

The Last Word™

Issue #606

April 2025

I didn't go to Bloomington

I didn't visit Bloomington, Indiana, during the past month. But the city does have some events and venues that we enjoy making fun of. At these attractions, it's forever 2020.

One of our biggest targets of laughter is the Bloomington Music Expo. It's been the butt of jokes among our inner circle since 2022. That year's event was preceded by a schnazzy press release that said that not only did the event have a mask mandate, but it also required either proof of COVID vaccination or a negative COVID test. In 2022. Not 2020.

I'm fully vaccinated against COVID—meaning I had the 2 original doses—but I've never encountered any venue that asked for proof, let alone after 2021. Yet one article said of the aforementioned regulations, "These rules will be strictly enforced."

We don't know if they were, because so few people showed up to find out. Many folks decided not to go just because of these rules. One rambling article tried to put a happy face on the event, but the photos with it show it was poorly attended. The few folks who showed up were just moping around in ill-fitting surgical masks looking at old records—which they probably purchased but never listened to.

A concept album is an LP whose music is all centered on a single theme. Some concept albums were groundbreaking, but others were just a performer's way of playing with themselves over their own ideas. Anyone who would still enforce a mask mandate in 2022 was like the most pretentious concept albums ever recorded.

Bloomington is also the home of a science museum—yes, a *science museum*—that has a mask mandate on part of one Sunday each month, but at least its website isn't as rude about it as the Music Expo was, and this museum is at least more accommodating the rest of the time.

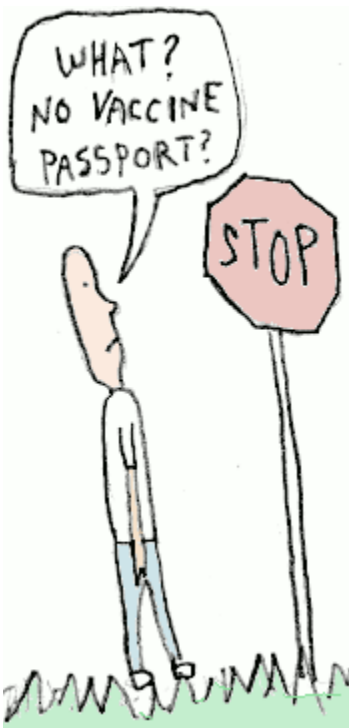
As for *events*, the Music Expo wasn't even the only Bloomington event to have a mask mandate after the pandemic was over in America.

Bloomington's Monroe County was hamstrung by the COVID industrial complex worse than perhaps any other community within hundreds of miles. The county enacted new limits on private gatherings months after the state lifted its lockdown. The reason? A city council member said, "We simply have to." That was the whole reason. The county went on to announce a new mask mandate 8 months after vaccines came out—the only Indiana county to do so. It continued deep into 2022.

The right-wing totalitarianism in the area wasn't new with COVID. (Yes, I'm using the term *right-wing* correctly.) Not so many years earlier, the county's schools fired a teacher because he opposed the failed Iraq War. George W. Bush handily won the county in 2000, so the humiliation is all theirs.

Granted, not every Bloomington event is guilty of the above sins. It's like how we didn't spraypaint "CLO3ED" on an adult movie theater just because one of our top local politicians did. But we need you. We need you to help stop this crap from hap. Maybe we should steer clear of events like the Music Expo for a few years even if the mandates are dropped, just so the events aren't rewarded for past illogical rules.

And Bloomington is far from the only big offender. It just happens to be one of the closest. Over the past 5 years, the laptop underpants contingent has saddled America's



college towns with Campbell Countification on steroids. Things are *that* bad.

Buildings got vandalized because everyone was bored



Hey! Have you heard?

Spring is in the air! Whoosh, whoosh!

This was always the time of year when baseball, festivals, and circuses came to town after the months-long doldrums of the permacloud. These days, there aren't as many circuses, and sports tickets have become prohibitively expensive (even just for a stupid cardboard cutout). Because of the lack of rightful recreation, things get weird.

It came to a head last spring in Minneapolis. There's so little to do these days that people began vandalizing a luxury apartment complex. Folks kept shitting on the doorstep of the buildings. People broke into the buildings and left garbage in the stairwells. Trash cans were stolen from outside.

Wealthy residents responded by making a finger-pointing racist video—like a big bunch of babies. It's shocking how some people go on camera just to run their mouths without investigating the situation first.

In Omaha, people kept breaking into an apartment building and urinating in the hallway. A few years before that, folks broke into a senior housing complex in San Antonio and rode bikes through the hall. And at an apartment complex in Nashville, strangers would just show up inside the buildings.

All of this is because people were bored. There's nothing to do anymore. There's no legitimate recreation, no work, nothing to buy, and nothing to buy it with. Our society is done.

Donald Trump mentioned 'Sesame Street'

I bet Donald Trump still watches *Sesame Street*. He probably shits his pants because he waits until it's over to go to the bathroom. I bet he puts on a Farley wig and cradles on his hands and knees as the magic of the ol' Ses fills the Oval Office. He probably sets his VCR for it every day and has compiled a complete log of every skit *Sesame Street* has shown for the past 50 years.

He probably has all the coloring books and paints numbers on everything because he saw the Number Painter do it. I'm sure he begs Marco Rubio to sing "Rubber Duckie" to him every night as he tucks him in.

All of this must be why Trump was inspired to mention the once-popular children's TV show during his dumb speech a few weeks ago. The embattled leader of the free (?) world decried "\$20 million for the Arab *Sesame Street* in the Middle East. It's a program."

It's a program? Really???

This is like that debate where Mitt Romney just wanted to talk about Big Bird the whole time.



Republicans are Ses obsessed.

It's not entirely clear what Trump was referring to. One website says he confused a Middle Eastern children's show that features *Sesame Street* characters with a separate educational project. That would be like when the FCC confused rapper Candyman with "The Candy Man" by Sammy Davis Jr.

School toilet got stuck on Band-Aid

You can just picture the Grandpa character on *The Simpsons* saying, "Back in my day, if we hummed 'The Wayward Wind' at the dinner table, we got ambushed with a peachtree switch!"

He really wouldn't be that far off from the truth, because at some of the schools I attended, we got ambushed with lots of things—and for just about anything.

That included things we didn't do. At school, you could get in trouble just because another student said you did something wrong. No evidence was needed. You could also get in trouble if a teacher made something up entirely. But this piece is a collection of stories posted online about things people *did* do—and got in trouble for. Big troubles, no bubbles.

One person says they rode a motorcycle down the hallway at school as a high school senior. This commenter also got in trouble once "for getting hit by an idiot", who apparently got in even bigger trouble and cried because of it.

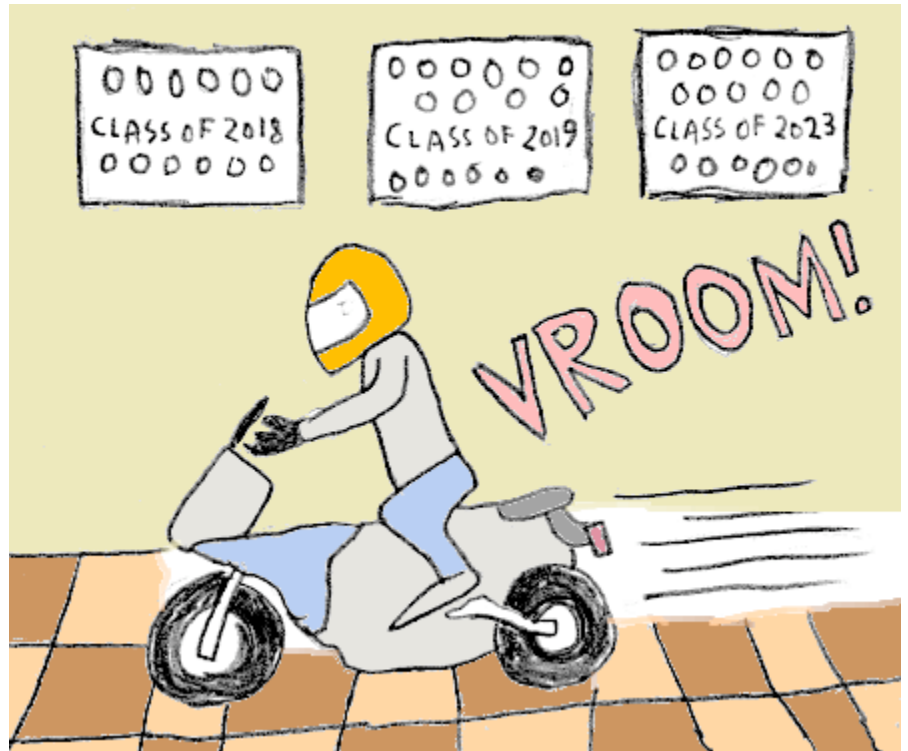
Somebody almost got suspended for flushing a Band-Aid down the toilet in 2nd grade. Someone else posted that in 1st grade, a student got busted for taking a coloring book into the restroom. Somebody else said they were punished for throwing pebbles into a sewer pipe on the school playground. Another person said that when she was in 1st grade, she forged a note from her mom using that paper with huge lines that they have in 1st grade. Another said their brother took their dad's shot glasses that had nudes on them to school and showed them to everyone at recess.

