



Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

Time, Place, & Manner

Volume 36, Issue 5

19 February 80AT(2026)

Read all our issues at
hellskitchen.org/gdt



My Thursday started like any other day: wake up, take a shower, and fix myself some breakfast. Typically, after breakfast, I work on my book or just relax. Life as a contractor is usually pretty chill. While I buttered my blueberry english muffin, I read the newspaper. Most days it's just mundane—a local bakery opened, a guide on staying cool in the summer, or someone ranking the best dog breeds for children. Today, however, was different. As I skimmed the headlines, one article caught my eye: “Town Parade Saturday for the Spiked Speedster.”

Fuck.

Most people think that superheroes are awesome. People would give *anything* for their town to be protected by such power. They think they can live worry-free lives. Those people are fools. The truth is, superheroes are inconvenient. Batman, just like normal bats, eats thousands of mosquitos every day. He's insistent that they be local, free-range mosquitos, which means that Malaria, West Nile Virus, and Zika run rampant in Gotham. The legendary Tony Stark has hemochromatosis, and extorts Malibu's city council into paying for his frequent blood transfusions and expensive medical care. And Thor is responsible for extensive power grid failures across Oklahoma, putting the lives of millions at risk.

In that sense, I'm lucky to live in Green Hills, Montana, far from those dangers. But I wouldn't consider myself blessed. Our local superhero is none other than Sonic the Hedgehog, and honestly? I'm sick of it.^[1]

They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder, and the flip side is true, too—I'm sick of Sonic's cult of personality in this town. Blue sodas, blue pastries, blue pasta, and blue goddamn chilli dogs. I don't think you've ever felt true defeat and disgust at the state of the world until you've had a blue 'Sonic Pizza' from Vincenzo's Velocity Pizzeria. The novelty wears off, I promise.^[2] Commuting each day is hellish, thanks to the vast arrangement of hamster tubes choking the buildings and walkways in the city, interspersed with the occasional loop-de-loop so that Sonic can look cool while running. But, even these inconveniences pale in comparison to the single worst thing about my situation: Sonic himself.

Allow me to share a fact about hedgehogs. While some may consider this “fun,” I consider it to be the single worst thing that's happened to me. You see, hedgehogs defecate when they run. And what does a hedgehog with an *extremely* high metabolism do? Defecate a LOT. Let me tell you, then, what happens when a hedgehog travels at near-light-speed. Spoiler alert, it's not pretty. Well... that's not true. It is. Let me explain.

Have you ever actually taken a close look at hedgehog shit? No, of course not. Why would you? Sonic's poop, like all hedgehog poop, is initially sort of sausage shaped and... shiny. Like all hedgehogs, Sonic's diet mainly consists of beetles, and a lot of that stuff just passes right through. In the 'biz we call this a WYSIWYG food: what you see is what you get. When the light hits a normal hedgehog's poop just right, it sparkles in

¹ Metaphorically.

² I went shopping last week, and the only condoms I could afford were Sonic flavored. The taste was... unpleasant, to say the least.





Gracies Dinnertime Theatre (GDT) is a founding member of Hell's Kitchen and is published by Carissimus Diablo. *GDT* is edited by **Igor Polotai** and editor *in exilium* **Goose Waffles**, with layout done by **G.S.** Marginalia was chosen by the layout editor or crafted by **Goat Caroler**. Blackletter font copyright **wood man**. The main article, "Contractor Woes," comes from **Sam W., Kelly Gunter, Sean T. Hammond, Max, Ada H. Ominam, Franklin Scharf, and TheTaco_Slot**. *GDT* is spread far and wide by *éditeur gris* **Sam W.** and his loyal printer daemons: **cormac, Dedusmuln, Layna, Max, Ada H. Ominam, and USS N.G King of Hearts**. Other content was written by **Ezra, Rock Goblin, G.S., Franklin Scharf, Susan, Sam W.**, and contributors on the *GDT* Discord. Thank you to all of our newsies this week!

