

The Last Word™

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More vacations got ru!

Vacations got ru! Vacations got ru! Nerrrrr nerr nerr nerrrrr! Wurma lurma lurmp lurmp! Wurma lurma lurmp lurmp! Vacations got ru! Vacations got ru! Nerrrrr nerr nerr nerrrrr! Wurma lurma lurmp lurmp! Wurma lurma lurmp lurmp! (That's the extended 12-inch dance mix!)

It's summer vacation time in the Northern Hemisphere, so we should regale you with more stories from the public Internet of ruined vacays. These aren't as illustrious as others in recent years, such as the man who wrote about his "wasted Rockettes tickets" after Delta Airlines made him late getting to New York. Or the time someone whined about a store's flower display. But they rule nonetheless.

A Minnesota woman said she took her family to a lake in Idaho. The trip was supposed to last a week, but they went home after 2 days. The woman's older sister "threw a nasty temper tantrum" because she didn't get the biggest room in the lodge. The sister refused to use her car to drive the fam to the beach. As a result, "I packed up our shit in 5 minutes and vowed that if my sister ever suggested a joint vacation again, I'd rather shit in a pile and lie in it."

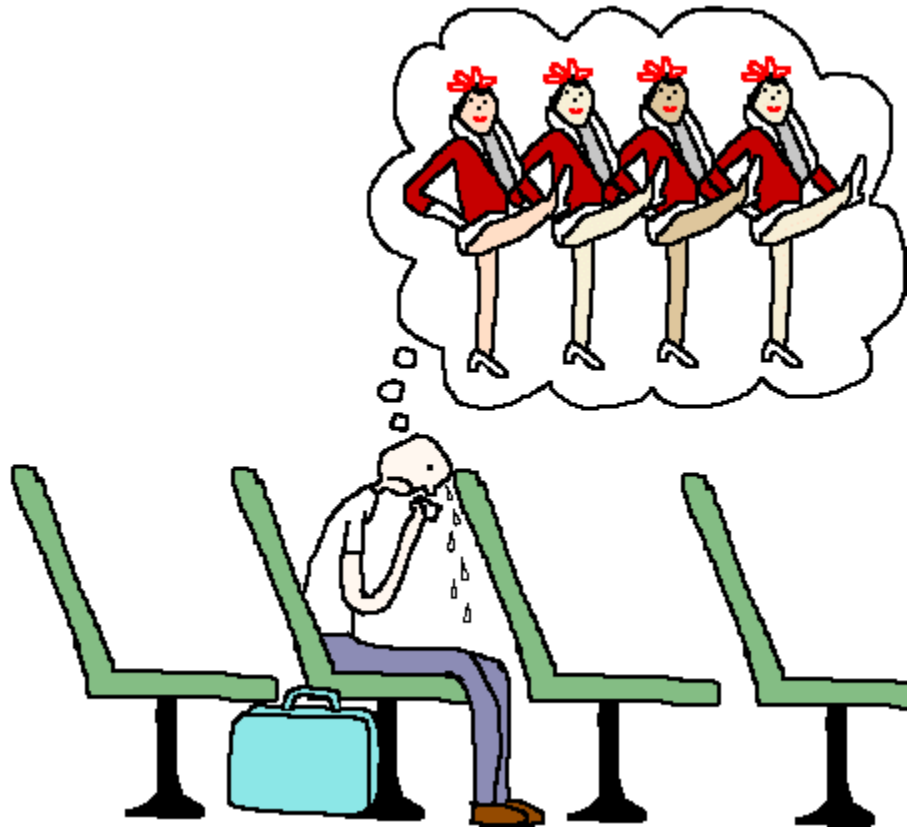
A feller said his tropical vacation was spoiled when the neighbors just decided to show up there and lecture him about marriage: "1/3 of a very expensive vacation wasted on their whims and rudeness."

Another guy said his trip went roodledy-doodledy when he and his wife decided to bring along another couple. When they got to their destination, the other couple refused to take their car to sightseeing spots, because they were afraid of losing their parking space. They decimated the group's brunch reservation by deciding at the last minute to eat somewhere else.

One commenter said she grew up "back when school summer breaks lasted an entire summer." Those were the days, huh? She said there was one year when she went to a summer camp in North Carolina. She kept writing home asking to come home early because a bunch of rich kids had ruined the experience by acting like brats. But her mom had paid in advance and refused to let her come home, lest the cost of the camp get wasted.

