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DATING A SENIOR CITIZEN

discovering your partner is old af
page 34 | by hannah one cup



THE WORST OF US

investigating the infamy of the us fifty
page 38 | by wombstretcha the magnificent

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THE P-TOWN HAPS

I'm sure you've noticed all the green in this issue. I'm further sure you know why... But if green isn't your jam and you've always been more antagonist in nature, we recommend you rock all orange this St. Patrick's Day. There's no better way to upset Irish Catholics and showcase that Portland nonconformity that you hold so dear. That said, if you're not into stirring the pot and you'd like to take a more passive approach to your disaffection, you can always go old school and wear blue. That's right, folks. The patron saint of Ireland was associated with sky blue long before any shade of green. And you thought you couldn't learn anything from reading *Exotic*, huh? Mom would be so proud (at least until you told her where you grabbed the magazine...).

Now on to the industry haps! March brings a fresh list of *industry* events, birthdays, and anniversaries, and we'll start with DJ Dick Hennessy's 8th Annual *Miss T&A*. Over the entire month, your favorite entertainers will be competing to win it all, including the title of *Miss T&A 2023*. Check out the details for all seven rounds on page 20!

Ready for spring break? We sure the fuck are! Luckily, Lucky Devil Lounge is hosting Mel and Ruby's Spring Break Party on Saturday, March 4. Then, a week later, it's time to bust out those PJs and head to Stars Cabaret (Bridgeport) for Ray and Hailey's Pajama Party on Friday, March 10.

Let's cover the industry birthdays next... On Saturday, March 4, Jane's birthday party is at Guilty Pleasures. The following week, on Friday, March 10, it's Tristen's birthday party at Devils Point! Finishing out our birthdays this month, it's Jameson's birthday party at the Magic Tavern on Saturday, March 18 (make sure you wear black). Happy birthday to all three of you!

What's March without the mention of St. Patrick's Day parties, right? We have three such shamrock shindigs for you—and if you play it right, you should be able to make it to all of them. We'd suggest starting out east at Guilty Pleasures, then on to Dream On Saloon, and then finishing the night at The Lounge. Ending at The Lounge is the smart play, as it's not only a St. Patrick's Day Party but also their second anniversary! You already know the festivities will be on. Happy second anniversary!

Don't forget to hang out on the industry's rest night—every Sunday night at Dante's for Sinferno Cabaret. It's always chill, and there are always a lot of talented and unique stage sets. If you haven't been in a while, check it out!

POLEROTICA 2023

Yessir... Are you ready for the largest and most established pole performance and dance competition in the nation? *Polerotica* kicks off on April 7 at Guilty Pleasures and runs through every Friday (and one Thursday) until the end of May. We have all the essential dates listed for you on page 16!

Until next month, rock on, leprechaun!



Support your local businesses, including every industry business within these pages.



FRI 03 – CLUB DETOUR
8TH ANNUAL MISS T&A CONTEST (ROUND 1)

SAT 04 – GUILTY PLEASURES
JANE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

SAT 04 – LUCKY DEVIL
MEL & RUBY'S SPRING BREAK PARTY

SUN 05 – DANTE'S
SINFERNO CABARET

FRI 10 – DEVILS POINT
TRISTEN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

FRI 10 – DREAM ON SALOON
8TH ANNUAL MISS T&A CONTEST (ROUND 2)

FRI 10 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
PAJAMA PARTY

SAT 11 – THE LOUNGE
8TH ANNUAL MISS T&A CONTEST (ROUND 3)

SUN 12 – DANTE'S
SINFERNO CABARET

FRI 17 – ANGEL'S
8TH ANNUAL MISS T&A CONTEST (ROUND 4)

FRI 17 – DREAM ON SALOON
ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY

FRI 17 – GUILTY PLEASURES
ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY

FRI 17 – THE LOUNGE
2ND ANNIVERSARY & ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY

SAT 18 – MAGIC TAVERN
JAMESON'S BIRTHDAY! (NOIR)

SAT 18 – THE VENUE
8TH ANNUAL MISS T&A CONTEST (ROUND 5)

SUN 19 – DANTE'S
SINFERNO CABARET

FRI 24 – X EXOTIC LOUNGE
8TH ANNUAL MISS T&A CONTEST (ROUND 6)

SUN 26 – DANTE'S
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FRI 31 – GUILTY PLEASURES
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ROUND 4
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ROUND 5
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EXOTIC LOUNGE
ROUND 6
FRI, 3/24 @ 9PM
15 SW 2ND AVE



FINALS
FRI, 3/31 @ 9PM
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Pussy Facts

BY ESMERALDA RUPP-SPANGLE

Last month, we reflected on some of the nuttier facts about our most solid companions... dogs. The creatures who would, without a second thought, throw themselves into life-threatening danger to save you or your family. Who would, if you died, mourn wistfully over your bloated corpse and slowly pine away until they died of a broken heart?

So, this month, let's talk about our...other most widespread cohabitants. The ones who wouldn't sulk themselves to death and pine endlessly if we shucked off this mortal coil, but rather, who would start eating our dead bodies before we even went cold. Yes, of course, I mean cats.



If you love cats, you may have brain parasites.

Now, don't get me wrong here; I actually love cats. Their entitled, selfish, vain, sociopathic, vindictive nature is as endearing to me as can be. Full disclosure, though, I might also have brain parasites, so take my words with a grain of salt. *Toxoplasma gondii* is a wee beastie that can be carried and transmitted in a few ways, including eating undercooked meat or via contact with cat feces, aka the best excuse to procrastinate dealing with the litter box. Cats tend to carry it in an asymptomatic form, though if it infects humans or other animals, this isn't always the case. It can cause a fun grab bag of awfulness for us, including fever, muscle aches, rashes, and so on. If it's picked up by mice living near cats, it causes a proven reduction in their fear response toward predatory felines. Think of taking a couple of Xanax and doing a few huge bong rips before meeting a velociraptor or something.

