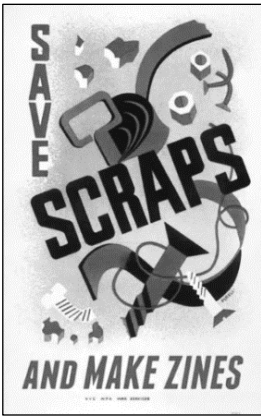


# News From Around the Bend



**31<sup>ST</sup> Anniversary Issue - #107**



## NEWS FROM AROUND THE BEND

ERRATA, EPHEMERA, ET CETERA.

**ISSUE #107    FEBRUARY 2022    31<sup>st</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!**

*A periodical brought to you periodically by*  
**The Northcraft Entertainment Organization**

Cover: Photo by Steven Jensen. During the demolition of the Cockenzie (UK) power station in 2015, the two parallel brick towers converged as they fell, producing a rubble cloud that took a somewhat... ominous form.

Publisher/Editor for Life  
**ACOUSTIC ROSS**

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### *Known & Suspected Contributors To Your Delinquency This Month*

**SHAWN BRETT  
GINNY GREENAWALT  
GLEN HETHERINGTON**

**The JOHNSONS  
The KNARRS  
The MASONS**

**GLORIA SHADE  
THE YUNGKURTHS  
MELANIE ZOLTAN**

send links & clippings  
to [ross@nfatb.com](mailto:ross@nfatb.com) or  
[ross@acousticross.com](mailto:ross@acousticross.com)

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### *This Month's Cartoons*

Wiley Miller, Non Sequitur (p. 3)  
Chris Hallbeck (p. 4)  
Marshall Hopkins for The New Yorker (p. 5)  
Luci Gutiérrez for The New Yorker (p. 7, 15)  
Pablo Amargo for The New Yorker (p. 7)  
Alex Gregory for The New Yorker (p. 8)

Mel Cebulas in The Grossest Book of World  
Records Volume 1 (p. 10)

Pia Guerra for The New Yorker (p. 11)  
Bizarro (bizarro.com) by Dan Piraro (p. 14)  
Tom Gauld (p. 15)

## NOTES FROM THE SKEPTIC TANK

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**Any book worth banning is a book worth reading.**

– Isaac Asimov

Once upon a time, in February 1991, in a Kent State dorm room, I grabbed a couple sheets of notebook paper, some 'weird news' clippings, some good quotes, a couple of comic strips, and a decent pen, and made a little four-page zine (**full disclosure: I didn't know what a zine was yet**).

When I was done – after, for some unknown reason, *hand-copying the news stories onto the pages* instead of cutting them out and pasting them in – I decided that whatever this thing was, it needed a title, so I scrawled "News from Around the Bend: Volume 1, Issue 1" at the top of the first page. I made half a dozen photocopies, gave them to family and friends... and away we went.

Thirty-one years that feel like *fifty-one* years later, 'weird news' clippings, quotes, and comics are still the core elements of a typical issue – although we do find a lot of them online these days. Spread over 31 years, 107 issues isn't really all that many – fewer than 3 ½ a year (**and there have been many years where I published fewer than 3 ½ issues**) (**last year, for example!**) – but here we are once again, actually publishing the anniversary issue ON TIME in February (**another thing that doesn't happen very often**) and bounding into 2022 like... uh, like a nerdy zine publisher trying to outrun a giant LEGO Sentinel mini-figure in a comic shop.

I'm glad you're still here after all these years (or for however long you personally have been here), and though I'm a little worse for the wear, I'm glad to still be here too. Enjoy the anniversary ish – made, in large part, at the same time as the previous issue, but with lots of new stuff too – and hang in there. The world is weird, and there aren't a lot of signs that it will be getting less so. Hope we can share a laugh or two, at the world's expense, while we can. Let's do it again soon.

In the meantime, watch out for those giant mini-Sentinels.



- RmG3, NFATB CEO, February 19, 2022 -

## BOUNDARY-SETTING SENTENCES

"I CAN'T DO THAT, BUT I CAN HELP YOU FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN."  
 "I APPRECIATE THE GESTURE, BUT IN THE FUTURE, I'D PREFER..."  
 "I CAN'T TAKE ON ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES RIGHT NOW."  
 "I'M NOT COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING THIS TOPIC WITH YOU."  
 "I'M UNCOMFORTABLE WITH WHAT YOU JUST SAID / DID."  
 "THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN, BUT I CAN HANDLE THIS."  
 "I CAN'T ATTEND, BUT I APPRECIATE THE INVITATION."  
 "I DON'T GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO DO [X] TO ME."  
 "I CAN'T DO [X], BUT I'M OPEN TO TRYING [Y]."  
 "I DON'T FEEL SAFE SO I'M GOING TO LEAVE."  
 "I WON'T BE SPOKEN TO IN THAT MANNER."  
 "I'M ALLOWED TO CHANGE MY MIND."  
 "THANKS, BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED."  
 "I WISH I COULD, BUT I CAN'T."  
 "NO, THANK YOU."  
 "NO."

Posted on Instagram by @positivelypresent

-- While shopping at a Peoria, Illinois, Walmart on Sept. 20, an unnamed 30-year-old woman filled her cart but also added a few items to her backpack: leggings, pencils, a quart of oil and a "Jesus Calling" Bible. After she paid for only the items in her cart, a loss prevention officer stopped her before she left the store. Peoria police were summoned, reported the Peoria Journal Star, and the woman explained to them she was hoping the Bible could help her spiritually: "(She) told me that it sounds strange, but she was trying to be more Christian," an officer reported. She was charged with misdemeanor theft.

**Americanism: Lying to the reporter; accusing the press of unreliability.**

El Paso Herald, Texas, December 3, 1927



▼ hcrld

Queue is just Q followed by 4 silent letters.

▼ Robot\_Spider

They aren't silent. They're waiting their turn.

## SIXTEENTH CENTURY SHADE

**Michelangelo was harshly criticized by a Vatican official for the nudity in *The Last Judgment*, which hangs on the walls of the Sistine Chapel. So Michelangelo made some changes: he painted the face of that official into the piece as the judge of the underworld.**



In this Ikea billboard in Bahrain, the upper line of text reads "Create your perfect night's sleep" in English, with Arabic text below. The Arabic text reads "The same as written, but in Arabic." It was later updated. (photo via Sneha Sharma on Twitter, emphasis by Adweek)

**Billy Crystal has won 3 Emmy awards for hosting the *Academy Awards*.**

## Canada taps into strategic reserves to deal with massive shortage ... of maple syrup

Robert F. Bukaty, AP, 11/25/2021

While high gas prices have pushed President Biden to tap into the US's strategic oil reserves, America's neighbor to the north is also dealing with a shortage of another so-called "liquid gold." The Canadian group Quebec Maple Syrup Producers recently announced it was releasing about 50 million pounds of its strategic maple syrup reserves — about half of the total stockpile.

