

"You can kick the ass of the rich. It's just such a big ass that it takes a long time."

February 2024

the lightly toasted issue...



Pepper Spray Times

all together now.



It's electrotonic...it's free...if you can find it

"Weary of solid firmness, melt itself into the sea!"*

Vol. XXIV No. 2

Barbie Steps into Republican Field for President

By Isaiah Prayer



BARBIE'S STEP INTO the Republican field of candidates is a refreshing change from candidates with little experience or substance.

"I'm so excited," stated one Iowa voter loading up on yard signs to support the newest candidate for the Republican nomination for the presidential race. "I'm excited to finally have a candidate with serious, viable ideas for moving the country forward."

"I was going to sit this one out," nodded another prospective voter with midwest enthusiasm. "But finally there's a candidate who has the support of the entire country."

"I was leaning toward a third party when I heard she was

entering the race," stated another Barbie supporter handing out fliers at the local bowling alley. "She's the only one who seems sincere."

The recent debate between former United Nations ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis confirmed that until Barbie entered the race it was diffi-

cult to tell the Republican presidential candidates from a from a bunch of clucking, flapping barnyard chickens, a difficulty exaggerated by the exit of former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie whose commitment to telling the truth gave him nearly negative ratings in upcoming primaries.

"Barbie started with a very small house in Malibu, and her business is now international," enthused one Iowan arranging to caucus for the newest candidate in freezing temperatures. The Barbie brand is currently valued at approximately 700 million U.S. dollars, almost twice the value recorded just two years earlier.

"She always has a smile on her face," offered a New Hampshire voter asked for his opinion. "And it doesn't hurt that her brand generated gross sales of about 1.68 billion U.S. dollars in 2021 and 1.49 billion U.S. dollars in 2022 for Mattel."

Barbie's choice for vice president is rumored to be current and soon to be former Berkeley City Councilmember for District



RIGEL ROBINSON IS RUMORED to be Barbie's pick for vice president since her preference is for cartoon characters.



BARBIE MAY SEEM LIKE A LIGHTWEIGHT to some, but she's valued at 700 million in U.S. dollars and is apparently both ageless and tireless.

Seven Rigel Robinson, who is stepping down from his council post because, as he puts it, he "can't take the heat" and wants to double down on his professional duties as a local wedding planner.

"She never seems to age, either," noted one political insider. "Trump has his support, but she's got game." * * * * *



SOMEWHERE BEHIND THESE EMPTY SHIPPING CONTAINERS is People's Park, which the University of California decided deserved this impressive tribute.

UC Goes Off the Rails

By Isadora Jar

The relatively recent addition of People's Park to the National Register of Historic Places inspired the University of California (UC) to encircle it with empty shipping containers weighing approximately four tons apiece in tribute to the hard work done by local community members and an international coalition of historians, artists, students, professors, and musicians to successfully get the park recognized for its historic significance.

"Of course it's a tribute," stated UC spokesperson Dan Mogulof emphatically. "Think Christo."

Some neighbors seemed unsure.

"It's bizarre. The shipping containers are stacked two containers high and they completely circle the park," stated an amazed neighbor.



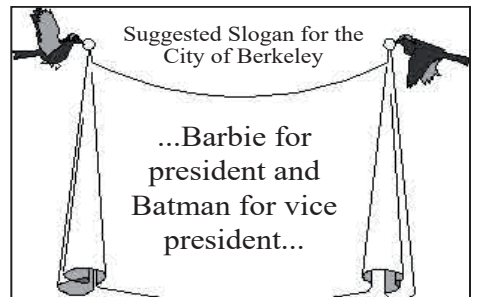
TAXPAYERS LOVE paying enormous amounts of overtime for UC's obviously crucial educational projects. * * *

"It's certainly a monument to the inevitability of any fence around the park meeting immediate demise." * * *

Your Tax Dollars At Work



CHANCELLOR CAROL CHRIST enjoys celebrating People's Park's traditions, most recently embracing a New Year's opportunity to yet again bulldoze the garden lovingly hand-watered by gardeners after UC turned off the water.



ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, so a four ton shipping cargo container is a fence? Isn't that kind of a stretch? When the university asked to put a security fence around People's Park surely nobody thought they would substitute in sixty four-ton shipping containers. It looks like a boxcar graveyard over there.

Dear reader, blue and gold boxcars as a natural landscape are a subjective matter. One might find admirers even among People's Park supporters. But they appear to have cut people entirely out of their public park equation, and nobody is sure why.