A reader in Scotland said their school punished students severely if they carried their bookbag with the buckle facing outward, because that might scratch the paint on the walls. One person dipped tobacco in the restroom in 4th grade but was only caught because they swallowed it and got sick. One youngster kept getting busted for bringing cigarettes and pocketknives to school—in 1st grade.

One scholar recalled an incident in 4th grade in which a teacher brang a blob of mercury to school for kids to look at. The students weren't supposed to go anywhere near it, but one did anyway. He dropped it, causing it to break into small balls that scattered about the floor. Then he tried sweeping it up, which broke it into even smaller balls.

One commenter said that in 3rd grade, they got in a fight with a bully, and both brawlers were punished by being locked in a closet in the principal's office. It turned out that the intercom was in that closet, so the duo turned on the intercom and broadcast a steady stream of profanity to the school. They were particularly fond of words starting with *f*.

A student was expelled from kindergarten for sneaking into a classroom and eating all the vanilla wafers. One commenter talked about how she got in trouble at school recently because she did not braid her hair. One said he was in 2nd grade in the 1980s and had a classmate who was 10 who had repeated a grade 3 times. This classmate kept cussing out the teacher. One commenter said they had a high school teacher who punished students by eating their lunches. A 2nd grader got in trouble because she used a dictionary to show that her teacher was wrong when she thought *people* was spelled *pepole*. The teacher insisted the dictionary was wrong. This commenter also said that when she was in 3rd



grade, her school required uniforms, and she was given lunch detention because she argued about it. Upon being informed of this penalty, she took off all her clothes and ran naked up and down the hall. Police were called. One person said he made fireworks out of weed killer and sugar and set them off at school when the governor was visiting. The fireworks blew up in the principal's face and humiliated him in front of the governor.

Another commenter got in a heap of trouble for drawing lewd comics of his teachers. The principal told him he was "quite a disturbed boy and it's very sad that you use your talents for such a negative purpose." One student got in trouble for walking the wrong way down a hallway instead of exiting the school into the snow and climbing 3 flights of stairs with an armload of books just to use the right hallway. A school threatened to file felony charges against some students for removing the feet from their desks and spinning them like a top.

A 3rd grader got detention for hiding a ferret in their backpack. One student dared a friend to eat a brown paper bag at lunch. The friend promptly crumpled the bag and shoveled it into his mouth. A group of kids got busted for throwing a schoolmate's book out of a second story window. Someone got in trouble at a Catholic elementary school for bringing in a porn movie that their dad had stashed away.



A student got in trouble for using "Pumped Up Kicks" as a ringtone. At one school, the principal called the police on a kindergartner for scratching some paint on a window and tried to bring vandalism charges. Teenage students at another school drank beer in the restroom. One school laid down the law because a student brang a foam boomerang to school. A student at another school got busted for throwing a marker at a ceiling fan.

A freshman at a fascist high school got detention for accidentally breaking the mandatory ID lanyard they were supposed to wear and taping it to their chest. One commenter said they were part of a group of kids who found thousands of packs of gum in a school storage closet and took it all. Probably even bubbled! It turned out the gum was for a fundraiser.

One person said they went on a field trip to a zoo in 3rd grade. This student's mom was a chaperone, and she purchased water for the group, as it was a very hot day. The next day, the teacher kept this student in at recess to be yelled at for this. The teacher also called the student's mom to yell at her.

A pupil was sent home for wearing a shirt that said, "I fart in elevators." A student got in trouble for piercing their ear with the metal spiral of a notebook. (In my day, a schoolmate did the exact same thing in class, but the teacher never caught him.) A student drank a half a bottle of vodka on the last day of school and threw up on the carpet in the principal's office. An elementary school child found shit smeared all over a restroom and got in trouble for making up a story that a "poopy monster" was terrorizing the school. A high school senior was almost denied a diploma because he had Tylenol in his backpack.

A high schooler got suspended for 5 days for drinking beer on vacation in a locale where the drinking age was lower. The "offense" was not at a school function and was completely unrelated to school. The school's reasoning for the punishment was that school rules trumped the laws of the outside world and that students had to obey school rules even away from school.

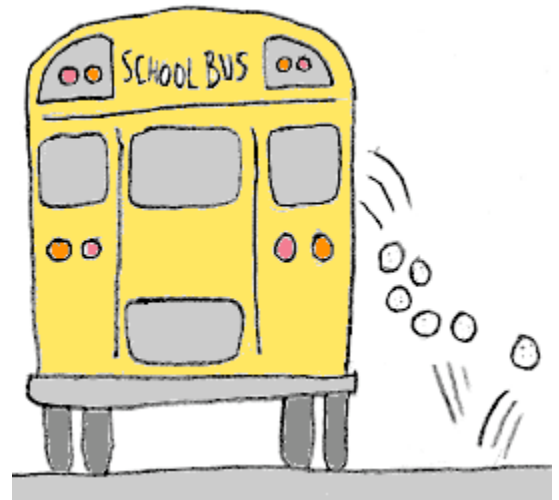
Someone got punished for sculpting a huge penis out of aluminum foil at lunch. A student at a Catholic high school stole wine from the chapel, took it to a party, and boasted about stealing it. Word got back to the school, and the punishment included weeks of suspension, a theft awareness class, and drug testing. A student at another school got in trouble for flicking beans onto the cafeteria ceiling. Another commenter said they got detention for wearing a "Trix are for kids" shirt that they got from sending in the labels from Trix cereal boxes. The principal said the slogan was "perverted" – yet he got arrested sometime later for his own salacious behavior. Another commenter reported being punished for drawing a picture of a hamster smoking a cigarette. Another said they got lunch detention for the rest of the year for popping an empty Caprisun pouch. Another school required students to wear socks with the school mascot on them. Students got punished if the mascot was on their inner ankle instead of the outer.

Still another person said they stuck a label from a jawbreaker box on a pay phone and was suspended because the school said it was a bomb threat. Another got in trouble for installing Firefox instead of Internet Explorer on the computers in the computer lab. Another taped all the tables and chairs together. Another was suspended for getting drunk in art class and sleeping the rest of the day.

Yet another got in trouble for wearing a Boy George t-shirt. A junior high student got in trouble for gathering in a group of more than 2 people, because the school said groups of more than 2 were a "gang." A student got suspended for showing up at school drunk and vomiting all over the school van.

Some students never got caught for all their mischief. One said that when he was a high school senior, he broke into the school through a window and rearranged all the drawers in a teacher's desk. He did this on 3 weekends in a row. Another got away with selling marijuana to teachers and a school bus driver. Another went to the cross country division championship at a local golf course and was part of a group of runners who gathered up about 50 golf balls. On the bus back home, the group dumped the balls out the window and onto the freeway.