A man went on an Alaska cruise where the ceiling of the ship kept leaking onto his bed. He kept calling the maintenance crew, and they refused to fix it, even though they could have purchased parts in one of the port cities if they stupidly didn't have any parts on board. Then the ship lost a propulsion motor and many of the stops on the cruise had to be canceled. The passenger then demanded a refund for the cost of the rest of the cruise and said he would disembark and travel home from there. Cruise line employees then fought with each other about this, and the passenger threatened to charge the cruise line with kidnapping if they left the port without letting him disembark.

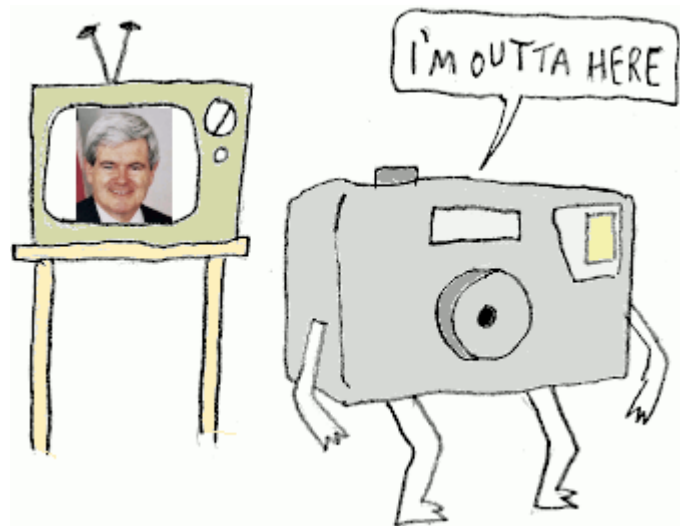
One traveler said their trip to Mexico was ruined when they got to the airport one minute late because their boss called them. This shouldn't have been a problem, because the flight was delayed—



but the supervisor at the airport wouldn't let them board even though they were perfectly capable of doing so. The next flight wasn't until the next day. This made the vacationer late to arrive in Mexico, causing them to miss an excursion they had booked. Drunken guests at the resort demolished the trip further.

Another commenter said the thing that ruins vacations the most is the lack of photos: "There's nothing more frustrating than hearing about a vacation gone wrong because someone didn't bother to take a single photo, or worse, lost all their precious memories due to a faulty camera or a forgotten memory card." A lack of photos ran pandemic in the Dusty Lenscap era. I lost most of the 1990s because of Kmart ruining whole rolls of film, a defective camera, or my camera being stolen. What's especially entertaining is when someone says the camera wasn't stolen but was merely lost—as if it grew legs and walked away.

Maybe it walked away from this world because it knew what was coming.



Masketeers big on censorship

In recent weeks, the COVID industrial complex has truly proven themselves to be the biggest bunch of brownshirts to roam the world since the Third Reich.

It's not just because these spoiled elitists were completely wrong about their draconian stay-at-home orders, years-long school closures, and the origin of the virus. It's not just because they dig in even after being proven wrong. It's also because of their growing campaign of spamming and censorship—which they've rolled out against us lately. They picked a fight by complaining to Twitter about one of my posts that was far less offensive than the crap they post.

It's a crying shame we can't wall off these useless clowns from society. I am sick and tired of their god complex and their insistence on foisting their standards on everyone else even after seeing how destructive they are. They're cut from the same sheets as the sapheads who handed out flyers in college complaining that schools were assigning too many nonfiction books. The difference is that the Internet wasn't big enough for them to censor back then, so we could just send them to the corners of our minds and ignore them. I've felt this way about certain individuals for a long time, but I didn't say anything about it until just the past few years, because I thought that when push came to shove, they'd at least help us with the important things. But nope!

Let's talk about Twitter. When Elon Musk purchased Twitter, cheers went up far and wide because its previous ownership was so quick to deplatform people just for COVID wrongthink, and Musk promised fast improvement. But the celebrations didn't last long, because Musk soon hired Linda "Yakety Yak" Yaccarino—a World Economic Forum cutout who had served as head of global advertising for the authoritarian-right NBCUniversal—as Twitter's new CEO. Musk vowed that Yakety Yak wouldn't undercut Twitter's new commitment to free speech—but we haven't been so lucky.

Around early June, I and many others noticed our Twitter feeds were being bombarded by COVID commissars demanding new mask mandates to last permanently. These posts were from accounts we didn't even follow and had no contact with before. For each of them, I clicked on "Not interested in this post." Yet these exact same posts kept reappearing over and over again—at the top of my feed, no less.