Quebec produces nearly 70% of the world's maple syrup, with the US being its biggest client for the sweet stuff. However, this year producers weren't able to keep up with worldwide demand, which jumped 21%, according to Bloomberg.

Maple syrup is made from the sap from maple trees, which is traditionally harvested by installing a metal tap into the tree's trunk. Modern sap harvesting typically involves a system of plastic tubing and vacuums to collect the sap from multiple trees to a central location where it can be refined into syrup. This is a seasonal process though, as maple sap can only be harvested in specific weather conditions. So, this year's short and warm Spring resulted in an uncharacteristically low yield for producers.

"That's why the reserve is made, to never miss maple syrup. And we won't miss maple syrup!" said Helene Normandin, the Quebec Maple Syrup Producers' communications director.

This is not the first time Quebec's maple syrup reserve has made headlines. In 2012, more than 3,000 tons of maple syrup (valued at nearly \$19 million CAD) were stolen from the stockpile over the course of months.

**Never step on spiders. You could be stepping on a female with eggs, and they'll stick to your shoes and hatch all over the house.**



## BOSSSES

As the business magazine *Inc.* discovered, all that the following company-wide e-mails from executives accomplished was ticking off their employees.

### Subject: SYSTEM FAILURES

It has come to my attention that the e-mail system was down yesterday. From now on, I have requested that the system manager send a group message to everyone next time the system goes down.

### Subject: COMPUTER COURSE

After much consideration, we have decided to cancel the training for our new computer system on the grounds that once people learn the system, they usually leave.

### Subject: COMPANY PICNIC

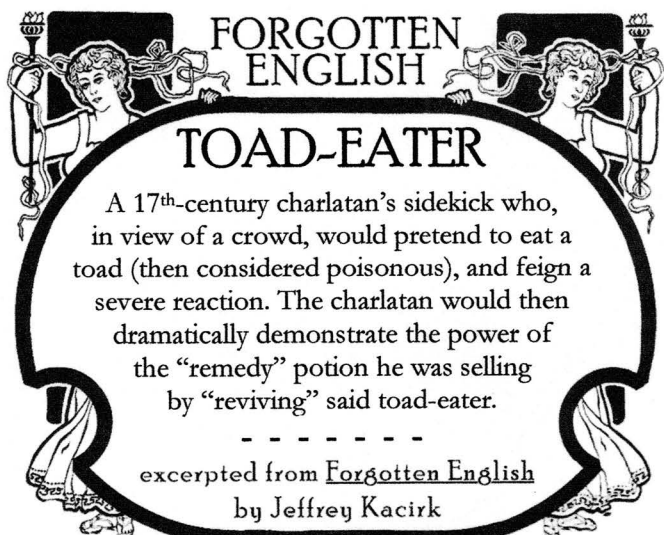
We will have our first company picnic next week, which we have dubbed "Morale Builder." The picnic will feature carnival rides and all-you-can-eat hot dogs and beans. A menu of steak and lobster is available for executives.

### Subject: RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS

After several strong sales months, we have decided to print Employee Appreciation T-shirts! These shirts will go on sale next Monday.



In Lawrence, Kansas, architecture students designed a new bike rack for the Prairie Acre Ribbon Classroom, the first outdoor classroom at the University of Kansas. The metal rack features the letters P-A-R-C, but viewed from another vantage point, they spell C-R-A-P. Social media lit up after a photo was posted May 13, including, "It'll make a fine bike rack. Crap a diem!" Project PARC KU responded: "The photograph shown is not the intended vantage point, nor is it the message of our project," but at press time, the university had not announced any action, according to the Wichita Eagle-Beacon.



**What The Heck Is Grimace Anyway? One Answer Has People Shook**  
Ed Mazza, huffpost.com, 9/02/2021

The manager of a McDonald's franchise in Canada has revealed the story behind Grimace, the purple pal of longtime mascot Ronald McDonald, and it's left a lot of people very confused.

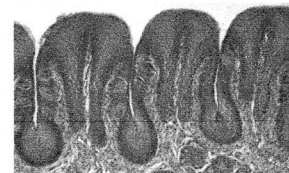
Brian Bates, who has worked for the chain for 10 years, casually dropped it into an interview with CBC News over the weekend. "He is an enormous taste bud, but a taste bud nonetheless," Bates told the network in an "unofficial" explanation, adding that the character was meant to show that the food tastes good.



McDonald's has been unusually tight-lipped about the purple creature's origins over the years. The closest it had come to providing an explanation was a few variations of this tweet, which it has sent out from time to time in response to inquisitive customers:

Great question! #Grimace lore says he is the embodiment of a milkshake or a taste bud. What do you think?

Grimace, who was actually a villain early on, doesn't resemble a milkshake, but he *does* kinda look like he may have been inspired by images of taste buds and papillae (right, photo by Ed Reschke via Getty Images. Trust us, grayscale readers - they're a very familiar shade of purple.)



Twitter users were stunned by the McHistory lesson:

@renonezero

I've always wondered and now I regret finding this out #becarefulwhatyouwishfor

@t\_wrecks\_64

Liked it better when I had no idea what Grimace was

@8bitonionring

If Grimace is a taste bud meant to show how good the food is why on earth would you name the damn thing after an expression of disgust





In Ohio in 2004, 6-year-old Alex Malarkey spent two months in a coma after a car accident, awaking as a quadriplegic and telling his family he had visited heaven, seeing angels and meeting Jesus. Alex and his dad, Kevin Malarkey, co-wrote a best-selling book in 2010, "The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven," but in 2015, Alex admitted he had made up the story to get attention. "I did not die. I did not go to heaven," Alex told The Guardian. In a recent effort to set the record straight, Alex filed a complaint April 9 in DuPage County, Illinois, against the book's publisher, Tyndale House, alleging that "any reasonable person would have realized that it was highly unlikely that the content of the book was true." The Washington Post reported that while Kevin Malarkey is not a party to the suit -- which cites several Illinois statutes regarding the right to privacy, defamation, and financial exploitation of a person with a disability, among others -- it does allege that Alex's dad concocted and sold the story to Tyndale. The younger Malarkey did not receive any royalties from the sales of the book.

