with one of the ringleaders. The Highland Heights Police refused to do anything to him. Throughout those years, I was supposed to keep quiet about the abuse that was going on. This hooligan had a lot of clout with the Postal Service too. I had ordered a book that was shipped by priority mail, and it didn't arrive within the guaranteed 2 days. The post office delayed its delivery until the day of this incident. I'm actually lucky it arrived even then, because this was when some people with a Florida plate kept parking in front of our mailbox so our mail couldn't be delivered.

As I said, the thugs in the buildings up the street from me lived there for years. The assailant I jousting with on U.S. 27 had been there since around the time I started high school, which means he lived in that complex for 4 or 5 years—and probably for years after. A lot of law-abiding people don't get to stay in their homes anywhere near that long, but people like him didn't contribute a damn thing to society and got to stay put for years on end. Kentucky just passed an unconstitutional law making it legal for any person to use deadly force against homeless people on sight even if they don't pose a threat to anyone, but nobody dared challenge hardcore criminals who willfully destroyed my neighborhood. The previous tenants of the Highland Heights buildings got tossed out after not living there for very long, yet the violent convicts who replaced them flourished for at least 3



presidential administrations. It's hard to believe they showed up when *The Facts Of Life* was still on the air and were still there in the *NYPD Blue* era.

Incidentally, if you defended yourself, you would be in trouble—unlike the assailant. Not so many years before, authorities usually would have allowed for self-defense. Not anymore.

I've been back there only a few times in recent years, but if I visit enough, I fully expect to find the same people doing the same stupid shit as 35 years ago.

Leaky 'Episode I' Pepsi cans were phantom menace to magazines

I collected soft drink bottle caps because Bert from *Sesame Street* did it. But some folks collect and save cans. And they even try to save full cans.

Collecting full cans of soft drinks is something they've lived to regret. Soda contains acid. Acid slowly eats through aluminum. So eventually the cans form tiny holes, and the product leaks. A post on the public Internet says someone left an unopened can of Pepsi on their dresser and forgot about it for 2 years when they went away to college. They came back to find the dresser and everything on it coated with a sticky, brown goo.

But this was nothing compared to when people placed a whole collection of full cans above other collectibles.

You may remember the *Episode I* hubbub of 1999. This was when *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* was released. This prequel to the epic *Star Wars* trilogy prompted a funny drawing in these pages of some online crybaby angrily throwing items (presumably a broken Luke Skywalker action figure) at a Burger Chef sign. And Pepsi came out with limited edition *Episode I* cans.

What a time to live! You couldn't escape *Episode I* mania!

Someone posted online that they had the whole collection until some kid their mom babysat crushed most of them. But most stories are about the threat that the content of these cans posed to other collectibles. This includes the time some of the cans leaked onto a collection of *Nintendo Power* magazines—decimating them all. A Reddit commenter posted, "The *Star Wars* Episode 1 Pepsi cans are the reason I no longer have my childhood collection of 80s and 90s *Nintendo Powers*."

A few years after the *Episode I* hullabaloo came the era of "throwback" sodas. These were versions of popular bevs that used cane or beet sugar—which was the norm before high-fructose corn syrup replaced it in the Reagan era. Someone on Reddit said her dad collected and saved unopened cans of "throwback" Pepsi and Mountain Dew. This endeavor fell to rack and ruin when the cans leaked all over his huge DVD collection and ruined it: "It was rough."

Someone who collected University of North Carolina commemorative Coke cans found that the cans leaked and ruined an autographed cardboard box. Yes, the magic word was used. Somebody responded saying they had these cans and they leaked and destroyed some books.

Another online commenter said their "collector's edition" Diet Coke cans leaked and spoiled their priceless Taylor Swift memorabilia. This collection was a "shrine" built around an irreplaceable Diet Coke display featuring Taylor that came from a grocery store. Mold grew on some of the items. The post read, "I'm heart broken that my boxes of special special cans were destroyed and even more devastated [*sic*] that the display, the base of my shrine is ruined as well." The magic word again!

It really was a cruel summer!



One night in Bangkok

Our recent exposés on Mike DeWine's fascism during New Year's 2021 contrasted DeWine's Ohio with the relatively free atmosphere elsewhere. But those pieces focused mostly on the Western world, especially the U.S.

