

The Last Word™

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A computer did it!

We're living in a fascist era.

This isn't a claim I take lightly. I better not hear any complaints that I don't know what the word *fascist* means. If you support some of the things the government has done in recent years, you are by definition a fascist. Look it up.

Since this is the last issue of this zine before the November election, it is worthy to inspect a factor that influences the fascism of today—gerrymandering—and how it contrasts with my personal

projects. Gerrymandering is kryptonite to liberal democracy. Both major parties have been guilty. In fact, both parties have usually gerrymandered to the benefit of the same party. After the 1990 census, Democrats who led the Kentucky legislature actually drew a Republican gerrymander. But after the 2020 census, it was large, gentrified metropolitan areas that got lucky, regardless of what party benefited.

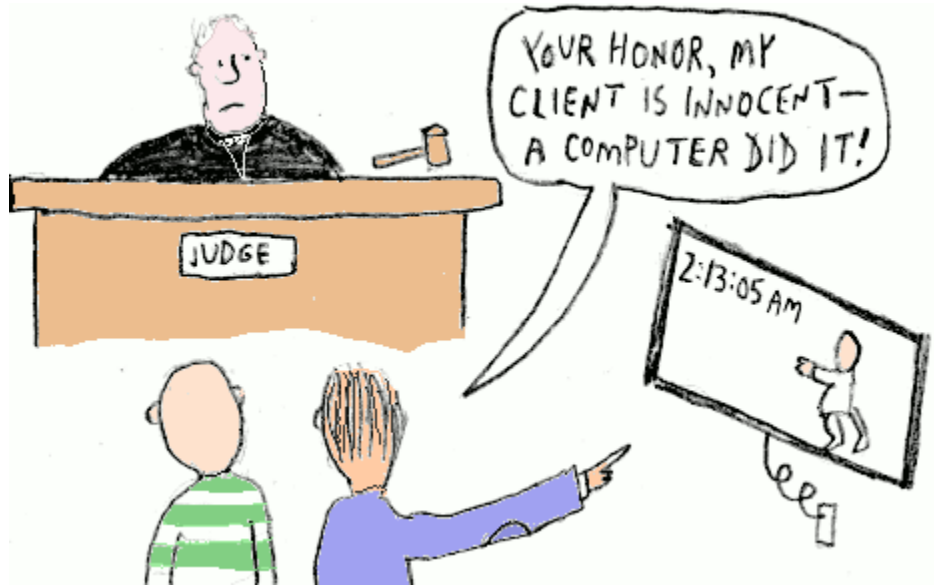
My projects should be free-floating. That is, they should come naturally. This zine was good at this in the late '10s. And my projects should have some connection with each other. Like how people talk about the *Star Wars* universe or the *Everybody Loves Raymond* universe, every person is a universe. One of the things I've worked on a lot lately is my longtime interest in BASIC programming, and we can connect it with this zine and my interest in politics.