### DEPT. OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES:

IN 1657, A JAPANESE PRIEST SET A KIMONO ON FIRE BECAUSE, HE BELIEVED, IT CARRIED BAD LUCK. THE FLAMES SPREAD, EVENTUALLY LEAVING 10,000 BUILDINGS DESTROYED AND 100,000 DEAD. BAD LUCK INDEED.



made by tumblr user bisopod

(from seatsafetyswitch.com, October 22, 2019, photo sourced online by NFATB)

For the last decade or so, I've been routinely attending a ride-on lawnmower race. I've always wanted to participate, but the high cost of used mowers is better spent on more practical vehicles, like literally anything else. Sometimes, though, the universe sends you a message. And in my case, that message came in the form of an awkward leg of a huge trade-in scam.

Picture, if you will, the humble redneck. They await the approach of big, fast domestic mowers. John Deeres, Cub Cadets, even weird modified Chinese stuff they looted from aliexpress. There is jubilation, but that soon comes to an awkward hush. An unfamiliar engine note approaches.

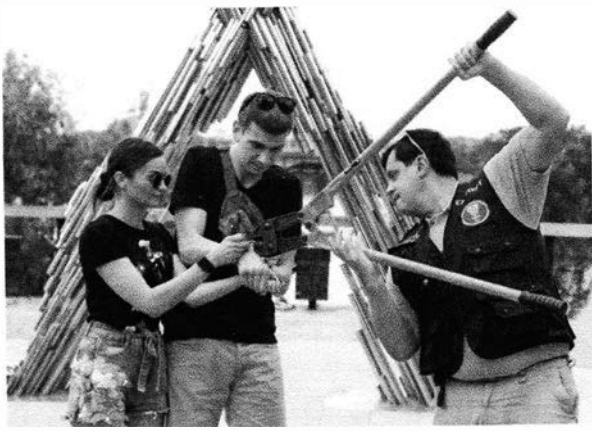
My International 1480 combine harvester, all ten tons of it, is barreling down the highway at a clip somewhere between "tepid" and "jaunty." Even though I have shown up for a race, I am sandbagging a little bit, making sure that the bets get settled against my vehicle before I show them the might of a fully operational monster such as mine.

Technically, there is no violation. I had looked at the rulebook from every angle in the previous year: it has the correct number of wheels, the proper agricultural intent, and with precise work on the tiller, it can even (poorly) mow a suburban lawn. Is it modified? Oh yes, yes indeed, but I see the nitrous bottles poking out from the rows of Kubotas at the starting line.

And when I leave the starting line, it is a thing of beauty. At least for a few milliseconds. It seems that the wizards at International Harvester simply did not comprehend of a situation in which the frame of their combine would be launched into the air by means of one thousand eight hundred foot-pounds of supercharger-bolstered torque. I had erroneously believed that the loose soil of the rural community would let the wheels dip in, but now I am facing directly into the sky, having twelve o'clocked hard on my wheelie, shooting flames from my exhaust and whirling vertical blades of death towards the grandstand.

It's not about whether you win or lose. Sometimes it's about how many pages you add to the rulebook.





## Romance Ends; Handcuffs Removed

Margaryta Chomokondratenko, Reuters, 6/18/2021

(Kyiv, Ukraine) After 123 days handcuffed together to save their on-again off-again relationship, Ukrainians Alexandr Kudlay and Viktoria Pustovitova have split up, shedding their bonds on national TV and saying the experiment had brought home uncomfortable truths.

The young couple from the eastern city of Kharkiv decided to handcuff themselves together on Valentine's Day, in a last-ditch attempt to break the cycle of breaking up and making up.

Throughout the experiment, which they documented to a growing social media following, they did everything together, from grocery shopping to cigarette breaks. They took turns to use the bathroom and take showers.

Pustovitova, who initially resisted the handcuff idea, shed tears as she discussed the latest break-up. "I think it will be a good lesson for us, for other Ukrainian couples and couples abroad not to repeat what we have done," she told Reuters in an interview in Kyiv.

Pustovitova said personal space is what she missed most, although she also felt her boyfriend did not pay her enough attention while they were chained together. "We stayed together all day, I did not receive any attention from Alexandr because we were constantly together," said the 29-year-old beautician.

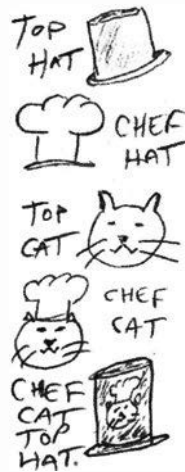
The couple plan to sell the handcuffs in an online auction and donate part of the money to charity. They had the bonds removed in front of Ukrainian TV news channels and a representative from a Ukrainian record book, who said no couple in the world had managed a similar feat.

The average N.F.L. career lasts just over three seasons, but players don't qualify for a pension until they complete the third game of their fourth season.

## BEER SONG

While English poet and dramatist John Gay (1685–1732) may be best known for *The Beggar's Opera*, he also penned this memorable "Ballad on Ale":

*Some folks of cider make  
a rout,  
And cider's well enough  
no doubt,  
When better liquors fail;  
But wine, that's richer,  
better still,  
Ev'n wine itself, (deny't  
who will)  
Must yield to nappy Ale.*

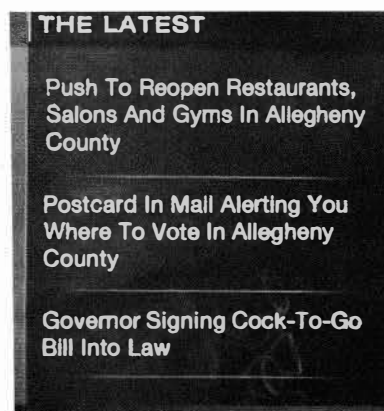


LIKE ANY COLLEGE student, Connor Cox was excited when he received a package from home. He assumed it was filled with food and other goodies. He tore open the box and, indeed, found a surprise inside: garbage. Turns out, he'd left home without taking out the trash as he'd promised his mother, so she mailed it to him.

