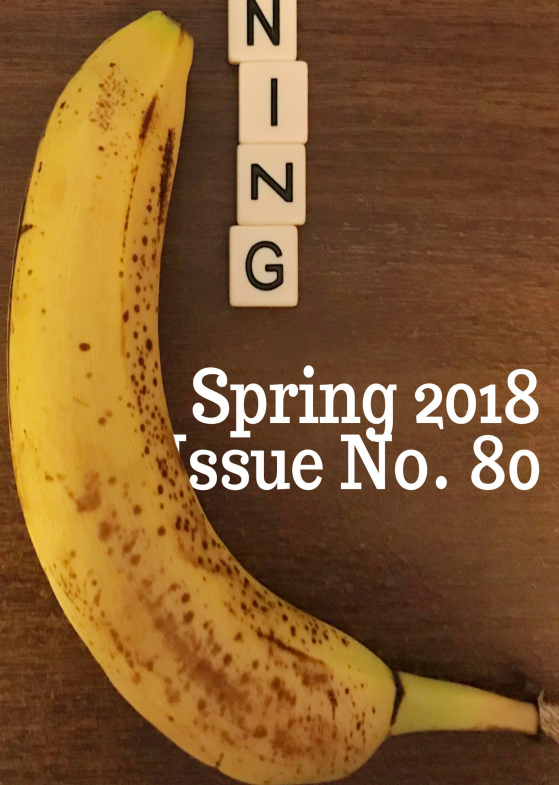


PASQUINADE
WINDING
NATIONAL



Spring 2018
Issue No. 80



It was down to Sylvia Acevedo and I when I went all in. She folded. I walked away from the game with over fifty grand and the rights to the Girl Scout Cookie brand. I won all the cookies, man!

But fear not, carb junkie. I will not get rid of the classics you've come to know and horde. I do intend to add some pizzazz to the current stable of standbys. I have to put my own mark on the legend, do I not?

- We are the Starbucks Generation and we love our coffee! Our new **Pick-Me-Ups** will slap a creamy mocha filling between two snappy cappuccino-flavored wafers.
- Girl Scout Cookies have always been one size fits all, but we'll be shrinking our new **Cinna-Biscs** to a bite size that will please our tiniest fans! These cinnamon-flavored mini cookies are perfect for the tyke who's just starting on solid food and great for the adult that loves snarfing cookies by the handful. Plus every tenth cookie is "hot" cinnamon and there's no way to tell until you chomp down on that mutha.
- Our cookies are arguably more popular with adults than any other demographic and our new **ButterScotch Scotties** are just for them. These buttery shortbreads are infused with a substantial quantity of 12-Year-Old Macallan Scotch. We may get into some trouble with these but I think it'll be totally worth it.
- Little girls love unicorns. Our new **Unicorn Drops** will be a true test of that love. Her name was "Winnie" and there is a little bit of her essence in every cookie. If this one does well, we'll be in the market for another unicorn soon.

Look for these and maybe another surprise or two in 2019's fresh batch of tasty treats from the Girl Scouts of America.

Ed Lynn
Editor-in-Chief
National Pasquinade



Music has always come hand-in-hand with putting together each issue of the *National Pasquinade*, inspiring its content and creation. Hell, "muse" is even part of the word! Therefore, it's only fitting that it should have its own section. What follows here is the music that has inspired the creation of this issue. A [Spotify playlist](#) is available for your listening pleasure (Note that some songs included in the playlist are not kid- or work-friendly).

- "Winning" (Santana)
- "Life's Been Good" (Joe Walsh)
- "We Are the Champions" (Queen)
- "Win It All" (Smash Palace)
- "Finish What Ya Started" (Van Halen)
- "The Winner Takes It All" (ABBA)
- "Win Your Love For Me" (Sam Cooke)
- "The Distance" (Cake)
- "Winners and Losers" (Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds)*
- "Playing To Win" (Little River Band)
- "I'm Gonna Win" (Foreigner)
- "Eye of the Tiger" (Survivor)
- "Started From the Bottom" (Drake)
- "The Final Countdown" (Europe)
- "Roar" (Katy Perry)
- "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now" (McFadden and Whitehead)
- "Thunder Road" (Bruce Springsteen)
- "Every 1's a Winner" (Hot Chocolate)
- "Live to Win" (Motörhead)
- "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now" (Starship)
- "On Top of the World" (Imagine Dragons)
- "Winner" (Pet Shop Boys)
- "Marathon" (Rush)

Do you consider yourself a pro at making mixtapes? Compile a Muselist for a future theme to inspire us! Or make up your own themed Muselist! Maybe you can inspire a future issue with your list! Send your themed Muselists to submissions@nationalpasquinade.com.

*The **National Pasquinade** is ahead of the pack, and I'm not talking about the one that comes in sixes. Its Editor-in-Chief and Ribbon-in-Blue, **Ed Lynn**, is pleased to present some award-winning silliness with **National Pasquinade's** Perpetual Mascot and Bowling Trophy, **Lyndon B. Oswalt**. Also contributing are **The Midnight Tree Bandit**, who is currently on a winning streak the likes of which has not been seen in southern Maine since something something Stephen King. Inspiration for this magazine continues to be Berke Breathed and all of the contributors from the past seventy-nine issues of the **National Pasquinade**, regardless of whether or not they ever existed.*

*Also contributing to this issue in many complicated ways are the awesome members of **The Occoquan Pasquinade**, a Facebook group that gathers artists, writers, and other ne'er-do-wells together to build a funny magazine and support each other through constructive criticism and positive reinforcement. If you are an artist or writer of funny things and, for some strange reason you're interested in being a regular contributor, you'll want to be a part of this group. Details are at <http://www.nationalpasquinade.com/the-occoquan-pasquinade/>.*

The Occoquan Pasquinade, at press time, includes: Holly Adams, Bryan Cox, Liana Miller Gott, Lara Hayes, Wayne Tuttle, and Kim Woo.