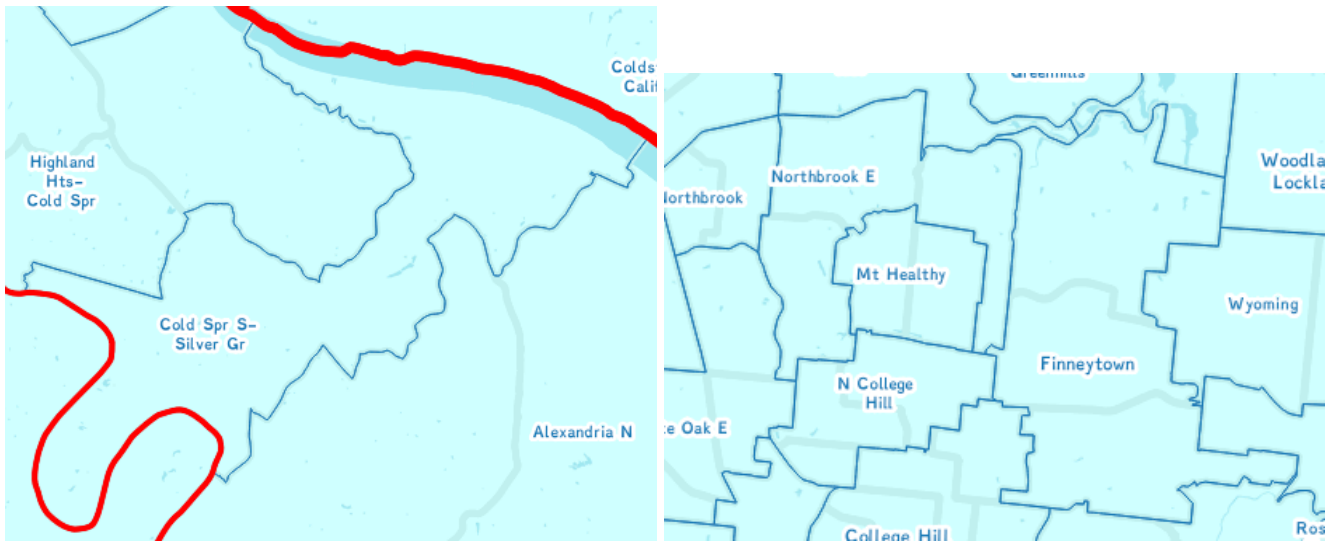
My life is full of BASIC fun (as a wise man would say). Since my foes live in the past and still dwell on things that happened 40 years ago, I reserve the right to program in a language that was shunned by the corporate suits 40 years ago. Fair is fair. I looked into Python, but it looks pretty heavy compared to BASIC. Maybe I'll try later. Plus, the instructions for installing Python libraries are complete garbledygoop. So BASIC it shall be!

And I'm going to use the same excuse my assistant principal used 40 years ago: A computer did it! In middle school, I was assigned to advanced classes in my worst subjects, and average classes in my best subjects. I mentioned this to the assistant headmaster, and he replied that this decision was made by a computer. I knew this was bullshit. Even if some info was fed into a computer, it was somebody at the school who programmed it. I doubt a computer was even involved, because school administrators (*sic*) probably didn't know how to program anything more complicated than a Major Morgan.

After I was told that my classes were assigned by a computer, the school refused to remedy it.

For my current project of making detailed bicycling maps of local neighborhoods, I wrote a FreeBASIC program that divides the entire area into small, mappable regions that have roughly equal population. I've improved on it from time to time, but it was inevitable that there would be some strange boundaries like these...





That’s what I call a community paper! (I just came up with that sentence on the fly. There was a guide on a school field trip who said weird things like this with a stupid grin on his face, but this isn’t a real quote.)

A computer did it! It was my computer that drew those maps. I bear no responsibility for the fact that each region is not a perfect square or circle—even though I wrote the program and decided what data to use. Cline Middle School wouldn’t accept responsibility for its choices, so why should I accept responsibility if not all my mapping regions are compact?

Seriously, I used the best formula available for drawing those regions. But some of the same rules can be applied to drawing legislative districts. I essentially used BASIC to write redistricting software that’s clearly better than whatever shitty methods our legislators use. And it takes only a few minutes for my progie-wogie to run.

I’m a BASIC guy. BASIC is my bag. It doesn’t put food on the table, but who gives a shit? I’m not one of the stuffed shirts in a cushy office who decided to banish it from the professional world just before I came of age. Nonetheless, as with those who sponsored the 1996 Telecommunications Act, there should be some criminal penalty for those responsible for BASIC’s banishment. But they’ll probably just blame a computer.

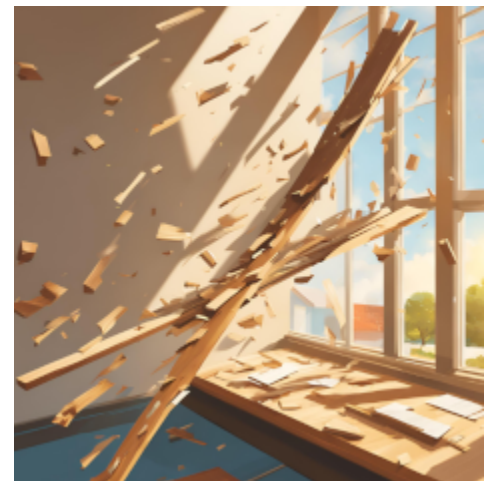
This sub was as twisted as a pretzel

It may seem improper to speak ill of the deceased within a few months after their deaths, but some people earned it. You had to know them to appreciate what miserable human beings they were. After all, it could be someone who talked shit about me without provocation. Garbage in, garbage out.