The posts were clearly a coordinated effort. Later, Jimmy Dore posted a commentary about how the Department of Homeland Stupidity farmed out its online censorship program to a group that included the University of Washington, which also houses the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, which produced flawed COVID models that encouraged draconian mandates. The DHS, CIA, FBI, universities, Chinese Communist Party, and others have conspired with each other to censor protected speech, so of course they collude on COVID propaganda. It's as sure as the sun rises in the morning. Just as significantly, the ridiculous, doom-filled posts on Twitter shared many of the same

catchphrases and debunked talking points.

The real problems for me on Twitter began when someone reported a post I had made solely because of my opinion on COVID measures. The post was weeks old, and I had forgotten I had posted it. I don't have many problems with some of the stated policies that social networking sites have regarding content. There are thresholds that should not be crossed – e.g., hate speech and harassment. But it's a different matter when there's a secret coordinated effort to censor people solely because of a difference in opinion. The trouble for me emerged after someone rightly criticized violent mobs that tried enforcing mask mandates. Their post included a now-infamous video in which a group of goons ganged up on a woman at a Staten Island grocery store and attacked her for not wearing a mask. I replied to this clip in my usual inimitable style – agreeing with the criticism of the attack.

People don't get to act like fascists in a public place and expect me not to respond. Except they weren't just acting. When you join a violent mob to try to assault someone for not wearing a mask, you're a brownshirt. Period. Full stop. I've urged restraint in responding to polite attempts at persuasion that imply no penalties, but I cannot abide outright mobbing. I value the right of self-defense, and people shouldn't be chased out of stores by criminal gangs.

There have been times in history when mobs like that didn't get off so easy. People fought force with force. They didn't just *talk* about it. They *did* it! Thirty years ago, a zine like this could at least still talk about it. Zines were printed on paper and distributed in person. Today, zines are expected to be online, and it's harder to travel to distribute print zines. The travel barriers have been intentionally built by our overlords as part of their long-running program to control society. So zines are subjected to censorship imposed by Internet hosting services and social media sites – which is often in collusion with the government, as the Twitter Files show. Thus, we can't publish things that need to be said which we could have gotten away with 30 years ago.

The masketeers accused my Twitter post of "violence." That's rich. They said that words were "violence", yet these same folks condoned the *real* violence found in the video. They think Twitter comments are "stochastic violence" – which is a fancy term for wrongthink. Trust me, my post was pretty mild. You used to be able to get away with things far rougher than that in print. Also, for years, there was a Facebook group that supported assassinating President Obama, and Facebook wouldn't do a damn thing about it.

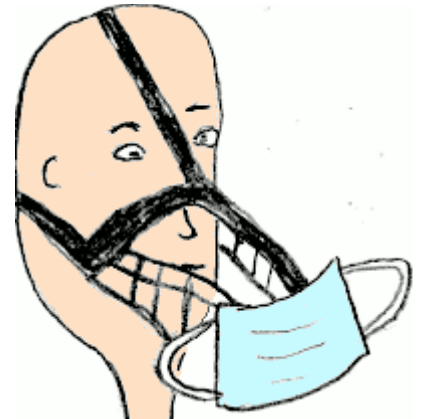
All of this shows that the brownshirtedness of masketeers not only takes the form of violence and support for making COVID restrictions permanent, but also censorship. So far, I've been luckier than other victims of similar censorship, because I wasn't completely kicked off Twitter. The worst that happened was that Twitter disabled posting until I deleted the "offending" post. I remember when someone made an even more inoffensive post on Usenet that quite properly criticized overuse of psychiatric drugs in children, and some asshole complained to this user's ISP all because he disagreed with him. The user immediately lost his account. Still, Twitter should have taken no action against me *at all*. I expected to get in this level of trouble with Facebook long before Twitter – even with Yakety Yak around.

The COVID wrongthink patrol has the money. But our side has the people. All of the recent coordinated fascist posts are from people in very lucrative careers. These posts are never from anyone who actually worked through school, was raised in poverty, or suffers a disability. The small number of people who support COVID totalitarianism don't get to impose their values on everyone else.

These dinosaurs not only try to censor online writings. They've been trying to shut down events too, and not just because of lockdown wrongthink. They call up concert halls to try to get them to cancel speakers who oppose financing neo-Nazis in the Azov Brigade. If you support censoring these speakers, you're not a progressive, but a fascist.

The most recent events are not isolated. Nor is the Staten Island riot. Several years ago, in Fairfax County, Virginia, parents who attended school board meetings to speak out against mask mandates reportedly found their cars egged. There have been *numerous* assaults by COVID town criers in stores.