National Pasquinade [ISSN 1097-3834] is more-or-less produced more-or-less quarterly by The Occoquan Pasquinade, locally grown in Occoquan, VA, but spreading out across North America like kudzu. Entire contents of Volume 2, Number 6, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#) during the Spring of 2018, except where noted. Tweet to us [@pasquinade](#). Like us on [Facebook](#). Visit us at <http://www.nationalpasquinade.com> where you can read the blog, see the upcoming themes and, well, whatever else you do while viewing the website is your own business. What the hell are you doing with those twenty-sided dice?! Seriously, man, a little dignity! Electronic submissions can be sent to submissions@nationalpasquinade.com.

Please do not smoke this PDF.

MARFORIO

SIRS:

Once you realize how bad my eyesight really is, my songs take on a whole new dynamic.

Ed Sheeran
Suffolk, England

SIRS:

That bastard had the gaul to call me a “snowflake”? Me?! I assure you, friends, I am utterly and completely snowballs!

Frosty the Snowman
Magic Hat Village, AK

SIRS:

Me too.

Caitlyn Jenner
Malibu, CA

SIRS:

My boys and I are in the final round of the Fifth Annual Queen’s Knickers Pub and Horseshoe Pit Trivia Bowl, totally spacing on the last question, and we’re hoping you can help us out with the answer:

What world-famous American humor magazine based in a small Virginia town recently went digital only and regularly pokes fun at Phil Collins in its fake letters section?

If you could get me the answer quickly, there’s a pint of Guinness waiting here for you.

Cheers,
Phred Colyers
Miami, FL

SIRS:

If my daddy says I was hatched, I don't need to see the eggshells.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders
*Chicken Farm outside of
Washington, DC*

SIRS:

At least our detergent pods are popular again.
Proctor & Gamble
Cincinnati, OH

SIRS:

You thought I was serious when I said Trump's overall health was excellent? C'mon, guys, we're talking about Donald J. Trump! Everyone knows the "J" stands for Jell-O! I thought you, of all people, would get the joke!

Dr. Ronny Jackson
*White House Doctors' Closet
Washington, DC*

SIRS:

People talking behind your back, saying things about you, maybe derogatory things? Well, I am here to get all of that secret chatter under control. Give me a call, I have reasonable rates.

The Whisper Whisperer
Des Moines, IA

SIRS:

Presidents have all left their mark on the White House. Everyone knows about Nixon adding a bowling alley in the basement, Carter adding solar panels to the roof, Reagan removing the solar panels that Carter added, and Obama adding solar panels back to the roof.

But I think Trump has gone too far adding a 24-hour McDonald's in the West Wing. It's a travesty and simply disrespectful of the office!

Walter Jackson
*Manager, West Wing
McDonald's
Washington, DC*

SIRS:

We've never actually met, but I work for the company that takes your refuse to the landfill each week. We're a little concerned by what we've been seeing in our weekly collection.

First, I wasn't aware that it was possible any group of individuals could consume the amount of coffee we're seeing. We've been talking amongst ourselves and the only conclusion we've been able to draw is that you're using it for something besides drinking.

Second, what's with all the bananas? Seriously, every week looks like the gross national product of Ecuador! Do you have a hundred monkeys with typewriters in a back room?

Finally, we're noticing a shitload (no pun intended) of soiled adult diapers. We don't even want to imagine what the deal is with those.

Isaac Thicke
*Trucks of Junk Waste
Management
Prince William County, VA*

SIRS:

I would just like to assure your readers that I am not, repeat not, an evil super-villain with designs on taking over the world.

Sure, I've built robots that could just as easily be used for evil than for good. I choose "good."

And, yes, I have an army of very strong henchmen and some of them are, in part, bionic and have the ability to shoot lasers from at least one of their eyes. But, in my defense, they'd just be employed by black ops organizations if they weren't picking up my dry cleaning and half-caff, no-foam latte. What else can I say? I have a very attractive health insurance plan that includes laser beam eyes and bionic limbs.

And, sure, there's that secret island I bought last year where I tinker with my more controversial experiments. Wait until you see what I'm doing with lambs!

I know how it all looks from the outside, but I assure you that it is not what it looks like.

Elon Musk
*What part of "secret" do you not
understand, Gladys?*

SIRS:

Holy shit! I just got the Ed Sheeran joke from before. Because he can only see shapes? Funny stuff, guys! I'm probably the only one that got it. On account of my superb and excellent intellectualism for everyday humorousness. You know I scored, like 400 on my IQ test. Or maybe that was my SAT score. It was a long time ago.

By the way, how come you didn't print any fake letters this issue from Donald Trump?

Donald Trump
Washington, DT

SIRS:

I know it's been bugging you. The truth is they haven't allowed me to get within fifty feet of anything sharp since I left CBS. That includes razor blades.

David Letterman
North Salem, NY

SIRS:

Alright, guys! Here he comes. Stingers ready! On three!

A swarm of bees
*Hiding behind that tree up
ahead*

SIRS:

The truth is that every Communications Director President Trump has hired is told that they have to solve all the clues to free themselves of the position. It's his concept for a new reality show for NBC once his term is up. It's based on those Escape Rooms that are so popular these days. He's calling it "Escape Job" and he says it will bring tremendous ratings!

Hope Hicks
Washington, DC

SIRS:

I was just relaxing with a nice hot shower when the curtains fly back and standing there were two Girl Scouts trying to sell me they're fucking cookies! In my own goddamned bathroom!

I don't know how the hell they got in, but I ended buying two dozen boxes.

Louis C.K.
New York, NY

SIRS:

I'd like to announce a new initiative right here in the pages of your magazine, the *National Pasquinade*.