Yet it wasn't just most of the West or North America where people enjoyed much more liberty than in Cincinnati. In fact, things were generally better outside the West. Many folks assume that no modern Western country can be a dictatorship, but Francisco Franco of Spain was in power in my lifetime, and some current governments in western Europe are largely modeled on the Franco regime. French President Emmanuel Macron is essentially Francoist. In addition, Ronald Reagan was a Franco admirer.

The elitist non-player characters who dominate online discourse have accused Americans of being reckless cowboys who brush aside "simple" rules, but this view is motivated by classism. The DeWine program was far more oppressive than what was seen in most foreign cities.

For instance, folks in Bangkok seemed to enjoy a largely normal New Year's to usher in '21...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0tedX9xsng>

Sure, there were a few people in that clip wearing masks, but everyone else was beaming widely – even in a taxi and what appears to be an indoor mall.

After seeing the clip from Indianapolis, I would have cut off my own navel for Cincinnati to be as open as Indy was. But Bangkok apparently did far better. A comment on the Bangkok video reads, "No nighttime curfew. No restrictions. Just life." Why couldn't Cincinnati be like that? As a bonus, the video concludes with some *Electric Company* music. (And why do people always talk about an "added bonus"? If it's a bonus, that automatically means it's added.)

Every city in the world has problems. But I can make an ironclad *guarantee* that social ills that some Americans think are limited to foreign cities were magnified in Cincinnati because of desperation caused by "new normal" totalitarianism. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. (People who live in *The Stranger* shouldn't throw stones either.)

Ohio couldn't be like most places around the world, because of the royal proclamations of one man: Mike DeWine. The state didn't close down because of duly passed laws but because DeWine unilaterally barked down orders.

While we deal mostly with the 50 states and D.C., it's also important to look at how things went in U.S. unincorporated territories. Whether media elites and our political class support statehood for a territory hinges entirely upon how authoritarian its COVID measures were – to the complete exclusion of every other issue. The media has moved seamlessly from the same old right-wing economics to a new brand of hygienic fascism. Same shit, different pair of underpants.

Governments of some of the territories openly ran roughshod over constitutional liberties even before COVID. We know this because there have been court cases on whether constitutional rights even apply in unincorporated territories. Territorial officials had taken actions that everyone knew would have been unconstitutional if they had been carried out by any of the states or the federal government. Otherwise, aggrieved parties wouldn't have been able to build a case to test the cockamamie theory that constitutional rights weren't available in the territories. Despite territorial officials' open scoffing against the Bill of Rights, these territories are candidates for statehood. The states at least aren't as open about their violations, as they have to argue that their policies aren't unconstitutional.

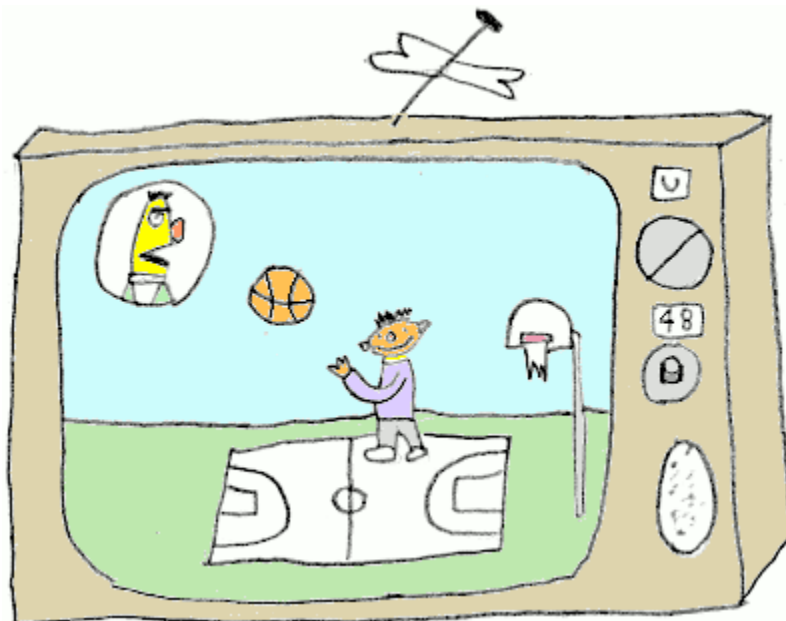
It's also not as if apologists for civil liberties violations that take place in the states don't have some completely crazy arguments of their own. The city of Miami Beach recently announced it would search bags of people entering the beach – which is a clear Fourth Amendment violation. Some maniac on Reddit argued that this was constitutionally permissible because visiting the beach with a bag meant you were automatically consenting to be searched – and that you could choose not to be searched by staying home instead. That's not how it works, stupid. That's like when I was forced to sign a contract when I was 16 that said I had certain rights but there would be penalties if I chose to exercise them. If you can be punished for exercising a right, it's not really a right. The Fourth Amendment seems tailor-made for safeguarding against the type of abuses carried out by Miami Beach. One of the main points of a free country is that you don't have to avoid public places just so you won't be searched.