Some new studies have shown that this may also be the case for humans. Humans carrying toxoplasmosis asymptotically may, in fact, be more than typically attendant, af-



Aww, look at how cute its stupid little claws are.

fectionate, tolerant, and generous towards our murderous feline companions. It's unknown what the percentage of folks who carry toxoplasmosis and never realize it is since "being willing to clean up hairballs" isn't typically something that we seek medical attention for. Research is still underway, but if true, this would mean that cats are, in fact, second-handedly creating an army of obedient, brain-corrupted, zombified human can-openers—as if we weren't that already.



When they're cuddling you, they're also claiming you as property.

You know that really cute, muffin-making thing they do with their claws right on the most exposed, sensitive part of your body? Like kneading bread dough with Freddy Kreuger claws? Or how they headbutt and rub their drooly gums on you, demanding pets—most especially when you're trying to do something with your hands that isn't that? We, as subservient dupes, typically regard this as our cats showing us love. In some ways, this may be true, but these behaviors certainly have an ulterior motive. Behind their ears, at the base of their tails, between their knife-wielding toe beans, and along the

sides of their faces are scent glands that get smeared off on your sweatpants (along with a generous wad of fur) when they try to trip you at 6 a.m., on the way to the toilet. This scent is something you wouldn't even notice, but in the cat world, it's like a neon sign that says, "This human is my property—back off, other cats!" So I guess if you regard being seen as chattel as being loved, this is the ultimate act of adoration.



No time like the present (for a nap).

If you've ever lived with or around cats, you likely won't be surprised to learn that they typically sleep from 12 to 16 hours a day. Of their remaining waking hours, they'll spend at least 1/3 of that time grooming. This leaves only 5.3 to 8 hours left to eat, stare vacantly into space like they're communing with poltergeists, walk on your keyboard, knock your keys under the sofa, chatter at birds with their badly accented "chirps," weave dangerously around your ankles while you carry grocery bags, produce a giant, wet hairball directly in your path, and pounce viciously on your toes at 4 a.m. Their time management is surely unparalleled.

You've probably heard that cats were domesticated in Egypt around 3,500 years ago—thus, all the statues, carvings, deities, moribund-but-weirdly-cute feline mummies, and so on. This was always considered to be a singular event. A happy accident, rather than an intentional domestication, humans make permanent settlements. Humans farm grain. Grain attracts varmints (I've been looking for an excuse to use that word all month). Varmints attract predatory felines. Humans let the cats have a field day mass murdering these pests and even reward them with warmth, love, and safety. Cats realize this is a 100% profitable arrangement and settle the fuck in, taking their rightful place as gods among men.

Amazingly, it was recently discovered that another early farming settlement in southwest Asia ended up doing damn near the same thing at least 5,300 years ago. Archaeological digs discovered this long-dead culture *also* had domesticated cats, only those cats weren't related at all to modern cats. In the Mauryest way possible, they were *not* the father.

These cats were, in fact, descended from a completely different wild Asian cat. These semi-domesticated Asian cats had clearly received some special treatment and care from the local humans, though maybe not their own gilded temples or anything. More recently, their wild cousins have recently been interbred with our domesticated African-descended house cattuses and (re?) introduced as the exotic breed "Bengals." They do tend to be a little bit (strike that), a lot bit more chaotic and destructive, are highly vocal (aka loud AF), as well as being quite a bit larger than modern house cats, so proceed to house them with caution, unless your furniture is indestructible and you have no pain receptors. Pretty coats, though.



Not everybody must get stoned.

Interestingly, only between 70-80% of cats are sensitive to catnip, so if you've ever presented Spot with a pinch of kitty chronic and been disappointed that you weren't treated to a floor show of your cat humiliating itself like someone high on LSD in a mud pit, you're not alone. The way that catnip affects the ones who are sensitive can vary widely as well, causing lethargy, hallucinations, paranoia, playfulness, mania, slobbery sluttiness, fear, and a whole range of behavioral changes. Research hasn't come to firm conclusions about the how and the why, but we can at least all agree it's objectively hilarious and a bummer that there isn't a dog version.

Ultimately, cats will always have more secrets than they care to share with us, but I, for one, am always up for a peek into the mind of our indifferent overlords.

Esmeralda Rupp-Spangle may or may not have brain parasites, but she's good with it either way. She can be found on Instagram as @esmeraldasilentcitadel or Facebook as Esmeralda Marina.



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ACROPOLIS 1 **FOOD LOTTERY**
8325 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 231-9611
Daily 11am-12am

ANGELS 39 **FOOD**
10335 SE Foster Rd | (503) 889-0916
Daily 1pm-1:30am

BOTTOMS UP! 5 **FOOD LOTTERY**
16900 NW St Helens Rd | (503) 621-9844
Tue-Sun 12pm-12am

CABARET 7 **FOOD**
17544 SE Stark St | (503) 252-3529
Daily 2pm-2:30am

CLUB DETOUR 22 **FOOD**
215 W Burnside St | (971) 385-1896
Wed-Sat 7pm-2:30am

CLUB ROUGE 48 **FOOD LOTTERY**
Portland: 403 SW Harvey Milk St | (503) 227-3936
Daily 5pm-2:30am
Beaverton: 8687 SW Hall Blvd | (971) 266-8340
Daily 11am-2:30am

CLUB SINROCK 23 **FOOD LOTTERY**
12035 NE Glisan St | (503) 889-0332
Daily 2pm-2:30am

CLUB TEASE 21 **FOOD**
4523 NE 60th Ave | (503) 288-9771
Mon-Thu 11am-12am, Fri 11am-9pm

COLUMBIA STRIP 32 **FOOD LOTTERY**
605 N Columbia Blvd | (503) 289-1351
Sun-Thu 12pm-1:30am Fri-Sat 12pm-2:30am