In the nineteen years since Columbine, school shootings have become far too commonplace. The recent incidents in Florida and elsewhere have us reflecting much more deeply than our usual deep reflecting. We've said many times over the years that the only thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.

But, Wayne, you say, we're dealing with kids here. They're still in their formative years. They're not even "guys" yet; they're still just kids!

Thus was born the "Good Guns For Good Kids" campaign. Its aim is to target good children and provide them with the safety and confidence that comes with the ownership of a firearm. These fine weapons will be provided to eligible children from grades K-12 absolutely free of charge, and predominantly subsidized by the U.S. Government. We've got the buy-in from the president himself, most of the legislative branch (some of those guys are pricey!), and some rad guys with Confederate flags and white hoodies.

But we need your help, too. Guns (and democrats) can be expensive. Donate today and help us arm our schoolchildren! Call 1-646-324-8250 today and say "I support your cause and want to donate as much as I possibly can!"

Together, we can prevent these massacres with some massacres of our own!

Wayne LaPierre, Jr.
National Rifle Association
Roanoke, VA

SIRS:

This is a long shot, but I read that the President of U.S. reads your magazine. Others say he reads nothing, but here go something.

Donald! If you reading this, Boris is angry you only pay half of bill for Gold Shower Special Request #8. He sending men if you not pay! These men make Putin look like Furby! They will disappear you!

Also, I being pregnant with your pee baby!

Mistress Excretion
Moscow, Russia



YOU'VE MADE IT.

You have an amazing corner office where you don't have to look at those goddamned IT freaks. You have a company car custom-made by Elon Musk. You have your own helicopter. Because HELICOPTER.

What's left for you to accomplish? CEO? Senator? POTUS? Please! You're too smart for that!

How about a subscription to the *National Pasquinade*? It's free and all it takes is an email address. We'll take care of the rest!

Just point your internet browser to <http://eepurl.com/ddRnbf> and signup for email notifications today!

The Tortoise and the Hair

A "Fable" by Douglas Carroll

As fables go, this one is not that great. It has no perceptible life lesson to convey. It doesn't result in a pithy phrase like "The early bird gets the worm." It's just a story.

Once upon a time, in a political landscape very similar to our current political landscape, there was a tortoise named Mitch.

Mitch was a very old tortoise and was quite satisfied with his durable tortoise shell, his practical tortoise shell spectacles, and his lengthy incumbency. He often bragged about the size of his incumbency to anyone he imagined was listening. Like interns, the media, and other members of Congress.

One afternoon, Mitch was at the local shopping mall, drinking a boba with his Japanese-American intern Kimmy, telling her how many times he had been re-elected by his constituents, when he felt a presence in his immediate vicinity. A force so negative, the open architecture lighting began to flicker. He went silent and turned abruptly.

"Hey Mitch."

It was the President of the United States. He was surrounded by a small entourage of Secret Service agents, two of which were working out the logistics of relocating a somewhat large booger from a third agent's left nostril. The President was oblivious to the second ring of this circus, focusing on the Congressman.

"Don. What brings you to the food court?"

"I was feeling peckish, Mitch, and I thought *Where would Mitch go to quell his peck?* I really do have the best thoughts."

Mitch was not very fond of the President. Mitch felt Don was an outsider, an uncultured buffoon that was elected to the highest office in the land as some sort of college prank gone wild. The President cracked his knuckles in the growing silence before Mitch's response. Mitch cringed audibly.

"You know, Don, I really need to run. I have a lot of work back at the office, don't I Kimmy?" The intern nodded. "Yes, I definitely have to run."

"And run you will, Mitch. But I'd like to make you a little wager. If I beat you back to your office, you have to take all the heat for this Russia thing."

"But you said there was no collusion. Are you saying there was?"

"Oh, there was no collusion. This is a different Russia thing."

"Would you care to explain?"

"No."

After a long pause, Mitch asked what he could expect if he happened to win this little race.

"What do you want?"

"Impeachment."

"Sure. Why not?"

"That doesn't mean that I want you to throw peaches at me."

"Oh. Are there peaches involved at all?"

"No."

"So, I can keep all the peaches?"

"Uh, sure?"

"Nice. Peaches are the best! You have a deal. I make the best deals!"

"So, Kimmy can count down and..."

"Go!" Don interrupted, and started running toward Entrance 4. It was actually a distant relative of running, closer to a clumsy walk while carrying two large bags of potatoes. His entourage had little trouble catching up to him, then assisting him through the sliding door.

"Shouldn't we go, sir?" Asked Kimmy.

"He doesn't know where my office is and there's no way he's asking for directions. So I have plenty of time."

Three days later, the President walks into Mitch's office, wheezing hard, completely out of breath. An agent hands him a Gatorade, but he slaps it from the agent's hand and screams "The blue one! I want the blue one!"

"No trouble finding my office, Don?"

"No problem. Made a few stops along the way. Surprise trip to Sweden. Did you know Air Force One will not fly me directly to the Russell Senate Office Building?"

"I don't imagine they would. I guess that means I win the race."

"And I get those juicy, juicy peaches."

“Sure. Just sign this document and you’ll be rolling in peaches.”

“Sweet! You know, Mitch, you’re not so bad after all. No matter what Paul Ryan says about you.”

“Wait, what does Paul say about me?”

As the sun sets on this tale, I remind you that this is just a silly story like all the others in this magazine. No moral to glean from its words, just an empty giggle to whet your palate for the next gem.

Ink By Numbers

By Ed Lynn

It wasn't unusual for Michael to wake up with back pain. He didn't treat his body like a temple as much as a dumpster at a cheap Chinese restaurant. At his age, battling the bulge would be like spitting at mimes in a hurricane. It didn't get weird until he caught a glimpse of his lower back in the bathroom mirror.

The source of the pain was just above his butt crack, no more than a half inch high. It was the number fourteen, reversed in the mirror but unmistakably numerical. He wet a washcloth and tried unsuccessfully to scrub it off.

