

2013 YearEnder

Early January, 2014

Dearest Reader,

2013. Are people still talking about *that*? Well...I know I am. In fact, before leaning fully into 2014, I simply have to look back.

Meaning that the self-created rumor of my YearEnder's demise proved incorrect. Yes, Virginia – the shtick is back. The same goes for the rest of you states and nations. Couldn't stay away, really. Because YearEnder freshness is something I believe in wholeheartedly. And I don't want to be finding gems like this 20-ish years after the fact, (allegedly) scribbled in the margins of my college textbooks:

George H.W. "Poppy" Bush considered firing newly approved Secretary of State [Lawrence "Do These Come In a XXXL?" Eagleburger](#) when Lorne Michaels announced Chris Farley simply wasn't a large enough star to play him on SNL.

Tell that joke 21 years later and you get little more than quizzical looks. Unless, of course, you can work in a Toronto Mayor Rob Ford reference. Then again, I couldn't build a tradition like the YearEnder and then just turn away without obligation. After all, this isn't Obamacare. Or a massive [fracking operation](#). Or Marco Rubio's withering Presidential aspirations.

Rather than continuing to have this somewhat farcical conversation with myself, I should do everyone a solid and especially bring the newest readers up to speed who have wandered into the mix. What I'm about to unfurl here is my **11th Annual YearEnder**.

Part recap, part awards ceremony, part crystal-ball/palm-reading into our collective future. I've added a few new bells and whistles this year, most obviously beginning with the fancy new delivery platform. Feel free to print it out and/or forward it along to others. Whether you got here via email (people still do that?), my website (ericemagnuson.com) or the various social media paths (such as my [tweets @emaggie](#)), thanks all the same for peeking into my all-in-good-fun look back at 2013.

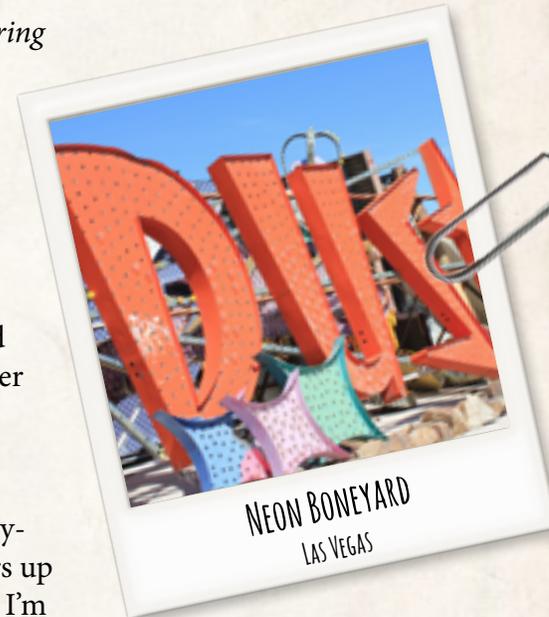
With that said, let's rock this van.

2013 Snapshots

- Edward Snowden revealed damaging elements of the National Security Agency's spy programs meant to collectively track the citizens of the World. In so doing, Snowden painted a huge target on his own back, became an



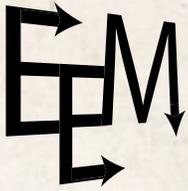
HANGIN' WITH SNOOP
SANTA ROSA, CA



NEON BONEYARD
LAS VEGAS



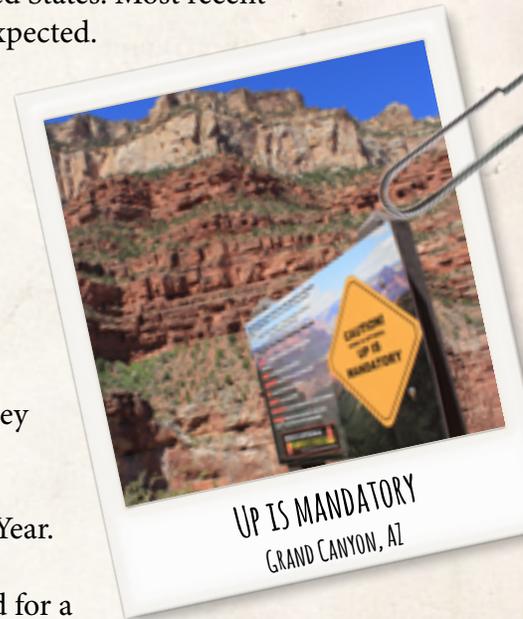
GHOST TOWN SCHLITZ
PARIA, UT



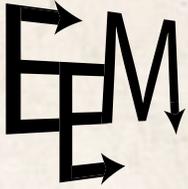
2013 Year Ender

American exiled abroad, and surrendered thousands of Best Buy Reward Zone points and American Airlines frequent flier miles.