DESIRE 18 **FOOD LOTTERY**
535 NE Columbia Blvd | (971) 339-2198
Daily 3pm-2:30am

DEVILS POINT 12 **FOOD LOTTERY**
5305 SE Foster Rd | (503) 774-4513
Daily 11am-2:30am

DIAMONDS 62 **FOOD LOTTERY**
318 SW 3rd Ave | (503) 206-7133
Daily 6pm-2:30am

DREAM ON SALOON 16 **FOOD LOTTERY**
15920 SE Stark St | (503) 253-8765
Daily 11am-1am

DV8 17 **FOOD LOTTERY**
5021 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 788-7178
Daily 12pm-2:15am

THE GOLD CLUB 72 **FOOD LOTTERY**
17180 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 908-1177
Daily 12pm-12am

GUILTY PLEASURES 28 **FOOD LOTTERY**
13639 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 760-8128
Sun-Wed 5pm-2am, Thu-Sat 2pm-2am

HAWTHORNE STRIP 19 **FOOD LOTTERY**
3532 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 232-9516
Daily 2pm-2:30am

KIT KAT CLUB 69 **FOOD LOTTERY**
231 SW Ankeny St | (503) 208-3229
Daily 4pm-2:30am

THE LOUNGE 30 **FOOD LOTTERY**
6210 NE Columbia Blvd | (503) 281-3212
Daily 12pm-2am

LUCKY DEVIL LOUNGE 47 **FOOD LOTTERY**
633 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 206-7350
Daily 11am-2:30am

MAGIC TAVERN 68 **FOOD**
2460 NW 24th Ave | (503) 894-8436
Open Sun-Thu 11am-1am, Fri-Sat 11am-2am

MARY'S CLUB 25 **FOOD LOTTERY**
503 W Burnside St | (503) 227-3023
Daily 11:30am-2:30am

REVEAL LOUNGE 4 **FOOD LOTTERY**
8345 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 477-6628
Daily 4pm-2:30am

RIVERSIDE CORRAL 31 **FOOD LOTTERY**
545 SE Tacoma St | (503) 232-6813
Mon-Sat 11am-2:30am, Sun 1pm-1am

THE RUNWAY GENTLEMEN'S CLUB 55 **FOOD LOTTERY**
1735 SE Tualatin Valley Hwy | (503) 640-4086
Daily 2pm-2:30am

THE SANDY JUG 29 **FOOD LOTTERY**
7417 NE Sandy Blvd | (503) 287-8900
Daily 2pm-2:30am

SASSY'S 34 **FOOD LOTTERY**
927 SE Morrison St | (503) 231-1606
Daily 10:30am-2:30am

STARS CABARET BRIDGEPORT 50 **FOOD LOTTERY**
17939 SW McEwan Rd | (503) 726-2403
Mon-Sat 11am-2:30am, Sun 4pm-2:30am

THE SUNSET STRIP 37 **FOOD LOTTERY**
10205 SW Park Way | (503) 297-8466
Mon-Fri 11:30am-2:30am, Sat 4pm-2:30am, Sun 5pm-2:30am

THE VENUE GENTLEMEN'S CLUB 52 **FOOD LOTTERY**
9950 SE Stark St | (503) 477-9523
Daily 10am-2:30am

TROPHY'S XXXSPORTS BAR AND STRIP 40 **FOOD LOTTERY**
8000 SE Foster Rd | (971) 230-0047
Daily 11am-2:30am

X EXOTIC LOUNGE 35 **FOOD**
15 SW 2nd Ave | (503) 790-9090
Daily 7pm-2:30am

XPOSE 70 **FOOD LOTTERY**
10140 SW Canyon Rd | (503) 430-5364
Daily 3pm-2:30am

EVERYTHING ELSE

ADAM & EVE 121
9220 SW Barbur Blvd #115 | (503) 224-1604
Sun-Thu 10am-10pm, Fri-Sat 10am-11pm

ALL ADULT SUPER SHOP 103
14555 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 652-2004
Daily 24 hours

BLACK DIAMOND RECORDING STUDIOS 172
1424 SE 162nd Ave | (503) 477-6523
Daily 7am-9pm

EYE CANDY FASHIONS 171
10412 SE 82nd Ave | (503) 771-0080
Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12pm-5pm

FANTASY FOR ADULTS ONLY (4) 180
3137 NE Sandy Blvd | (503) 239-6969
Daily 10am-12am

1703 W Burnside St | (503) 295-6969
Daily 12pm-8pm

15536 SE 82nd Dr | (503) 203-6969
Daily 12pm-8pm

6440 SW Coronado St | (503) 244-6969
Daily 10am-12am

FANTASYLAND (2) 116
5228 SE Foster Rd | (503) 775-0094
Daily 24 hours

16016 SE 82nd Dr | (503) 655-4667
Daily 24 hours

HOT BOX 157
3785 SW Hall Blvd | (503) 574-4057
Daily 10am-9pm

JUST BLISS 158
6712 NE Sandy Blvd | (503) 384-2373
Call For Hours

LOVE TOYS 123
10660 SE Division St | (503) 257-6881
Daily 24 hours

MR. PEEP'S / MR. PEEP'S TOO (2) 162
13355 SW Henry St | (503) 643-6645
20625 SW TV Hwy, Aloha OR | (503) 356-5624
Daily 24 hours

PASSIONATE DREAMS 130
6644 SE 82nd Ave | (503) 775-6665
Daily 10am-4am

PDX PEACHES 148
9243 NE Glisan St | (503) 444-7155
Daily 24 hours

PEEP HOLE 131
709 SE 122nd Ave | (503) 257-8617
Daily 24 hours

PUSSYCATS 134
3414 NE 82nd Ave | (503) 477-7019
10813 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 206-5356
Daily 24 hours

SHEENA'S GSPOT 137
8315 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 972-1111
Daily 24 hours

SILVER SPOON 139
8521 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 245-0489
Mon-Sat 10am-7pm, Sun 11am-5pm