Contact GDT directly at:
graciesdinnertimetheatre@gmail.com

IMAGINUM AUCTORES

Page 4: Nile. "Herz aus Buchseiten." 2015. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Herz_aus_Buchseiten.jpg

Page 5: Fichtl, Marcus. "Mardi Gras Comes to Poland." 2024. U.S. Army Garrison Poland. www.dvidshub.net/image/8233541/mardi-gras-comes-poland

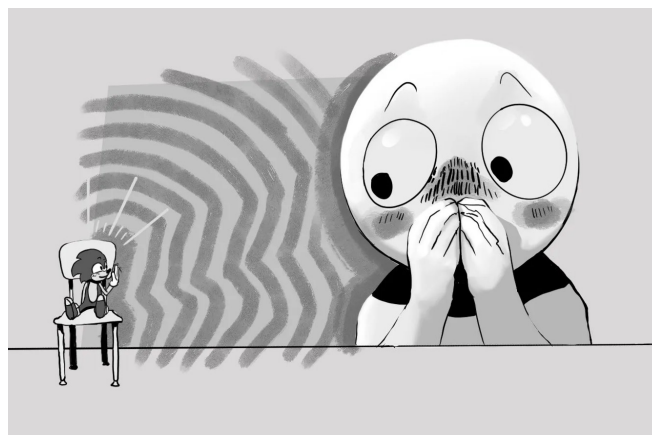
Page 7: Unknown. "The Floto Shows Advertisement." 1904. *The Tacoma Times*. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_Bunch_of_French_Clowns_with_the_Floto_Show.jpg

Page 8: Katz, Mussi. "Mardi Gras 2023." 2023. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mardi_Gras_2023_-_On_the_streets_of_the_French_Quarter,_New_Orleans,_10_February_2023_-_05.jpg

Page 8: Appel, F. "Rex Ball Admit Card." 1883. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rex_Ball_admit_card,_New_Orleans_Mardi_Gras_1883.png

Copyright 80AT(2026) *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre*. I guess you can reprint things for all the reasons covered under United States Fair Use Doctrine as defined by the United States Congress with the "Copyright Act of 1976," but why not make your own? All the work remains copyright of the authors. *GDT* may print or reprint authors' works.

the sunlight. Those iridescent beetle carapaces and wings make the shit almost magical, kind of like a poop Christmas ornament left on the ground.



At the speed Sonic runs at, though, that poop doesn't maintain coherence. The turbulent flow of air after its, um... ejection, means that the poop is quickly dispersed in the air as a sort of powder, and all of those beetle wings become glitter. They fill the air; sparkling, flittering, scintillating in a magical maelstrom of fecal matter. It's gross, but it's also beautiful. People love it.

Last year for Saint Patrick's Day, Sonic quickly zipped over to Iowa, ate seventeen kilos of the Emerald Ash Borers infesting Wisconsin's Wyalusing Hardwood Forest, came back to Green Hill, and let'em rip. The air was filled with green sparkles settling over the drunken crowd at the parade. Absolute hit. I have it on good authority that those green sparkles from the Emerald Ash Borer remains in his poop overwhelmed the HVAC systems of the businesses on mainstreet, though. Those systems simply weren't made to deal with that much particulate matter. Neither are lungs.

One of the leading causes of death in this quaint little Montana town is called Brown Lung, a particularly nasty infection caused by Sonic's particularly nasty diet. Once the speedy feces enter your lungs, it's nigh-incurable. Symptoms begin similarly to toxoplasmosis—you gain an overwhelming attachment to hedgehogs, and a desire to put them into positions of power. This is why most of the town has an obsession with Sonic-themed... everything. They're not unlike a hivemind, which is why Sonic hasn't been driven out of this godforsaken town yet. Even without repeated exposure the infatuation can continue for months or years, as the infection gradually spreads through the user's lungs. Persistent coughs, tightness in the chest, and obsession with the color blue manifest during this time. Those with late-stage infection are called "Wheezers," after their laboured breathing—the most famous is Rivers Cuomo, who recorded both a blue and a teal album. I digress.