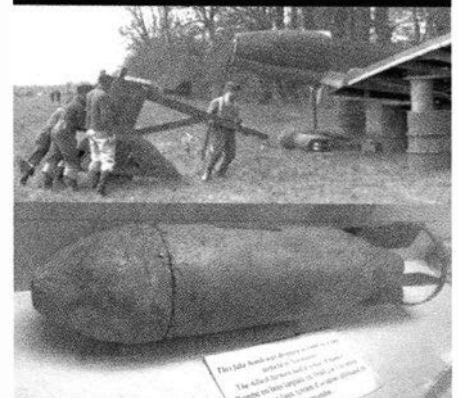


Source: buzzfeed.com

## Not Sure We Need to Go THAT Far



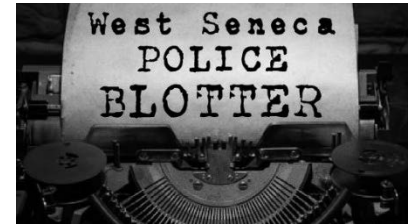
During WW2, the Germans built a fake wooden airfield with wooden aircraft, vehicles, and hangars in order to trick the Allies. The RAF, having known of the secret project for months, patiently waited for them to finish and then dropped a single fake wooden bomb on it



If you meet an asshole in the morning, you met an asshole.  
If you meet assholes all day, you're the asshole.

RAYLAN GIVENS (TIMOTHY OLYPHANT) ON "JUSTIFIED"

**A West Seneca (NY) resident and NFATB subscriber since issue #1 (*full disclosure: my sister Beth*) tipped us off to that town's police blotter, published regularly on social media. It's a small town, and as such is plagued with a wide variety of small-town problems. Here are some excerpts, the first in what will likely be an ongoing feature in these pages:**



A Tobey Hill Dr. resident reported there was a suspicious vehicle driving down the street, stopping in front of houses, and the occupant was walking up people's driveways. The occupant was delivering newspapers. (Monday 9/7/2020)

A suspicious person was reported to be walking around the former Nickel Creek Café on Clinton St. with a flashlight. The person was one of our officers, conducting a premise check. (Sunday 9/13/2020)

Patrol responded to a Brookside Dr. address for a report of screaming coming from inside the house. The occupant was upset and yelling at his TV, but was glad we stopped by. (Friday 9/11/2020)

A Casimer St. resident called police stating there was a raccoon in his house. The masked invader left on its own prior to patrol's arrival. (Sunday 9/20/2020)

Officers were flagged down by a person who reported a dog was being abused at a Round Trail Rd. address. The dog's owner was playing with the dog, chasing it with a squirt gun. (Friday 9/11/2020)

An anonymous caller reported there was a suspicious female, dressed in camo-print clothing, taking pictures of Town Hall. She was one of several West Seneca teachers present, conducting a virtual learning lesson outdoors. (Thursday 9/17/2020)



## **IF YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE LAWS TO BENEFIT YOURSELF, WHY EVEN RUN FOR OFFICE?**

***NFATB Staff from wire and broadcast reports, 1/8/2022***

The second-highest ranking Republican in the Oklahoma House of Representatives has stepped down from his leadership position, while defending himself from felony charges of abusing his power by changing state law to benefit his wife.

Oklahoma State Representative Terry O'Donnell and his wife, Teresa, were booked into jail on January 8, 2022, and the legislator announced his resignation as House speaker pro tempore, effective in February.

The couple was indicted by an Oklahoma County grand jury in December – 5 felony counts and 3 misdemeanors for Rep. O'Donnell, 3 felonies and 1 misdemeanor for Mrs. O'Donnell.

State law once prohibited spouses of legislators from serving as tag agents. In 2019, O'Donnell introduced a bill to eliminate that rule; and three months after it was signed into law, Teresa O'Donnell was appointed to take over the Catoosa Tag Agency.





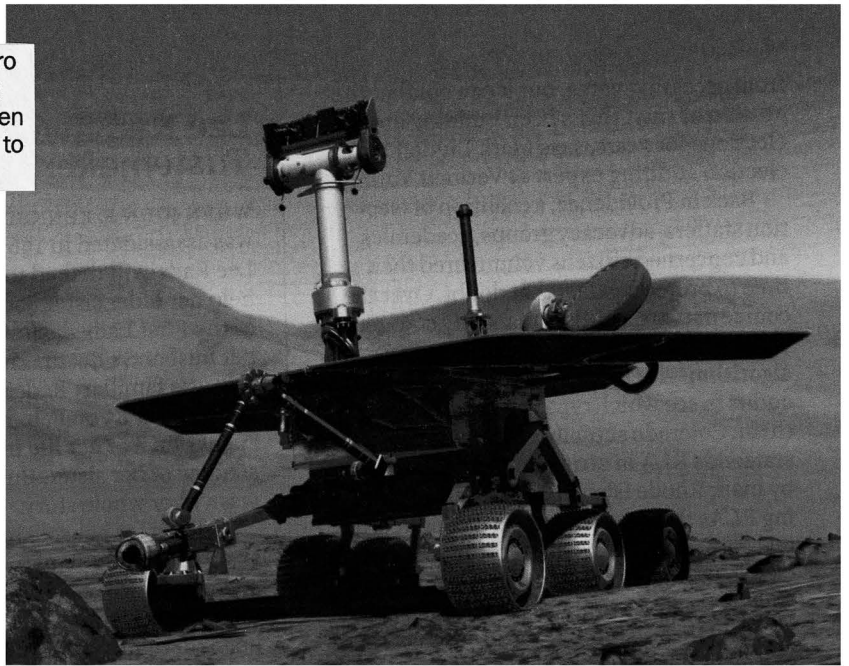


■ A caption accompanying a Dec. 6 story about Summit Metro Parks winter activities indicated two snowmen were watching sled riders. In truth, a tiny baby snowman was nestled between two rotund parents, bringing the total of observant snowmen to three. With apologies to Frosty and family.

National parklands are getting hotter and drier twice as fast as the rest of the country, according to a new study by climate scientists at the University of California, Berkeley.

## There's no underestimating the intelligence of the American public.

H.L. MENCKEN



### New Zealand City Taking its Official Wizard Off the Payroll

Rachel Treisman, npr.com, 10/15/2021

*photo: The Wizard of New Zealand, aka Ian Brackenbury Channell, casts a "spell" during a television interview in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2011. Mark Baker/AP*

Christchurch, New Zealand, is parting ways with its official city wizard after more than two decades. His offensive remarks about women and the local government's new tourism strategy reportedly spelled his doom.

Ian Brackenbury Channell is known as The Wizard of New Zealand, apparently even on official documents like his passport. He's been on the Christchurch City Council's payroll since 1998, receiving an annual salary of \$16,000 NZ (more than \$11,000 in current USD) to "provide acts of wizardry and other wizard-like services – as part of promotional work for the city of Christchurch," according to the New Zealand news site Stuff.