Thomas & Friends it is not.



Flocking after Flock

Love a good police state?

Lately, a company called Flock Safety has emerged that makes cameras that can read license plates and other details of vehicles in motion. There's already been gobs of outrage about cameras that are activated if it appears that someone is running a red light. Much of this anger is because of selective enforcement or trampling of due process. Some motorists have been wrongly ticketed. But Flock's cameras are even worse in that they photograph *every* car that drives by and automatically links it with a central database that compares it with data held by police and the National Crime Information Center. Authorities all over the country can then track where each vehicle has gone.

The Norfolk, Virginia, area seems to be the locus of much Flock controversy, and residents have filed a federal lawsuit over the program. That's because it violates Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches. Norfolk installed 172 Flock cams to conduct warrantless surveillance of all travelers. The police chief boasted that this unconstitutional dragnet makes it "difficult to drive anywhere of any distance without running into a camera somewhere."

If you operate any type of vehicle in Norfolk, every move is watched.

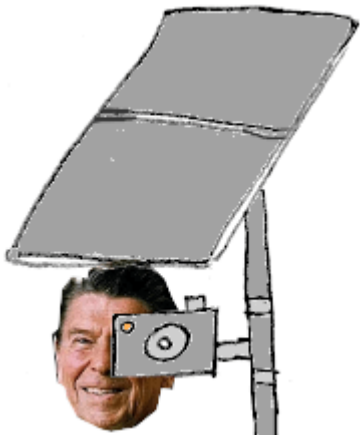
But the same Flock technology is used in over 5,000 American communities. A Kansas police chief repeatedly used Flock to stalk his former girlfriend and her new boyfriend.

Other technologies like this have already been ruled unconstitutional. The Supreme Court even weighed in against a similar program involving cellphone location data. Based on that ruling, a federal appeals court ruled against a spying program in Baltimore that used aerial photos to capture 90% of the city once per second. That program was bad, but it was still less intrusive than Flock.

It isn't just police that are abusing this technology. A homeowners' association in Norfolk recently announced it was installing Flock cameras, with the unanimous blessing of city council.

How many Flock cameras are there in greater Cincinnati? They're all over! You may be able to identify some of them, as many use solar panels and are mounted on poles. Recent news reports and press releases say Erlanger and Amberley have rolled out Flock cams, and that Colerain Township squandered \$70,000 of the taxpayers' money on Flock. The Hamilton County park system uses Flock too. One website says numerous other local jurisdictions also use Flock.

To augment our cool people image, we've been continuing our project of making bicycling maps of the area, and we download data from OpenStreetMap for each local county. This data pinpoints surveillance cameras, but only a few Flock cams have appeared in this dataset so far. These files do show a glut of Flock devices in northeastern Hamilton County. Among those, perhaps the closest to northern Kentucky is on the south side of Hopewell Road as you go east into Indian Hill. Just inside Montgomery, there's one on Montgomery Road just northeast of Cornell Road. We think we've



found it on Google Street View. It's in front of the Gate of Heaven sign.

Butler County has at least one. As you drive north into Fairfield on Ohio 4, there's one just behind the Ohio 4 sign. Man, does it ever look stupid!

In northern Kentucky, the dataset now pinpoints Flock cams in Florence and near the airport.

As we cycle through our maps, these cameras will be marked with a red star in a circle.

And this is one of the reasons we do what we do. Knowledge is power, and providing you with knowledge is a *public service*. You wouldn't hire a lawyer to perform heart surgery. You wouldn't hire a heart surgeon to sue a big automaker. That's just not their job. You also wouldn't hire an investigative reporter to just shut up when the boss says to, as that would just waste the reporter's talents.

Prove me wrong or admit I'm right.

Wrap, wrap, wrap, they call it the wrapper...

Back in December, I told you about how I once found a mysterious wad of bubble gum stuck to my blanket. Bubble gum mysteries are automatically funny because they're about bubble gum.

Sometimes it's so hilarious that you don't care who did it, like when I went into the locker room in high school gym class and saw bubble gum wrappers all over the floor. There were *gobs* of them, as if someone unloaded a whole mega pack, and it looked as if they were perfectly placed to elicit an angry response from authority. But there's also been another years-long mystery regarding gum wrappers.

It happened one day when I was in high school and I got home from school. I was usually the first person in the family to get home each day. Anyway, when I was walking through the living room, I noticed there was a bubble gum wrapper just resting on the carpet.

I don't remember which brand, but it was the inner wrapper for a piece of one of the ever-popular soft brands like Bubblicious, Bubble Yum, or Hubba Bubba. The wrapper was all in one piece, as if someone had meticulously extracted the gum when they dug into it. It wasn't torn at all.

Whodunit? Whytheydunit?

Nobody in my household was chewing bubble gum—let alone bubbling—in the days surrounding this event. So I concluded that it must have been a wrapper that had blown into the backyard from somewhere else and was dragged in by the dog.

I let the wrapper lay there on the rug, because the world wasn't treating me fairly enough for me to clean up other people's messes. It stayed there for a good while. I don't think I said anything about it until much later. I think that when I finally mentioned it, a family member picked up the wrapper and threw it away without saying anything.

That was disappointing, because I thought they'd laugh. Some people have no sense of humor.

Don't you feel bad about (hahaha) 7 Up!

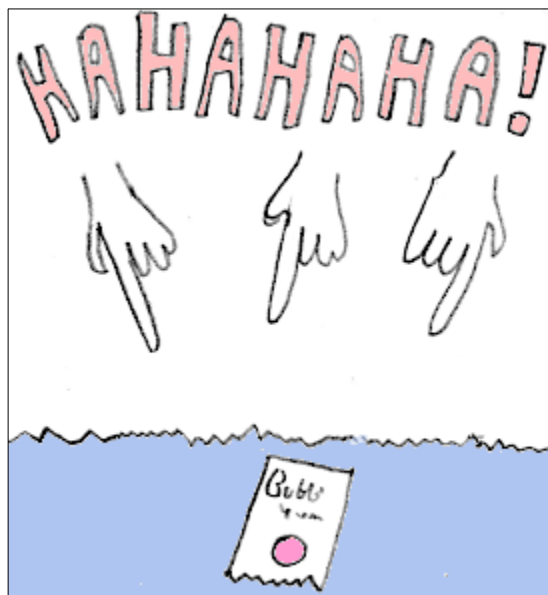
Here's more news you can use!

Because of my heart and other health issues lately, I largely replaced the Mountain Dew food group with the 7 Up food group. The latter was said to be healthier.

But here's a warning about the sharp practices of the proprietors of 7 Up. Recently, I bought a 6-pack of 7 Up. Or at least I *thought* it was 7 Up. It turned out it was 7 Up Zero Sugar—which is not 7 Up. It's like 7 Up laden with toxic artificial sweeteners.

That's not what 7 Up is supposed to be about. I *guarantee* you that when 7 Up was first made 100 years ago it wasn't full of aspartame. Donald Rumsfeld wasn't even born yet, and it was his company that made aspartame and got the FDA to approve it.

I purchased the wrong product because it was improperly labeled. The packaging looks almost identical to regular 7 Up, and the "zero sugar" print is not prominently displayed. This is deceitful.



Anything with aspartame should carry a skull and crossbones – the universal symbol for poison.

At least Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., apply their soda tax to diet drinks too. This differs from Boulder, a city run by wusses. Folks in Philly and D.C. are tough. But Boulder has become the very epitome of laptop loafing. If there was a war and we had to rely on the laptop underpants towns to defend the country, we'd lose because these sanctimonious hermits would be too busy accusing everyone of "class reductionism" or beating up grandmas because Social Security siphoned money from handouts for developers (even though it's the other way around).

We need a federal law to ensure that regular soft drinks are not taxed at a higher rate than diet soft drinks. In fact, this should be fundamental to any health program—*anywhere*. The WHO should be focusing more on the harms of aspartame. Indeed, the WHO announced in 2023 that it would list this chemical as "possibly carcinogenic to humans", but public policies surrounding it only get worse.

