

FOREWORD

RANDY BAUMANN

WEBSTER DEFINES SATIRE as *the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and popular culture.*

But who cares what Webster thinks? What was he, like, three feet tall? And how the hell did he end up living with Alex Karras in the first place? Was he abducted? A poor man's Gary Coleman, if you ask me.

But I digress.

Carbolic Smoke Ball's rise to greatness is a tale as old as time — which, according to Sarah Palin, is only about 6,000 years. And yet, these over-educated, under-sexed Swiftians might never have found their audience if not for the foresight of a brilliant young radio personality named Me.

One day, in an effort to impress a horn-rimmed barista, I pretended to read the *New York Times*, whereupon I spied an article describing the Carbolic Smoke Ball as Pittsburgh's version of The Onion.

A lightbulb went off.

"Why not put them on your hugely popular radio program? Give them the exposure they deserve! And pay them next to nothing! No — pay them NOTHING! You'll sit while they whitewash the fence! And you can bury them in the 9 o'clock hour in case they stink! It's brilliant, I tell you. Brilliant!"

It was then that I realized I was not thinking to myself, but in fact talking rather loudly. The barista was nonplussed.

Since that time, the men of CSB have dedicated themselves to skewering all that finds its way adrift in the mainstream, all the while ignoring the jobs they actually get paid for.

Here's hoping their clients, patients, students, and customers continue to get short shrift.

Randy Baumann co-hosts the great DVE Morning Show on Pittsburgh's top-rated radio station, 102.5 WDVE. He can crow all he wants about not paying us for the radio gig, because we're not paying him for this one.