To his best recollection he had come straight home from work the previous evening after an exhausting day, microwaved and snarfed down a frozen meatloaf and mashed potatoes dinner, and went to bed. Sleep came quickly; there was no alcohol, no drugs, no fun of any kind necessary to get him to REM. This tattoo, and after additional scrubbing in the shower, he was convinced that it was a permanent tattoo, was a complete mystery. A mystery he would have to deal with later since he had morning meetings and was already running late.

As the Q3 Planning Meeting drew to a close, Michael tapped the shoulder of Fred Philippe. "Hey, Phil. Could you stop by my office in ten? I need you to take a look at something."

Fifteen minutes later, Phil walked into Michael's office, pen and pad in hand. Michael asked him to close the door behind him and lock it. Phil considered this a moment, then turned the latch on the door. He slowly turned to look Michael in the eye. "What's this all about, Michael?"

"I need to show you something." Michael started to lift up his shirt.

"Whoa whoa," Phil said loudly as he turned toward the door. "I think there's been a huge misunderstanding!"

"Phil! Stop! It's not what you think!" Michael turned his back to Phil. "Just look!"

Phil turned and stared at Michael's back. After a few moments, he decided to say, "Nice... 'tramp stamp?'"

"I didn't have this done, Phil! I just woke up this morning and there it was! I don't even know what the 'fourteen' is supposed to signify!"

"What about the 'twenty-three?'"

"What 'twenty-three?'"

"There's a 'fourteen' and a 'twenty-three.' Maybe you should've gotten a heart with 'MOM' in it."

"Again, I did not have this done! It just appeared. And it sounds like it's getting worse. Is there some sort of virus that manifests as numerical tattoos?"

"Not that I've heard, but who knows? You sure someone didn't just Sharpie you as a prank?"

"I live alone and haven't been near a party in a month. Besides, if there's a 'twenty-three' there now, it's spontaneously appeared since I woke up and I've been in meetings all morning."

"Michael, I think you need to see someone. A doctor? Maybe a numerologist?"

"It says here that you've developed a rash," Dr. Prenup entered the examination room, his focus on the file folder containing Michael's pre-exam information. "When did you first notice this rash?"

"It's not exactly a rash, Doc. I just didn't know how to describe it to the nurse without sounding batshit crazy." Michael stood up and turned around, spreading the back of his gown. The doctor's attention shifted from the folder to Michael's back.

"So. Someone Sharpie'd some numbers on your back? Nothing a little rubbing alcohol won't fix." He started for the supply cabinet.

"It's not Sharpie'd on, Doc. It won't come off. I think it's tattoo'ed on, but I haven't been near a tattoo parlor. The 'fourteen' was there when I woke up this morning and the 'twenty-three' was there by lunchtime."

"So the other two numbers are new?"

"Fuck! There's more?"

The doctor snapped a picture with his flip phone and showed it to Michael.

"What the hell is going on, Doc? Why is this happening?"

"Have you considered seeing a numerologist?" Unlike Phil, the doctor said this with a straight face.

Rembrandt Jenkins touched the top stone embedded in the rock wall and repelled back to solid ground. Unstrapping the safety harness, he walked across the room to his desk as the intercom buzzed and Ms. Miller, his indispensable assistant, announced that a new client was waiting in the lobby.

He dabbed the sweat from his face with a towel emblazoned with the Greek letter π , then moved a mouse to wake the sleeping computer. He quickly pulled up a digital file on Michael and skimmed it. "Send him in..." Jenkins said as he pushed the intercom button with one hand and quickly adjusted his neoprene shorts with the other, "...now."

As Michael entered the enormous office, admiring the high ceiling and what appeared to be a helicopter in the far corner, he said this wasn't what he expected a numerologist's office would look like.

"How many other numerologists have you seen?"

"You're my first."

"Then why would you have any expectations?"

The two men stared at each other for several uncomfortable minutes before Jenkins asked, "Why are you here? Wrestling with the repercussions of drinking milk past its expiration date? The pervasive dilemma of whether you should switch to a No. 3 pencil keeping you up at night? Trouble understanding the Dewey Decimal System?"

Michael stood up and showed Jenkins his back. Jenkins stared at the numbers, tapped some notes on his computer, then snapped some pictures on a Nikon digital camera equipped with a ring flash and a rabbit's foot. After this flurry of activity, Jenkins asked Michael if the numbers held any special significance to him, maybe a special date or something more mystical."

"Not that I'm aware. The 'fourteen' showed up this morning and the rest have been showing up spontaneously during the day. How many are there now? I can't see."

"All of 'em." He showed Michael one of the pictures he'd taken. There were six numbers, all in circles now. The sixth number was in a darker circle than the rest.

"They look like..."

"I've seen this before. Seriously, it's nothing to worry about. You'll wake up tomorrow and they'll be gone."

"Really?"

"Really. Until then, just take it easy. Go home. Watch some NCIS reruns. Get some rest."

When Michael woke the next morning, he went straight to the bathroom and looked at his back. Sure enough, the numbers were gone.

Because of the state's privacy laws, there was no requirement to reveal the name of the solitary Powerball winner. Nor was there a requirement to mention the five other times this particular winner had picked the six winning numbers. Rumor has it that he is in negotiations to purchase an island in the South Pacific.

Nose Trimming Is For Winners

by Wayne Tuttle

Winners have an unmistakable aura about them that instantly commands admiration and respect. They may differ greatly in appearance, but one thing all winners have in common is an impeccably groomed nose. While the political leaders, military commanders, robber barons, and other winners of bygone eras often deliberately cultivated dense, bristling thickets in their nostrils as a way of intimidating their opponents and detractors, times have changed. Contemporary society prefers bodily orifices that are not noticeably hirsute, especially when they belong to winners. Today, a rogue, dangling nose hair can do almost as much irreparable damage to a winning image than feet of clay in Classical times.