As I've said, however, the U.S. overall did much better than Cincinnati did when ringing in 2021. Even a video from Honolulu shows what appears to be normal beach activity on New Year's Eve, despite Hawaii being among the very worst states for COVID tyranny.

Banjo Bert and Ernie

Whenever you argue with me about whether a particular *Sesame Street* skit existed, you're on shaky ground.

Any time a lost TV, radio, or movie clip is found after someone accused me of making it up, I call it a *Snuffleupagus moment*. I call it that because most characters on *Sesame Street* thought Big Bird just made up Mr. Snuffleupagus until they saw him for real. Some examples include the "Oh what a value!" commercial for Big Boy and a kids' show in which a youngster kept asking Quebec residents, "Do you speak English?" Another is a movie in which a cop blew a huge bubble with bubble gum and floated above a city. I even have some Snuffleupagus moments regarding *Sesame Street*—like the "Surprise!" song in which people (and Muppets) kept getting hit by pies.



But some items still haven't resurfaced—like the movie where a kid spit out food in a hotel restaurant or the commercial where people in business suits threw shit at each other. Another item that hasn't been found is what has to be one of the most bizarre segments ever to appear on *Sesame Street*. Maybe once or twice, I've posted on the public Internet about it, but not a single damn reply was to be had.

It involves basketball, banjos, Bert, and Ernie.

When I was a tiny tot in the mid-1970s, an Ernie and Bert skit appeared that was much different from the dynamic duo's other work. Instead of the inside of their apartment, it had sort of an aerial view of an outdoor basketball court. I don't remember any dialogue. The audio consisted of bluegrass music played on a banjo and perhaps other instruments like a fiddle—similar to the music in the segments with letters being drawn in sand. Ernie and Bert were playing basketball on the court. Either they were played by people in full body suits—like in "Sesame Street On Ice"—or they were miniatures shown in stop motion style.

After a few minutes of this, Bert stomped off the court—as if he was throwing a tantrum. Then his head appeared near the upper left corner of the screen. Ernie continued to bounce the ball around. He even bounced it in the air several times. Whenever he did so, Bert tried to catch the ball in his mouth—predictably failing every time.

In recent years, *Sesame Street* has included claymation Bert and Ernie segments, so maybe the banjo sketch was produced with the same idea in mind. But you have to wade through a lot of insufferable nonsense these days just to see this comedic pair at all. *Sesame Street* was great for its first 45 years. Now it's mostly unwatchable, and some of it is truly vile. Some of the folks who worked on the show in the '70s actually agree that it's declined beyond recognition.

If you have small children, be sure you get them the DVD sets of '70s episodes or bring up classic skits on YouTube instead of letting their heads be filled with the toxic slop that *Sesame Street* airs now.

Sesame Street today is a stenographer for the establishment narrative, but it was once a creative dynamo to be reckoned with.

Expanded Daylight Saving Time should get its clock cleaned

A broken clock is right twice a day, but around here, a *good* clock is wrong the whole day.