We can't trust the makers of 7 Up to properly label their products. Looks like it may be back to Dew for me.



For all 3 people who got a sneak peek

Several weeks ago, a few of you may have gotten a brief glimpse into the inner workings of **The Last Word**. There were a few seconds one morning in which an online copy of the previous ish was mistakenly replaced with the template for this edition, so you could see what we had in store.

But the far right had to have been disappointed, because this file had nothing scandalous on our part.

This document included gobs of articles and message threads I found online that I cut-and-pasted because I planned on writing a piece based on them. I didn't write what had been pasted. In fact, one item was a "news" article that could be debunked within 5 seconds.

Numerous articles were titled "Gum" or "Bubble gum" even though the content didn't have a damn thing to do with gum. The reason for the headers was that everyone insists I keep writing about gum because it's so funny and I was using the headers as a template. Another common title was "More items ru", thanks to the popularity of stories about ruined collectibles.

But nothing kills an investigative story like having it leaked. Thankfully, those are kept in a safer place. There's a few items that are actually kept in a safe place outside my home, but only as limited resources allow. They receive extra protection because I've been hacked before. I'm often drawn to stories where I get to state the most rudimentary observable facts, because it proves how wrong my foes are, but investigative reports are more involved.

I've been sitting on some findings for several reasons. For one thing, I don't always have time or energy to sort all the information that I gather. I often require more time or information to put things together. Also, some of my findings can be used as leverage.

Unfortunately, this edition won't have room for everything I had scheduled, but what's a mere mortal to do? Stink?

Another McCarthyist trope debunked

One of the things about the explosion of the Internet 30 years ago was that political extremists could now more easily recruit followers into their bubble. These bozos were around long before then, but it used to be that if they spewed their bullshit in public, people would tell them to shut up, and then we could get on with our lives.

One of their red-baiting conspiracy theories says that those who protested online against COVID lockdowns were posting through Russian proxy websites. Canada's National Observer

apparently used to be a fairly credible site, but now it just stenographs this McCarthyist canard. Not long ago, that site reported that criticism of Canadian officials who froze protesters' bank accounts came from Russian sites. However, this is false.

(Canada wasn't the only Western country that suppressed public protests against COVID tyranny. At the time, officials in Brussels and Paris banned events that supported the Canadian protesters. French police – under the rule of fascist dictator Emmanuel Macron – used tear gas to break up protests.)

The Cold War cave dwellers at CNO also claimed that a popular news outlet was actually a Russian propaganda organ, which is also false.

If Russia is funding all the people who criticized lockdowns, where's my check from the Kremlin? In the toilet?

Those who claim Russia bankrolled the opposition to COVID fascism are actually engaging in projection, for the Chinese Communist Party financed much of the *support* for COVID fascism. Some of America's leading TV broadcasting companies have interests in China, and Chinese state actors had a strategic interest in lockdowns.

The COVID industrial complex responded to the virus in a manner that was much closer to what you'd expect in North Korea than in any of the world's vanishingly few liberal democracies.

I remember, I don't remember...

I've been sitting on this story for 5 years, because it's tough to discuss. But we have to grow up sometime, and I'm not going to live forever.

I have a very good long-term memory. For example, I remember almost all of 8th grade and high school very vividly. But even parts of those years have suspicious gaps in my memory.

In late 2019 and early 2020, I started remembering events from middle and high school that I had completely shut out for 30 years. At the time, I was regularly visiting a licensed clinical social worker because of post-traumatic stress disorder. COVID lockdowns forced me to stop visiting him, because public officials don't care about our suffering, but that's a whole other matter.

The incidents that I remembered were not imaginary. They were real.

First, I recalled an episode that must have taken place during an outdoor gym class when I was a freshman at Bishop Brossart High School. Another student – who I can't identify – forced several of us to sit on a bench at an athletic field somewhere near the school. We were forced to strip down either to our underpants or completely naked. I can identify one of the other students who was forced to do this. He was sitting to my left as we were facing the field.

Back then, the school encouraged seniors to "initiate" freshmen. I heard that some male students were forced to dress as female prostitutes and visit a rough biker bar. But I don't think the ballfield incident was billed as an initiation.

Another incident I recalled took place at Donald E. Cline Middle School, probably in 6th grade. I was in a part of a locker room that I don't remember ever seeing at any other time. Another student – who I also can't identify – had a handful of dirt, which I believe also included dog feces. He pried my mouth open and shoved the dirt inside my mouth. The dirt had a metallic taste. No other students were in the locker room. I ran out of the locker room and I felt like I was going to vomit. I ran from the gym into the cafeteria, but only one other student was present in the lunchroom.

Later, I recalled yet another event, probably also during the Cline years or perhaps when I attended St. Joe's in Cold Spring. I was running through a small field surrounded by woods in an attempt to get away from one or more students who were chasing me.

Around the time I stopped visiting my social worker, I remembered still another event – this one while I went to Brossart. In that incident, I was in some sort of tunnel like a large storm sewer pipe



or culvert near the school. A large group of students in the next grade level up had gotten me to follow them there. When we got there, they physically attacked me.

Regarding the above incidents, I better not *ever* hear anyone say, "I don't buy it." Guess what? You *have to* buy it—because it happened. That conversation is over with. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they're not entitled to their own facts.

Memories of 8th grade at St. Joe's and freshman year at Brossart each still have one single cavernous gap. I remember perfectly where I was in the minutes before each gap, but any attempt to recall what took place after those minutes produces a complete blank.

In retrospect, high school for me was nothing like the way other folks talk about what it was like for them. It bore no resemblance to it whatsoever. Elementary school, middle school, and college weren't that far off from others' experiences, despite all the bad schools that somehow seemed to find me. But high school wasn't even close. The things people talk about participating in at high school didn't even occur to me. When I was that age, I did things *outside* of school, because people outside the Brossart bubble generally behaved normally. But a part of me died because I didn't have even close to a normal high school experience. There are some things I didn't care about, such as the prom or the big basketball game, but what I experienced was so far outside the norm as to be completely alien to what you'd expect in high school.

On a related note, dress code violations were dealt with very harshly at some schools I attended. I still can't figure out the media's fixation on school uniforms. They must have a fetish. I would *bet the farm* on it. Otherwise, they wouldn't have put so much effort into advocating for uniforms. Creepy statements that uniform supporters made to the press seem to back up this belief. I had planned on trying to figure out how their fetish developed, but I have more important things to do.

I also find the timing of events in society in early 2020 rather interesting. I had just written a short text file about some of the above unearthed memories that I stored on my computer. Considering I had been hacked before, I'm wondering if someone hacked me again and needed to come up with something to shift my attention away from those events. Not to sound paranoid, but the timing seems like too big of a coincidence. If it's a coincidence, it's *unbelievably* bad luck.

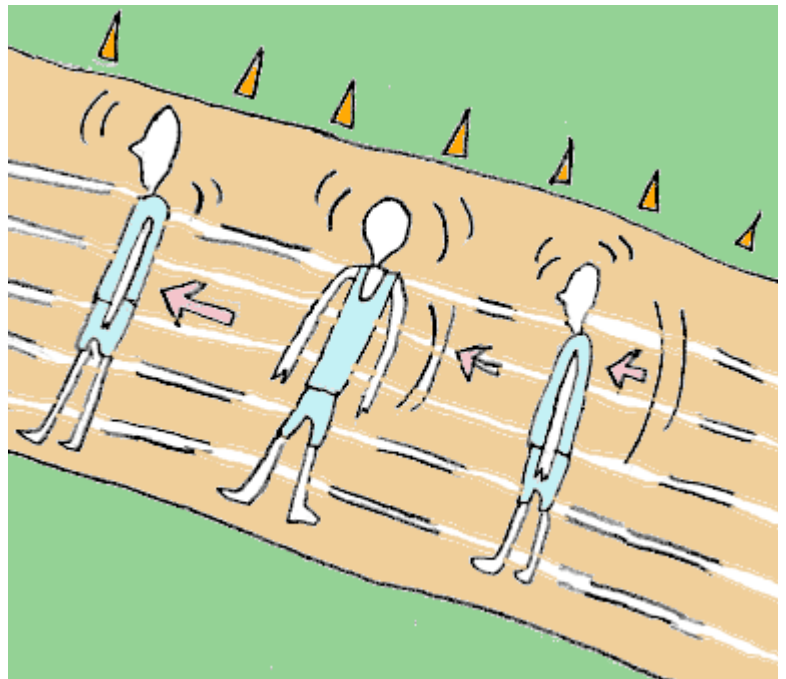
For 5½ years in middle and high school, everything was about confrontation. The degree of it was jaw-dropping. Worst of all, it was during formative years of life. The people behind it were ridiculous. They were the most ridiculous people I've ever met.