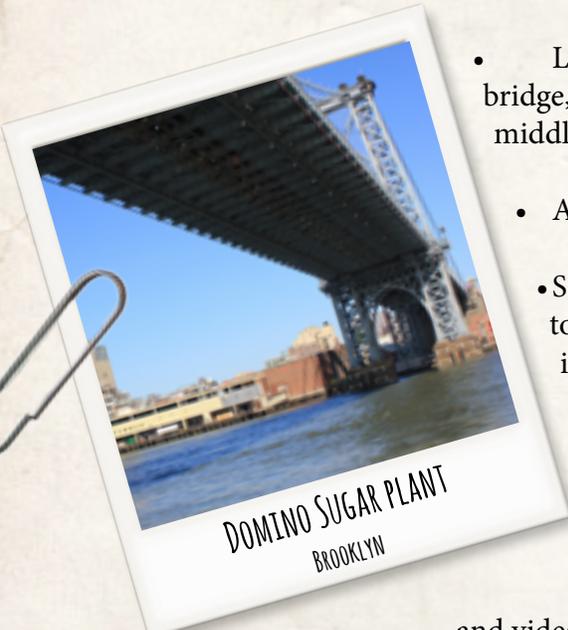
- [A wave of same sex marriages](#) crested and broke over much of the United States. Most recently including Utah, much farther inland than almost anyone would have expected. Those trying to turn this wave around face a public now accustomed to the practice and the simple fact of natural momentum.
- U.S. stock markets gained 20-30%, yet much of the nation seemed stuck in the ditch. Twitter's value after its IPO swelled into the Billion\$, while the City of Detroit declared bankruptcy. Even a monkey smashing coconuts with a discarded Blackberry seemed able to get funded for future technology ventures in 2013. Conversely, unemployment benefits expired for millions and Gov. Chris Christie (R-NJ) considered plans to begin employing the homeless in stacks as hurricane berms along the Jersey Shore. In a nutshell, we're a bit stratified.
- Twerking replaced [polkaing](#) as the hottest, sexed-up dance craze of the Year.
- Pope Francis warmed up to the gig as the entire Catholic Church prayed for a sign of what to do with universally good public imagery.
- Kim Kardashian and Kanye West made parenthood sexy. Or so they insist we all think. They also forever ruined [naked motorcycle riding](#) for the rest of us.



- American hostages held abroad received scant coverage. Including alleged intelligence agent [Robert Levinson](#) still being held in Iran, convicted missionary/overthrow-planner [Kenneth Bae](#) serving a prison sentence in North Korea, and 85-year-old adorable Korean War vet [Merrill Newman](#) who was thankfully sent back home after six weeks in prison. In fact, more people watched "Homeland" all the way through to the end of this season than noticed these stories.
- Dennis Rodman's bro-mance with Kim Jong-Un led to discomfort and trivial distraction from our interminable problems with the North Koreans. There's not been such an unexpected pairing since Bill Walton's ill-advised back channel diplomacy efforts with [Ugandan General Idi Amin](#).
- Attention was finally paid to the use of unmanned drones. Not in Afghanistan and Pakistan, of course. Instead, when Amazon announced a delivery prototype utilizing vaguely similar technology, security and limb-replacement specialists dropped their reductive payloads of bullcrap all over the rhetorical map.



- Afghan President Hamid Karzai gambled with others' chips on his nation's future. Karzai upped the ante by threatening to release prisoners accused of attacking foreign military targets. He risked scuttling the proposed security arrangement, which would keep our soldiers in harm's way there for another decade. Sorry, there's no joke here. I just feel the responsibility in my YearEnd to remind myself (and maybe others) about the longest war in our nation's history. Again.



DOMINO SUGAR PLANT
BROOKLYN

- Lady Kate Middleton and Prince William, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, gave birth to their first child. Little known fact about Prince George – his middle name is “Takei.”
- A rare sharknado destroyed large swaths of Los Angeles.
- Seattle's nascent “Big Dig” – a tunneled highway near the waterfront meant to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct – ground to a halt after Thanksgiving when the world's largest tunnel boring (zzzz...) machine (nicknamed [Bertha](#)) got stuck on an unknown object. Speculation abounded as to what might actually be in Bertha's way. As this YearEnd dropped, the answer being given to an incredulous population is that of a simple water pipe, stupidly left behind after ground mapping only 12 years ago. Don't be fooled by that! In fact, I must reveal here for the first time what actually remains below the streets of Seattle – Beyonce's secret recording studio and video production soundstage.