Recently, I got word that a substitute teacher I had in middle school died. My heart started racing, as foul memories of his reign of terror rushed back.

He was known for swaggering about the classroom and whacking a yardstick on students’ desks, but one other incident also came to mind. I think I was in 7th grade. By then, there was plenty of soul-smashing alienation and horror afoot at school, and much of the time, I felt like I was zoning out. One day, I received a recess detention for some minor infraction. This meant that after lunch, I had to report to a particular classroom for that purpose instead of going to recess.

That might not have been so bad, because I kept getting attacked at recess. Two or three students in particular kept walking up to me on the back parking lot, calling me a nasty name, and hitting me in the head with an open hand with all their might. The school refused to do anything about it. And I’d learned by then to never dare fight back. Despite that, I still didn’t feel like going to detention—so I didn’t. I completely ignored the detention order.



It so happened that this substitute teacher was presiding over recess detention that day. According to students who were there, he started talking smack about me when I failed to show up.

This is completely disqualifying for an educator. But this was World Economic Forum school, which is different from real school.

There were also situations at the time that caused this idiotic theme to be dragged into my home, so I wasn't safe at home either. I'd grown very wary of threats like this, because my life was in danger.

Now *there's* a way to destroy an innocent person's life. Think of how much is lost every time a school system decides to launch a vendetta like this against a student. The student isn't the only victim. Society is victimized too. If the direct victim can't advance in life, society never enjoys the benefits of their talents and contributions. Think what things would be like if Linus Pauling or Abraham Lincoln had been held back like this in their youth.

When I was in 7th grade, perhaps the main thing I wanted to do in life was become an Atari BASIC programmer. At other times, I wanted to go into civil engineering or broadcasting. In hindsight, I think it would have been good to get into investigative journalism for a professional news outlet, but at some of the schools I attended, I didn't have the amenities that others had that would have advanced this goal. Plus, on an increasing basis, major news outlets don't hire from the working class but rather from the nobility who can afford more prestigious schools. In addition, hall monitor types are more likely to stay in school long enough to get a journalism degree than investigative types are, because the latter are more likely to get in trouble over something dumb that the school caused. That's a major reason why most so-called journalism today just parrots official propaganda. The media used to be better because they used to hire more reporters from the working class.

On the other hand, lower educational attainment doesn't hold back those who toe the party line hard enough. These days, questionable characters are given their own media projects by the time they're 20, even if they dropped out of school when they were high school freshmen. They are awarded nationwide celebrity status that I've never even been close to having. They even boast of having an entire media "team." Most people I know don't get a whole media "team" no matter how experienced or competent they are.

As for my old substitute teacher, I've had his mugshot from his drunken driving arrest stored on my hard drive for years. In recent years, he also had a Facebook page. It was full of just as many right-wing memes as you'd imagine. But—predictably—any specific preference he had for the Republican Party ended in 2020, once the Democrats decided they could outface the Republicans, a feat that many thought impossible.

Imagine being ruled by a blob made up of right-wing former Republicans joining forces with "progressive" politicians and commentators who abandoned their principles when they knew it would bring them more money. Now you don't have to imagine! Rest assured, some of the so-called "progressives" must have been unhinged to begin with, or else they wouldn't be so bad now, but it wasn't obvious until later. We used to like Keith Olbermann, for instance, before he got so mean.

I think Keith Olbermann and Kyle Rittenhouse should be forced to fight each other in a gladiator ring. It would be just as funny as when Taylor Lorenz interviewed Chaya Raichik—which humiliated both. But Keith, Chaya, Taylor, and Kyle are ultimately all on the same side.