Branch Covidians represent an ilk that sees the world through a haze so thick you can cut it with a booger scraper. If not for their massive wealth and their presence in academia, they'd have lost



this war before it started. They've already lost in the court of public opinion. They can be petulant about it. I don't give a shit. We have principles, standards, and rights, and we won't surrender them.

Whether in America or elsewhere, these bullies are un-American. They hate America. One of them recently made a Reddit post praising China's authoritarian COVID measures, saying, "China has it all figured out, for real!" The Twitter Files showed that the U.S. government was involved in moderating COVID-related content on Twitter before Musk's takeover. Thus, statements by COVID disaistrists that praised China's COVID response shows the alliance between the Chinese Communist Party and some in D.C. The American media's deep love of authoritarian foreign regimes is legendary, but this same hatred for liberal democracy is found among some of our government representatives.

Another COVID warrior whined on Twitter, "People are so entitled it blows my mind. They feel they're entitled to live exactly like they did in 2019 regardless of reality having changed so they simply can't live like that now if they value their health." I have news for that bombastic sorehead: Unless science and nature themselves change, we *are* entitled to live as we did in 2019. This is an inalienable right. Those who try to deny this right practice censorship because that's all they have. Censorship is a refuge of the scoundrel.

Eek! TV shows!

What were the scariest things you saw on TV growing up?

If you thought *Sesame Street* wouldn't have anything to scare small children, you'd be wrong. For years, the ol' Ses kept running this brief cartoon about the letter *D* and the word *dart*...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lfSiZ1uQGw>

In that clip, a man throws a dart, and the dart carries him through the air. Finally, he crashes into a dartboard, and his guts splatter everywhere. I remember being terrified of this segment's frightening yet hilarious ending. I would hold my hands over my face and peek through my fingers until it was over.

Someone on YouTube called this skit "another funny one that the PC crowd would find too 'violent' nowadays." But, as scary as it was, it made our lives better. Kids today are being raised by the media to be a bunch of wimps. That *Sesame Street* segment taught us that life wasn't all candy and unicorns.

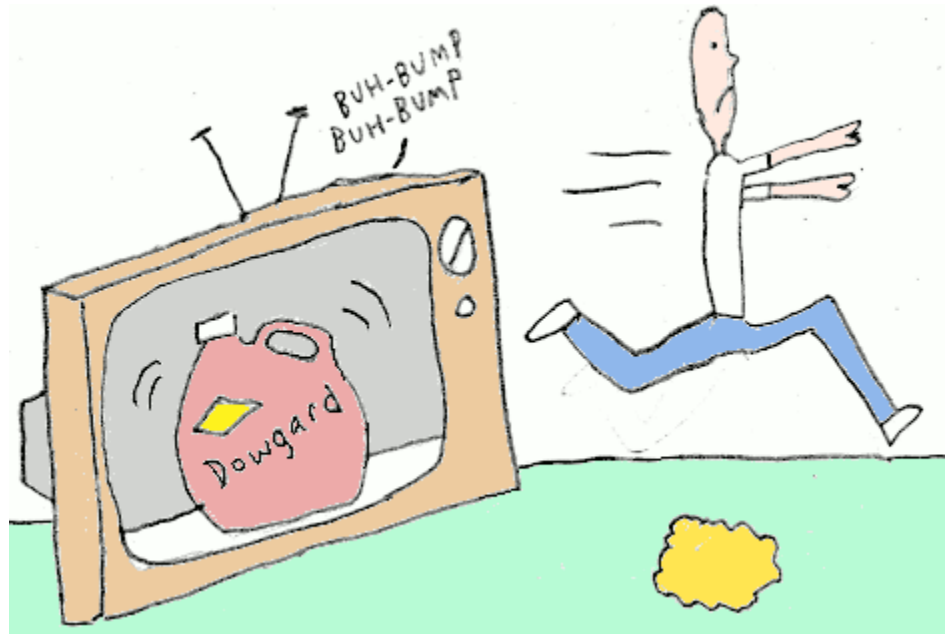
Want to be scared even more? Here's a horrifying commercial for Dowgard antifreeze that frequently aired during football games...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQRB9LzkAuk>

I remember when that commersh used to clear the room! Even the dog was afraid of it! A big, red bottle of antifreeze towered over some gas and oil cans and pulsated as if it was about to explode. But it never exploded. Instead, at the end of the ad, it just hid from us until it terrorized us again during the next ad break.

A YouTube commenter said of the Dow ad, "This commercial scared the shit out of me when I was about three years old." Another said, "This commercial traumatized me when I was a kid; it's still really creepy."