- Macklemore's ubiquitous song “Thriftshop” produced a radio-friendly version where the lyric “this is f*#@ing awesome” became anything but f-word-y. Using the same strategy employed in converting Cee Lo Green's hit “F*#@ You” into “Forget You.” Not surprisingly, no child in America was spared damage by this tomfoolery.

- Amazon founder Jeff Bezos bought the “Washington Post” for \$250M of his own money. Soon thereafter, Barnes & Noble founder Leonard Riggio countered by paying \$240M for the “Peoria Journal Star” and “Racine Journal Times” (with a third mid-sized Midwestern paper and/or minor league baseball property to be named later).

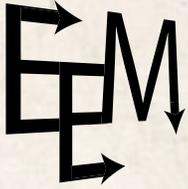
- [NASA's Voyager 1 spacecraft](#) exited our solar system, proving itself our farthest discarded innovation since our earliest chimp-helmed pre-Mercury program capsules.

- Failed New York City Mayoral candidate Anthony Weiner (D) and ex-Mayor Bob Filner (D-San Diego) collaborated on a secret sociology project designed to see just how low our collective opinion of politicians could go. In that, they were successful.

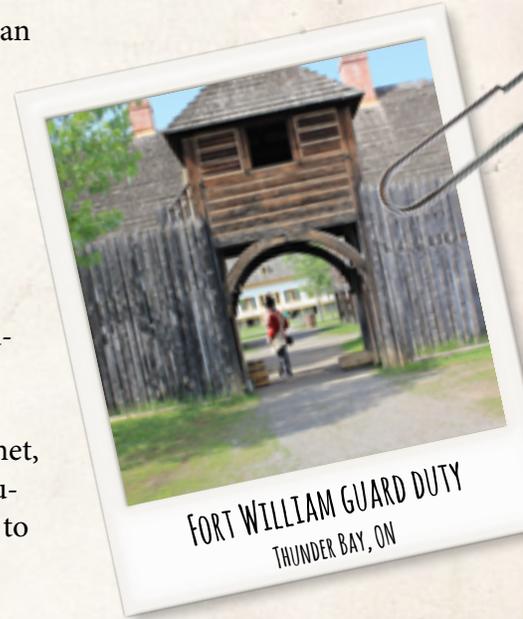


PUNK @ THE MET
MANHATTAN

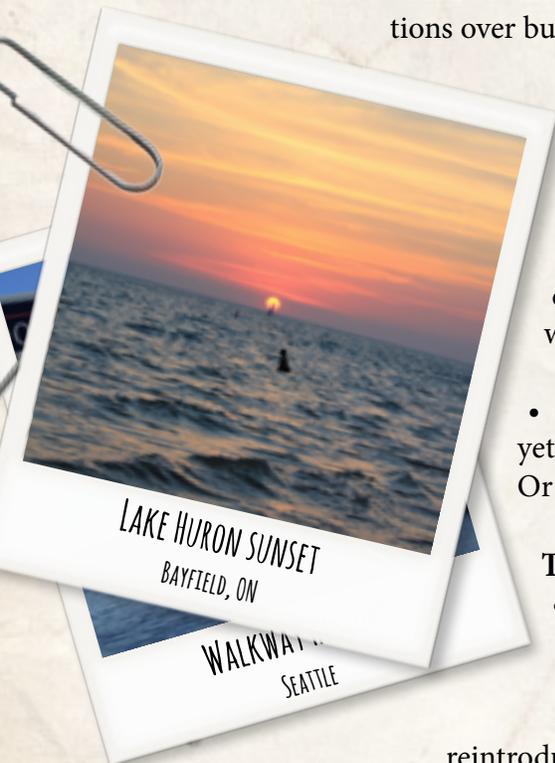
SEATTLE



- Food Network personality Paula Deen apologized for stupid, insensitive things she said years ago. “Duck Dynasty” reality TV star Phil Robertson did not apologize for stupid, insensitive things said recently. Guess who kept their job?
- Sen. [Wendy Davis](#)’s (D-Fort Worth) lengthy filibuster in Texas caused an astonished majority of Americans to put their bladder strength on the clock.
- The 100th anniversary of the 1913 NYC Armory Show gave rise to numerous, thoughtful exhibits. Including a great one at the [Montclair \(New Jersey\) Art Museum](#), who celebrate their own Centennial on January 15th of 2014. Along with countless lame attempts at besting what is still the cleverest title EVER for a painting – Marcel Duchamp’s bait-and-switch painting “Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2.”
- Nelson Mandela’s passing gave pause to people from all across the planet, as so many sought to dignify the story of his life’s journey. Until a fraudulent sign language interpreter and Dutch selfie taker brought us all back to the present.