It's worth noting that repeated exposure to Sonic vapors accelerates the infection process exponentially, causing immense pain and killing victims quickly. Thus, it is in the best interest of a victim to avoid further contamination. But with the victim's growing obsession with hedgehogs and the color blue, this becomes increasingly difficult.

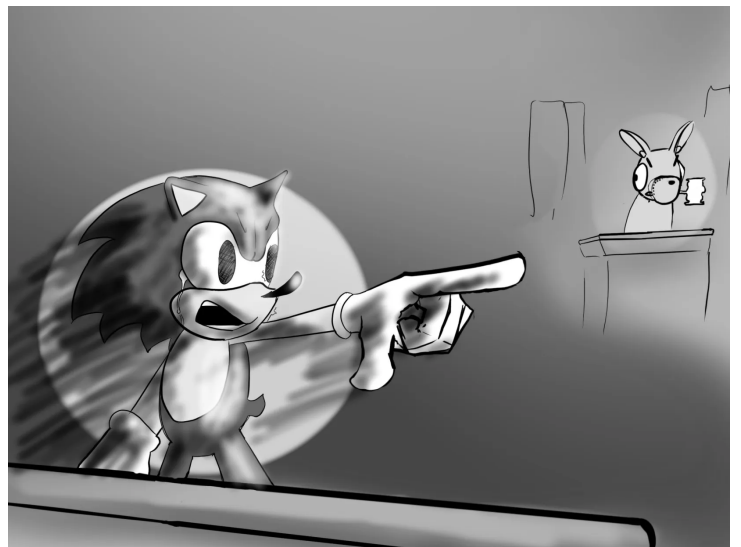
Why should I care so much about what that hasty blue plague-vector^[3] is doing to this town? There's a reason why I'm telling you all this: it is, unfortunately, relevant to my job. Remember, earlier, that I mentioned that being a contractor is usually chill? When Sonic is fighting his newest villain, it's not. As one of the few uninfected people left in the town (thanks to my full hazmat gear), I'm employed to clean up Sonic's mess before it rapidly kills everyone.


It's difficult to describe the pure repulsion of scraping sparkly faeces off the exteriors of all the buildings on Main Street. Or the disgust at having to clean out the HVAC systems stained brown by years of abuse. Or the mix of surprise and disappointment when Sonic hits a loop-de-loop and vomits from the smell. Or the wretched metallic scent of the remains of cyclists unfortunate enough to stand in the bastard's way when he cuts through the bike lane.

Victims' families have attempted to bring a class action lawsuit against that speedy blue devil, but it never amounts to anything in the end. It turns out that an unhealthy love of blue hedgehogs and a further need to put them into a place of power unfortunately leaves you with an indiscrete predilection towards signing any no responsibility disclaimer and/or non-disclosure agreement placed in front of you—if only that spiny blue bastard will sit next to you for a few minutes and you can bask in the glow of his... leavings.^[4]

While the class action suit is a non-starter at this point, there does appear to be some light on the horizon. Because some of the victim's families had been trying to get their stories out and ask for help for their afflicted relatives, there have been some fringe writings online about the health hazards of Sonic. This has run afoul of fast food franchise Sonic, as it has started to affect their business on account of some of their customers mistaking the Sonic in the story for their business.^[5] Thus Sonic has filed their own lawsuit against Sonic for the damage to their public image caused by the fleet footed eulipotyphla.

Sonic vs. Sonic has the potential to be a game changer for my life. First of all, it was filed in a jurisdiction that is expected to be far more sympathetic to the fast food franchise. The suit was filed in Oklahoma, the loving birthplace of Sonic, in the courtroom of the Honorable Judge Kanga Clanga. Sonic seems determined to represent himself in this case and has gotten off to a rocky start as he claims that there is no way he could possibly get justice in this Clangaroo Court because of graft and backroom dealings. The Judge has already ruled out the possibility of using Sonic's hedgehog obsessed victims as character witnesses and is about ready to kick Sonic to the clink after numerous contempt charges.