We all remember public figures who were once effective and popular but near the end of their careers abandoned their principles and policy stances and began supporting far-right extremism. That's the point that the Democratic Party, the "progressive" blogosphere, and publications like the *Nation* are at now.

Unbalanced, vindictive, selfish hooligans are running the country, and it's because nobody ever told them no.



I gave the boot to this trinket

No revolution has ever been won by good behavior, and 4th grade was a microcosm of that maxim. Every action was scrutinized, so we walked on eggshells, but it reaped no benefits for us.

Fourth grade might have been the year I accidentally left crayons in my pocket and they went through the washer and dryer, thereby stinking up the whole house. I remember watching *CHiPs* in the den and stepping out into the living room and noticing that everyone had bandanas over their faces to block the stench. Anyway, at school, we were given small tokens for good behavior, and when we filled a baby food jar with tokens, we were supposed to receive a reward.

It wasn't much of a reward though. When I filled my jar, I didn't expect much in return, but I got even less. I didn't expect anything of great monetary value. I don't think the school was swimming in dinero like some of my other schools were. But I have no idea where the school obtained the prizes we got, or what gave the teacher the idea that we would be interested in them.

This was the same teacher who tied me to a chair like a hostage, so it shouldn't be a surprise that she gave out weird prizes. I don't know if this swag was purchased by the school, or if she went out and bought it herself. Anyway, the prizes consisted entirely of small trinkets that I didn't have any interest in. When I was to receive my reward, she produced a collection of these trinkets and invited me to select the one that "appeals" to me the most.

I picked a small likeness of a boot that featured the bright '80s colors that were popular then. I deliberated all of 5 seconds before selecting it. The class bully who grew up to be a bank robber started laughing for no apparent reason.

I had so little use for this toy boot that I think I gave it away to some other kid on the school bus that afternoon. The toys I had at home were far more interesting. I didn't even have that many, because we weren't made of money, but still they were better.

The teacher also vowed to award me with a "rainbow superstar" for exemplary behavior, but I had no idea what that was. It sounded babyish. I was 9, but it sounded like something for 3-year-olds.

About halfway through the school year, I gave up on behaving, but school officials kept exaggerating my transgressions—or they made things up outright. I would have been better off if I had misbehaved more from the start.

In the years after, small knickknacks that were actually valuable were stolen from me at other schools. The exact same thing kept happening over and over, yet schools refused to do anything about it. That's in addition to the time in 8th grade when someone stole my red pen, and then I got in a heap of trouble for not having one. If something got stolen from us, that was considered our problem. It was as if we caused it to be stolen. Also in 8th grade, some girl stole a huge mega pack of bubble gum out of a 7th grader's desk and got away with it. She even bubbled!

One time in high school, I found some of my treasured broadcasting memorabilia that I needed for a school project in the trash. It was just luck that I hadn't waited longer to throw something away. Otherwise, I never would have found it.

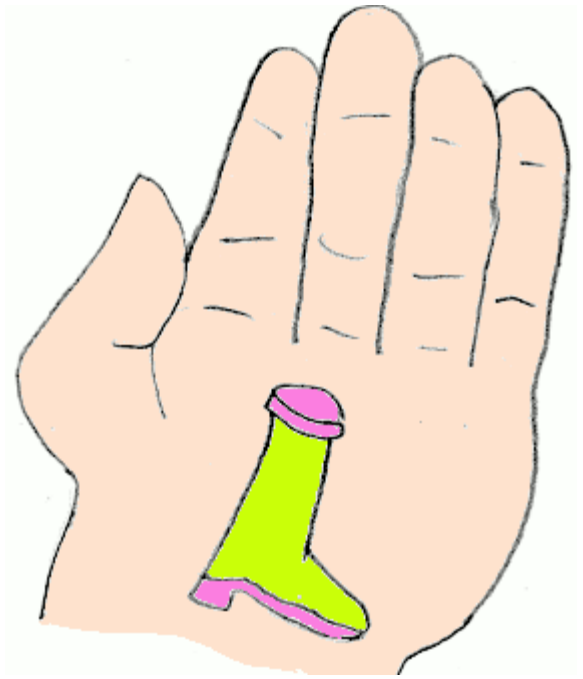
These thefts were leading children down a moral sewer.