Things go better with rapid-fire rundowns!

There's no law that says we can't have more than one of our famous rapid-fire rundowns in the same ish. Who says you can't have baseball and rock 'n' roll? Ronald Reagan? Anybip, this is another set of stories about people getting in trouble at school that we found on the public Internet. It's fun for the whole famn family!

One student was accused of flooding a restroom by clogging a sink with paper, even though a camera in the hallway proved another student was in the bathroom at the time. Another student made a toilet out of cardboard in art class and placed it in one of the stalls in the restroom. This pupil got detention because people kept peeing in it. Someone else got in trouble for throwing wet paper towels at the walls and ceiling in the bathroom, and for breaking a toilet. A 2nd grader was suspended for unpausing a movie on the teacher's computer when nobody was looking.

A high school gym teacher flunked an entire class of kids because they goofed off during the annual 12-minute run and did a log roll around the track. This meant they would have had to repeat



gym class the next year. But the principal intervened and let them redo the run. A student almost got expelled from an entire school district because paper was sticking out of their backpack. Eek! Paper! Other students got suspended from this school because they had items with logos of companies other than Coca-Cola, as Coke “sponsored” the school. At another school, a student was suspended for stomping on a ketchup packet in the cafeteria.

A 2nd grader got detention just for pouring leftover nacho sauce into an empty milk carton at lunch. A 7th grader got lunch detention on the first day of school for having the wrong size of index cards for history class: “Even thinking about it now makes me want to rip a phone book in half.”

One commenter related a story from elementary school: One day, there was a field trip. But, back at school, a student who didn’t go on this trip shit all over a restroom floor and smeared it all over the walls, mirrors, and sinks. The next day, the entire class was called into the school library for a lecture about it from the principal, who said, “No one is leaving until someone says something.” Someone promptly blamed the commenter, even though he was on the field trip and couldn’t have possibly done it.

A preschooler got in trouble for saying there was “poop” on an imaginary vacuum cleaner. One commenter said that when she was in 1st grade, she got in trouble because she wasn’t able to get to the restroom and she wet the floor. The teacher said, “This isn’t your house” so “you can’t just pee whenever you like.” An 8th grader got busted for releasing a 10-second-long fart in history class. A 7th grade student downloaded porn off the Internet and sold it to schoolmates. This went on for 2 weeks before he was caught.

One commenter said they were part of a group that got in trouble because they were doing a big painting project and just smearing brown paint everywhere and yelling, “Diarrhea diarrhea!” A student got kicked out of study hall for laughing at the teacher because he picked his nose and ate it.

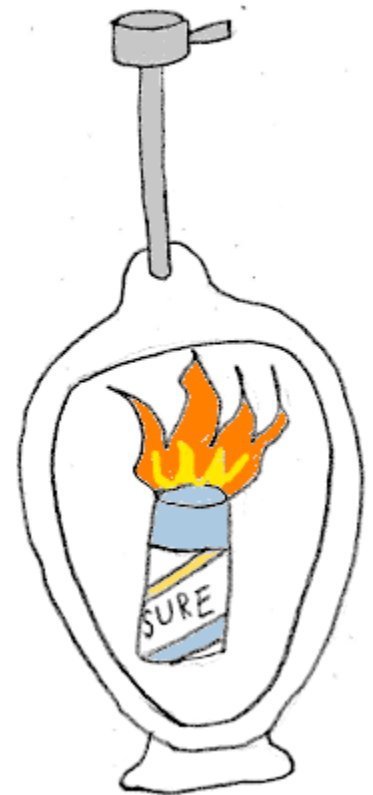
One high schooler lost college scholarships because a schoolmate—who was the commenter’s ex—kept falsely accusing him of harassment. Some kids who were in kindergarten or 1st grade found a bloody M-shaped shoelace and told everyone M stood for “murderer.” Then they wrote a profanity-filled threatening letter and hid it under the bushes—and stupidly signed their own names to it. A 5th grader glued a classmate to a chair using super glue and had to pay for his ruined jeans. A student got busted for Googling the phrase “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee” because it has “butt” in it. Another got in trouble for exposing the school’s moldy apples on Facebook. Another student used a Sharpie to write “Hell’s Angels” on the back of an art teacher’s denim jacket. The school threatened to withhold the offender’s diploma.

An elementary school kid stole from every book fair for years until finally being caught in 5th grade and bawled out by a cop who was giving a presentation at school that day. Another commenter said that when they were in 1st or 2nd grade, they got lunch detention for trying to drink milk with a straw through their nose. Another was accused of bringing “martial arts weapons to school”, even though it was a rolled-up newspaper.

A student lost recess for calling Kmart “K-Fart.” Another commenter tried to flush a coat down a toilet. Another was wrongly accused of being part of a group that set deodorant containers on fire in a restroom and clogged the toilet with them. A group of elementary school kids got detention because they replaced all the nouns in the Pledge of Allegiance with “biscuit.”

A student got in trouble for wearing a belt buckle that had a peace symbol. The school said it was gang attire. Another got suspended for blowing up a toilet with an M-80. An entire 2nd grade class was held in the computer lab for a half-hour because someone used the school’s precious computer and paper to print out a Mister Rogers coloring page. Nobody was allowed to leave until someone confessed. Another commenter says a teacher threw their shoes in the trash because a schoolmate falsely accused this commenter of kicking him. Another respondent said her 3rd grade teacher started a huge argument with her about the color of plastic Easter grass.

One person said a classmate set his own table in a classroom on fire. He was so feared by the teacher that students who pointed out the blaze were sent to the office. A few months later, police showed up and arrested him in the middle of class. He had a bag of cocaine under the table. At another school, a student got kicked out and sent to alternative school for handing out Scooby-Doo gummies.



An entire science class got detention because a project in which they built bridges out of toothpicks went awry and made a big mess. An elementary schooler who also played hockey got suspended for wearing a shirt that said “puck” because the word rhymes with a common profanity found in later dictionaries.

A group of middle school kids was assigned to change the letters on the sign in front of the school that showed upcoming events. The principal blamed them when the letters kept randomly falling off, and they were suspended. When a different group of students was assigned to this task, the letters fell off again, and they too were suspended.

One school began requiring polo shirts that had 3 or 4 buttons. When a student wore a shirt with 5 buttons, the school called home and woke up the student’s dad—all because of a button. A middle school student—at a *public* school, no less—got in trouble for wearing a necklace with a skull on it. A junior high schooler got in trouble for wearing a Winnie the Pooh bandana because the school said it was Crips attire.

A duo of high school seniors somehow got the janitor to let them borrow his keys. So, over spring break, the pair went into the school and changed the combination on every locker in the school. When school came back after break, it was as hilarious as you might imagine, because nobody could get into their locker.

A pair of college students got in trouble for pouring laundry detergent into a new fountain on campus. Students who walked to class the next morning found the whole square covered with suds.

When a school installed a metal enclosure over an electrical socket so students couldn’t plug in the soft drink and snack machines, someone brang in a screwdriver to remove the enclosure. This went on for a week before this student finally got busted. Another commenter described breaking into a closet at school and pouring 3 whole cans of Diet Coke into the janitor’s motorcycle helmet. This—along with students placing full cans of soda on top of open doors so they fell on people’s heads—led to the school removing the soft drink machine.