SYLVIA'S PLAYHOUSE 163
8226 NE Fremont St | (503) 568-4090
Daily 24 hours

TABOO VIDEO (4) 144
Downtown: 311 NW Broadway | (503) 227-3443
Daily 11am-12am
Portland: 237 SE MLK Blvd | (503) 239-1678
Daily 10am-12am
Portland: 2330 SE 82nd Ave | (503) 206-4708
Daily 10am-2am
Portland: 14712 SE Stark St | (971) 888-5159
Daily 10am-12am
Vancouver: 4811 NE 94th Ave | (360) 254-1126
Daily 8am-11pm

TORCHED ILLUSIONS 149
17935 SW Tualatin Valley Hwy | (503) 259-2310
Daily 6am-12am

TORCHED ILLUSIONS II 169
12963 SW Pacific Hwy | (503) 430-5140
Daily 11am-10pm

THE VELVET ROPE 101
3533 SE César E Chávez Ave | (971) 271-7064
Thu 8pm-2am, Fri-Sat 8:30pm-4am, Sun 8pm-2am

VICTRESS ENTERTAINMENT 156
7303 SE 82nd Ave | (503) 788-3354
Call For Hours

X-OTIC TAN 129
8431 SE Division | (503) 257-0622
Daily 24 hours

X-SENSUAL 126
3520 NE 82nd Ave | (503) 954-3115
9061 NE Sandy Blvd | (503) 477-7210
5226 SE Foster Rd | (503) 477-4614
Daily 24 Hours

DISPENSARIES

MARIJUANA PARADISE B
9663 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 206-7462
Daily 10am-8pm

1
ACROPOLIS
8325 SE McLOUGHLIN BLVD
(503) 231-9611

7
Cabaret
17544 SE STARK ST
(503) 252-3529

48
Club Rouge
a Gentlemen's Lounge
8687 SW HALL BLVD
(971) 266-8340

23
CLUB SinRock
12035 NE GLISAN ST
(503) 889-0332

12
DEVILS POINT
5305 SE FOSTER RD
(503) 774-4513

62
DIAMONDS
RESTAURANT'S CLUB
318 SW 3RD AVE
(503) 206-7133

16
DREAM ON SALOON
15920 SE STARK ST
(503) 253-8765

17
DV8
5021 SE POWELL BLVD
(503) 788-7178

180
FANTASY
For Adults Only
3137 NE SANDY BLVD
(503) 239-6969

116
Fantasyland
ADULT SUPERSTORE
16016 SE 82ND DR
(503) 655-4667

28
GUILTY PLEASURES
13639 SE POWELL BLVD
(503) 760-8128

19
Hawthorne Strip
3532 SE POWELL BLVD
(503) 232-9516

158
Just Bliss
6712 NE SANDY BLVD
(503) 384-2373

69
Kit Kat Club
231 SW ANKENY ST
(503) 208-3229

30
The Lounge
GENTLEMEN'S CLUB
6210 NE COLUMBIA BLVD
(503) 281-3212

47
LUCKY DEVIL
LOUNGE
633 SE POWELL BLVD
(503) 206-7350

68
MAGIC TAVERN
2460 NW 24TH AVE
(503) 894-8436

148
PDX PEACHES
9243 NE GLISAN ST
(503) 444-7155

50
STARS Cabaret
17939 SW MCEWAN RD
(503) 726-2403

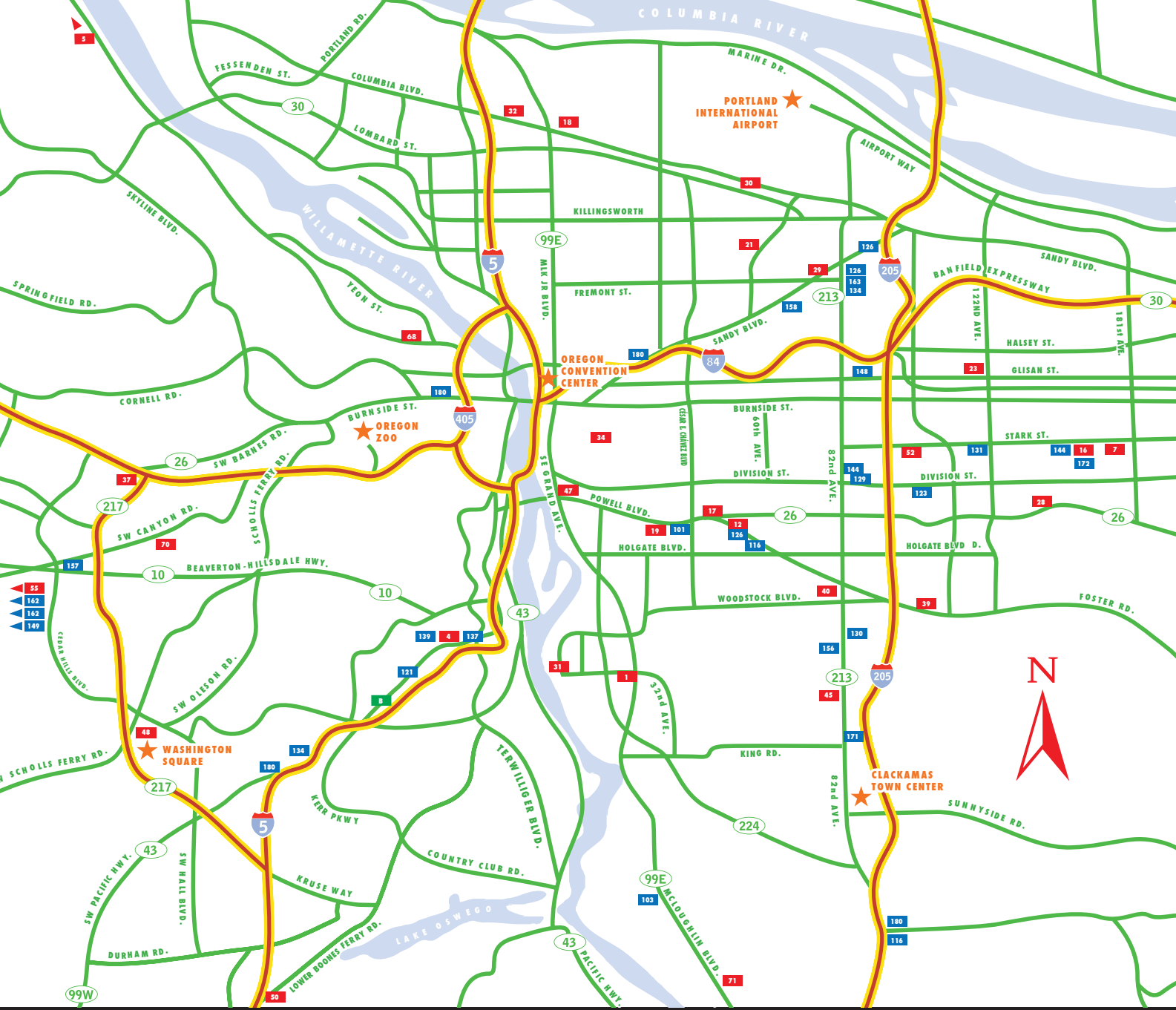
163
Sylvia's PLAYHOUSE
8226 NE FREMONT ST
(503) 568-4090

