

WEDNESDAY MORNING: WOE, NELLY, WOE

I meant woe, not whoa. I do know the difference.

It's woe I was thinking of when I wrote this next bit.

What would you do if you were told you wouldn't be paid for last 2 months of a 9-month job? Let's say you have kids to feed, a mortgage/car payment/college loan payments to make, childcare to pay, out-of-pocket healthcare costs – you know, all the expenses the average working person has.

In spite of one or more obligatory college degrees, continuing education requirements and mandatory background checks, your job requires you to work in facilities where 'mushrooms, black mold, fecal matter, dead rodents, no heat' are common. It's a workplace functioning like Flint's water crisis, and it's been this way for more than a decade. Fellow employees have had to bring in paper towels and light bulbs from home or solicit them as donations to the workplace.

Because of your employer's money woes, you may even have made a concession agreeing to collect your pay over 3-4 months instead of the next six to eight weeks you are actually scheduled to work.

And then your employer's employer says they aren't going to pay, and you might have to work without pay for the next six weeks. Unpaid, as in violation of labor laws unpaid.

And your employer's employer has a history of acting both in bad faith and with prejudice. Your workplace hasn't improved for years; children were permanently poisoned and adults died as a result of their awful handiwork on this and other projects.

What would you do? Quietly stay at your desk working and hope for the best, or walk out in protest to demand action?

The employer's employer accuses you of all manner of bad things, and is actively undermining your rights to organize, by the way.

Welcome to Detroit Public School system, and welcome to more of Michigan's obnoxious and toxic GOP-led legislating. Pretty sure the jerks who are causing this latest crisis by grandstanding on teachers' backs don't care if the president arrives here in Michigan today.

Dude caught on video sprinkling substance on food arrested by FBI

As if we didn't have enough to worry about in Michigan, some whackjob has been sprinkling a mixture of hand sanitizer and rodent poison on food in stores, including salad buffets. He was caught on security camera in Ann Arbor, but he is alleged to have sprinkled this mix in multiple stores in Ypsilanti, Saline, Birch Run, and Midland. The mixture is not supposed to be toxic, but who wants to eat remnants of isopropyl alcohol and an anticoagulant? What the hell was this all about anyhow?

Canadian city of 80,000 forced to evacuate overnight due to massive wildfire

Mind-boggling to think of an urban center this size forced to flee on such short notice, but Fort McMurray did just that beginning late afternoon yesterday. Even the local hospital was emptied as fire leaped from undeveloped to developed areas, consuming neighborhoods. 80% of homes in the Beacon Hill neighborhood are ash. Conditions have been unusually warm and dry in the region; the local temperature was 83F degrees before the evacuation notice was issued. Weather conditions today are expected to be hotter (32C/90F) and WSW winds stronger ahead of a cold front, likely spreading the fire even farther to the northeast.

The area around Fort McMurray has only been in moderate drought conditions, yet the fire was explosive, doubling in size in a matter of hours. Can't begin to imagine what might happen in areas where conditions are drier while this climate-enhanced super El Nino continues.

Volkswagen's former head of engine and transmission development exits company
Wolfgang Hatz, suspended by VW for his role in Dieselgate, chose voluntarily to leave the company. This bit in NYT's article is choice:

In 2007, shortly after being named head of engine and transmission development at Volkswagen, Mr. Hatz complained at an event in San Francisco that new rules on tailpipe emissions in California were unrealistic.

"I see it as nearly impossible for us," Mr. Hatz said of a proposed regulation during the event, which was filmed by an auto website.

In other words, Hatz didn't see the purpose of the regulation, didn't perceive a challenge to design truly clean diesel – he saw an obstruction he needed to bypass. *Auf wiedersehen, Herr Hatz.*

Odds and sods

- Middle Eastern drought worst in 900 years (NASA) – Drought map of Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Turkey looks awful, but Egypt – wow.
- Wars might be caused by lack of water (Scientific American) – I sense a theme developing...hey, guess when the Crusades were? 900 years ago.
- Study shows stocks overvalued often, too long (Phys.org) – Huh. Interleaves with economic

social theory of
reflexivity, that.

- Third leading cause of death in U.S.: medical errors (Science Daily) – Grok this: 250,000 deaths a year. You'd think insurance companies and policy makers would look into this, considering annual death toll is like ten times that on 9/11. Imagine if we spend tax dollars on fixing this and improving health care instead of militarizing against the rare-to-non-existent domestic terror attack.
- Tesla's residential battery, Powerwall, now for sale (Bloomberg) – Residential solar may now explode with growth. We can only hope.

It's supposedly downhill from the top of this hump. Race you to the bottom!