It is for this reason, National Pasquinade is pleased to offer as a service to the winners known as our readers these simple instructions for safely defoliating your nostrils.

Trimming Your Nose Hair

Use sharp scissors that fit comfortably inside your nostrils.

Find a well lit, stationary place with a dry, level floor and a mirror. Keep your feet firmly on the floor at all times when using the scissors.

Slowly insert scissors into your nostrils to a depth of not more than one half inch (12.7 mm).

Position the blades of the scissors on each side of the hair you wish to trim, open scissors, then close with enough force to sever the hair. Repeat as often as necessary and/or desired. Do not

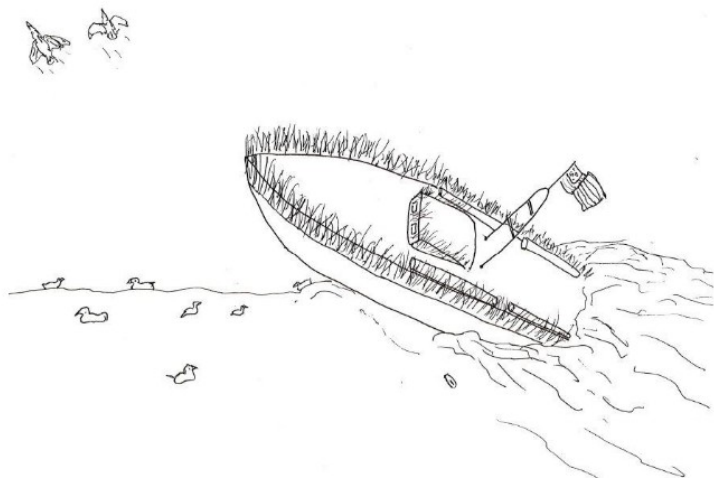
attempt to force the scissors to open wider than the diameter of your nostrils.

WARNING: Do not attempt this procedure while exercising; exorcising; operating vehicles or machinery; during earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, or other natural disasters; if you are hallucinating, hysterical, heavily medicated (self- or otherwise); prone to involuntary twitching; engaging in sexual activity; fantasizing about sexual activity; giving birth; thinking about giving birth; grocery shopping; constipated; incontinent; easily startled; easily offended; trying to fend off a swarm of stinging insects; conducting an orchestra; or yelling at heavy machinery.

Another Day in the Blind

Story & Illustrations by Chris Espenshade

Thirty seconds from shooting time, with a large flock of greenheads sitting in our decoys, the hunters in the next blind arrived. They were riding in what started its life as a PT boat. It was apparently hard to steer, because they ran right through the center of our spread, fouling or outright cutting many of our decoy lines. They reached the blind and attempted to cut off the motor, which had last been tuned when John F. Kennedy was at the helm. Will E nodded in their direction and said “poor man’s GPS.” I must have looked more puzzled than usual because Will E felt the need to explain. “They can never get lost. They can always follow the oil slick back to the boat ramp.”



It was another day in the marsh with my old friend Will E and his latest dog. Years ago, when I used to hitch-hike, I would occasionally find a lost tool on the side of the road—vice grips, a socket ratchet, maybe a screwdriver. They were often pretty beat up, but I would think *that looks like crap, but it probably still works. And it's free.* Will E followed the same philosophy with retrievers. They just appeared to him. To my knowledge, he never once paid for a dog, and never once trained a dog. It was always an adventure.

Now, a few words about the new dog. I have read a lot of hunting magazines. I have watched DU TV.¹ I have shot over a lot of different dogs. I even watch the national dog show after the Macy's Parade each Thanksgiving. Rex was not a recognizable breed and had no physical traits I had ever seen on any breed.² I mean, he wasn't even a decent mutt, where you could spend some time saying "oh, yep, you can see the terrier in that snout. See that thick tail? Must have some Lab blood." His coat was one of many colors, to break Biblical, and he looked like somebody had randomly applied Bondo patches to the boat they camo-painted themselves, poorly. There was no logic whatsoever in his coat. There were splotches of long hair, curly hair, short hair all intermingled. I asked Will E about the lineage of Rex. He mumbled something about Inspector 57 out of the Maiden of China, but I think he was just reading from the slip he found in the pocket of his new hunting jacket.

At least Rex was well-behaved, for the most part. He had an inordinate fascination with where his testicles would have been, had he not been to the vet. I was going to say "had he not been fixed" but there was nothing fixed about this dog. He constantly produced a canine imitation of an asthmatic at a pie-eating contest. Occasionally he would take a break from the slurping and smacking to lick me on the cheek or drink out of my coffee cup. I am not proud of those moments. I just wanted it on-the-record so the doctors will know what to suspect when I get to the hospital ("I'd of never thunk of canine syphilis.")³

Our ears just started to function again after PT 109 shut down and the newcomers settled in among a foot-deep midden of Red Bull and Monster cans, when we heard the far-off call of a hen mallard. Sure enough, there were three ducks headed in our direction. Will E got to calling. Will E had listened to a lot of Parliament and The Funkadelics when he was young and impressionable, and these long-ingrained Funk rhythms tended to creep into his calling tempo. You can imagine the ducks talking to one another.

“Let’s land down there.”