Ekco cookware gave us scary ads too...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmXwN9qBjI4>

The woman in the commersh terrified viewers all across the land by flipping the muffins so they would somehow stay suspended in midair. It was like Christmas 2020 when red wine got spilled on a light gray carpet at an important family gathering, or the following spring when a waiter at a restaurant dropped rolls all over the floor. With each of those incidents, I imagined the wine or the rolls pausing in midair as they were falling, because it seemed like the whole room ground to a standstill. Likewise, the Ekco ad scared viewers into thinking there would be ruined muffins all over the floor.

Even Pepsi had a scary commersh up its sleeve...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiAAu__Vv7E

Most of that ad is rather benign, featuring little kids playing with friendly puppies and an elderly grandma guzzling an ice cold Peps. But the horror comes at the end when we see a scary close-up of a Pepsi bottle emblazoned with words in small print that no 2-year-old could possibly read. I remember running out of the room when I saw that and being told, "It's just a commercial!" Just a commercial?!

I also recall being in the living room when my parents were watching some show like *60 Minutes* and being terrified when it showed what appeared to be some young prince somewhere dying. But he might not have actually died. He might have been part of a royal family that had been deposed, and he was being isolated somewhere. He's probably been there ever since!

Even when I was about 20 or 25, I became very uneasy at something on TV. There was a segment on the CBS news in which correspondent Bill Geist stuck duct tape over his mouth at the end. Then the video morphed into a cartoon of the mustachioed journalist, with the tape still covering his mouth. Then the duct tape was suddenly yanked away by some invisible force, and he shrieked in pain!

People on the public Internet talk about how they were afraid of the commercials where a Neo-Synephrine bottle appeared to be breathing. They also said they used to recreate this effect using the small milk cartons in their school cafeteria.

During the years when I was scared by TV the most, I noticed scary things kept being broadcast, while people I admired like Mr. Patches of *The Uncle Al Show* appeared less and less. When I noticed Mr. Patches never appeared anymore, I asked my parents why, and they said it was because he was fired. Recently, after Mr. Patches actor Tom McGreevey died, I saw an article that said he was indeed fired – because he was an independent thinker. And, in a 1978 piece, a broadcasting student accused *The Uncle Al Show* of discouraging young viewers from thinking for themselves. This student said, "Al teaches conformity, not creativity. When he says it's time to twist – they do. Or else you see a big hand coming out and grabbing a child. It's like the old vaudeville hook. I've always had this feeling that there is a big room of babbling people in the basement of 'CPO who were once yanked off *Uncle Al*, and who are now 32." Thus, Mr. Patches was too independent for *The Uncle Al Show*.

Bob Keeshan of *Captain Kangaroo* said, "Any adult who uses authority tactics has really lost the ball game." So independent thought should be welcome on children's TV. Unfortunately, this is sorely lacking in media of today, for children and adults alike. It's even more lacking now than it was on *Uncle Al*.

Next time someone beats you up for saying TV used to be better than it is now, show them this article. TV that we remember was sometimes scary and sometimes gentle, but usually more respectful of its audience than TV today is. These days, TV acts like everyone is a big dummy. And maybe some of us are, for tolerating the digital transition that's been a big failure.



Mixed signals from Taylor Mill stop sign

Back in January, I warned you of a stop sign on Sunset Drive in Highland Heights that marked an intersection with a street that does not exist. But Taylor Mill also plays the phantom street game.

Let's take a jaunt over to the part of Taylor Mill that once made up Winston Park – home of the fictitious Winston Park Pie Toss. Let's slog southwest on Church Street.

As house numbers increase into the 4700s, you may notice a stop sign sternly standing guard. At first glance, you might think it's for a phantom street. But it's actually for Ovada Avenue. To be sure, Ovada is hard to see, as it's barely even a street. This may get into that weird gray area of what's a street and what isn't—kind of like Sesame Street. Ovada is a little lane that runs southeast to some ballfields. But that's not the stop sign I'm exposing.