One commenter used a seesaw as a catapult for a large boulder—which got the whole class banned from all the playground equipment. Somebody else got in trouble for “pooping my pants.” Another student got detention for cussing while talking with friends—away from school, off of school property, away from school functions, after school was out. The teacher who issued this punishment was later fired for misusing her power in a different incident. At another school, the entire 6th grade class was penalized for vandalizing a freshly painted wall. At another, a 5th grade pupil burned a piece of paper using a magnifying glass during class. A 3rd grader got in trouble for making fart noises so that a classmate would throw up. This classmate was able to throw up on command, and he regularly did this so he could he could get sent home from school.

A high school student got detention for breaking a ruler that the math teacher boasted was “unbreakable.” Another commenter said they got in trouble when they jumped in a hallway and slapped the exit sign, and the sign fell down. Another got in trouble for attaching balloons to their math book in the schoolyard and watching it float away, never to be seen again. One student got in trouble because he put his initials on his backpack, and his initials were W.T.F.

An elementary school tiny tot wrote a bunch of other kids’ names on a restroom wall, and everyone whose name was on the wall was required to clean it—even though they didn’t write it.

Another elementary school student kept getting pushed around by a group of kids. One day, this student was just sitting there reading a Harry Potter book when one of the attackers came along, grabbed the book, and began ripping pages out. The assailant then smashed the student’s face into a radiator and pulled a knife. But the first student fought back by pushing a big stack of chairs onto him. The result? This student was suspended for 2 weeks for fighting back.

Another student said they had some cards from *Yu-Gi-Oh!* (a Japanese comics franchise), but a schoolmate stole them from their backpack, and the teacher threw the cards away upon catching that student with them. Another placed some sort of glow-in-the-dark goo on the principal’s chair and



ruined his pants. The student had to pay for the pants, costing a year of allowance. A 3rd grader got busted for licking a chalkboard. Another student left a bologna sandwich in somebody's pencil case. It sat in a locker for 9 days, thereby stinking.

Another student got in trouble for drawing a picture of the Easter Bunny getting run over.

After a student spent an entire lunch period working on an assignment, a schoolmate came along and tore it up. The first student then punched the second student in the face. The first student received a 0% for the assignment and was suspended. One school suspended members of the ski club for 2 weeks for stealing the food trays from the cafeteria and using them to slide down a hill as if they were sleds.

A high school student got sent to the hallway for laughing because someone farted really loud during a test. Someone actually got in trouble for chewing bubble gum on a school bus.

Fight the power!

The rise and fall (but mostly fall) of a political party

The Democratic Party has a love-hate relationship with us. We wanted to love them – we were even in the Northern Kentucky Young Democrats – but they hate us.

We first bolted the party because of the DLC's fascism, but after we thought that Coke can had been crushed, we gave the party a second chance. Then they stabbed us in the back again by being even more ridiculous than the first time. That in turn was even before Chuckie the Cheese Schumer got most of the rest of the Democrats to support the Republican budget that annihilates Medicaid and pumps up war spending. But from the very start, the DLC didn't know when to shut up, and there were early rumblings of it since even before all of this.

This story underscores that there's a huge political faction that the Democrats have abandoned: those of us whose politics formed from opposing the authoritarian conservatism of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. And there were some in the party who started abandoning us before that sorry era even concluded.

There were Democratic politicians who I supported a long, long, *long* time ago who sold us out long before the recent constitutional quagmires, but there were a few who didn't even wait that long.

One time in school, we had a class project where we made small posters backing favorite candidates in a local election. This project didn't get very far, as I found that the teacher had thrown away all the posters that same day. Anyway, even back then, my once-great Democratic Party had a few anti-everything killjoys. After the Reagan regime raised the retirement age, one Democratic legislator in Kentucky responded by...writing a bill that would have directed the state of Kentucky to censor TV broadcasts.

This bill was not to protect ownership caps or regulate broadcast outlets for public interest purposes. Instead, it was to expurgate TV based on content.

There was a small cadre of allegedly Democratic lawmakers who came up with other ideas that only seemed to double down on what Reagan and Bush did. Even if – by some absurd stretch of the imagination – their laws were remotely defensible in their substance, it showed how distorted their *priorities* were. There was a lot wrong in society. Their laws failed to solve any of it. If I was elected at the time to write a law, the topics of these laws would have been about my millionth priority. I gave some of these folks the benefit of the doubt for a while, as if maybe – *maybe* – they tried to do the right thing deep down, but their ideas continued to get even goofier. Some managed to hang on until the DLC was firmly in charge, but I had to cut them loose.

There was a Democratic congressman from New York who was elected because he had a reputation of rightly opposing disastrous wars like the Vietnam War. But when he was in Congress, he cosponsored the 1991 Gulf War authorization act. After losing reelection because of it, he tried to get Bill Clinton to start a new war against Iraq.

Although it was Reagan who signed and consummated the law that absolves drug makers from liability for defective vaccines, the law was actually introduced by a Democrat (though it was



cosponsored by Republicans).

Slowly but stupidly, the Democrats brushed off those who fought against Reagan and Bush extremism, even though such folks had been the party's biggest constituency. It's especially stunning that there isn't even any talk from party "leaders" about reversing Reagan's Social Security cut—one of his very worst domestic policy actions. But while the 2020s have seen the most damning indictments of modern Democrats' unhinged and barbaric rot, it began a long time ago.

I don't oppose the Democrats because I support the Republicans. I oppose the Democrats because *they* support the Republicans.

The purpose of a political party should not be to copy the other party's bad ideas, but some so-called Democrats got a head start on the rest of their party on that. Where did they think people who opposed it were supposed to go?

A beautiful banana! Gone!

A beautiful banana!
(Meaningful pause.)
Gone!

You know how I am about food getting wasted. One of the most pivotal moments of wastage bastage took place when I was about 16.

My seat at our kitchen table was a wide bench. When we first got this table and chair set, that spot had separate chairs, but I was accused of breaking a beam of one of the chairs by repeatedly using it to climb onto the chair. This was absurd, because if a brand new chair breaks that easily, the store or manufacturer should have fixed it. Besides, I didn't even climb onto the chair using the beam. After the beam broke, we switched that chair with the bench.

Anyway, back to my mid-teens. One evening, dinner included a nice, big, fresh banana. After I took a couple bites out of it, the unthinkable happened.

My mom moved the bench forward so I was closer to the table. But I was holding the banana, and the bench moved too quickly. So most of the rest of the banana broke off and fell onto the floor.

My mom lamented, "A beautiful banana! Gone!"

So gravity is my fault? The banana wasn't going to float in midair if it broke.

The banana rested on the floor. The dogs weren't going to eat it, because they didn't like bananas. They ate everything—and I mean *everything*—but not bananas. One website says bananas are safe for dogs but "bananas shouldn't make up the main part of your dog's diet."

In any event, the banana wasn't really "gone." It was really just playing hide-and-seek. It still existed, but just not in an edible state. It sat on the floor, smiling its ass off and daring us to approach.

This wasn't the only time a banana got wasted. Inspect this video that was posted on YouTube back in 2022...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EoPMkk6MakA>

In that clip, a Walgreens drugstore was essentially robbed by a masked man—taking advantage of the mask mania of the era—who leaped behind the counter and loaded a bag with merchandise.

After he emerges from behind the counter, he notices a customer standing there. The thief picks up a banana out of a basket and throws it at the customer for no apparent reason. Many of the rest of the bananas fell on the floor and were likely bruised.

The wastage of the banana causes a food fight in which the customer throws the ruins of the banana back at the thief.

A beautiful banana!
(Meaningful pause.)
Gone!



A bunch of right-wingers got mad because homeless people built homes (a blast from the past)

You're not gonna believe what the Tea Party brain trust complained about in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 2019. We didn't hear about this story until now, but now it's even more relevant.

An apartment complex was torn down—leaving cinder blocks and other rubble behind. Instead of letting this pile of rocks sit there and stink away, a group of homeless people came along and built new dwellings from this rubble.