But that job title will soon become – like many wizards before him – a thing of legend. "The council has met with The Wizard and sent him a letter thanking him for his services to Christchurch over the past decades and informing him that we are bringing our formal contractual arrangement to a close," said Lynn McClelland, the council's assistant chief executive.

The decision was a difficult one, according to McClelland. She explained that Christchurch's promotional landscape is changing to "increasingly reflect our diverse communities and showcase a vibrant, diverse, modern city that is attractive to residents, domestic and international visitors, new businesses, and skilled migrant workers." That may not have been the only reason, The Guardian reports, citing controversial comments Channell made back in April.

Born in London in 1932, Channell spent time as a Royal Air Force navigator, studied psychology and sociality, traveled in the Middle East and taught in both Tehran and Australia. His wizarding career highlights, listed on his own website, include performing rain dances in New Zealand and Australia during droughts, participating in protests against the demolition of heritage buildings after the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes and famously battling the company Telecom over the changing color of the city's telephone boxes in 1988. (He went around repainting the new blue boxes to their original red, according to one biography, in a battle that "raged for twelve days" and at one point even involved the city council.)

Despite the contract ending, Channell promised to keep visiting Christchurch's Arts Centre to chat with tourists and locals. "It makes no difference. I will still keep going," he said. "They will have to kill me to stop me."



In 1621, the printer of a publication of the Holy Bible accidentally omitted the word 'not' from the Seventh Commandment, reversing the intent of that particular rule.

(The Seventh is the adultery one.)



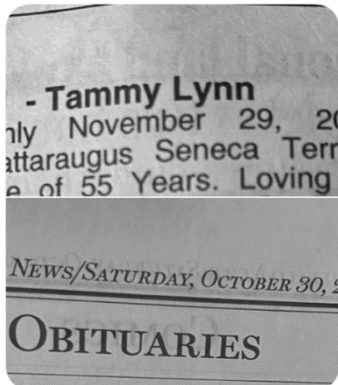
Like a breakfast at the Egg House  
A waffle on the griddle  
I'm burned around the edges  
But I'm tender in the middle



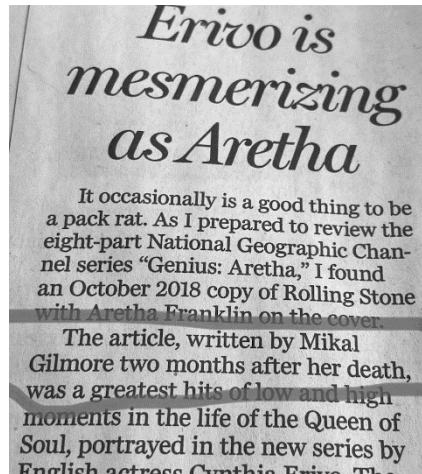
"Stop It"  
Adrian Belew



Behold! Not one, but *two* death-defying acts  
of predictive / posthumous journalism:

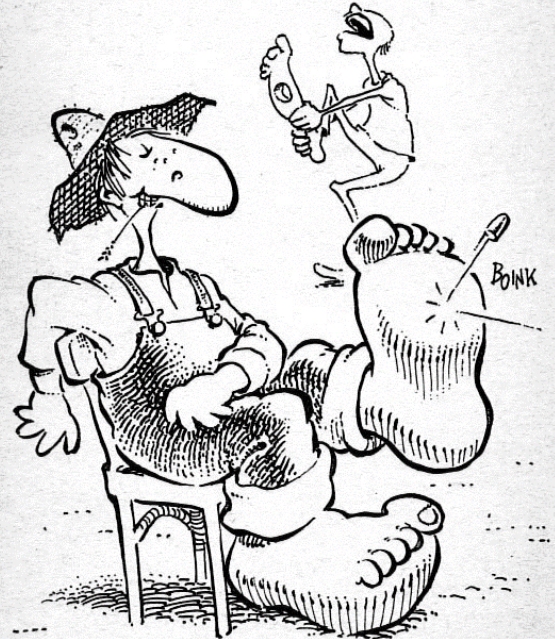


Buffalo News predicting the future. 🐭



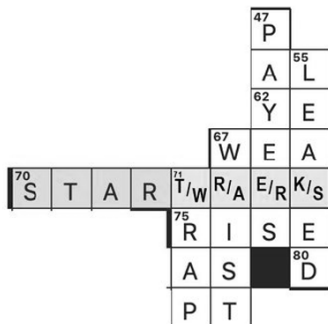
## CALLUS

IN A CONTEST HELD ON JULY 28, 1976, ERNIE HOOPS OF TULSA PROVED THAT HE HAD DEVELOPED THE THICKEST LAYER OF FOOT CALLUS IN THE WORLD. IN THE FINAL EVENT OF THE DAY, ERNIE'S FOOT CALLUS WITHSTOOD A .22 RIFLE BLAST. A LIKE BLAST WENT RIGHT THROUGH THE FOOT OF ERNIE'S CLOSEST COMPETITOR.



@matttomic on Twitter, 2/7/2022:

Fun little trick in the Sunday New York Times crossword yesterday: the central theme clue was "The better of two sci-fi franchises", and regardless of whether you put Star Wars or Star Trek, the crossing clues worked



ACROSS:

70. The better of two sci-fi franchises

DOWN:

71. "It's a \_\_\_\_!"

67. Body part that precedes "band"

47. Ones involved in a transaction

55. Let out, in a way

In 1404, King Taejong fell from his horse during a hunting expedition. Embarrassed, looking to his left and right, he commanded, "Do not let the historian find out about this." To his disappointment, the historian accompanying the hunting party included the King's words in the annals, along with a description of his fall.

(Taejong Sillok Book 7; 5th year of King Taejong's Reign [1404], Feb. 8.)