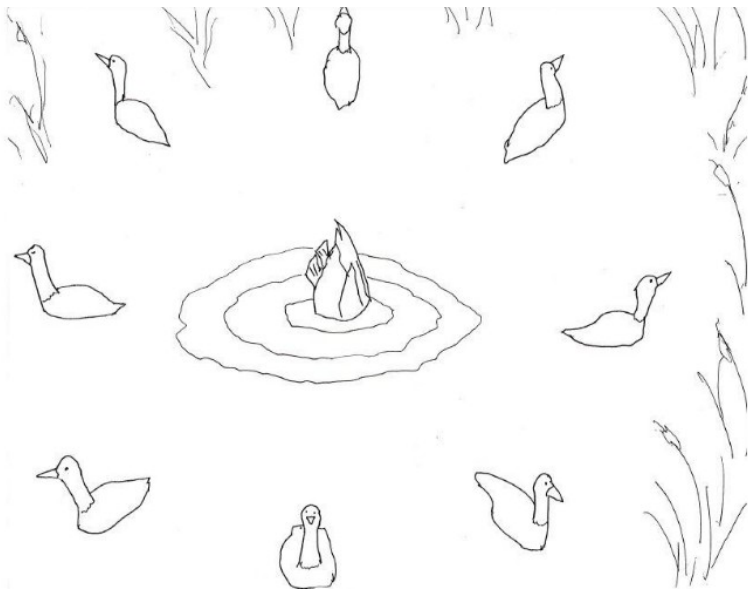
“Why?”

“For some reason I want to make my funk the P Funk, I wants to get funky up.”

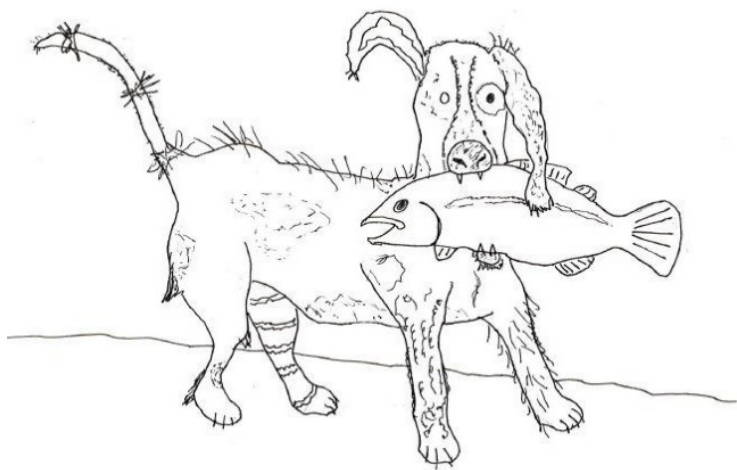
Everybody else calls using “Three Blind Mice” for their cadence. I share the blind with a guy channeling George Clinton. All we got was a dismissive glance from one of the ducks, that for some reason gave me a flashback to my first year in college. You know, that sort of you-have-got-to-be-kidding expression, which I have seen a lot of pretty girls give... to other guys.⁴ By the time the Boeing 767 passed between us and the three ducks, we were convinced they were probably out of range. Of course, this did not keep the PT Boat guys from letting loose.

It sounded as if each was shooting something approaching a four gauge. I did not forget to add ten to that. I meant four gauge. As in, you could probably have shot a cue ball out of one of those things. I think they were shooting five-inch magnums, because you could actually see the dense cloud of shot out to about a hundred yards. These did not sound like shotguns. They were like something fired in “Tom Sawyer” times to make corpses rise to the surface of Old Man River. Will E, who relished in bizarre, yet mild, curses, queried “The Pope on a pogo stick! What in tarnation was that?”

As the morning wore on, we suspected our spread might be causing ducks to veer off. I say “veer off” to mean make a high-speed U-turn about three miles from our decoys. The spread wasn’t working. Using our savvy and keen hunters’ logic, we decided that these ducks must be wary, as if they had been shot at by other idiots. We decided the best way to decoy them was with a spread of ducks that were even warier than them. I set a ring of about ten decoys, all high-head, alert-looking numbers, spread face-out as guards or sentinels around a circle maybe fifteen yards across (and I use the term “circle” very loosely). In the center, I put an oversize feeder. Will E asked “why oversize?” Because that’s the one that gets to eat. These wary birds are big on logic and we needed to outthink them.



For whatever reason, we started to get some shots. I don't know if it was the change in the spread or Will E's shift to "Flashlight," but we started seeing a few singles and doubles coming through. I wounded one, which splashed a pretty good way out in the river. Now we got to see Rex in action. You've probably all, at one time or another, been behind an old car or truck on which the rear wheels do not share alignment with the front, and you are mystified how it can possibly travel in a straight line. Rex ran like that, and he swam even worse. He was occasionally startled at being passed by his own tail. "Joseph Smith in a Speedo! I thought I had seen it all." Will E was a cross-denominational blasphemer. But that dog could retrieve. I mean, I didn't even know we had any walleyes over five pounds in that river.

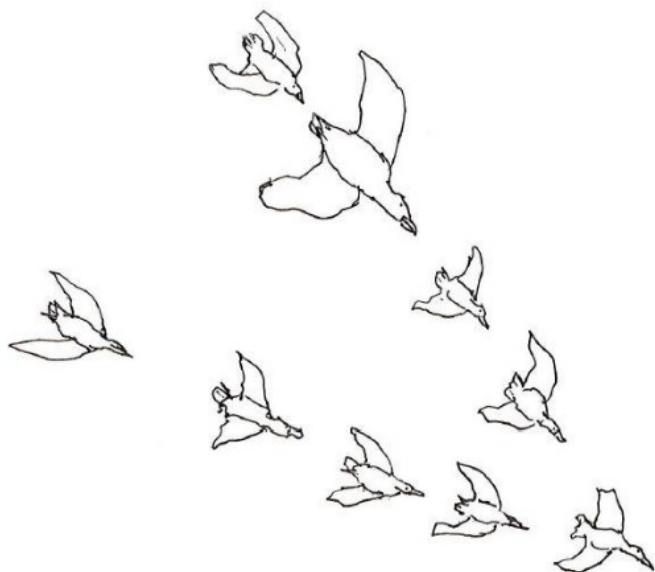


Rex was so proud, wagging his tail like nobody's business. Which, of course, made his ghost balls itch.