- Author Robert Galbraith scored a whopping debut after it was revealed that he was, 1) not a dude, and, 2) J.K. Rowling.



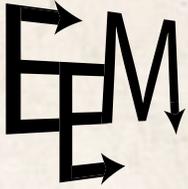
- The Government Shutdown debacle scared Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) enough to commence negotiations over budgetary matters with Democratic members of the Senate Majority. It certainly wasn’t those three Dickensian ghosts who showed him all over Racine on that frigid night in early December. After all, that stuff happens pretty much every time he’s back in his home district ever since the Romney campaign ended.



- As just one or countless tragic examples, Super Typhoon Haiyan decimated parts of the Philippines. Welcome to our evolving NewNormal weather pattern.
- “[Cronuts](#)” (a cross between a croissant and a donut) were tried by very few, yet discussed by the multitudes. Qualifying them as 2013’s food crack cocaine. Or “cro-caine,” if you will.

Trending Forward

• **Bespoke Tailoring** seems to me positioned to blossom, as it taps into increasingly cool and viable origin-sourced/”made in the USA” vibe. Granted, I say this in part because I spent time this past year getting acquainted with some artisans in the trade. [My new favorite hat maker in Venice Beach, CA](#) reintroduced me to the term “bespoke tailoring” while describing the work he does.



Look for even more of such custom-made old-school coolness in 2014.

Comeback of the Year

- Mike Huckabee's fat wardrobe.

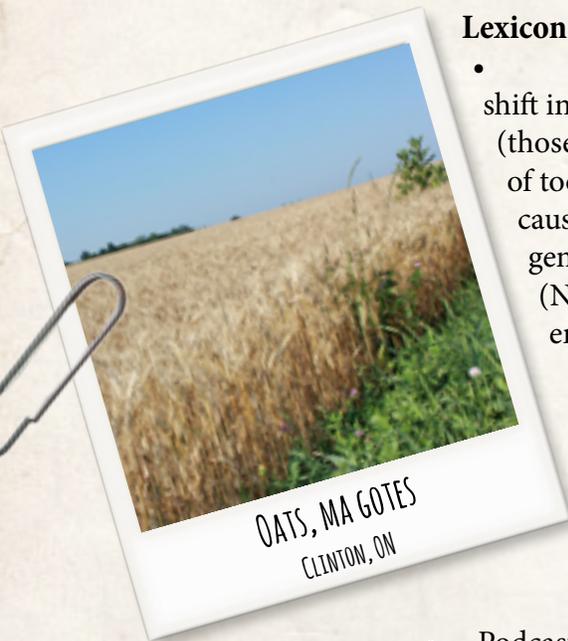
Lexicon Addition

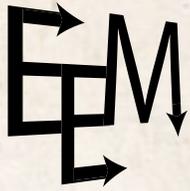
- **Inelegant truncation** proved to be the most notable (and most annoying) shift in the way language spilled forth in 2013. Things like the loss of gerunds (those "-ing" forms of words...think "amaze" instead of "amazing"), the creation of too cute roots (think "adorbs" resulting from "adorable") and the use of "because (blank)" without a full clause to back it up. Call it what you will, but this general disarticulation of word meanings is a bad path.

(NOTE: the above grumpy-sounding complaint actually reads best when employing an Elmer Fudd impression.)