So for me, there may be a light at the end of this excrement-laden tunnel. If Sonic gets locked up or is firmly censured my life will change for the better. Sure, I might lose my job, but it has become so much more stressful as of late. And if you really think about it, with all of the deaths in the community, there are surely so many job opportunities if I just look. 

3 I sometimes call him "Bubonic Sonic."

4 This has also inspired some of the town's less savory aspiring bartenders to invent the "Gin and Sonic." It is a concoction that contains—you guessed it—gin and the unfortunate sparkly ordure of the crime fighting contaminator. The good news is it doesn't cause Brown Lung when you consume it, the bad news is it *does* give you the runs. But that makes you more like Sonic, so maybe this is the intended outcome?

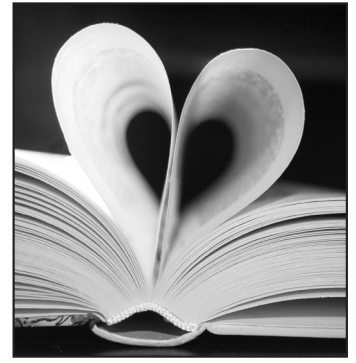
5 An understandable mistake; one can't help but think of a fresh, hot-off-the-grill SuperSONIC™ Double Cheeseburger when they read "finely ground-up digested beetle remains."

Letters to the Editor Re: V36, I1

GDT reserves the right *not* to edit letters for spelling, grammar, or coherence.

DEAR EDITORS,

I WAS STRUCK BY THE IDEAS PRESENTED IN THE RECENT *GDT* ISSUE. THE IDEA OF SWITCHING TO AXOLOTL-TAIL MEAT ONLY IS FASCINATING, AND AT TIMES A LITTLE DISTURBING. BUT I SUPPOSE THE MEAT INDUSTRY AS IT STANDS NOW IS NO DIFFERENT. IN WRITING THIS LETTER, I WISH TO POINT OUT A FEW FACTUAL INCONSISTENCIES THAT MIGHT LEAD TO THE FAILURE OF SUCH AN ENTERPRISE IF NOT ADDRESSED.



FIRSTLY, HUMANITY NEED NOT DERIVE ALL OF THEIR DAILY CALORIES SOLELY FROM THE CONSUMPTION OF MEAT. IN FACT, THAT WOULD LIKELY BE A DETRIMENT TO ALL OF OUR DIETS. THUS, THE AMOUNT OF DAILY DEMAND FOR AXOLOTL MEAT, AND THEREFORE NUMBER OF AXOLOTLS, COULD BE DIMINISHED, ALLOWING FOR GREATER MOBILITY OF THE ENTERPRISE.

SECONDLY, THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AXOLOTL LIFE HAVE BEEN IGNORED BY THE AUTHOR. ALTHOUGH THE GREAT LAKES WOULD SEEM THE PERFECT AREA, THE TEMPERATURE OF THE WATER AND THE GENERAL CLIMATE OF THE REGION WOULD NOT BE CONDUCIVE TO AXOLOTL SURVIVAL. I WOULD SUGGEST EITHER MOVING PRODUCTION TO A WARMER AREA OF THE GLOBE, OR USING HEATERS OF SOME SORT (AI COOLDOWN PERHAPS?) TO CREATE AN OPTIMAL LIVING ENVIRONMENT. OF COURSE, THE LATTER METHOD WOULD INTERFERE WITH YOUR GOAL TO BE “ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY.”

SINCERELY,

ART VANDELAY,
A DEDICATED READER

Dear Art Vandelay,

Thank you for your response. I would like to address a few of your concerns:

Regarding the all-axolotl diet, they are shockingly nutritious.^[1] I’m using frog legs as the equivalent since there are predictably no nutrition facts for axolotl tails (yet...). It seems like the biggest missing vitamins and minerals would be: vitamins C, D, and K; and calcium, fiber, and omega-3. Thus, to supplement this diet, I would propose eating pesto to handle vitamin K, calcium, fiber, and omega-3; and drinking Monster Ultra Vice Guava^[2] (fortified with vitamin D) to handle vitamins C and D.

