



Next Episode of

P.O.S. Enterprises and Roger's Favorite Things

When I owned *EDM Today* magazine, I penned two irregular features which alternately expressed my disdain for things that gave me grief and my admiration for things that brought me joy. Unfortunately, for reasons of political correctness and to avoid antagonizing advertisers, these features are no longer part of the magazine. However, I still come across these exceptionally poor and wonderful items, and in this month's **Rant** I offer a new episode.



There's a burgeoning, worldwide conglomerate of unrelated companies that burden both industrial and retail consumers alike with poorly designed, poorly executed products. Because the inferior products that they occasionally foist upon me cause this anal quality professional no end of aggravation, I call them collectively – P.O.S. Enterprises which stands for Piece Of S..t – you can fill in the blanks so this blog doesn't lose its PG rating. No doubt, you too, have been victimized by their products, which, distressingly, seem to be proliferating at a disturbingly increasing rate.

I'm hoping that sharing my experiences with a representative array of P.O.S. products will prove cathartic, if not entertaining.

Pull Tab Packages



No doubt, you've all come across packages with the "Pull tab to open" legend. Of course, once you pull on the tab, the incomplete perforation results in the situation pictured above. In the case of the Healthy Choice meal shown above, this has happened repeatedly over the course of more than a year with this particular product.

Producing a functioning perforation is not an easy task. The tooling has to be maintained in perfect condition and set to a precise depth. Obviously, this company is unconcerned with such trivial details!

Leaking Batteries



In the "good ole days" of "dry cell" batteries, batteries were imprinted with a warranty that said the manufacturer would replace any device damaged by battery leakage. Of course, in those days, battery powered devices consisted mainly of flashlights.

Fast forward to today, when we have an infinite variety of expensive electronic devices powered by alkaline batteries, and, yes, they often leak a nasty, corrosive substance (typically potassium hydroxide) that can destroy your expensive device.

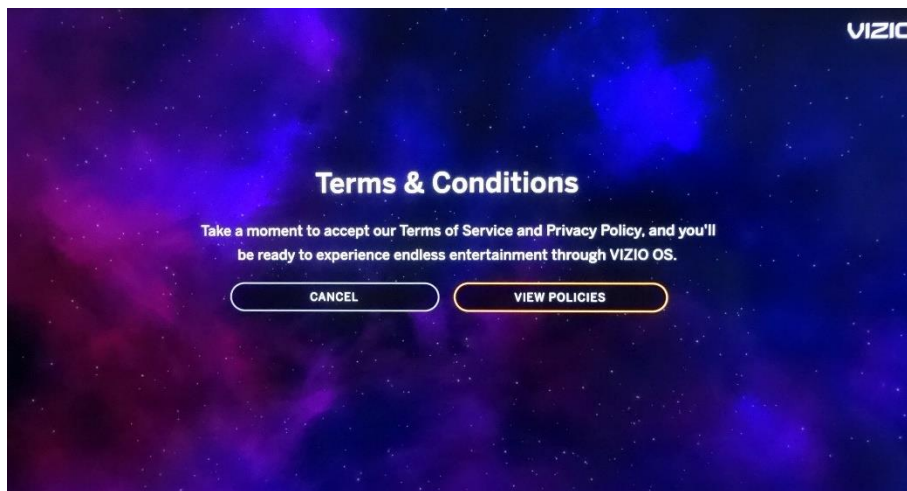
One brand of alkaline battery claims "guaranteed 12 years in storage" and the packaging states "Should any device be damaged due to a battery defect, we will repair or replace it at our option." First of all, does the 12 years apply when the battery is not "in storage?" Also, what is considered a "battery defect?" Good luck trying to collect.

The image above on the left is of a battery that came out of my expensive, yet non-functioning, Bose noise cancelling headphones. Notice the accumulated debris on the negative terminal as well as the liquid leakage at the 4:00 position on the battery case. This toxic brew ate away the hidden wire connected to the negative contact spring.