Notables (Maybe not the "Best"...but certainly Most Interesting) of 2013

- TV – **"Breaking Bad"** just got better as it went along and ended on an incomparably high note. Something great died with that show's departure. Nothing I saw in 2013 came close to this daring series' resiliency and effectiveness.
- Podcast/audio – I've become a huge proponent of **the audiobook**, whether on long runs or when copious time in the car renders the inanity of podcasts pale and first draft-y. Bill Bryson's *One Summer, America 1927*, proved an especially strong example, given that Bryson chose to read it himself – (almost) always a class move, in my ear's opinion.
- Person of the Year – An (as yet) **unnamed sales clerk in a phantom U.S. airport bookstore**. I think it was a Simply Books, and it might have been in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport (MSP). In all seriousness, I can only recall the conversation and not where it occurred. I didn't catch her name, yet the whole episode came back to me when I was starting to put this YearEnder together. This shy yet articulate twenty-ish-year-old woman offered the most varied, thoughtful and thoroughly self-aware book recommendations. In short, she was a gem of a reader uncovered and then lost again in my self-styled role as a latter day Studs Terkel. When I figure out exactly who (and where) she is, I'll get back to y'all.
- Killer App – **Chic Trash**. As in actually useful, attractive consumer goods made from plastic bottles and other discarded materials. Clothes, bags (such as those by [Urban Junket](#)), furniture, etc. Might we put a tiny dent in the planet-sized trash heap we're creating? That might be



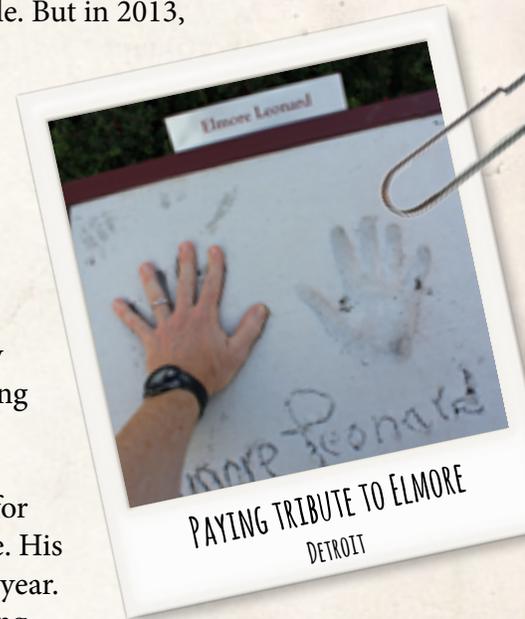


wishful thinking. But I'm glad for those who've spent the time making it a viable business.

- Sport - **Boston Strong**. Marathon tragedy, then World Series triumph. We all certainly want to turn the page and get back to ribbing Red Sox Nation for being so insufferable. But in 2013, everyone kept a candle lit for the true home of the (original and best) Tea Party.

- Live Performance (Music) – **Jason Isbell** (former lead singer/songwriter of the Drive-By Truckers) at Neumo's on Capitol Hill in Seattle. After playing one of the most wrenchingly personal songs (“Elephant”) from his astute and compelling solo “getting sober” album, one of his normal southern-fried rocker fans heckled “play something sad!” Isbell laughed along with the crowd and then returned to his roots. That's why live music is still worth a few hours spent standing uncomfortably waiting for the show to get rolling.

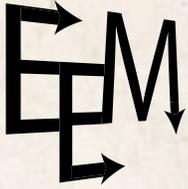
- Live Performance (Literary) – I feel the need to create a new Notable for the job I saw author **Eric Schlosser** do with his book tour stop in Seattle. His new book *Command and Control* was on my short-list of favorites this year. But it was the effortlessly cool overview that he presented without reading from any prepared text – not even his own book, of which there were many copies available – that made such an impression on me. Any author should hope to be merely half as good off the cuff when doing a “reading” of her or his own work.



- Art – City officials considered whether or not to sell the astonishing **collection housed at the [Detroit Institute of Arts](#)**. While all of Detroit largely now functions as a performance art piece in a weird limbo, the DIA, exists to be seen as it was intended. At least for now. If at all possible, I recommend visiting Detroit and the DIA. The conversations that flow from this inspiring collection – which looks stark raving mad when viewed through the filter of a city in ruinous financial straits – I believe make the cost of getting there entirely worthwhile.

- Music – Rather than pick a winner myself amidst a number of faves ([Blood Orange](#), [Waxahatchee](#), [Vampire Weekend](#)...), I'm going to do something new and hand the mike to my wife. Sarah unflinchingly called [Yo La Tengo's latest album](#) (“**Fade**”) the Album of the Year. She correctly points out that Yo La Tengo been creating engaging new music for 30 years, and that this album was the one that both of us (and our very musical 8-year-old daughter) chose most often throughout the year to put on the turntable. I'm happy that I saw them play at Seattle's Easy Street Records before they shuttered that indie store to build another bank. It only added an extra layer of appreciation to one of my all-time favorite headlines from “The Onion” (“39 Record Store Workers