Regarding the environmental friendliness of these operations, I would like to assure you that the environment is our utmost concern. As Nestlé^[3] Foods^[4] said, “we are embarking on a journey toward regeneration; to help protect, renew and restore the environment.”^[5] Your idea to heat up the Great Lakes for Generative AI purposes is brilliant, but I have already decided to make some side money with cryptocurrency instead. My company is mining for \$\$EpsteinCoin as we speak. However, your concerns are valid: heating the Great Lakes is not environmentally friendly. Since we live in a net-zero world, I have decided to aggressively cool the Amazon River to balance out the harm. We will do this using our fleet of:

$$\frac{7.2 \cdot 10^{15} \text{ liters}}{\text{year}} * \frac{37 \text{ kJ}}{1^\circ \text{F} * \text{liter}} * 40^\circ \text{F} * \frac{1 \text{ liter ice}}{337 \text{ kJ}} * \frac{\text{lb ice}}{0.49 \text{ liter ice}} * \frac{\text{day}}{26 \text{ lb ice}} * \frac{\text{year}}{365 \text{ days}} = 7 \text{ trillion icemakers}$$

Hope this helps,

Sam W. 

1 Probably. But we all know that the world runs on Hail Maries and educated guesses anyway, so I’m sure it’s fine.

2 Specifically because Guava is high in vitamin C.

3 Fuck Nestlé.

4 A company famous for its commitment to making the world a better place ;)

5 www.nestle.com/investors/environmental-social-governance-sustainability



In Sports: a Mardi Gross Upset

-by Franklin Scharf

For as long as Rochester has had nine letters in its name, RIT has dominated the competitive scene of the grand American pastime, but as of late, an unlikely competitor has appeared: Monroe Community College. In January 29th's match, MCC saw a decisive victory out of the blue and, by some metrics, out-performed RIT last month. Was this just a fluke, or is MCC coming for the crown?

Pop quiz: to which D1 sport does RIT devote the most resources? If you answered "ice hockey," you, my friend, have never stepped inside of the Grace Watson Dining Hall. The most important sport at RIT by far is health code violations. It is said that rules are made to be broken, and nowhere is this more true than in the New York State Department of Health. For those unfamiliar, there are two categories for violating NY's authoritarian food safety standards: Non-critical and Critical. Inspectors award points of one type or the other for violations like improper storage of perishables, inadequate or absent hand-washing stations, or whatever horrors your imagination guides you to perpetrate. Non-critical violations generally don't compromise the vittles' fitness for consumption. Critical violations, on the other hand, almost certainly do, making them the ones to look out for. Break enough rules, and they'll schedule a reinspection (or a bonus round, as we fans like to call it) where you can rack up even more points.

Seventeen out of Gracie's's thirty most recent inspections included at least one critical violation, with ten of them including the nebulous code "insects, rodents present." Was it insects, rodents, or both? Perhaps a chimaera of the two? The world may never know. I digress. In their latest match, Gracie's landed two Critical and seven Non-critical violations—certainly not their worst showing, but a far cry from their peak performance. Conversely, MCC's Production Kitchen & Catering (PKC) has spent the last few years under the radar without a single Critical violation, but they shocked everyone last month by pulling a four Critical, four Non-critical game, creating a massive upset and killing many a tournament bracket early on in the season with their (and I quote) "adulterated" provisions. The question is, can they keep it up?