## Garden of Joy

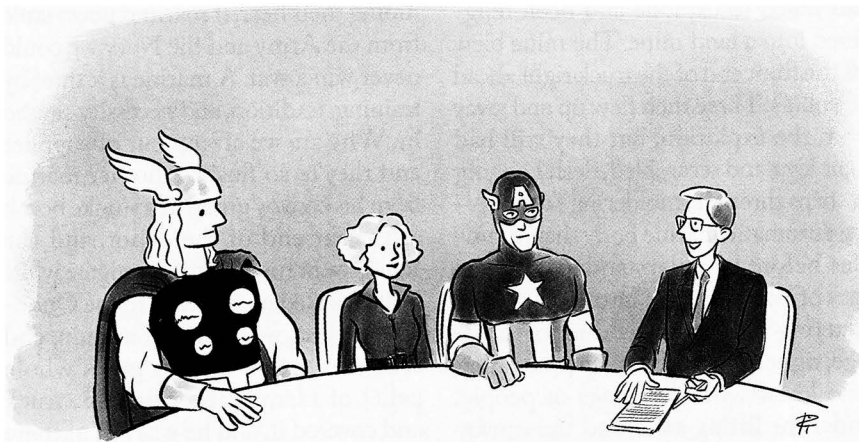
For an instant happiness boost, plant flowers with bright faces that make you smile.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Um... I don't know if "joy" is really the emotion these flowers appear to be conveying.





*"Well, I was bitten by a radioactive lawyer and ended up with the power of attorney."*

### MARCH 5, 2001

Boxer Darrin Morris, who died in October, climbed up the WBO's super middleweight rankings from seventh in November to sixth in December and fifth in January before officials realized he was out of title contention for good.



### Massive Discount Coupon Fraud Gets Virginia Woman 12-Year Prison Sentence Ile Kauppila, oddee.com, 10/27/2021

You wouldn't think faking a discount coupon is that big a deal. Sure, it's illegal, but saving an illegitimate dollar on toothpaste seems like a victimless crime. But start stacking those small savings up and you could end up with significant savings. It was the sheer scale of her coupon fraud operation that caused the FBI to bust a Virginia woman's coupon fraud operation.

In September 2021, Lori Ann Talens, 41, got slapped with a 12-year prison sentence for running a nation-spanning discount coupon fraud scheme. On top of that, the courts ordered her to pay whopping \$31.8 million in restitution to the companies she'd defrauded. Her husband Pacifico Talens, Jr., 43, got himself an 87-month sentence. According to the FBI, he knowingly assisted and profited from the scheme, despite not being directly involved in the production of the coupons.

Talens and her fraudulent ways first came to the authorities' attention when a person who had bought a coupon from her reported her to the Coupon Information Center (CIC). The CIC is a group of consumer goods manufacturers that upholds the validity of discount coupons. The CIC started buying coupons from Talens to see just what she was up to. In the end, they bought enough coupons to deliver more than \$125,000 in illegitimate savings.

When the investigators arrived at Talens' home, they didn't find just a few stacks of poorly made fake coupons. The house was filled with professional-quality counterfeits. According to Thomasson, they discovered the coupons "in every crevice of the house. There were coupons in every jacket pocket. They were stuffed in her vehicles," he said. In total, the coupons were worth more than \$1 million. On the Talenses' computer, the investigators also more than 13,000 design templates for the fakes.

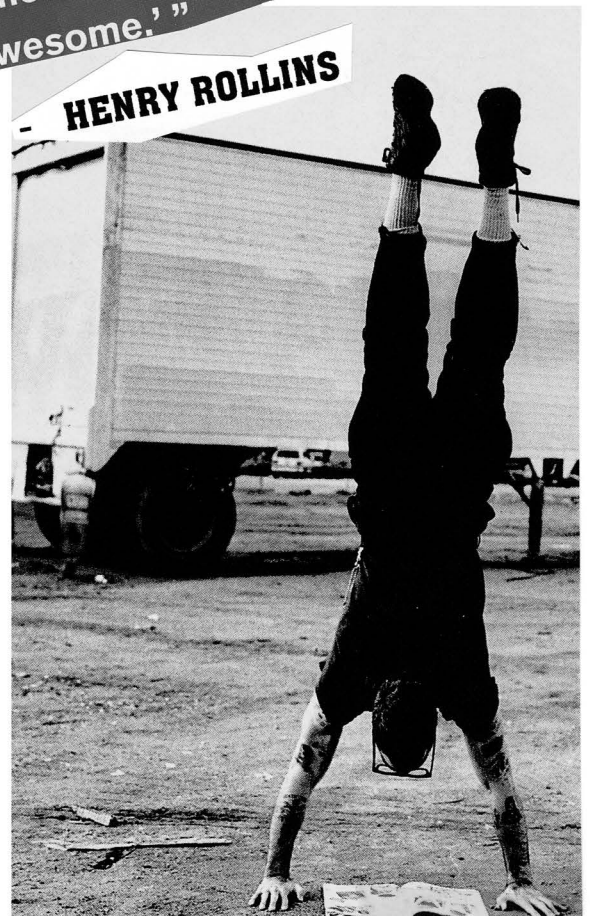
According to the investigators, Talens ran an intricate supply network throughout the country for customers she found on social media. Over three years, she made a comfortable \$400,000 off her fake coupons.

The first time Frankenstein's monster appeared onscreen was in a 1910 short silent film directed by J. Searle Dawley and produced by Thomas A. Edison (yes, that Edison).



**"I didn't get a Ph.D. I just said, 'I don't want to work at Pizza Hut. I don't want to join the navy. I guess I'll have to go out and be awesome.'"**

**HENRY ROLLINS**



**What the United States does best is to understand itself.  
What it does worst is understand others.**

CARLOS FUENTES, MEXICAN NOVELIST, 1986

**Outside of the killings, we have one of the lowest crime rates.**

**MARION BARRY, WASHINGTON, DC MAYOR. 1989**

**Block that metaphor!**

*From the director's notes to an Ontario production of "A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur."*

Set in the St. Louis of Amanda Wingfield and *The Glass Menagerie*, the play conjures a similar time, when America was matriculating in a school for the blind, having its fingers pressed forcibly down on the fiery Braille alphabet of a dissolving economy.

Berlin (AP, 11/23/2021) — A man in Germany has discovered the hard way that it's best to get a driving license first before trying to use it. Police in Bergheim, near Cologne, said that the 37-year-old drove himself to his driving test, parking an Opel Zafira outside the test center in front of an astonished examiner. They said he told police officers who were called to the scene on Monday that he had only driven because he wanted to make sure to get to the driving test on time. His test was immediately called off. The man now faces an investigation for driving without a license. Police also opened an investigation of the car's owner.

**I'm Not Sure "Law & Order" Would Even Touch This One**  
*NFATB Staff from wire and web reports, 11/26/2021*

In late 2019, a national legal organization named Oklahoma City attorney Keegon Harroz as one of Oklahoma's "10 Best." The American Institute of Criminal Law Attorneys said Harroz was being recognized for exceptional performance, and also listed her as one of Oklahoma's "10 Best Criminal Law Attorneys for Client Satisfaction."