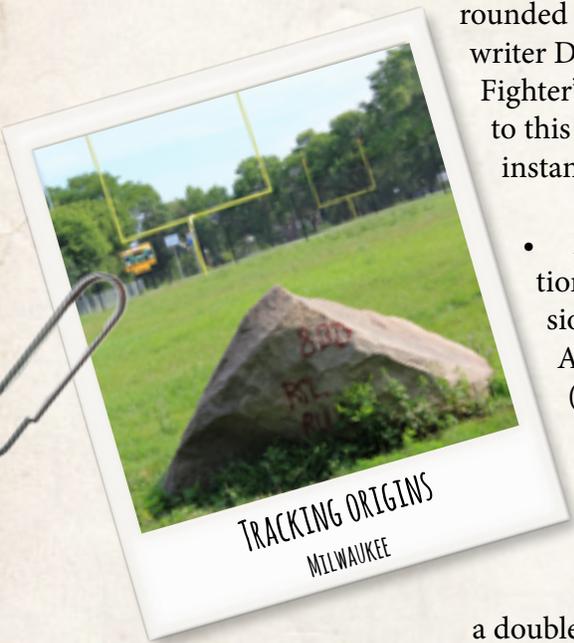
Killed In Yo La Tengo Concert Stampede.”). And a band that still ranks as one of my all-time faves. Nice choice, Sarah.

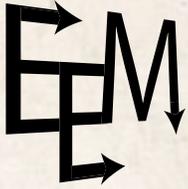
- Movie – “**American Hustle**” knocked the wind out of me. The entire cast smolders at a just below flashpoint heat. You’d think the cloud of polyester and hair products they’re surrounded by woulda coulda shoulda ignited by the time it’s all over. The director/writer David O. Russell is on a roll unlike anyone working in film currently – “The Fighter” and “Silver Linings Playbook” came in almost yearly succession previous to this stunner. This may not be the best movie of the Year. Doesn’t matter. It’s an instant classic and you should make sure you go see it.

- Book – *The Unwinding* by George Packer. Super strong narrative nonfiction – my hat’s off to Packer’s impressive skillset. He proves that a strong vision can overcome obstacles of skepticism (“what’s your book really *about*?”). And you need look no further for Elizabeth Warren’s campaign biography (even though Warren’s autobiography will be released in 2014) than what Packer places here amidst the dozens of other profiles.

2014 Predictions

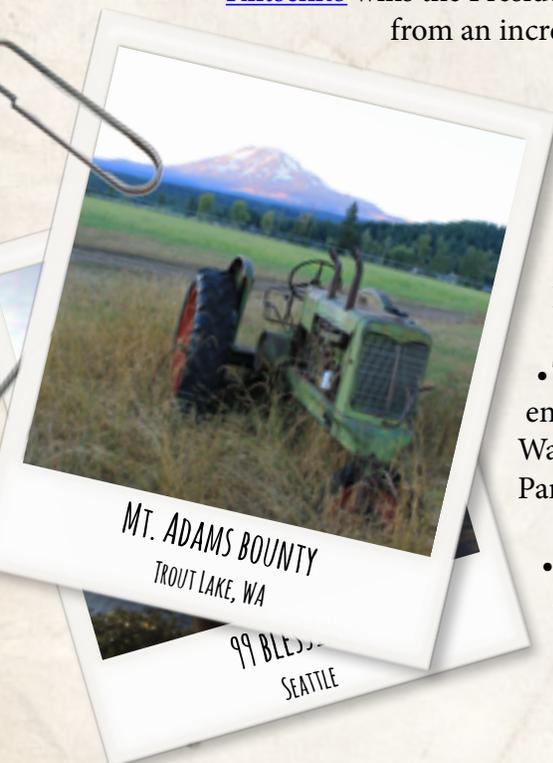
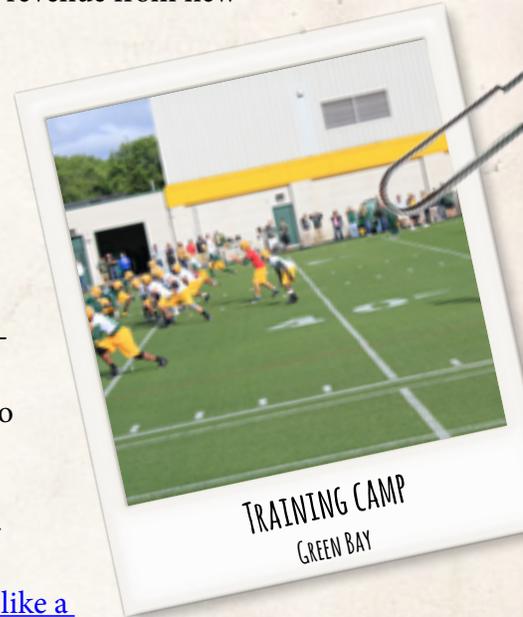
- The Devil himself revokes Vince Vaughn’s pre-“Swingers” contract and hands back his soul. Although Hell’s multiplex indefinitely books a double-bill of 2013’s “The Interns” and “Delivery Man” in hopes of recovering some of their investments.
- The past NFL season’s media firestorm resulting from a hazing scandal among the offensive linemen of the Miami Dolphins prompts a copycat controversy. The in-state, non-rival Jacksonville Jaguars special teams unit ups the ante with a murder for hire plot. Jags punter [Bryan Anger](#) (or “Banger” to his co-conspirators and teammates) is identified as the ring-leader. No one pays attention, however. Because...well, they’re the Jaguars.
- Washington State’s new legalized pot business climate eclipses even those of Colorado and fills the state’s coffers. For example, a “Marijuana Buyback Zone” in the form of a van at the airport where pre-security check agents offer to buy back the pot unused by tourists generates first year profits sufficient to build the world’s finest ultimate Frisbee stadium.
- 2013’s exploding oil trains (in [Lac-Megantic, Quebec](#) and near [Casselton, ND](#)) and a depressed natural gas market take the wind out of the sails of fracking, pipeline building and North American oil & gas exploration. Bwaaah-ha! Just kidding. Oh, and lookout behind you – here comes a mile-long coal train.