Impressive as MCCPKC's recent push was, RIT has a much more consistent history of high-scoring performances, keeping up a sustained chain of Critical violations every couple inspections ever since their grand debut. On Tuesday, February 13th, 2014, a day that went down in Rochester history as "Rat Tuesday," Gracie's managed a whopping five Critical, 14 Non-critical violations—including, of course, the presence of insects-comma-rodents—and prompted not one, but two bonus inspections in a row. Gracie's fans ("Gracies") will point to iconic moments like these and argue that MCC simply doesn't have the experience to stack up to RIT's undercooked dough-slinging prowess. MCCPKC supporters will counter by pointing out that Gracie's' infamous violations are growing less and less glamorous over time, suggesting that they may be past their prime. If this trend continues, it won't be long before RIT falls out of competitive relevance entirely.

I, for one, am a Gracie through and through. It's far too early to confidently bet on MCC's newfound success lingering, and I expect that the hype will die down soon enough. That said, it is very true that our home team's dubious delicacies are not what they used to be, and unless they get serious about cleaning up their uncleanliness game, they may well find their slice of the king cake baby-free, and it will be another college food court's turn to cook up the next batch of batter not kept at or above 140° Fahrenheit during hot holding. 🍷

**Have your own articles? Poetry? Illuminated manuscripts? SUBMIT!
graciesdinnertime@ gmail.com**

Ask Susan



elzle elzle elzle elzle elzle elzle elzle elzle elzle

Dear Susan,

What is the appropriate sock to leave on the doorknob? My roommate thinks me using my toe socks for this is extremely gross, but I can't see their tan socks^[1] from down the hall against the door.

- Popsicle Toes

Dear Popsicle Toes,

Have you considered that using your toe socks may be making your roommate feel self-conscious? Even a bit ashamed? I think it is appropriate for you to use toe socks, but maybe shorten the toes by a few inches at least, so that your roommate feels represented. In the future, try to be more empathetic. Not everyone has toes as long as yours.

-Susan

Dear Susan,

I asked a girl out and she spat in my face which is kind of like blowing a kiss if you think about it. Am I in?

- Chief Big Dog

Dear Chief,

Actions speak louder than words, and it sure seems like her actions are quite the statement. I think you guys are destined for each other!^[2] Next time you see her, I recommend you spit back and show that the love flows both ways. I wish your budding relationship much joy!

-Susan

Dear Susan,

Hii I was wondering how do I make more girl friends here? All my friends are guys and they're great and all but I just need to talk to another girl sometimes ;_?;

- Gender Ratio Victim

Dear Gender Ratio Victim,

Fear not! You have plenty of solutions to your predicament. Obviously a little forceful feminization is the clear solution, but don't discredit the power of bathroom conversation. Where better to socialize with your sisters than the joining force—potty time! Next time you sit yourself down on the john (or the jane as I like to call it), bump feet and say hi to your sister sittin' next to you. 🏠

-Susan

1 Note from GDT: who the hell wears tan socks?

2 In fact, ever since the days of Ancient Greece, spitting has been a sign of good luck.



Do you need advice? Have burning questions?
Susan is here — maybe to help!

Scan the QR code to ask! It's all anonymous. 😊



Colin Gets Promoted and Dooms the World: a Review

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~* -by Rock Goblin

Note: I mostly read post-modern feminist horror, and psychedelic sci-fi, so take all that I say with a (massive) grain of salt.

As a satire, this book is phenomenal. As anything else, it sucks. *Colin Gets Promoted and Dooms the World* (CGPaDtW) follows Colin, our very messy, gay, ~nerdy^[1] main character, whose only redeeming qualities stem from the sympathy elicited by the sheer lack of a spine he possesses. It offers not One, but Two! examples of the poorly written queer romances genre; the type that hinges on nothing but the fact that the interest is hot, dumb, and is not into people with self-confidence, and another with only about two pages of set-up, which is finalized with the *deus ex machina* of mediocre queer romance—a *deus ex machina*.^[2] Unfortunately, this book poorly represents evil corporate businesses,^[3] fails to make the B plot interesting, and, despite giving Colin a decent amount of spite and need for vengeance, fails to make him anything but boring.^[4] This book would have been much better if the side characters^[5] had more time to shine, and if the horror aspects, despite being quite good conceptually, were a little more visceral.