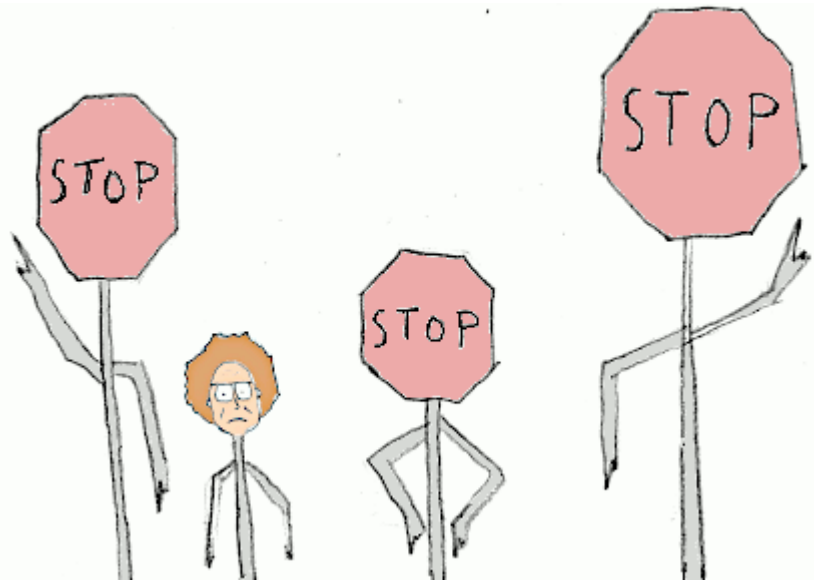
Travel a few more houses past the bend in Church Street. There you will find a stop sign that is indeed for a phantom street. The sign appears in a 2022 Google Street View photo, the most recent photo available. Instead of a street, there's a poor attempt at a very short footpath to nowhere, which is only 180 feet long and was built only in the past few years. Very few people use this path, because it doesn't go anywhere. That is no exaggeration. It's a dead end, and there is absolutely nothing along it. It gets less use than a standard one-car driveway of a small house.

Just as importantly, there's been a stop sign there since before that path appeared – when there was no intersecting road or path at all. As with the Highland Heights exhibit, there must have been a sign there since many years before *that*, when there was an actual street, although the sign looks newer. There *is* a public right-of-way there, and it appears that Valleyview Lane once ran there. A detailed 1939 map shows that stretch of Valleyview but labels it as “not opened.” The map doesn't say the street didn't exist. It just says “not opened.” This suggests that the street had been built and was slated for development, but the city of Winston Park gave up on it when developers did. This stretch of road is gone in aerial photos and maps from the 1950s. Maybe they wanted to focus on the Pie Toss instead.

I know the sign wasn't posted because of the path that would be built later – unless it's a magic time-traveling stop sign. With Big Oil using its deep pockets to influence public policy to favor cars, and with the Boptrotters' Social Credit System, I'm sure most public officials didn't care enough about a footpath to post a sign for it – especially since the path was decades away when they posted it.

The long and short of it is that there's a stop sign but no real intersection.

We bring you this story because knowledge is power! Now you're warned about this sign, and this warning may spare you a ticket. Maybe this article will also encourage cities to remove stop signs once the street for them is gone. But after Taylor Mill recently decided to ban medical marijuana, I don't expect its leaders to get on the ball about outdated stop signs.



Blowing the whistle on Amazon seller scam

If you read last month's ish – which most cool people did – you'd know that I ordered a referee whistle so I could blast WellCare when they make telemarketing calls. It was to replace the lost toy duck call that I used years ago. (Someone said the duck call was “probably buried under all that junk.” When somebody says that, that's when you can write off an item for good.) I ordered the whistle from a third party Amazon seller instead of slogging up to the nearest sporting goods store, which might not even have any whistles.

This order exposed new problems, so listen like thieves (as INXS would say). The Amazon page for the whistle did not state this, but the seller was in China and would ostensibly mail it to me using the Chinese postal service. I had no way of knowing this until I placed the order.

Two weeks after I ordered the whistle, the status page showed it had bounced all over China

and was sitting at a customs station in Shanghai. Two weeks after *that*, there were no changes. My whistle still hadn't arrived, and the most recent report on the status page said it was still in Shanghai.

I was allowed to get a refund from Amazon after another week – which I got. But other people have told me they've had similar experiences. They ordered items from Amazon, never received them, and saw on the status report that the items had been stuck in China for weeks. They were not told beforehand that the items were shipping from China.

This is an obvious scam. I bet the third party seller didn't even have this whistle in stock. It appears as if this seller banks on people forgetting that they ordered anything. The seller can then pocket their money, while no merchandise is actually shipped.

Even if the buyer doesn't forget, this seller still gets their precious dough. That's because Amazon – not the third party seller – covers the refund.

The big question becomes: Why does Amazon tolerate it? Why do they put up with an overseas third party seller that seems to rip them off? This has happened often enough that there's no way Amazon doesn't know about it. It's as if Amazon willingly consented to a scammer in China defrauding them. Amazon is in effect paying China.

A website says Amazon is so solidly in China's camp that it recruits third party sellers in China by regularly conducting conferences there. A Reddit commenter reported that Amazon allows sellers in China to break its rules while punishing American sellers for the same violations. There's no level playing field, as American sellers are held to tougher standards. All of this is while Chinese factories make extensive use of slave labor.