Some kid ate candy and the math teacher got mad

Time for more 7th grade mems!

Bubble gum is of course the funny candy. It's not just a candy but a toy. But other kinds of candy can also evoke guffaws when it falls into the right hands.

In 7th grade at Cline, the school assigned us to sell chocolate bars to raise money. I don't know



whether this was before or after the school spent all the money from a candy sale on a huge sign that lasted about 6 months before they threw it away.

Each day, we were dismissed from school from our last class, and I had math as my last class. One of my classmates had his box of candy with him. As the class was drawing to a close, he extracted a candy bar from the box, unwrapped it, and began devouring it.

The teacher was *MAD!!!!*

The student got an idiotic smirk on his face. The teacher angrily demanded he throw away the rest of the candy bar – thereby wasting it.

He did as directed and went back to his seat. He was snickering throughout.

The amusement continued. He then grabbed another candy bar out of the box and was about to unwrap it. But the instructor was watching him like a hawk and skeeped at him. The student looked like he was about to burst into laughter.

Then the student declared, still smiling, “I already paid for it.” So he was actually being a good citizen.

At least Cline wasn’t as bad as Brossart. Brossart made us sell raffle tickets and pay for the ones we couldn’t sell. If we didn’t sell all our candy at Cline, at least that was the end of the matter, and we didn’t have to pay for it. An online commenter said their school had a candy sale and they had to pay for 4 boxes of candy they somehow ruined, but I don’t know of any school except Brossart that made students pay for goodies they didn’t sell. However, one person said their school wouldn’t let them go to their prom unless they sold all their candy. That student got a good laugh out of that.



More elite fail

When we released our previous issue, it was during flooding rains here, which began before Hurricane Helene. It was before the hurricane caused damage in North Carolina that was many times worse than what we described last month.

Asheville, a city of 90,000, may end up being completely abandoned. This would be the first time in modern American history that a city of that size would be abandoned to such a degree. The region was previously thought to be one of the safest places to be from a natural disaster.

As the Carolinas were in ruins, Florida was facing a second hurricane in only 2 weeks, and Georgia was blanketed by chlorine gas from the BioLab fiasco. Unchecked corporate greed was the reason for all of these debacles. A month later, Kentucky is still having floods near Bowling Green.

North Carolina hurricane victims were completely isolated, and some died waiting for help on rooftops. Yet it didn’t come close to becoming a national story for weeks. As FEMA botched the response, the agency threatened to punish residents who began rebuilding by themselves when they couldn’t get help. Gov. Roy Cooper—an incompetent clown—says that much of the area won’t be rebuilt at all.

Officials in the town of Canton pointed out that phone companies were largely to blame for the isolation there. The companies refused to prepare or have resources handy for officials to communicate with emergency workers. An online comment said phone service was so bad in the area even before the hurricane that cellphones didn’t even work in much of the area, and landlines went out every time it rained and took a week to be fixed. It’s like the time Cincinnati Bell’s phone line here rotted and it took a week for our service to be restored. Parts of western North Carolina had no Internet access even before the hurricane. Officials in a local county had received a grant for broadband, yet no service ever came, and nobody knew how the grant was spent.

Hurricane Helene was big enough that the media simply ignored the worst of it instead of claiming the event was the opposite of what it really was. We’re convinced there’s something to the way weather events are reported. If it was your average flooding rain, it would be portrayed as a “drought” –and vice versa. We know this from over 35 years of scrutinizing news media. The most severe events are not treated in this manner, because the web of ruling muckety-mucks wants to think that will save their credibility. But where does the media get its backward data from? Some agency

above them must be misreporting weather data, but why? The main reason we can think of is so insurers can point to this data and avoid having to pay insurance claims. For example, if someone's home or farm is damaged by a flood, the insurer can just claim there was no flood and not pay them.

The aftermath of the hurricane is one of the biggest scandals in modern American times, and it's not only utility companies, Roy Cooper, and FEMA that are to blame. Some communities in that area have public officials who have rarely ever focused on practical matters. When they do, they botch that. It was reported that a mayor in the area had previously refused to effectively deal with homelessness and instead sent local homeless people on a bus to Tennessee.