Would I recommend it? Sure. There are other, better queer satire books out there, and there are other, better horror novels out there, but if one was in the market for a quick, dumb read with reasonable side characters this would be it.

Final rating: 2.5/7 chapters. 🏠

1 By ~nerdy~ I mean a manic pixie dream boy who wears cardigans and bowties, without any obvious interests other than being ~not like other boys~^[1]

2 Which sucked—I really did care about that one. 🏠

3 In this day and age all evil corporations in lit have to behave like real evil corporations,^[3] or I get pissy.

4 Boring characters are the bane of my existence.

5 Who were actually interesting, and despite also being evil, weren't irritating.^[5]

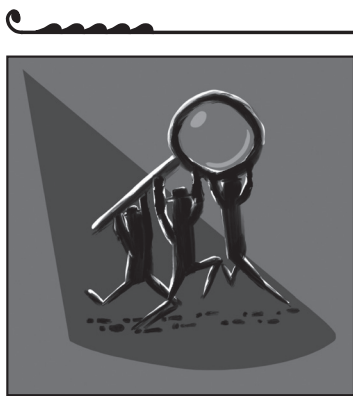
☞ I wish there was a way to make words w a b y when I add ~s around them. It would be so fun ^ - ^ ☞

🏠 Curse you, shitty queer romance genre that this book ripped off.

☞ Disney, Nestle, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Procter and Gamble, Johnson & Johnson, Berkshire Hathaway, Blackrock, (fill in the blank) _____

^ Or boring!

☞ Also, something I think everyone should do: when you type emoticons, add a space between characters—it looks better and keeps them from getting those inbred pug breathing problems.



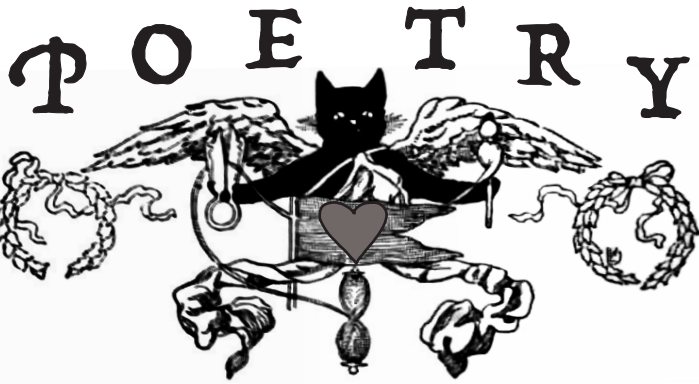
Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is away on 'vacation' this week! Check in later for a special investigative report by Smigor Smolotai, "Ranking Every* FreezeFest 2025 & 2026 Event." Seen below is his alter ego, Smigor Slack-otai, at the new MPT/

PAC/Marshmallow instead of writing it.

Do you have a story that the 'weekly' Neighborhood Watch column should inform RIT about? Email it to us at gdtneighborhoodwatch@gmail.com! All submissions will be kept anonymous. We value our whistleblowers!





& NEWS

Cop Tipping

-by Anonymous

My family keeps telling me
 I shouldn't hate people
 just because they're
 Fucking pigs.
 Nice car.
 How dare I judge you
 for everything you
 willingly decide to
 Be,
 Do, and
 Represent.
 Nice car.
 It'll look so much better

upside
 down.



A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Although this issue is mostly Mardi Gras themed by special request, Fat Tuesday is only one of several holidays this week.

Fat Tuesday is followed of course by Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent, beginning forty days of Christian fasting). Tuesday night is the start of Ramadan, with the first day of fasting for Muslims also being Wednesday.

Tuesday is also the Lunar New Year (Spring Festival). Welcome to the year of the horse.

Expect plenty of both feasting and fasting ahead! 🍷

-G.S.



Want to party with GDT?
 You're invited! And unlike
 some other groups, we don't
 require your full name and
 hometown for entry.

Join our Discord!

Triple the Holidays — Triple the Fun