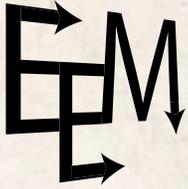




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- Beards are out, mustaches are 5-minutes-ago, unkempt eyebrows become ragingly hip.
- Using the good ol' U.S. Postal Service becomes a blazingly hot – and bargain-priced - trend. Seriously. Ten years from now, I foresee a whole new wave of “letterists” making the revenue from new vinyl records in comparison look like bake sale numbers.
- China’s expanding crack down on Western journalists pales in comparison with what’s seen around the [Winter Olympics](#) in Sochi, Russia. The press, however, overwhelms President Vladimir Putin’s iron-fisted desire to limit their freedoms when Lindsey Vonn and Tiger Woods are spotted canoodling in a trailside condo hot tub.
- Noted murderer/[tasteless-eBay-artist](#)/recluse George Zimmerman’s Netflix queue is hacked. Four TMZ.com and “New York Post” reporters file a class action harassment suit against their employers after being required to binge watch the entire “Recommended Just For You” suggestions list.
- Nuclear waste utilizing and/or reducing technologies (developed by fascinating brainiacs like [Leslie Dewan @ MIT](#)) capture wider notice. People begin hoping in earnest that we might someday hook a [thingie that looks like a Cusinart](#) up to our Deloreans and power our collective future off garbage.
- Recently retired Heavyweight Boxing Champion (and current boyfriend of Hayden Panettiere) [Wladimir Klitschko](#) wins the Presidency of the Ukraine in a nearly unanimous decision. Prompting a challenge from an increasingly delusional Sylvester Stallone for a grudge match based upon “Rocky IV.” Dolph Lundgren is entirely available for comment – you can even call him at home, just ask and he’s happy to give you the number – although no one bothers to ask.
 - James Franco king of all formats overload becomes a game overtaking “Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon” as a means of pop culture showoffishness. It’s called “Why James Franco is Better at Everything Than Anyone...”
 - The race for the White House in 2016 heats up in unexpected fashion by the end of 2014. That’s when the major party early front-runners, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and [Alan Mulally](#) (R-Ford), face an unexpectedly viable Third Party threat from re-animated zombie [Will Rogers](#).
 - Iraq continues to splinter. The Pottery Barn rule – long ago expired – looks like the most prescient thing said during the entire George W. Bush Administration.





• The 100th Anniversary of [Charlie Chaplin](#)'s still brilliant "Little Tramp" persona inspires a re-examination of the charms in silent movies. Impassioned imitators of the form abound, and Sam Rockwell is cast as "the New Tramp" in a big-budget tribute film. The sky's the limit...until Ben Affleck is introduced as the new Buster Keaton, and the whole dream factory collapses in upon itself.