Societies that truly value the public good and cooperation would not respond to homelessness so poorly. But such misrule is by no means limited to North Carolina. It's become worse in larger cities. Most of the problems are no longer in small cities and rural areas but rather the heavily gentrified big cities. Ungentrified America has a baseline as to what represents civilization. The gentrified world doesn't care about others' health or well-being.

The elitist media probably thinks the aftermath of the hurricane can be remedied if only they'd run more frenzied front-page editorials demanding school uniforms or more Social Security cuts.

Some people are afraid of free speech



Some peeps have a weird idea of what free speech means. We're in a time worse than when a self-styled free speech Internet provider tried to get perfectly legitimate Usenet posts yanked.

There's now an international effort to close down social networking sites that allow users to post unapproved views on an assortment of topics. It's frankly hard to figure out exactly what to make of it. Its stated aim is to combat "hate speech" and "disinformation", but the material being targeted seems to fit into neither of those categories. None of the material consists of overt bigotry or objectively false statements. By and large, it contains not denial of real crises, but criticism of public policies that might be enacted under the guise of fighting these crises.

We've all seen in recent years that real emergencies are exploited by government officials to carry out goals unrelated to such events. This is how COVID was turned into a welfare program for tech tycoons and right-wing *Fortune* 500 firms.

Free speech is an elementary principle of democracy. Coercion of social media sites erodes democracy instead of strengthening it. At the same time, free speech has been distorted to defend corporations' unlimited ability to fund political campaigns – which is undemocratic.

The war against online dissent is part of a wider phenomenon in which the worst narcissists have been allowed to fail upward into positions of greater power. Then they train young followers to build their identities around this miasma of failure.

Meanwhile, even "alternative" media—like the more established media before them—have devolved into a diarrhea-like slop of elitist propaganda. When our autocrats propose bad ideas, these outlets won't miss a beat in echoing them. Their shrill writers praise the equally shrill public officials

who execute these ideas. This is also why the Democrats are on the brink of trading 3 of their most effective senators for one demagogue who used COVID as an excuse to slash the number of voting locations to help her cronies.

That time when YouTube yanked all those videos

Remember a few weeks ago when YouTube temporarily pulled practically every video on their site instead of renewing their agreement with SESAC in a timely fashion? Of all the YouTube moves, that was the YouTubiest of all.

Some performers lost out on revenue because YouTube and SESAC were both being such fartpipes about it.

But did you know that not all the videos that were yanked featured music? It's true, it's true, it's all true! YouTube pulled some videos that had no music whatsoever, or the music just happened to be playing in the background on a music system in some establishment and you could barely hear it at all.

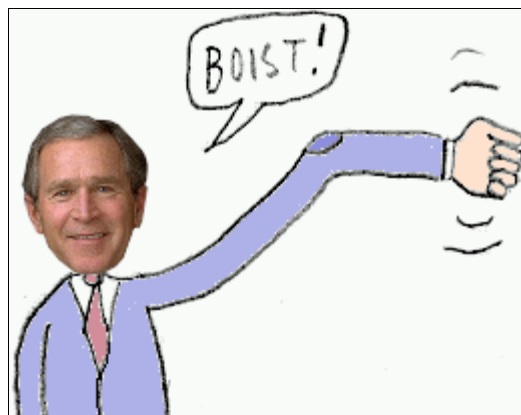
Maybe it's time for some legislation to clarify that the fair use doctrine is supposed to protect brief, incidental appearances of music.

There's no wa in Covington neighborhood

There's no wa! Badeedle-badeed! Bee-dee-da-dee! Bee-dee-da-dee! Bee-dee-da-dee-dee-dee! Pow!

No, this isn't an article about a Frisch's commercial.

For months, a Covington neighborhood has been forced to put up with visibly contaminated tap water. The water has been running brown since summer, and the Northern Kentucky Water District has sat there all the while doing only this:



The district said this contamination is caused by the water not "turning over" (???). At least they didn't blame the "drought" like they usually do, even when it's been raining nonstop. The district also told residents to run their water for 20 minutes before using it.