But the Tea Party threw an utter shitfit and cried to the local media.

What's significant here is that they didn't complain about residents of the apartments that were there before. They only complained when people of less means moved to that property. The homes that the homeless people built were not tents but fixed structures. The homeless improved the property by turning rubble into small houses.

Even police checked the new houses and said nothing was wrong. But that wasn't sufficient to enchant the 1%.

This story shows that—as with many other issues—you can never assume that when the far right comes up with nutty ideas that they're getting it out of their system. Letting them get their way moves the window of discourse and it encourages them to dig in more. With right-wing candidates having won 10 of the past 12 presidential elections, that shows you how far the window has shifted.

New York Post wants you to chew wood instead of gum

The World Economic Forum wants you to subsist by eating insects. Likewise, the *New York Post* wants you to chew wood instead of gum. It's enough to make you want to stroll up to the nearest *Post* vending machine and say, "Do you guzzle WEF bastepaste? Yes, you guzzle WEF bastepaste!"

For almost a half-century, the *New York Post* has been part of Rupert Murdoch's right-wing propaganda empire. In 2020, this rag accused Black Lives Matter of spreading COVID-19. The paper managed to roll COVID alarmism and authoritarian attacks against BLM into one extra, extra sickening product. It's absolutely the worst combination of views. A pox.

Cool people chew bubble gum to improve concentration. If you see someone blowing a bub, they're probably deep in thought. Now a new study says that chewing wood boosts antioxidants that help memory and brain health. But you can't blow bubbles with wood.

The *Post* is having a field day. It looks like they're building up to something big. At some point in 2020, it occurred to me that the broader media's support for "temporary" mask mandates was building up to the permanent mandates we see now. Some schools still do not let students use lockers—because of COVID—which forces them to lug all their books around all day. Some public swimming pools, zoos, and other amenities still require patrons to make reservations in advance—cuz COVID. It's also like the "temporary" fascism after 9/11 that has become permanent. Similarly, I think the *Post* is building up to either a ban on gum or letting inflation get even worse so we can't afford anything except old twigs. They seem to be vaguely implying that people should ditch gum and chew wood instead. It's a "get used to it" strategy—not unlike the WEF trying to get us to eat bugs.

If you think that sounds crazy, look at all the other things that have slowly built up over the years. Someone will get some nutty idea, but instead of it being rejected out of hand like it should be, their fellow drumbeaters double down. We've had 45 years of democratic backsliding with very few breaks. You may know that Singapore already banned gum a long time ago, and that some Florida airports outlawed its sale, so it's actually surprising that we haven't seen broader bans yet. The default response to everything seems to be to ban something, so gum is actually quite a survivor.

If anyone seriously wants to ban gum, that places them in the same weird philosophical territory as those who ban Halloween. That guild represents a mix of right-wing religious zealotry and North Korean-style juche. A few years ago, an American public school district reportedly sent a letter



to parents that read (with boldface added by us for the most ridiculous parts)...

"In alignment with (HPS) initiatives to create inclusive learning spaces and an equitable school environment, we examine annual holidays and celebrations that impact our learning community.

"Over the past several years, the Equity-Oriented Strategic Plan (EOSP) has guided HPS. The EOSP and its strategic goals strive to create a learning community where all students feel seen, heard, and valued. In alignment with our Safe and Welcoming Goal of the EOSP, we center this goal as the foundation for many decisions regarding the recognition of holidays and celebrations.

"With the start of Fall, and Halloween on the horizon, we must remember that we want everyone in our learning community to have fun in our classrooms and across our buildings. Some of these activities underscored inequities within our learning community over the years and caused us to pause and reflect as a district. In doing so, we recognize the unintended consequences that a holiday such as Halloween creates. In addition, traditional Halloween practices do not align with our core values and commitment to creating a safe and equitable school environment. To that end, our classrooms will not host Halloween events during the school day, and students are expected to wear appropriate clothing per Board Policy 5511. We thank you for your partnership and commitment to helping create systems that honor all students."

This is the sort of word salad that typifies the recent amalgamation of authoritarianism. One of the biggest offenders in the war on Halloween is the school district of East Lansing, Michigan, where the superintendent whimpered, "Some school decisions should be made by the professionals," thereby ignoring the community.

Hey Donald Trump, there's a school system for you to defund. You keep making an issue out of defunding things, but if you look at some of the things East Lansing school officials said, why not start there? Schools that have a war on Halloween should be among the first places to lose public funds. They frame Halloween as an affront to equality—one of the most important values we fight for and cherish—when they know their argument is bullshit. You don't get to take advantage of our liberality in order to force unliberal rules.

We're living in the most reactionary times—led by Rupert Murdoch and the rest of the blob. Kids would probably be receiving wood in their trick-or-treat bags if the Unified Command didn't keep them from trick-or-treating too.

The trouble with Clint (a blast from the past)



I'm humming "Alibis", for this was another situation where I had an alibi that proves my innocence.

Let's go back to the days of dialup Internet, America Online, and Usenet—the 4chan of the dialup era. Off and on for several years, Usenet was peopled by one of the most hilarious trolls ever to grace civilization. Let's call him Clint (not his real name). He seemed to get his start at America Online.

I wish I had saved Clint's posts, because some of them were uproarious. One loudmouth kept trying to shout down Clint with a torrent of homophobic slurs. This illustrates the level of discourse that defined the Usenet thought police—which in turn justified more trolling by Clint. I recall cheering on Clint once or twice.

I remember a thread that had a title like "Why does God punish us?", and Clint replied with something like, "Because people stink."

Now, the problem with our pal Clint is that—in addition to cheering him—I started using some of the words and catchphrases he made up. I still use them sometimes. I also started focusing more on some of the same topics that he posted about—which he apparently posted about because I had already

posted about them a little bit. It was a cycle in which we each piggybacked on each other's posts. I think this started when I posted that someone in high school had discarded his gum in a trash can and later pawed through the trash and chewed it again, or possibly when I posted that folks in college called gum "Singapore contraband."

In brief, I made a post about gum, so Clint posted about Singapore's gum ban, so I in turn posted more about gum. I also posted about *Sesame Street*, so he posted about *The Electric Company*. On and on *ad infinitum*. The only topics missing were toilets, ruined baseball cards, and Speak & Spell.

The trouble with all of this was that a few people claimed Clint was actually *me*. Nope. Not me. I think they knew it wasn't true, but they just couldn't handle the fact that more than one person could possibly disagree with them.

But I had an alibi. Many of Clint's posts appeared while I was on a big road trip out west. Remember, this was the era of blue mechanic shirts and *The John Larroquette Show*, so there was no broadband. I wasn't about to lug a Power Mac and 2400 baud modem into a motel in Winnemucca. Back then, if someone e-mailed or even called you during vacation, you wouldn't know until you got home. You'd come home to a week's worth of answering machine messages. That shows beyond any reasonable doubt whatsoever that I wasn't Clint.

Just because I use some of Clint's catchphrases doesn't mean we're the same person. It's like how I propagated "fi out of fi", but I didn't start it. I *did* coin words like *vivolyvoovler*, *spleezox*, *beezlymouth*, and *noxawoxawoxawoxalism*—often to evade library censorware—but not some of the others.

People who argued with me online had Clint derangement syndrome, and later it got even worse. A later batch of Clint posts was just as funny as the first set. One exchange went something like this...

Idiot: "You invented that word."

Clint: "You invented shitting your pants."

Even though it was clear I wasn't behind those posts, my foes dug in and accused me of posting them. I only wish I had come up with Clint's above comeback, but I can't take credit for it. My enemies said I had made those posts from a computer in the Steely Dan Library at NKU in the middle of the night—when NKU's facilities were closed.

When I pointed out that the library wasn't open that late, they said I must have known someone at NKU and visited them in their dorm and colluded with them. This is another of their contradictions. They had spent months claiming I was a recluse who everyone wanted to avoid, but now they were saying I was a heedless carouser who partied all night with college students who let me use their computers to make troll posts. Both things can't be true.