At the time of the announcement, Harroz was in federal custody, facing weapons and ammunition charges.

That was bad enough, but that recognition for "client satisfaction" ended up carrying even more irony.

Harroz pleaded guilty to the weapons charge – possessing a firearm while subject to a state-court victim protective order – in September 2020, and in March 2021 was sentenced to 24 months.

Just weeks after that sentence was handed down, Harroz – alongside former client Barry Roland Titus II – was charged with first-degree murder. Prosecutors believe Harroz fell in love with her client, then helped him execute his ex-girlfriend and her parents in an attempt to bury a domestic violence charge against him.

Titus' former girlfriend Tiffany Eichor and her parents were shot to death in their home in 2019. Eichor's uncle, Steven Newman, found the victims after the murders, and told investigators about Eichor's history with Titus. During the investigation, authorities also uncovered accusations that Harroz had previously tried to plant drugs at the home in a bid to discredit the case against her client.

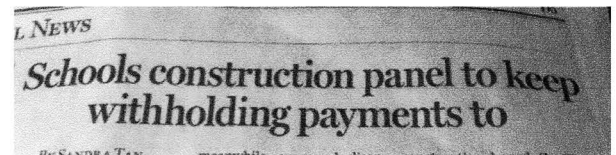
Investigators said they found a ballcap near where the Lexus had parked that contained Titus' DNA. Inside, they found 9mm and 5.56 shell casings. Harroz's brother later turned over an AR-15 to Texas authorities, which was later matched to casings from the crime scene.

Harroz and Titus each face three counts of first-degree murder and a felony burglary charge.

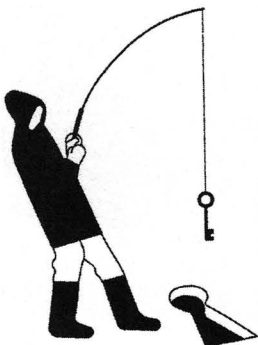
(In case you were wondering, she lost her law license after the original 2019 arrest.)

**The very powerful and the very stupid have one thing in common. They don't alter their views to fit the facts. They alter the facts to fit their views.**

**DR. WHO, "FACE OF EVIL" 1977**



**Next time I see you,  
remind me not to talk to you.**  
**GROUCHO MARX**





### Quite An Effective Sausage

London (AP) — A British butcher who got locked in a freezer says he was saved by a frozen sausage that he used as a battering ram. Chris McCabe says he became trapped in the walk-in freezer at his shop in Totnes, southwest England, when wind blew the door shut. The safety button to open the door had frozen in the -20 C (-4 F) chill. McCabe said he tried unsuccessfully to kick the button free before picking up a 1.5kg (3.3lb) black pudding, a form of blood sausage. He told website Devon Live that he used the sausage "like a battering ram" and managed to unstick the button after several blows. The grateful butcher told the Daily Mirror: "Black pudding saved my life, without a doubt."

### South African Priest Drugs Himself and Congregation

(Stonie Williams for Oddee.com) — A priest in South Africa took it upon himself to prove his church's faith in their god. And what better way to prove that faith makes you superhuman then drinking poison?

Priest Light Monyeki is from Soshanguve, South Africa, and he decided to perform a dangerous stunt. He claimed to his congregation they should not fear death, as they cannot die (for they would be immortal) if they had true faith — or so he claimed. So he took a bottle of water and filled it with rat poison, then took a big drink. Then many of his followers came forward to take a drink. Monyeki proceeded to pour the drink down the throats of his loyal congregation. Five died and 13 were put in the hospital, but he denied responsibility.

Grace Living Hope Ministries posted on Facebook:

**DEMONSTRATION OF POWER - MAN OF GOD MIXED RATTAX (DEADLY POISON) WITH WATER AND CAUSED PEOPLE INCLUDING HIM TO DRINK!!!**

*The man of God, Prophet Light Monyeki demonstrates the power of faith by causing congregants to drink Rattax; deadly poison to show forth their faith. As he was doing that he said "we do not need to proclaim faith because we are believers. If [anybody] can smoke Rattax for more than 8 years, who are we? Death has no power over us". Then he declared life from above upon the water mixed with Rattax; and spoke nourishment unto bodies and healing unto the sick. A multitude of congregants voluntarily ran to the front to have a drink of the deadly poison. After declaring nourishment and healing, Prophet Light was the first one to drink.*

### Car strikes Lord Jesus Christ, 50

NORTHAMPTON, Mass. (AP) — The victim might have forgiven the woman who ran him down in a Massachusetts crosswalk, but police haven't.

Police cited Brittany Cantarella, 20, of Pittsfield, Mass., for failing to yield to a pedestrian, named Lord Jesus Christ, in a

crosswalk Tuesday in Northampton.

The pedestrian, a 50-year-old man from Belchertown, was taken to an area hospital for treatment of minor facial injuries.

Officers said the man's ID confirmed his unusual name.

## KNOW YOUR BEER INNOVATORS

Conveyor belt sushi has beer to thank. In the 1950s, Yoshiaki Shiraishi was having problems staffing his sushi restaurant and didn't want to manage the restaurant by himself. But after watching beer bottles on the production line in an Asahi Brewery, Shiraishi had an idea. Countless trial runs and technical improvements later, Shiraishi opened the first conveyor belt sushi restaurant in Higashiōsaka in 1958.

**There have been numerous complaints received in recent months from the owners of holiday homes around the county about local residents planning changes to their permanent houses.**

We've spoken to a few of these irate short-stayers about their grievances.

Tom McEldroon who asked to remain anonymous, has a house in Fortsalon and is angry about a construction planned near his holiday home area.



**Girl, Teddy Bear Reunited a Year After Loss in Glacier Park**  
Amy Beth Hanson, AP, 11/12/2021

Helena, MT — Thanks to a social media plea, the sharp eyes and soft heart of a park ranger, and the closure of a hiking trail due to grizzly bear activity on the same day a family friend visited the park, a very special teddy bear is back in the arms of 6-year-old Naomi Pascal in Jackson, Wyoming.

Teddy was the first gift Ben and Addie Pascal sent to Naomi before adopting her from an Ethiopian orphanage in 2016. She took Teddy with her on family trips to Ethiopia, Rwanda, Croatia and Greece. When Pascal took his kids to Montana in October 2020, Teddy was once again along for the adventure. While family friend Terri Hayden watched the kids, Pascal and a friend went on a hike in Glacier National Park. They were almost back to Hayden's home in Bigfork that night when they realized they didn't have Teddy. It snowed overnight, closing the higher elevations of the park for the season and preventing Hayden from returning to search for Teddy. She made a report to park officials, hoping someone might turn in the bear to a lost-and-found.