144
TABOO
14712 SE STARK ST
(971) 888-5159

156
Victress Entertainment
7303 SE 82ND AVE
(503) 788-3354

35
X
EXOTIC LOUNGE
15 SW 2ND AVE
(503) 790-9090

126
X-Sensual
3520 NE 82ND AVE
(503) 954-3115



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7pm-4am

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Sun-Thu 12pm-10pm, Fri-Sat 12pm-12am

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Sun 12pm-6pm

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Theater

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SPOKANE

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& Sun 12pm-10pm

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Call (503) 252-3529

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3pm-5pm At Beaverton.

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A Brief Summary Of Your Experience
& Contact Information To
HawthorneStrip@gmail.com

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Ankeny Alley Text 503-919-8644
For More Information

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WHAT IT'S LIKE DATING A SENIOR CITIZEN

BY HANNAH ONE CUP

I am not actually dating a senior citizen. I also do not care one bit if anyone is—and what their age gaps may be in comparison with their partner. Why should I poke my nose into anyone else's business just so I can give my opinion on something that has nothing remotely to do with myself? But truth be told, I am involved with someone who, each and every day, makes me start wondering if it's getting to that time of their life where I may soon need to sign them up for AARP and start talking about life insurance policies.

They're roughly 30 years away from needing any of these things, but sometimes their mannerisms make people around them ponder if they're talking to their grandpa or not. Let us go into some details about what I mean by this, shall we? After reading this article, if this type of person doesn't seem right for you, maybe get off of that oldermen-looking-for-younger.com website, take a long look at yourself, and wonder if you yourself are not this old man.

Ordering Anything Takes Patience

Going out to eat or drink takes twice as long as it ever did when I was alone. Being a proud reclusive-domestic house raccoon, I enjoy not taking too much time when doing things. It allows me more time to do more of the nothing I was busy with at my house. But, *this old man* now causes my order to take twice the amount of time, which makes my eyes go wide, a sigh to occur, and a "this-happens-everywhere-thank-you-for-your-patience" to slip out of my mouth to the kind server or barista. The old man will say something like "Uh...one more minute....Oh, that's new! What's your opinion on *fill-in-the-blank*? I think I'll...just...get...finally, fill in the blank of what they are ordering."



It's a lot more fun if you can put a crowd of people in the back of us. Time means nothing to the elderly. They seem to have nothing but time left, so that's what you will now be giving them: time and great amounts of...patience.

Talking to People About Everything

The fact that I may indeed be dating a senior citizen was brought to my attention by a best friend of mine when we were visiting Missouri. We went out to eat, and my old man decided it would be worth mentioning to the waitstaff where he was from ("Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada"), what his life experiences were *in great generalness*, and to make sure to let the cooks know how much we enjoyed the food. My



friend and I were already outside the door, down the steps, just to see if he'd notice. Five minutes went by, and he hadn't; she asked, "Did you know you were dating a senior citizen?" as we both watched him continue talking about all of his life experiences. As I mentioned earlier, you will give them nothing if not all your time, and in some cases, your ears as well.

You Start to Lose Your Own Hearing

Now, I used to pride myself on having excellent hearing, to the point where people started to realize that "sneaking one by me" just wasn't gonna happen. Concerts have happened since then; age has snuck in there a bit, I think, but out of all of these things life has given, it doesn't compare to the dependability of the decibels produced when my old man is just talking. It might be a Las Vegas thing, it might just be a dick thing, but I really think it's just them not being able to hear themselves anymore and needing to be consistently sure that whomever they are speaking with can adequately hear them. I can, and so can the rest of the restaurant. Sometimes I try to remind them that I'm not deaf by saying things like, "You're extremely loud," or "Are you talking to me or everyone else here?" They'll pout for a second, alter their volume switch for two minutes, and then it's back to eleven. Loud conversations will never not be a thing now. It's just how it is. Roll with it, or get some earplugs.

That Question You Answered Two Times Already

Will be asked again. And probably a subsequent time after that. A good analogy for this would be to say that this person thinks that by opening the fridge up a second or third time that day, will magi-

cally cause it to replace the juice you were wanting but finished the day before, or you'll suddenly remember what it was you were digging in there for, to begin with. Currently, we are waiting on the results for our dog to come back, which will tell us what kind of possum it is. And until I get results saying otherwise, this dog is a possum or some sort of hyena-possum hybrid. Don't ask how that would work—I don't know.