They had such dumb arguments.

Their crusade against dissent would have been hilarious if it hadn't caused real harm. One of them actually complained to NKU that I had used their computers to make posts like that—which was a lie. Even if it was true, was it really a misuse of the computers? It was protected free speech.

The con artists who fought against me were the type who could lie with a straight face. Sometimes it's hard to even tell the truth with a straight face, because people like that are so full of shit that you can't help but laugh. They didn't think like most people did.

The post-truth era goes back further than just the past few years. In fact, do you even still remember the during-truth era?

A golf farting story that's not par for the course

It's funny when people fart.

It's hilarious when people fart while playing golf.

It's uproarious when famous professional golfers fart while playing at one of the biggest PGA Tour events!

Back in 1959, the Memphis Open was a regular event on the PGA Tour—and one of the most important. At the time, Tommy Bolt was the reigning national champion in men's golf.

Bolt was known for his fiery temper and played at the Memphis Open that year. Between putts at the event, something amusing took place. Bolt was among several golfers standing on the green to

warm up. Fans went silent in anticipation.

Then what sounded like a loud clap of thunder was heard.

But it wasn't thunder. It was a bunker blast! Tommy Bolt had released a loud-and-proud air biscuit while another golfer was putting.

One of the other golfers yelled out, "That's disgusting!" But most of the fans burst out laughing.

Decades later, it was revealed that Bolt was fined \$250 for this incident. His bout of flatulence was deemed "conduct unbecoming a professional." Bolt is said to be the only golfer in the PGA Tour ever to be fined for farting.

Bolt was also said to have let loose with some stinkers at other times. Tony Jacklin wrote that Bolt once released "a long and loud fart as an official stood by." The official then said, "Do that again, Bolt, and I'm going to have to fine you." Bolt then accused the official of "taking all the color out of the game."

Open your heart to me...I throw the donation box and you hold the key...

When I went to school at St. Joe's, there were several things that took place that were complete scams. I don't take this claim lightly, because it was a parish-run school. But if you think everything that takes place at a church-run school is honest 100% of the time, think again.

When I started attending school there in 7th grade, I found that we were all required to join some club that didn't seem to do anything. Class time was set aside for a meeting of this club, and it was all lost on me, so I just sat there quietly. Then the teacher said I owed money for being a member. I tried arguing against this point. A member of what? I didn't know I had joined. Why should I pay money to a club I didn't want to join, especially when I didn't even know what the club did?

The teacher instructed a couple of students to approach me, make me get out my wallet, and pay them what I supposedly owed.

Someone said this money was actually for a big party for the end of the year, but there never was a party. Clearly, however, if they said it was for a party, that means the club wasn't a charity. If I thought it was a charity, I'd let it slide. I take great pride in coming from an economically humble background, but there's always someone worse off, and that's one thing that tugs at my heartstrings. Yet we can be pretty sure this club wasn't a charity.

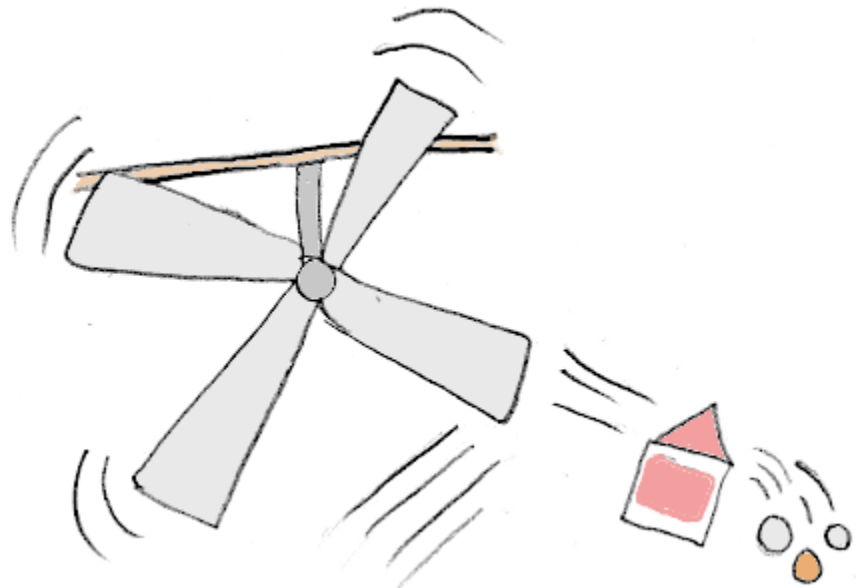
If it was a charity, why did it never show the receipts?

The school's club was apparently a chapter of a larger organization, which I can't find much information about either. It appears to be a religious group but not specifically a charity for the disadvantaged. It looks like it's something with very limited appeal like the Brossart "retoolings."

Our club met once in a great while in 8th grade, but again, it didn't seem to do anything. The school focused more on other things that I was just as uninterested in. They couldn't understand that anyone could possibly care about anything else. I had personal interests and life goals, and the school didn't like that my goals and interests had nothing to do with the school.

At some point in 8th grade, there was another fundraiser that didn't seem to be quite on the level. This time, a red and white donation box that was the size and shape of one of the small milk cartons from the cafeteria appeared on my homeroom teacher's desk. It had a coin slot and the words "Open your heart." These words reminded everyone of the Madonna song that was popular then.

Nobody said what the donation box was for. I don't know if it was for a legitimate charity or something like that club. I know it wasn't for collecting fines when people farted, because they would have needed a much bigger box.



Somebody did put money in it though. Someone also took money out of it. I saw a classmate emptying it when the teacher wasn't looking.

One other way I knew it had coins in it was because somebody once picked it up and threw it at the ceiling fan while the fan was spinning. The fan blades hit this box that was heavy with coins, and the box almost hit some kids.

If this donation box was for the underprivileged – which I doubt – it sure wouldn't have gone very far. I'm reminded of an editorial cartoon of Ronald Reagan holding a single dollar bill and saying, "This is for the *truly* needy." But my schools squandered so much money on stupid stuff that if the school was the intended recipient of the money, it wouldn't have gone very far with them either. It also wouldn't have been enough to cover my homeroom teacher's legal fees for his later criminal run-ins.

Once again, *show the receipts!*

At Brossart, I found out I was a member of the pep club without even knowing it. One day, I was summoned to a pep club gathering, and I responded that I wasn't a member. Then I was told that every student was automatically a member. But I don't think it had dues other than regular tuition.

My negative opinion of the aforementioned schools could have been avoided if I hadn't been forced to go to school there in the first place. But that stop sign has sailed. I hated both schools from day one, and my later experiences there prove this feeling was more than justified. I'm not the kind to live in the past. The years run too short and the days too fast. But these schools earned every last smidgen of scorn I've lobbed their way – and then some.

Brrrrraaaaap! Channel 9!

Like much of the rest of the broadcast industry, Channel 9 (those in the know call it WCPO-TV) is a whole world just hankering to be lampooned!

Everyone remembers former Channel 9 sports anchor Dennis Janson. He was one of the most popular local media figures. But one day, at the height of his career, Janson let loose with a bunker blast. An air biscuit. A trouser sneeze.

On the air. In front of hundreds of thousands of viewers.

According to this story, he once ended the 6 PM news by loudly passing gas. Carol Williams and Clyde Gray were the main news anchors back then, but people disagree on whether the main weather reporter was Bob Alan or Pete Delkus.

Many years later, Janson said Delkus was the weatherman then, and that Delkus burst out laughing over Janson's bout with flatulence. Janson said he himself kept a straight face, but "anyone with a brain and two eyes could know who the fella was."

This isn't the only interesting story involving local sports reporters. I seem to recall that there was one time, perhaps in the early '90s, when all the local sports anchors went on the road to cover the Reds' spring training. I think this was when there were only 3 local stations with news. Anyway, I read in the paper that one of the 3 reporters kept hiring prostitutes during this outing. But the article didn't specify which one of the 3 it was.

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