Ranger Tom Mazzarisi soon spotted the stuffed bear, soaking wet and sitting in melting snow near the Hidden Lake Trail while he and others were doing end-of-season work. "Typically, items that aren't worth much monetarily get thrown out," Mazzarisi said. He was unaware the stuffed animal had been reported lost, but for some reason couldn't bring himself to dump it in the trash. Teddy "hibernated" in Mazzarisi's cabin in St. Mary and when Mazzarisi returned to work in April he "immediately put him on the dash of my patrol truck."

Teddy spent spring and summer watching wolves howl at each other and working "bear jams," traffic jams caused by bears being near the road, Mazzarisi said. In June, Addie Pascal posted a plea on Facebook for help finding Teddy, and people responded with well wishes and offers of replacement bears. A Michigan woman posted a photo she took of Teddy on the day it was lost, saying it was the only bear she saw in the park.

Hayden, still feeling bad about the loss of Naomi's special bear, visited the park in September, stopping to check on potential lost-and-found sites, and soon she and her adult niece spotted a stuffed bear in a ranger's truck, took a picture and sent it to Addie Pascal, who quickly confirmed it was Teddy. They left a note on the vehicle and found rangers, who confirmed where the bear had been found, then returned Teddy to Hayden. Hayden shipped the bear to Naomi, who said she was really excited when she got Teddy back.

Hayden bought another stuffed bear for Mazzarisi. He named her Clover, he said, after a grizzly bear he saw in Yellowstone National Park that would lay on her belly in a clover patch and eat. Clover is wintering at Mazzarisi's cabin in St. Mary. Next spring, she'll ride in his truck.

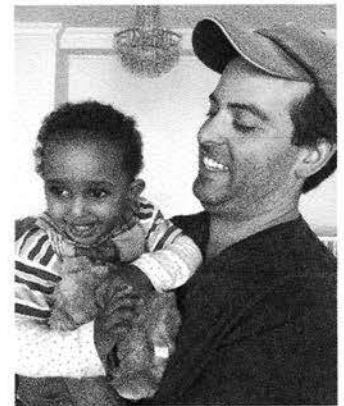
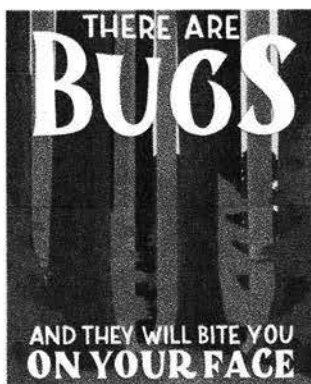
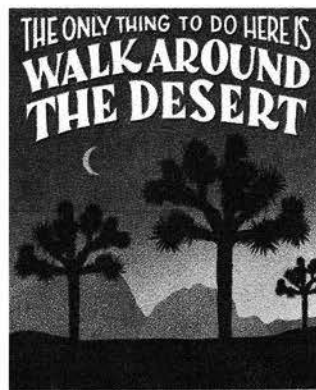


Photo: Ben Pascal is seen holding his daughter, Naomi, with Teddy at an orphanage in Ethiopia in June 2016. (Ben Pascal via AP)

In other National Park news this month, we at the NFATB wanted to introduce you to illustrator Amber Share. Share uses negative customer reviews of national parks to make delightfully ironic posters for the parks in question. Find more great examples – *in glorious color, not our standard NFATB grayscale* – on Instagram (@subparparks), buy Subpar Parks merchandise (ambersharedesign.com), and be sure to grab her book *Subpar Parks: America's Most Extraordinary National Parks and Their Least Impressed Visitors*, published in 2021.



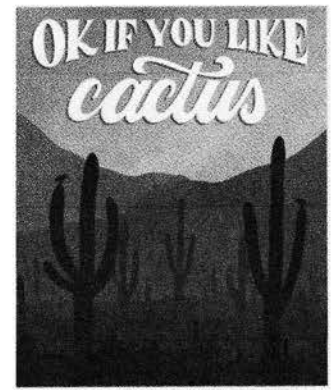
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK | EST. 1890



JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK | EST. 1994



ARCHES NATIONAL PARK | EST. 1929



SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK | EST. 1994



A dangling participle walks into a bar. Enjoying a cocktail and chatting with the bartender, the evening passes pleasantly.

A bar was walked into by the passive voice.

An oxymoron walked into a bar, and the silence was deafening.

A malapropism walks into a bar, looking for all intensive purposes like a wolf in cheap clothing, muttering epitaphs and casting dispersions on his magnificent other, who takes him for granite.

Hyperbole totally rips into this insane bar and absolutely destroys everything.

A question mark walks into a bar?

A non sequitur walks into a bar. In a strong wind, even turkeys can fly.

A mixed metaphor walks into a bar, seeing the handwriting on the wall but hoping to nip it in the bud.

A comma splice walks into a bar, it has a drink and then leaves.

Three intransitive verbs walk into a bar. They sit. They converse. They depart.

A synonym strolls into a tavern.

At the end of the day, a cliché walks into a bar -- fresh as a daisy, cute as a button, and sharp as a tack.

A run-on sentence walks into a bar it starts flirting. With a cute little sentence fragment.

An allusion walks into a bar, despite the fact that alcohol is its Achilles heel.

The subjunctive would have walked into a bar, had it only known.

A dyslexic walks into a bra.

A simile walks into a bar, as parched as a desert.

A gerund and an infinitive walk into a bar, drinking to forget.

A hyphenated word and a non-hyphenated word walk into a bar and the bartender nearly chokes on the irony.

David Needle (Nov 1, 2020, Facebook) (excerpt)



TOM GAULD

**PEN** Professional Editors Network  
@MplsPEN

Roses are red  
And John's eyes are blue  
But you said they were hazel  
Back on page 52  
#CopyeditorValentines

6:35 PM · Feb 14, 2022 · Twitter Web App

MARTIN LUTHER, writing during the Bubonic plague of the 1500s:

I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I will fumigate, purify the air, administer medicine, and take medicine. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order to not become contaminated, and thus perchance inflict and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, He will surely find me. But, I have done what He has expected of me, and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person, but will go freely. This is a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy, and does not tempt God.



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