But all this will do is just run up their water bills.

This is yet another chart-topping smash by utilities that serve the area from their "we screwed up" greatest hits collection, volume #34,810,298,547. I'm surprised they don't do a duet with our schools.

Drone harassment shouldn't fly

Scratch any elitist cause celebre, and the blob is there.

We've discussed social networking sites' political intolerance until we're blue in the ears. Yet while they constantly delete factual information, they allow harassment.

Some lifeless anusface in Pueblo, Colorado, has set up accounts on TikTok and Instagram in which he harasses homeless people by allowing drones to hover dangerously close to them. This

violates FAA regulations against flying drones too close to people. This is as bad as last year when New York City planned to fly police drones over Labor Day cookouts for no apparent reason.

Like other social media ogleopolies (*sic*), Instagram and TikTok delete “misinformation” about topics like COVID—even when this information is objectively true. Sites such as this often use the excuse that the info contradicts advice by national health authorities. Yet not every nation has the same advice. The deleted information aligned perfectly with advice given by Swedish authorities, for example.

This isn’t entirely new with this decade. Others have attacked me for publishing things that were objectively true for much longer. Assholes have a long history.

TikTok is the most gnawing offender in this story, because it’s owned by the Chinese government. Its censorship and its support of harassment not only have an official stamp, but this stamp has support from many in the American media, who bizarrely admire authoritarian regimes. The CIA and World Economic Forum are also part of this blob. It’s not as if Instagram—owned by Facebook’s parent company—isn’t also mostly within this amorphous oombaloo, but at least it isn’t owned outright by a media-backed government.

It was reported that TikTok had already deleted about 29,000 COVID-related videos by July 2020. Yet videos of harassment against the homeless are tolerated. Instagram and TikTok delete everything, it seems—but not someone harassing the homeless with a drone.

Apparently, one of the targets of this harassment fought back and destroyed a drone with a rock. Investigating the pilot of the drone a bit more, we learn that he’s a multimillionaire developer active in local politics. He faced a probe by the FAA and local police over his drone operation—but later went back to the same old shit.

In essence, a campaign to harass the homeless is being propped up by the Chinese Communist Party, which in turn is endorsed by weird editorials in the American media, including guest op-eds carried by Business Insider and the *New York Times*. The latter piece praised the extreme surveillance and “the heavy censorship” in China. The CCP has also found friends in Western political droids like Gavin Newsom and former Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews. Just recently—in a story that’s already been memory-holed—officials in New York state were caught hiring CCP spies.

And Pueblo is the home of a CCP-backed harassment campaign against the homeless. It’s another terrible day in the life of ‘20s America.



World Series got benched in Seattle (a blast from the past)

We now return you to ridiculous sports broadcasting stories of old, already in progress.

Last December, we told you about how the people of Lewiston, Idaho, missed the Super Bowl in 1979 because of unbelievably bad luck with a blizzard. But during the 2016 World Series, folks all over the Seattle area had bad luck not with a blizzard but with their local Fox affiliate.

The series was widely anticipated. It consisted of the Chicago Cubs versus Cleveland, and these teams had the longest World Series title droughts in baseball. Some said this World Series was among the greatest of all time, because everything before the mid-’90s was memory-holed.

And Seattleites missed half of it! Well, maybe not half, but a significant chunk.

KQTV-TV is the Fox affiliate in that region. Folks all over the Seattle area settled down on the



Sunday before Halloween to watch Game 5. They had a big tub of Fritos as they relaxed in a recliner.

But with 2 outs in the bottom of the 9th inning—and the Cubs just clinging to a 3-2 lead—KQTV suddenly decided to switch away from the game. Instead of the game's exciting conclusion, KQTV showed an infomercial for eyeglasses.

Baseball fans missed the last out of a World Series game for an eyeglasses ad!

This was worse than the *Heidi* incident. When NBC cut into an NFL game to air *Heidi*, at least *Heidi* was at its scheduled time, and the game in question was only a regular season matchup. Plus, *Heidi* wasn't an ad.