You may know about the media's push to have Daylight Saving Time all year. This would place Cincinnati 98 minutes off of natural time year-round. It's also based on a crackpot flat earth theory that

incorrectly says we'd still have the same amount of sunlight in the morning. Here's hoping this idea is flushed down the crapper like the FCC's plan to space AM stations 9 kilohertz apart was.

Daylight Saving Time aggravates the fact that Cincinnati is in the wrong time zone to begin with. The question today is: How did Cincinnati end up in the Eastern Time Zone? Central Time is closer to its natural time. Indeed, Cincinnati used to be on Central Time.

Long ago, every city used natural time, but the rise of rail travel meant standardized time zones were in order. Under this exciting new concept, travelers didn't have to reset their watch unless they entered another time zone. It was a sound idea really: The world was divided into 24 time zones. Usually, you were placed in the time zone closest to natural time in the nearest major city.

This meant Cincinnati was originally in the Central Time Zone. But why did it change, who demanded it, and why did they demand it?

Cincinnati did not switch from Central to Eastern Time until 1927. One web page about "Cincinnati time" says the city shifted to Eastern Time because of lobbying and prodding by—drum roll, please—the Chamber of Commerce and the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. Imagine that! Two of the leading voices of COVID totalitarianism today were the same folks who broke our clocks a century ago.

At the time, that was considered equivalent to year-round Daylight Saving Time—which it essentially is. These days, we're actually getting a double dose of Daylight Saving Time for most of the year.

If you think the current situation in Cincinnati is bad, it's even worse in Louisville. Louisville naturally fits squarely in Central Time, but it actually switched to Eastern Time *in 1961*—after TV and Interstate highways had already come of age. Louisville took most of Kentucky with it. A map made only a few years earlier seems to show the time zone boundary was between Campbell and Pendleton counties. This means that even some counties that are now part of greater Cincinnati were on Central Time in fairly modern times. A 1945 map suggests that even Campbell, Kenton, and Boone counties were on Central Time then, even though Cincinnati was on Eastern by then.

Why did Louisville switch? A Reddit post says it was because of pleading by—wait for it—the Chamber of Commerce.

After they bullied schools into putting masks on 4-year-olds, why should we give a damn what the Chamber of Commerce wants? If anything, we should do the opposite of what they want.

Why do these cities *stay* on Eastern Time? The biggest reason they don't change back to Central is so they can be tied to the New York Stock Exchange—which nobody gives a shit about.

How bad is the current arrangement? It's bad for farmers in most of Indiana, because they work based on natural time, and the time zones are so far off from it that they have to miss scheduled events in the evening.

In 2019, the *Washington Post* reported on a study that found that—as time zone boundaries trudge westward—people living near the western edge of their time zone suffer a lower life expectancy, largely by causing them to be deprived of sleep. The risk of a heart attack increased by 19%. They experienced lower wages too, because of disruptions to work.

It's hard to see why we shouldn't just use the time zones that are closest to what they would naturally be, with each county assigned to the time zone of the closest major city.

The Kentucky chainsaw massacre

You wouldn't believe the things we thought were funny back in my day. That's because they were a hell of a lot funnier than what passes for humor now.

These days, we can digitally edit audio or video clips using programs like Audacity or VSDC. But my generation only had analog, and household audiovisual equipment was very basic. Schools had the big stuff, but even that was analog. My bizbud once said that when she was in high school, she was assigned to randomly splice brief scenes from a Pink Panther cartoon into a boring "educational" film reel so students would pay attention to it. When I was in college, I had to buy reel-to-reel tapes for broadcasting class. They somehow vanished amid the struggles with the school thereafter.

I had worked with simple home equipment for many years before. When I was 12, I did something I thought was hilarious. This wasn't the time I recorded myself saying, "Good farts brew like good beer," and sped it up by pressing the play and fast-forward buttons on the boom box at the

same time. Rather, this was when I taped some music off the radio and made a special effort to include someone saying “chainsaws.”

That passed for comic genius in those days.

There was a commercial where the announcer mentioned chainsaws. I think he was a DJ at the station. The only other thing I remember about this commersh is that it used the music bed of “Loverboy” by Billy Ocean in the background. When this ad aired that day, I knew right when the announcer would say “chainsaws”, because I’d heard it so much. I released the pause button at the *perfect time* to isolate just the “chainsaws.”