I also strongly doubt that my order was a secure transaction.

There needs to be some sort of law or regulation that requires online retailers like Amazon and eBay to state what country items are being shipped from. America has its share of scammers too. No country has a monopoly on fraud. But con artists are easier to catch if their hustle is confined within a country's borders.

In the meantime, I've simply borrowed another toy duck call from a family member.

A person chewed gum and denied it

Annoy your school! Chew bubble gum in class!

Beegee is such hilarious stuff that it earns yet another entry here. I may have touched on this story not long ago, but you want details! I also thought about it recently and burst out laughing!

Bishop Brossart High School usually treated bubble gum busting as a capital offense – like violating their idiotic dress code. You could scream outside the windows for hours on end, rip pages out of library books, flush locks down toilets, and start fights in the middle of class, yet sail through school with no disciplinary record. But minor infractions weren't considered so minor. The school pioneered broken windows policing.

By 1988, however, Brossart was starting to lose the war on gum.

One student in particular chomped gee daily yet denied it. I don't even remember who it was, and I can't identify him in the yearbook. As with the kid in elementary school who blurted out in class that his fingers smelled like Doritos, this important information has been lost to time. Anybip, the gummer in this story had a technique. He would chew bubble gum in each class, blow bubbles, loudly bust them, and cup his hands over his face all the while in the hopes the teachers wouldn't catch him.

Needless to say, it was pretty damn funny.

Here's how it worked. He held his hands together with his thumbs below his chin. His hands were upright so they covered his nose. At first glance, he appeared to be praying. Yet his hands formed a profile that was narrower than his mouth, so you could still see his mouth moving. And he kept popping bubs loudly.

The teacher would inevitably ask, "Are you chewing gum?" He would always deny it. It was obvious to everybody that he was gumming – even bubbling – and still he denied it. But the bubble gum kablammoing was getting so out of control everywhere on campus at the time that some teachers



began throwing up their hands and not pursuing the matter further. Or they would get distracted by some other misbehavior and have to deal with that. But, as I've said, the most serious offenses never resulted in real penalties.

The only thing funnier was classmates imitating this student. I remember one who sat in front of me in one of my classes holding his hands in front of his face, making popping sounds, and saying, "I'm not chewing gum!" I also remember when one of my pals stood up, made popping noises, did a little dance, and bobbed his head as he held his hands in front of his mouth.

I have no idea why gumming increased so precipitously at Brossart around that time. People I knew at school didn't chew bubble gum that much until around the middle of that school year, when they suddenly started masticating the stuff constantly and constructing their entire lives around it. I was once told that I can't let my life "revolve around" *American Top 40*. I was completely spoony over this weekly countdown of the 40 hottest records in the land. Lots of folks at Brossart began treating gum with the same level of interest as I treated *American Top 40*.

Why didn't you just hoo the haa!

YouTube is like having 1970s TV at your fingertips!

The Internet itself is like getting a new toy for your birthday every day of the year. You can find historic documents and old local maps to broaden your knowledge every time you log on. And if you're looking for entertainment, YouTube can be handy.

Even serious TV shows have yielded unintentionally funny moments. Take this 1972 scene from *The Waltons*, for example...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzbdzWJbg5E>

Here's a synopsis of that clip in case you're afraid Wonder Woman might pop out of the screen and tie you up with her Lasso of Truth. In that *Waltons* scene, John-Boy is practically in tears because he can't find an antique typewriter he borrowed and hid in the toolshed. The real funniness begins when Mary Ellen tells him she sold it.

John-Boy absolutely loses his shit!

He devolves into angry babbling. "Why didn't you just hoo the haa!" he yells. "I don't know why you didn't just stab me in the back with a dagger!" He threatens to drown himself in a pond.

All that over a typewriter! Couldn't he just get Microsoft Works instead?

We had a toolshed when I was growing up, and I thought we were the only people in the world who had one. But we didn't have many of our tools in it. We mostly just used it to store *Time* magazines and cans of gasoline. I know gasoline and paper were a bad combination, especially because the toolshed was attached to the house.

I guess the *Waltons* ass-kicking crew couldn't find a haa to hoo.

Students cast their vote against election assignment

This is another story that I think I've touched on but not really gone into detail about.