Anyways, I am asked six times a day, at least, "Do we know what kind of dog Bob is, yet?" I just tell them, "hyena." They do not like this answer, but that's what I have for them so far. And that's what I'll have for them in 20 minutes. I'll probably not even tell them when I do know otherwise because they're grinding my tiny patience on this. But the old man won't forget to ask. So I'll keep saying the same answer. And on and on it will go, until the rest of forever, or I tell them what the possum-hyena dog we have actually is.



Ladies, gents, and all you fine, foxy people out there, this is what dating a senior citizen is like. And if it doesn't sound like your cup of tea, that's because it probably isn't. No one wants to be old or feel like they're with their grandparent, but I am. Thankfully, I'm with the fun one, though, and we still have a blast eating donuts and taking road trips. We just have to add an extra 20 minutes to each stop to allow them to stretch their legs and talk to someone around—anyone around—who will listen to them talk about their dog or where they could find the best cup of coffee 20 years ago. The place just isn't there anymore.

Hannah One Cup is an at-home caregiver to her elderly partner. She has one arm in a sling, but that doesn't stop her from slinging glares or sighs when her patience runs thin. You can find her in line somewhere, waiting on the "old man" to order his coffee. He'll probably just get the same thing he always does after twenty minutes of indecision while Hannah takes one of the calling cards from the bulletin board advertising... "Adventures for Grandpa. Mobile outings to keep them spry." You can also find her on Facebook by her name and on TikTok @thursday-night_depression.

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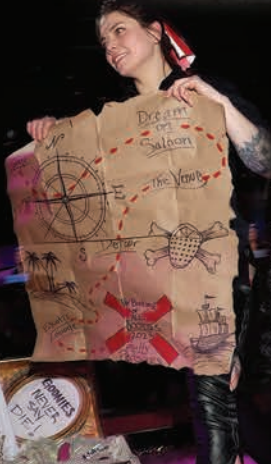
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THE MONTHLY

COLUMN

BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

THE WORST OF US

We, as humans, like to celebrate things that make ourselves appear good, just by virtue of it existing in the same place as ourselves. It doesn't matter if it's something completely removed from anything we personally have ever done.

Sports teams, clean cities and towns, famous products made in our home states, notable individuals, and the natural features of our landscapes. We take great pride in all these things and more, but what happens when the area you're from is terrible at something? Obviously, we don't celebrate it, but it always lurks in the corner of our minds. What are these things, though? People exist, who take time to document them, and whenever we hear about what our state's problems are, we tend to downplay it. "Ah, it's not so bad," or maybe some modest grousing before we move on. Now, what *are* the things our states are bad at? I've done some research and compiled a list of the most frequently documented problems with all of our possibly not-so-great fifty states.

"Who does this research?" you may ask. Lots of places do, from academic institutions, on down to the government census bureau, insurance companies, and other such monolithic entities. I read as much about our statewide flaws as I could, so now I'll share them with you all. Much like the people who figure out how much time the average person spends on the toilet during their lifetimes, it's one of those jobs that makes you wonder how people get paid to do it at all, and you wish your high school guidance counselor had told you about how to get that kind of work.

Listed in alphabetical order...

Alabama: *Most Underage Tobacco Smokers*

An interesting stat. My first question is how they confirmed this. Did they ask? Are kids reliable when talking about things that might get them in trouble? Or did the researchers simply go behind an elementary school and count all the people under 4' tall with a cigarette in their mouths? A surprise spelling test can make anyone want to chain-smoke a pack of Camels.



Alaska: *Most Chlamydia*

Alaska is a very large state with very few people. That said, it is, according to state health authorities, a hotbed of chlamydia. Fun fact: they've had the highest rate of chlamydia per capita since 1996. They're also high on (but not topping) the list for gonorrhea and syphilis, too. Whatever Alaskans get up to during their long winters apparently comes with some gross consequences.

Arizona: *Just the Worst*

According to a livability survey conducted in 2021, Arizona ranks last. Reasons include poor air quality, poor education systems, lack of public health services, the heat, the heat, and holy merciful hell, the fucking heat.

Arizonans, not to be deterred, reassure us that at least it's a dry heat. They're also really bad at visiting the dentist, with some 60% of residents reporting they do not go in for dental care on any kind of regular basis. High heat, low teeth.

California: *Worst Air*

It's no secret that Los Angeles has truly awful air. Seriously, you can cut the smog into slices with a knife. Other cities in the large, banana-shaped state which sport truly awful air quality are Sacramento, Bakersfield, Fresno, and Modesto. The last time I was in Sacramento, the first person I met tried to sell me crack rocks, so maybe there's more to it than just car exhaust. There are so many reasons California might feature on this list, but air quality is apparently just so bad that it overshadows crime, cost of living, and volume of obnoxious Hollywood celebrities.



Colorado: *Most Blow Fiends*

Yup, the real powder in Colorado is the kind that goes up your nose. While I'm a big fan of recreational drug use, dealing with cokeheads is annoying. They always want to talk way too fast about ideas for a great new restaurant, which is typically based on a non-viable business model.

Connecticut: *Highest Income Disparity*

With a very high tax burden and seeming abundance of jobs, CT has the distinction of having the highest rates of income disparity, with the top 1% of earners making forty times the least paid. Yes, while the top 1% get paid more in most places, it's typically not quite such a huge gap.



Delaware: Most Unfit

The people of the First State are apparently not very keen on exercise, with less than half of the residents getting regular exercise of more than 30 minutes a day. Why they're so disinclined to work out is unknown, but one might blame a steady diet of scrapple, which is a popular meat product in the state: it is a collection of pig lips and assholes combined with cornmeal, made into a loaf and fried in slices.

Florida: Most Boat Accidents

Given that the Sunshine State is surrounded on three sides by water, there are a great many boats and boaters. Therefore, it's easy to see how they lead the nation in boating accidents. I feel as though this statistic comes in at the top of their list because nobody has really put effort into studying that whole "taking bath salts and eating faces" thing they do in Florida quite yet.