So my tape featured a segment of a song on the radio, then “chainsaws”, then a piece of another song. I’m pretty sure the song after the “chainsaws” was “My Hometown” by Bruce Springsteen, but I don’t remember what was before it. The sounds of Heart, Stevie Wonder, and Arcadia also lurked in this unconventional montage, which crammed hours of action-packed music from the radio into just a few short minutes.

The chainsaw ad was like the Extra gum commercial where the voice-over man said “saliva”, except the man in the gum ad talked slowly enough and with such a stupid emphasis on “saliva” that this would have been easier to isolate.

America today is not the America we were promised as kids. I can’t even begin to say how disappointed and disgusted I am with the way life has turned out. At least technology is more advanced now. But that doesn’t always matter when the tech field is dominated by companies like Facebook and Microsoft that shrug off support inquiries and won’t fix their faulty products, or when downloadable software that would otherwise be very useful adds critical bugs in new versions that still aren’t fixed after many years. I get an image of the people who work on these things being 19th century drawings that just robotically move their mouths and arms like in the Finger Bar commercial.

Pushing the envelope

Among the greatest technological revolutions available to the average American in recent years is digital photography. Dusty Lenscap started quaking in his boots when folks began buying digital cameras, because this deprived him of his pastime of ruining photos that people took to the store to be developed, which we had to do before the digital era.

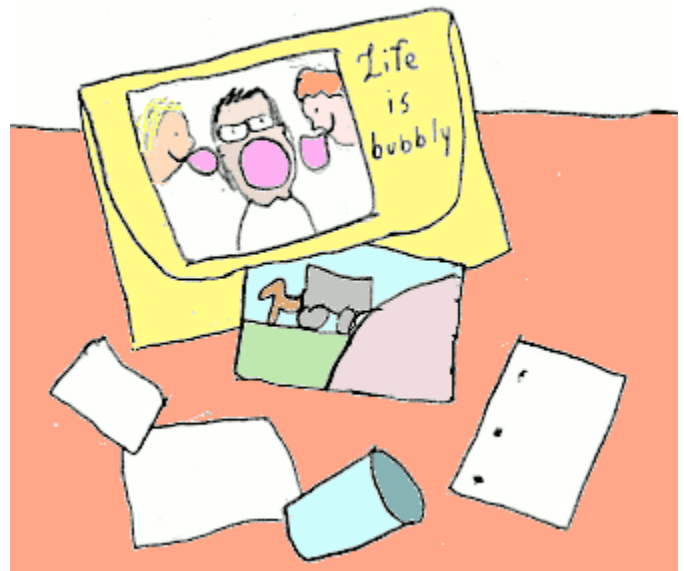
One saving grace of the old photography method was what happened once when I was about 6. One day, we got some photos back from the store that had processed them, and they were in an envelope that sent me rolling on the floor in uncontrollable laughter. Printed on the envelope was a color picture of 3 people just sitting there blowin’ some bubs with bubble gum. The person in the middle was facing forward, while the others were a side view. This was accompanied by some corny slogan.

Needless to say, it was pretty damn funny. It ranked right up there with the room key card from the Peppermill in its hilarity.

I wouldn’t stop laughing about this picture, so my folks decided that this envelope would be where we would keep photos we took that were duds. If the envelope was ridiculous enough to laugh at, that’s where ridiculous photos should be stored. I remember that a badly botched photo of the Pennsylvania countryside was kept in this envelope, but not much else.

After that, I went years and years without even seeing this envelope. But one evening, it resurfaced unexpectedly. I came home from somewhere and found it in a pile on the floor—as if someone was doing summer cleaning. I think actually they were doing summer dirtying, because it always seems like the more effort we put into cleaning, the more cluttered our place gets.

I know the mere existence of bubble gum is uproarious, but I was less than amused to find this mess. It was inevitable that some items were lost, which happens during every big cleaning. Some



things might have later reappeared – like how I found my hole puncher that was missing for 20 years – but usually, when something is gone, it's gone.

After that, I don't think I saw the envelope ever again. It's gone the way of other lost items, a list that dates at least as far back as the Hi-C book and even the pink dictionary.

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