• Speculation around Hillary Clinton's presumed run for the White House in 2016 is derailed by allegations regarding the overstatements made in connection with her "[pantsuit aficionado](#)" claim.

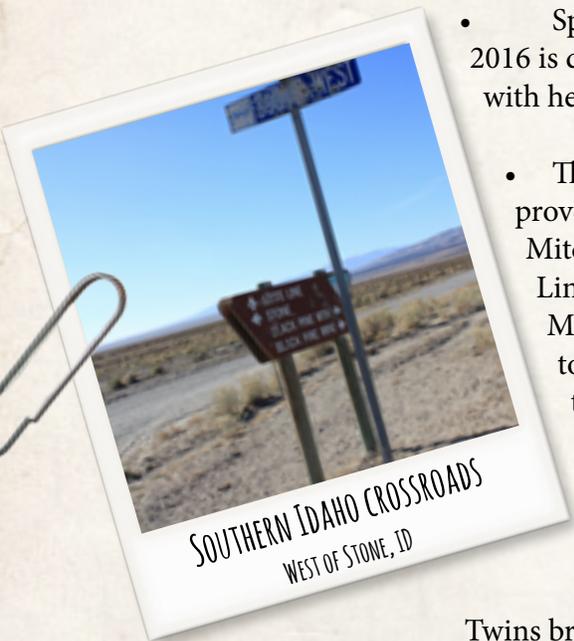
• The 2014 Midterm election has the lowest turnout ever and effectively proves nothing. Incumbents get dumped across the board, including Sens. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), John Cornyn (R-TX), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Mark Begich (D-AK) and retiring Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) sees his seat flip to the GOP. The House GOP majority sees some noticeable shrinkage, but they have excuses at the ready. In short, we get only a slightly newer loaf of political white bread across the nation. With the same vague taste of stale-mate. The real story, however, unfolds with respect to jockeying for 2016. For that, you'll need to stay tuned for details in my 2014 YearEnder.

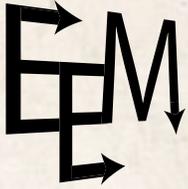
• Miley Cyrus and Justin Bieber join forces and resurrect the Wonder Twins brand. "Form of...an ice comb. Form of...an ant-eater." On second thought, no joke can replace the simple absurdity of watching (yet another) pair of extremely talented young performers grow up wealthy and hounded by countless party crashers of all manner of bad motivations. Let's just say that someone resurrects the Wonder Twins. And it's awesome.

• An even rarer East Coast sharknado destroys parts of New York City.

• Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) amps up his disruptive political style with new partnerships during his second year in Congress. His weekly press lectures with Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) are held "on" the new D.C. campus of [Trump University](#) – a 1998 Ford Econoline Van – as it tours points of interest in and around The District.

• "De Blasio" becomes a verb. Not because the new New York Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) is especially amazing. Just because it's so much fun to say. Not unlike words with mouth feel akin to "prowl" and "defrock." Maybe it means "to extend to an almost absurd height." Doesn't really matter, just so long as it's said with snappy conviction.





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- China's space program ("the Jade Rabbit has landed in the Bay of Rainbows") continues its run of dated yet interesting accomplishments. Next up, they claim to have invented "[Tang](#)"-like instant beverages. Appropriately enough, however, the Chinese call them "Johnson."

That's where I'll call it for yet another YearEnder. Thankfully, there's never a shortage of ridiculousness out there to keep my head on a swivel. So I'll continue looking for and posting in the various places those new things worth mentioning from time to time. For those hoping for a dose of the personal herein, the executive summary of life here in Seattle and what was encountered beyond in 2013 amounts to a happy, healthy hoot. 2014's storyline opens with a clever tracking shot and really exciting staging, so we are very excited about what's coming next. We're certainly prepped for our fair share of exciting things in 2014. Straight-up logistics include a research trip to Scandinavia (Finland and Sweden) for me in mid-March, a family Spring Break in D.C. (including Tax and Patriot Days – woo hoo!), and another work trip to Africa for Sarah in May. If you check back from time to time, I promise to showcase at least some of the new ideas that invariably bubble up as the conversational pump gets primed. I'd love to hear from you in reply, of course. Whether about whatever tickled you in what's claimed above. Or just to say a New Years-y "hey, how you doin'?"

Be well, publish to flourish, and remain true to your core throughout 2014. I certainly will try to do the same.

Ever,

E.

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Tweets @ [emaggie](https://twitter.com/emaggie)