Georgia: Most Corrupt Government Employees

According to an anonymous survey, some 658 government workers admitted to taking bribes or incentive-oriented gifts or payments in 2012, and then the state abruptly stopped taking surveys on this matter. So, if you've got money or gifts to toss around for favors, there's the place to go.

Hawaii: Highest Homelessness Rate

That one came as a bit of a surprise, given that California and Oregon exist, but apparently, the per capita rate of homeless people tops out in good ol' Hawaii. Many things factor into this statistic, namely the cost of living and the fact that you can't just easily move to another state when you're on an island in the middle of the Pacific, so they're number one. At least the weather's pretty decent if you gotta be down and out.

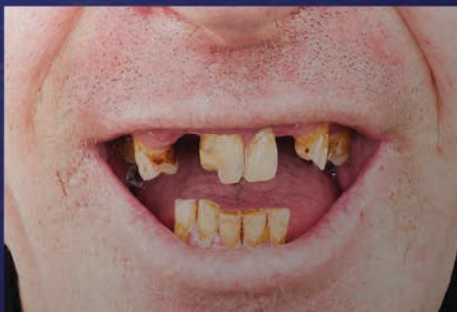


Idaho: Worst Drivers

I am baffled by this one. I swear that other states would easily edge out potato-loving Idaho in the area of terrible drivers, but according to a recent study by a car insurance consortium, Idaho is numero uno for bad drivers, but they have seemingly uncovered a weird dichotomy. Whereas many other states have drivers known for aggression and carelessness, Idaho apparently has two kinds of drivers: those who drive 15 miles per hour under the speed limit and those who go flying by them, aggressively wielding middle fingers. This leaves normal drivers in a sort of purgatory trapped between them.

Illinois: Mass Exodus

Oddly, the bizarre gladiator arena of Chicago is not the only reason that folks are leaving in masses. The other leading factors are extremely high state and local taxes, poor funding for schools, and some of the worst fiscal health among its residents. It also boasts the most jailed governors in the entire US of A, at four!



Indiana: Meth Central

Indiana tops the charts for per capita meth use. You had to figure one state would have to wear this dubious crown, and it's Indiana. Given the somewhat bleak nature of the state itself, I suppose it's not a big surprise that they're drowning their sorrows in amphetamines. Unsurprisingly, thefts of copper wire are also quite high there, as well as twitchy shuffling at bus stops.

Iowa: Racial Disparity in Weed Arrests

Statistically, both white and black people in Iowa smoke the reefer with roughly the same frequency. However, if you're a brotha or sista, you are eight times more likely to be busted for it. And here I was, thinking whatever Iowa had going on would be related to corn, not prejudice.

Kansas: Butt-Ugly Scenery

In a poll of Americans, there was near-unanimous agreement that Kansas has the worst scenery. Flat and drab is the order of the day in the good ol' Jayhawker State. No other state's environment was quite as negatively reviewed, though New Jersey did come in second.

Kentucky: Cancer

Kentucky is number one in the nation for rates of cancer. The relationship between this upsetting fact and the widespread consumption of fried chicken has yet to be probed, but I suspect there just may be a link. After all, what if one of those 11 herbs and spices is powdered lead or something?

Louisiana: Murder

Known for its raucous lifestyle and delicious creole food, Louisiana is also known widely as the murder state, though this moniker has yet to make it onto license plates. It is, and has been for some time, the state with the highest murder rate per capita, so come for Mardi Gras, but apparently, don't look at people the wrong way, or you might find yourself face down in a bayou.

Maine: Lyme Disease

Maine sports the highest instance of Lyme disease in the country. I'd assume this has to do with the "hellish" volume of ticks

that populate the state when it's not frozen over. Lyme disease is no joke, either, as it can be incredibly debilitating.

Maryland: *Baltimore*

Also, in addition to Baltimore, there's the aged criminal population. You see, if you're over fifty years of age in Maryland, you have a greater tendency to commit crimes than people elsewhere in the same age group. You're also less likely to do time for it, statistically, as the over-50 population of prisons is nearly 50% lower in Maryland than in other states, on average. The Geriatric Menace™ is real.



Massachusetts: *No Happy Hour*

Banned. They banned fucking happy hour. Why on earth would anyone do that? Also, they banned it nearly *forty years ago*, and there was somehow no major backlash. Unreal.

Michigan: *Worst Transportation Infrastructure*

Michigan spends a mere \$174 per person annually to upkeep its traffic infrastructure. That's not very much, and as a result, their roads and overall infrastructure are the worst in the country. Plus, there are more Juggalos on the road per capita than in any other state.

Minnesota: *Tornadoes*

You would think perhaps Kansas or Oklahoma would be the number one state for angry wind, but nope. Minnesota is, with an astonishing 2,052 of them documented since 1950 and 70 last year alone.

Mississippi: *Shortest Life Expectancy*

The average life expectancy of a Mississippian is a mere 75. Even though it has improved slightly over the last few years, given that in most states, it's closer to or above 80, that's pretty dismal.

Missouri: *Most Backyard Puppy Mills*

The Show Me State apparently shows people a lot of poorly treated dogs. Not sure why this is a Missouri thing, but apparently, there's an incredibly high concentration of shoddy or just downright illegal dog breeders there. Apparently, nobody heard of just going to the animal shelter and snagging a pooch there for cheap.

Nebraska: *???*

Nobody knows anything about this mysterious location in the center of the country. It is rumored that those who go there are never seen again.

Nevada: *Absurdly High Divorce Rate*

Well, what were they expecting when not only can you get drive-thru weddings, but drive-thru divorces, and your choice of whether or not it can be performed by Elvis? It's just too tempting.

New Hampshire: *Very Few Inland Waterways*

That's it? That's considered the worst thing about New Hampshire? No oppressive taxes, angry hobos, crooked politicians, bad roads, or lake monsters? Nothin'? Hell, I might have to visit someday.