This zine famously had a broken glasses phase in the late '10s. Part of our winning formula was frequent stories of people ruining their specs—often in ridiculous ways such as dropping them in the toilet or blowing a bubble with bubble gum that burst on them. That infomercial could have used some of our magic.

The KQTV incident prompted folks on an online message board about radio and TV to propose a new FCC rule. Under this rule, stations could not preempt network programs with infomercials. This rule is actually pretty generous to the stations, as infomercials used to be effectively prohibited altogether, as there was a limit on the amount of ad time. Proponents said this rule should apply to network programs because the stations had been awarded the exclusive privilege of being a network affiliate for their market. Not showing a network program is essentially not providing a service that the station has a monopoly on.

A few naysayers balked at this proposal, but it was a sound idea.

TV in Cincinnati has also been plagued by infomercials preempting network shows. Channel 5 once preempted *The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air* to show an infomercial for a department store (I think it was McAlpin's).

If only it was just the Toy Money commercial that was preempted, we wouldn't have cared.

The Hots aren't for me!

If you have a very long memory about very obscure commercials, you may know from the title of this piece exactly where this is headed.

Yes, I'm going to talk about aiming a hair dryer at bubble gum.

Back in the mid-'80s, there was an ad on TV for something called The Hots. The commersh sang, "The Hots are for me!" The product appeared to be an entire collection of blow dryers.

I don't know why anyone needs more than one hair dryer, let alone a big set of them. On the other hand, hair dryers don't last forever. I don't think it's as bad as the situation with electric razors, but it's not great either.

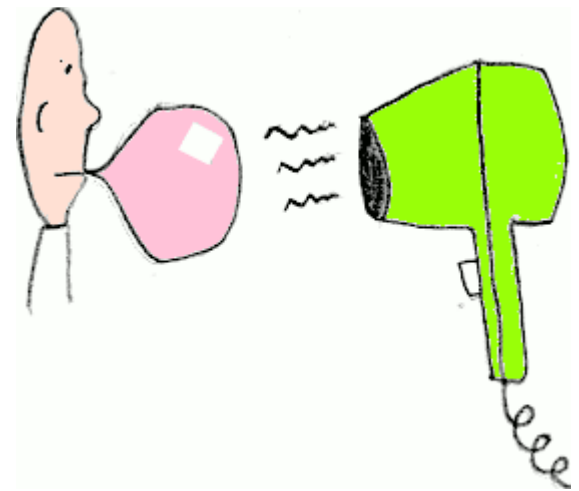
The actress in the commersh was seen dancing around and bubbling as she was using this blow dryer.

When I saw this ad back when I was middle school age, a few ideas came to mind. The blow dryer probably wasn't actually running when the commercial was being filmed. So it didn't accurately show the effect of a hair dryer on bubble gum.

I thought to myself, *What if?* What if a person blew a bubble with bubble gum and pointed a hot blow dryer at it? Would the bub just wilt? Would the gum melt? Would it be dangerous? How would pointing the dryer directly at the person's face as they bubbled differ from aiming it from the side?

Inquiring minds want to know!

I didn't try to find out. It sounds like something people back then would do as a prank: Somebody would blow a monster bub, and when they least expected it, someone would turn on a blow dryer. But I never actually saw anyone do this. It sounds like one of those '80s pranks like when someone was using hairspray and somebody lit a match (also very dangerous).



A shocking story about a dangling power line

We'd like to know why Bellevue has allowed a live electric wire to dangle from a power line at Fairfield and Taylor since at least 2022.

If someone gets electrocuted, maybe the city can add that to the ADA lawsuit that's already barreling their way for the ongoing sidewalk closure across the street.

The obligatory defense of this hazard by Facebook swellheads has taken place.

More wine got spilled

A chair got ru! A chair got ru!

Recently, at an important family gathering, it was like Christmas 2020 all over again! Christmas 2020 was when red wine got spilled on a light gray carpet at a family get-together—one of many family events we had for the holidays in 2020.

At our recent gathering, red wine was spilled all over a blue upholstered chair.

I envisioned the wine glass freezing in midair as the fanfare from the baker skits on *Sesame Street* played! The drama was intense!

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