The image on the right shows the leakage that occurred from the stored “fresh” battery in the headphone carrying case.

The leakage issue is not confined to any one major brand. I have had a number of expensive devices damaged by batteries installed for as little as six months.

Spyware Television



TVs are no longer simple devices that you plug in, connect to an antenna and watch your programs. They are now actually a form of computer that, when connected to either WIFI or directly to the internet, gives you access to streaming services.

There is a downside to this connectivity, however.

Having tired of exorbitant cable TV fees to merely watch network TV programs, I cut the cable and now use antenna TV, which, by the way, offers higher quality images than either compressed cable or streaming images.

For a while, this was all good for my Vizio flat screen TV, until it downloaded a software update without asking my permission. Suddenly, the screen above appeared. It turns out that if you accept the “Terms and Conditions,” you must connect the TV to the internet and you agree to your TV sending data about all your viewing choices and history to Vizio so that data can be sold to who knows who. If you don’t accept the “Terms and Conditions,” you are forced to go through a cumbersome series of menus and actions each time you turn on the TV, merely to watch over the air programs from an antenna. I tried doing a restore to the original configuration, but that was wiped out during the software update.

Certainly, this will be my last Vizio TV.

Leaking Aluminum Wheels



A couple of years ago, my wife's Chevy Volt began flashing TPMS messages indicating low pressure in one of the tires. Sure enough, the tire was low on air. From that point on, the tire required topping off with air every two weeks. Multiple trips to the dealer (which included remounting the tire and replacing the valve stem) resulted in no solution to the problem. Even after replacing all the tires (including valve stems), the problem persisted, so I did some old fashioned soapy water testing which showed a very slow leak at the valve stem hole. Careful examination of the area (shown above) revealed significant corrosion in the valve stem area, no doubt from New England winter salty roads.

The only viable repair is to replace the expensive wheel.

Never, in my sixty years of driving experience have I ever experienced this problem. "Mag" and aluminum wheels are great for high performance applications, but the old fashioned steel wheel is likely a more durable solution for every day vehicles. So much for progress.

Frustrating Streaming Platform



I have always been a news junkie. Whether it be reading multiple newspapers, watching national news programs or listening to domestic and international news radio stations, I always want to be on top of what's going on.

Over the past decade, there has been a consolidation in the ownership of radio stations. For example, Audacy, Inc. now owns more than 200 local stations in 45 media markets. (Audacy, Inc. filed for bankruptcy in January 2024 and has recently re-emerged as a privately held company.) Likely as a result of the bankruptcy, one of the all-news radio stations under their corporate umbrella (News Radio 880 in New York) has recently been converted to an all sports station. Living in Connecticut, I depended on News Radio 880 to get much of my news fix. When that station format changed, I switched to the only other alternative, WINS 1010, also owned by Audacy. Unfortunately, that station's signal strength in Essex, Connecticut is marginal for reliable listening.

Years ago, most radio stations allowed listeners to stream their audio on the net. This was great for me when I traveled extensively for the magazine, as I was able to listen to my favorite stations anywhere in the world.

However, when Audacy took over my favorite stations, they removed that option, instead creating their own streaming platform for all of their stations. And, therein lies the problem.

Audacy overlays their separate corporate advertising over the local station's advertising and some of its content. Thus, when listening to a local station, one is repeatedly bombarded with inane national ads that often, in addition to replacing local ads, overlay actual local content, altering or eliminating some of it. In some cases, local content is actually replaced by something other than what is playing on the local station.

This may seem like a minor irritation to most, but it is utterly frustrating to me.



In the "P.O.S. Enterprises" feature above, I gave a list of items for which I lamented their poor design or quality. Lest I be branded as a totally disgruntled curmudgeon who finds fault with everything, I produce a similar list of items I adore rather than deplore.