But, hey, we had at least hit one. All the PT 109 guys had managed was to wing a Harley rider on the highway about a half-mile away. They didn't even try to retrieve him. I mean, that's just unsportsmanlike.

By late afternoon, we actually had a couple of ducks each, which Rex had retrieved without too much of a struggle. Will E allowed that Rex had just needed to find his groove, "like Buddha at the craps table."

About this time, we spotted a flock of mallards headed our way. Ten were normal size, and one was twice as big as the others. "Now this looks promising. I love it when a plan comes together." Will E spoke to them, telling them to "Get Up on the Down Stroke." They turned and approached on the side away from PT 109, a.k.a. the demilitarized zone. We flipped a coin for who would have the honor of trying to shoot the giant drake, and I lost.⁵



And in they came. When the massive drake cupped his wings to brake, the blast of air literally blew my hat off, and the PT 109 guys shot it (the hat, not the drake). Will E hit the drake twice, and it was clear that the duck was going down in the river. "Rex, put down his sandwich and go get that duck." The dog had missed the whole thing, but the splash was so loud that he got a direction and lit out. We encouraged him the best we could, because we could see the PT 109 guys trying to start their craft so they could steal the bird. I assume they had visions of the oversized trophy hanging above the mantelpiece, while they guzzled energy drinks and told fantastic lies to their girlfriends who all look like Ainsley Beeman, but I digress.

Suffice it to say there was a lot of noise and much belching of black, grey, and blood red smoke (the red being something you don't see every day), and we could hear our decoys being caught in the torpedo tubes. After an eternity, we could barely make out through the haze Rex sort of paddling in our direction with something large in his mouth. We were elated. We were not elated because Rex had retrieved the monster drake, but because we finally had an answer as to what had happened to Jimmy

Hoffa's body. Will E commented "Jesus Christ drinking decaf," which pretty well summarized our day in the blind.

A professional archaeologist, Chris Espenshade branched into creative writing in 2017. He's had works accepted for publication by *The Write Launch*, *The Paragon Journal*, *The RavensPerch*, *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature* (thrice), *The Raven Chronicles' Journal* (twice), *Life in the Finger Lakes* on-line (twice), and *Georgia Outdoor News*. *Another Day in the Blind* is the first chapter of his hunting-fishing farce in progress.

¹ Not just the episodes featuring Ainsley Beeman, whose voice makes me think of caramelized bacon, but I digress.

² Other than large and clumsy.

³ Yes, I suspect I have misspelled "syphilis," which is a good thing. I mean, imagine if you're so familiar with the disease that you knew the proper spelling. "Doc, I think you spelled it differently last time."

⁴ Boy, I just barely saved that one.

⁵ Someday when my wife is not reading my stuff, I will tell you how Will E and I decided who would first ask her out. Will E now finds women using the same method he employs for retrievers.

The Agony of Compleat Defeat

by Douglas Carroll

This is so not fun anymore.

When I destroyed the Man of Titanium, Mighty Man, with a simple rubber band I bought at the Dollar Store? That was fun. When I defeated the Phantom Fog with a package of All-Purpose Flour and a pocketknife, that was a blast! And when I brought down Blaze of Glory with a Dyson vacuum cleaner, I celebrated with some Fireball whiskey on ice.

But now, there's no one left to challenge my unmatched intellect. All the superheroes have been put in their place and the world is mine to do with as I please. Men are afraid of me and bow in my presence in the hope that I will spare their lives. Women throw their naked bodies at me in hopes that I will make all their dreams come true. Children are exterminated as soon as they stop being cute, so there is enormous pressure in my new world order to remain cute.

As you might imagine, this all started to impress a girl. Her name was Summer and, like the season, she shone in my heart. She was my high school crush and I longed to worm my way into her heart. She barely knew I existed. Those few times that I registered on her boy-dar would involve some degree of public awkwardness—a surprise erection during an oral report (twice), when the football team hung me up in the school library by my own underwear (three times), or standing right in front of her stammering my proposal to be her accompaniment to a high school dance (every one of them).

By my senior year, I began to plot out a course of action that would force Summer to not only acknowledge me, but to be my one and only. I would defeat every superhero, every hero, and every would-be challenger that would come up against me. I would start small, with the jocks.

By Homecoming, they had ingested so much estrogen, they were more interested in knitting themselves new uniforms than playing in the big game. Still, I was a nobody in Summer's eyes.

Although my superior intelligence could have allowed my entrance into any college around the world, I chose to follow Summer to Central State Community Collidge. That is how they spelled "college." It was the second of two recommendations by their legal department. The first was to put "college" in quotes and that lasted one year. It was changed when, at graduation, the dean was forced to use "air quotes" every time the institution's name was mentioned in his speech.

At CSCC, there were certain "professors" that believed they were above all rules. I suppose when you're not paid as well as educators in top-tier schools like Harvard and Yale, you feel entitled to bend to rules to your favor. A few bucks to change that "C" to a "B." Did they understand what they were doing to the curve? Did they even care?

Obviously, I had to do something. There would be a shortage of qualified instructors at CSCC after the *Great Pay For Play Purge of 2012*, but I still managed to finish at the top of my class. But even as I gave a very moving speech at our graduation, I could see that Summer was more interested in her iPhone.

After college, I landed a lucrative job at Dow Chemical where I made the bulk of my fortune from patents for new pesticides to target specific varieties of crop-killing insects, a solution that could be added to tap water that reduced the risk of cancer by 91%, and a Post-It Note adhesive that could withstand hurricane force winds (not surprisingly, the US House and the Senate were our biggest customers for this). I would use this fortune to fund the construction of a secret lair, deep underground beneath a house on Prescott Avenue that just happened to be directly across the street from a house occupied by my high school crush.