New Jersey: *Speeding Ticket Kings*

New Jersey hands out more speeding tickets than any other state in the Union, and they have speed traps every thirty miles. Furthermore, if you are caught going ten-plus miles over the limit, your fine doubles. Ouch. They're so strict about this that they typically generate \$30,000 per mile per year. What a racket.

New Mexico: *Most Accidental Deaths*

Pay attention, New Mexicans. Apparently, you're screwin' around too much, and people are getting hurt. Are the residents here simply absentminded, or just have cavalier attitudes toward life?

New York: *Worst Taxes*

Yeah, worse than California, somehow. The taxes in NY are, on average, 39% higher than the national norm, with your typical citizen forking over around \$10,000 a year in state-imposed taxes, just for the privilege of living there.

North Carolina: *Crap Schools*

With the worst education system out of all 50 states, a teacher shortage, and huge class sizes, they're not exactly setting the kids up for success—and it shows in standardized test results, which are vastly lower than the national average.

North Dakota: *Nothing to Do*

North Dakota has few tourist attractions, few things for people to do, and great distances between towns and cities, which are separated by vast expanses of nothing. That said, the low cost of living and low taxes mean people actually do live there. Apparently, there's oil to be found there and not much else.

Ohio: *Terrible Water Quality*

Ohio ranks worst out of all 50 states in terms of water quality, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. Yes, it even beats out Michigan with its famously awful Flint water, so definitely use caution if you're hitting up the tap in Ohio.

Oklahoma: *Low Produce Consumption*

Oklahoma does not like to eat its veggies. A survey of adults between the ages of 18-44 reported only 4.5% of them were eating a fruit or vegetable every day. I wonder if there's a lot of vitamin deficiency going on out there.



Oregon: *Pill-Popper Capitol*

We sure like our painkillers in OR, appar-

ently to the point where it's become a significant social problem among all sorts of people in all sorts of social classes, on a much larger scale than in other states. This has thus led to a crackdown on prescribing pain pills, which has mostly affected folks who might actually need them, so make your Oxys last, if you get any at all.

Pennsylvania: *Terrible Bridges*

There are nearly 23,000 bridges in Pennsylvania. According to the Department of Transportation, an astounding 23% are found to be significantly structurally deficient. So, with nearly 5,300 bridges in awful condition, it makes driving over them kind of a crapshoot. I hope your car isn't too heavy.



Rhode Island: *Worst Roads*

The Rhode Island roads are not to be rode upon, at least according to a recent study that ranked the streets the worst in the country. For such a small state, you'd think it would be easier to maintain what I assume are fewer roads in total, but apparently, this is not the case.

South Carolina: *Most Violent Crime*

Not to be confused with Louisiana, which has the most *murders*, South Carolina has the most violent crime in general, so while you might not die, you certainly might get brutalized in some non-lethal fashion.

South Dakota: *Lowest Pay*

South Dakota has the distinction of having the lowest wages and salaries—across the board—for almost all professions, both skilled and unskilled, and in the public and private sectors. But they have Mount Rushmore! That counts for something... right?

Tennessee: *Most Dangerous Cities*

While other states may have higher to-

tals of violent crime statewide, cities like Memphis are hotspots of murder and violent crime, with some 327 homicides last year in a city that only boasts 600,000 residents. So, keep your eyes open if you end up in any of the major cities Tennessee has to offer. Apparently, the rural parts aren't bad at all.

Texas: *Most High School Dropouts*

Fewer than 80% of Texans have high school diplomas. Not sure whether this is related to modern educational curriculum, class sizes, teacher effectiveness, or some other factor I did not come across, but let it be known that they are the *only* state to dip below 80% graduation rates, so something's gotta give.

Utah: *Bad Booze*

When your state is built on a foundation of religious temperance, you are going to have to deal with some strangeness when it comes to grabbing a drink. They have an odd series of rules. For example, stores (except liquor stores) cannot sell anything with an ABV of over 3.2%, which is basically like drinking the LaCroix of beer. If you get a drink at a bar, the bartenders are only legally allowed to pour 1.5 oz of spirits or 5 oz of wine at a go. Also, if you get pulled over on suspicion of DUI, their BAC limit is .05: the lowest in the country, so even if you do spend all day drinking watery beer, I guess you're staying put. Also, Utah is one of the most expensive states to buy alcohol in. They're making sure that you must do your damndest to have a party.

Vermont: *Drug Use*

Vermont has both the fewest children and the most illegal drug use. Wait, that's considered a negative? That sounds like a party. Get high, don't worry about the kids, and eat some of that hippie ice cream. 15.29% of Vermonters admitted to regular illegal drug use, versus square-ass Utah, at 4%.

Virginia: *Suicidal Deer*

Virginia records a huge number of large animal/vehicle collisions, with more than 60,000 each year, according to insurance claims filed. The deer have a death wish, and they'll take you down with them if they can.



Washington: *Driving in Seattle.*

I may not have institutional statistics on this, but from personal experience, I can say driving in Seattle definitely contributes to frustration, depression, and anger problems.

West Virginia: *Fat Bodies*

West Virginia is the fattest state in the nation, with 40.6% of the population being classified as obese. Possible causes include a poor diet, lack of exercise, and the relative deliciousness of deep-fried Snickers bars.

Wyoming: *Suicide*

Wyoming tops the nation for suicides, and it's by a large margin. Some 29.5 people per 100,000 commit suicide in the Cowboy State, which is an astonishingly high figure. There must be something depressing about living in a big rectangle.

As we can see, every state has some point where it excels at being awful, even if it's in a seemingly negligible way (looking at you, New Hampshire) or something very concerning, like Louisiana's enthusiasm for murder.

Stay safe out there,

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a shaky bridge traveler, happy hour enthusiast, Elvis-themed divorce lawyer, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on Twitter as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe (yay!) and Facebook (boo!) as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."

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Salem

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