If that idea for an article sounds like a shameless knock-off of an Oprah Winfrey idea....well, it is! However, I can assure you that things on my list will be quite different than hers, being a red-neck gear head type. Besides, I don't get the big bucks for paid endorsements that she does!

So, here it is.....my 2025 tribute to items that are distinguished by their outstanding design, utility or quality. Enjoy!

World's Best Hot Dog



Astute **Rant** fans may recall a number of culinary delights that have caught my definitely not gourmet fancy. Well, here's another to add to the list of delightful dishes.

The town of Ivoryton, Connecticut, one of three villages in the Essex, Connecticut voting district, was once the world center for the ivory trade. Ivoryton is a well-preserved example of a nineteenth-century company town and was the home of the Comstock, Cheney & Company, an ivory import business. Of course, we now realize that the ivory trade was, and still is, responsible for the decimation of the elephant population.

Recently, I had occasion to have lunch at the Ivoryton Tavern, located in the heart of downtown (such as it is) Ivoryton. Having ordered a hot dog from the menu (one of my favorite comfort foods), I was delighted when my order arrived. As you can see. The oversized hot dog is perfectly prepared and ensconced in butter grilled bun. The fries are great too.

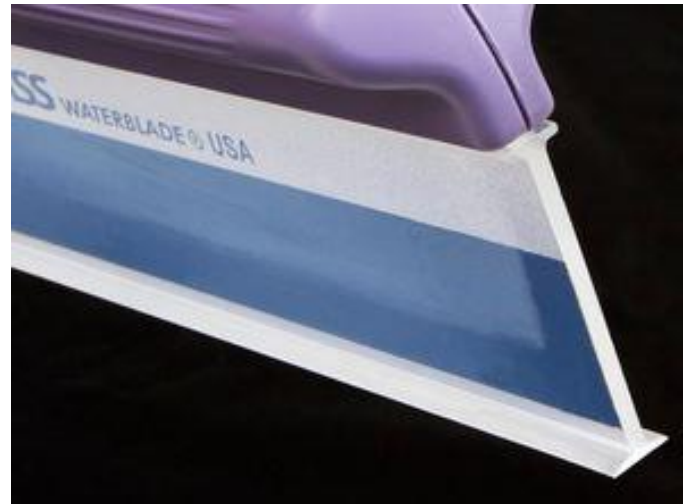
Staple-less Stapler



One day, while I was wandering about the warehouse in which my consulting laboratory is located, I noticed an unusual contraption lying on the shipping bench. Upon inquiring about it to the shipping department staff, I learned that it was a staple-less stapler. While performing their shipping duties, the staff often has to staple shipping documents together, and at times need to later separate them. Tired of the tedious task of removing the staples (often tearing the documents in the process), they came upon this little gem of a device that puts a small row of embossed rectangles into an area the size of a staple, effectively binding the documents together and allowing easy separation when necessary.

Intrigued, I immediately bought one and will happily discard my old fashioned stapler. It readily binds up to five pages securely without the annoying staples that often catch on other documents.

California Waterblade



My home is serviced by a water well sunk hundreds of feet into a granite ledge. As a result, our water is considered to be “hard,” containing dissolved limestone which precipitates on my shower walls and glass enclosure if not promptly removed. Years ago, I was reading a home improvement column in the newspaper that recommended a handy squeegee that readily removed water from surfaces. After some online research, I found the California Waterblade, which was originally designed to replace a chamois for car washing.

The California Waterblade features a patented tee-bar edge which is made from silicon rubber and does an excellent job of de-watering the surfaces of my shower. I’ve had mine for decades and it still works perfectly.

World's Best Cake



Years ago, I discovered a delightful Austrian (my heritage) bakery in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, a town adjacent to my home town in Essex. Dagmar's Desserts features hand-made, delicious treats, many made in the Austrian gastronomic tradition.

The Cherry Nougat roll shown above features a delightfully moist cake with delicious layers of frosting mixed with cherries and topped by dark chocolate shavings and a cherry. Like they say on TV, "umm, umm good!"