The high-tech surveillance equipment eventually revealed that Summer was dating someone quite obviously inferior. It was only a matter of time before I discovered he had a secret life. He couldn't fly or bend steel with his bare hands, but he could move very fast. My high speed cameras, however, were no match for his speed. At first, they registered strange blurs but, when I viewed the footage frame-by-frame, I discovered him and his ability. He was dressed in animal fur of some sort, which was disgusting and cruel as far as I was concerned, and I soon drew the connection to the superhero our local news was calling "The Cheetah."

He would be my first super-casualty. It's really amazing how an inexpensive set of spike strips and a simple clothesline can be used to take down an asshole with speed issues. Summer mourned her loss for about a week before she'd moved on. Not surprisingly, this new guy also had abilities.

He went by the ridiculous name of "Mr. Frosty." I mean, seriously, the name makes you crave a milkshake, right? His super catch-phrase was "That's MISTER Frosty to you," just before he manifested a giant snowball around your body. Summer was dating a super-villain (and I can't be the only one to see the irony of Summer dating a Winter).

Hero or villain, it didn't matter. Mr Frosty would be done in by a microwave gun that I cobbled together using spare parts. Even I was surprised at the size of the explosion. I heard later that he had been taking pills for his heart.

Summer would continue to date losers—super and not so super—over the next few years. Each would die under mysterious (and frequently brilliant) circumstances. I can't say that I was responsible for all of these mishaps, but I had a hand in most of them. I was really starting to enjoy taking them out with the creativity and the challenge of being as cost-effective as possible. Superheroes, super-villains, politicians. No one was safe.

Six months ago, Summer was diagnosed with a serious case of radiation poisoning and passed away within weeks. I was furious! How had I missed it?! How could she have been fucking Nuclear Man without my knowledge?! How could I have missed the glow from her bedroom?! Sure, I see it now on the tapes, but I was so obsessed with my new hobby that I missed my opportunity to rescue my crush!

That's when I started wiping out every challenger on Earth. I was ruthless and all-encompassing in my destruction. Two days ago, I took over all the governments, kingdoms, and dictatorships of the world. I now ruled everyone and it was a huge rush until I came to my senses.

There is no love left for me in this world. There is only subservience. There is only fear.

There is this cute barista named Amanda.



*Lists are an undeniable part of our lives. We might as well have a bit of fun with them, eh? Occasionally, we'll even post a new **Listeria** topic on [Twitter](#) so that you can play along. Here are some of the best from the last few months.*

Unfortunately-Named Cartoon Characters

- Woody Woodpecker
- Benito Moose
- Vladimir Lion
- Adolph Hippo
- Donald the Drumpf
- Mitch McConnell

2018 High School Prom Themes

- Pity-Dancing the Chess Club
- Fifty Shades of Great!
- Beneath the Stars (maybe... I mean, who can tell with all of this smog?!)
- Cats! Cats! Cats!
- Chasing the Hangover

Themes for Your Spring 2018 Vision Board

- Canned Goods and Other Non-Perishables
- Glue and Fragments of Yarn
- A collage of colorful Warby Parker frames
- Lisa, who lives across the street and likes to vacuum naked with the curtains open

Summer Gourmet Competitive Eating Calendar

- **June 2nd @ The Fancy Radish:** Smoked Leeks
- **June 9th @ Sparx:** Fried Chitlin Bread Rolls
- **June 16th @ The Gaslight:** Stuffed Mushroom Surprise
- **June 30th @ Prague X:** Poached Sea Urchin
- **July 14th @ Big Pearl's:** Iberian Pork Chops
- **July 21st @ Bueller:** Squid-Stuffed Eggplant
- **July 28th @ Last Mistake:** Buckwheat Crepes
- **August 4th @ Check Pleas:** Karaage Fried Chicken
- **August 11th @ Smashed Banana:** Geoduck

New Policies by EPA Chief Scott Pruitt

- That horrible stench when you walk outside is now federally-mandated.
- New school lunch programs to include lead-based paint chips.
- Introduces standard idiom "Where there's tap water, there's fire."
- Trees are now officially on their fucking own.
- Backing a constitutional amendment to allow Scott Pruitt to use sirens to navigate traffic when late for an important meeting.

Bottom Tier Candidates on Donald J. Trump's Administration Scab List

- Sean Hannity
- Steve Doocy
- Peter Doocy
- Literally anyone else named Doocy... it's just fun to say "Doocy"
- Keith, a shift manager at the Alexandria Outback (has a tremendous Aussie accent!)
- Jeeves
- Hooch (not Turner, though)

Got an idea for a list to be featured in a future installment of Listeria? Email us at submissions@nationalpasquinade.com with at least three bullet points for each list suggestion.

Contributors to Listeria this issue include: The Occoquan Pasquinade.





Although National Pasquinade does not accept advertising, there are times when there are companies, associations, coalitions, organizations, departments, books, bands, websites, trios, duos, or just some guy in a Ramones t-shirt who did you a solid back in 92, to which you want to give a little credit.

While the *National Pasquinade* is an expensive hobby that I call a "labor of love," it involves many hours of writing and rewriting material until it's suitable for print. Much of the writing and rewriting happens at a corner table in a small coffee and crepe shop here in Occoquan. If you happen to be in northern Virginia and find yourself hungry and in need of a Nitro Brew, you can't do much better than the [Grind n Crepe](#). Their caffeinated beverages have fueled some of the more interesting things you've read and many of those you will hopefully read in the future.

Back before the *National Pasquinade*, before its predecessor *idiot wind*, there was a terribly amateurish zine called *The Beacon*. One of the original friends of *The Beacon* and one of the original friends of the Editor-in-Chief for all of the above was a pleasant gentleman who liked to call himself Carlyle. This past March, he went and hitched himself to a lovely woman who calls herself Melissa. There was much celebration then (yay!) and, as long as the wine is flowing and their sails are filled with wind, the celebration will never end. Congrats to **Carlyle & Melissa** from all of us at *National idiot Beaconade*.