I was in 6th grade during the 1984 election. On Tuesdays, I was forced to attend a class for gifted students, which I hated. The other kids in that class were more sedate and bookish. They were the type who were academically smart but would probably believe things that official sources said even if they could be debunked fairly easily. Most of them weren't the malicious type, and I got along with them (except one who I got in an altercation with on a TANK bus when I was in high school). They seemed to be intelligent but with a blind spot that made them gullible when authority figures said something. I was different in that I knew that adults were full of shit much of the time.

But the presidential election inspired an assignment that left nobody unscathed by the teacher's wrath.

We were assigned this project weeks before the election took place. I might have gotten



interested in it if the election didn't have a predetermined outcome by then, and if this outcome wasn't so bad. On the other hand, the media wasn't nearly as bad then as it is today. Ronald Reagan sadly won most newspaper endorsements, but the media is no better now. *USA Today* just ran a laughable op-ed attacking J.D. Vance as too liberal and demanding Donald Trump pick Nikki Haley as his running mate. Imagine the national press being so right-wing that it won't accept anyone less extreme than Nikki Haley. Now you don't have to imagine!

In any event, I think our assignment was supposed to involve pasting articles onto a large sheet of paper. We were supposed to start right away and let the suspense build up to the election's final result. You can just imagine us wearing flat Uncle Al hats with red, white, and blue stripes as we presented our work in front of the class.

But nobody did hardly anything. I didn't do a thing for this assignment, since this class didn't even count for a grade for our regular report cards. Nobody else did very much either.

And the teacher was *MAD!!!*

Usually, he only got mad at me, but this time it was the whole class. He lectured us about how we waited until the day of the election to work on the assignment. He was disappointed, dammit, and we were gonna pay!

You know the drill. He expected this, he expected that. But I don't think he had made it clear enough what he wanted. If he had, more students would have started earlier. Anyway, he was making a mountain out of a molehill. It's like if a weather reporter predicted it would be 100° F for my beach weekend but it only got up to 99.

You're not gonna believe this, but the whole incident was uproarious beyond description.

I had some bigger run-ins with the school not long after, and the mustachioed instructor hated me forever, but he quickly forgave the rest of the class. For the rest of the school year, there were class discussions on current events, like the planning for the then-upcoming Geneva Summit, but my classmates' studiousness made a lot of it soar way over my head. (The Geneva Summit is not to be confused with the Reykjavík Summit, where Reagan threw a big tantrum and refused to give up his failed Star Wars program.)

It's sad that I was forced to hog a spot in that class that could have gone to someone who actually liked it.



Schools sound like a broken record

Every time I get around to discussing permanent records in schools, it's always just before an ish needs to be published, so I can't go into as much detail as I should.

We now know there *is* a permanent record. It doesn't just include report cards. It doesn't even just include your academic info. It includes every disciplinary infraction since preschool, and it follows you around to every school you attend, all the way through college. I mentioned last year that a New Jersey news site reported that schools begin compiling students' permanent records the moment they start prekindergarten. My own experiences suggest that is true.

When a teacher or principal says, "This is going on your permanent record," they mean it. Mean it like a dictionary, they do.

Let me give you an idea as to how out of control this was. After Brossart and before the end of high school, there were at least 2 different classrooms – in fact, 2 completely different venues – in which the teacher alluded to my disciplinary record from Brossart. The first time, a teacher mentioned something to me that he couldn't have possibly seen anywhere else. The second time, a teacher told me point blank that she had read my Brossart rap sheet. This was especially perilous, because Brossart had included something that was merely hearsay, which could have affected how I was treated if I was falsely accused of breaking rules at a new school. That's like if a prosecutor brings up an old, unrelated case to use against a defendant – after the defendant was acquitted on the old case.

I still wasn't safe in college. A high-ranking official at NKU once referenced events that took place even before high school. When he mentioned these incidents, my mind started reeling a mile a minute, and I figured out he had to have had my disciplinary record going back through several schools. He wasn't even a dean.

He had apparently taken the time to paw through my record. But why was some of that information even on my permanent record in the first place?

This was at a university where I was told I was “fighting old battles” because I tried enrolling again after 2 years away. Yet the school used information from my record that was 10 years old.

I was also never allowed to dispute anything that was on my record, even though much of what it said was false. A school’s word was taken as gospel.

There’s practically no difference between this and the Chinese Communist Party’s Social Credit System. This has been especially true since about 1990 when states began giving schools direct control over things that were not connected to school such as denying driver’s licenses. It’s been even more so since 2020 when even public colleges began limiting students’ travel and recreation that was unrelated to school and was not on school property. Each of these events was rooted in malice and classism, and you don’t have to dig very far to see it.

Because schools keep permanent records on students, students should start keeping permanent records on schools. Then they should blab them everywhere like schools do with student records.

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