Dear Lena, so nobody can get in there?

Dear reader, we're thinking Chancellor Carol Christ might be able to have private parties in there. But she unexpectedly cancelled her fireside chat with the public regarding the shipping containers which was scheduled for January 8, 2024, at the Hillside Club.

Dear Lena, is the park still public?

Dear reader, so far. But you apparently can't get in if their publicly funded security guards, the police, and the razor wire are any indication.

Dear Lena, is razor wire really necessary?

Dear reader, we at the Pepper Spray Times are not authorities on boxcar or shipping container accessories. But it certainly is a fashion-forward, even a punk look.

Dear Lena, what's the big fuss about the chess players? Are they really dangerous.

Dear reader, maybe not specifically. But they contribute to a culture of strategic thinking one might consider taking seriously at the moment. Chess players, unlike politicians, always see the long game through the prism of each move.

Ask Lena about fun things to do with razor wire at cdenney@jgc.org.

Razor Wire; All Part of Honoring the Traditions of People's Park

By Grace N. DeGrass

Despite its tradition of years of progressive anti-war proclamations the Berkeley City Council refused to endorse a ceasefire in Gaza or say a word about the addition of dangerous razor wire which the international medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has objected to for decades.

"We are terrified of looking anti-semitic," whispered one councilmember after requesting complete anonymity. "We cannot criticize Israeli state policy, foreign or domestic, without running that risk, and it's just so dangerous. I



THE CITY COUNCIL goes along with developers because if you look closely you'll see that their shovels are very, very small.

mean, Gaza is dangerous. But running for mayor in Berkeley is quite a hot spot all on its own." The council member admitted that city ordinances strictly forbid the use of razor wire in residential areas, but pointed out that the university is exempt from anything from which it wishes even absurd exemption.

"It's public when it wants public money and it's private when it wants to shut the public out and avoid scrutiny," stated the councilmember scratching her head. "It's all like a traditional folkdance at this point that you hear so often you can hum along to the music."



RAZOR WIRE TOPS OFF the delightful addition to the southside neighborhood which knows so well the inclusive, cooperative attitude the university has toward local concerns about its democratic choices for the public stewardship of the public resources it holds so dear.

"It's called Step to the Right and Don't Look Back," called out one of the local Telegraph Avenue vendors. "I happen to know it by heart."

One local Telegraph Avenue merchant sighed that at least in the old days the revelation that the University of California at Berkeley was one of the biggest nuclear weapons contractors on earth was considered shocking.

"It's all changed," stated Rudy Wakening of TBA Later, a consulting firm for former tenured professors now on unemployment. "But razor wire is pretty old school. If they really want to frighten people out of Southside they should not only use traditional concertina wire, they should use concertinas. The typical concertina convention can usually clear a neighborhood for four or five city blocks." * * * * *



CONCERTINAS have been known empty an entire arena within the first few notes.



BERKELEY MAYOR JESSE ARREGUIN HOPES TO BRING FOUR TON SHIPPING CONTAINERS TO DESERVING NEIGHBORHOODS LIKE YOURS if you'll just vote for him for state senator so he can continue his love affair with developers, highrises, and the monetization of parks and natural open spaces. What is a beach, after all, without a hot dog stand, a large amphitheater, more parking for the wealthy, and of course a liberal distribution of razor wire.



THANK HEAVENS THE OFFENSIVE TREES AND FLOWERS are now safely tucked behind a wall of mostly blue and gold cargo containers symbolizing a new era of looking like a trainyard.

Turning A Garden into a War Zone

“It took planning, secrecy, millions in public funds, plus creative bookkeeping hard to justify in a public entity,” states Christ with pride.

By Izzy Listening

“It was a lot of work,” stated University of California Chancellor Carol Christ proudly over her effort to turn a garden into a war zone complete with razor wire and armed guards. “It’s a vision I’ve had for years.”

Christ, whose hiring as chancellor was contingent on her willingness to address and/or destroy People’s Park decided against waiting for the California Supreme Court to make its decision on their appeal of an appellate decision upholding park supporters objections to converting the park to high-end, student-only housing.

“We thought we’d prime the pump,” she stated of the midnight raid on the park over the winter holiday break. “We’re hoping that even if the California Supreme Court rules against us that there’s just a bunch of dirt there anymore that nobody remembers

and nobody cares about.”

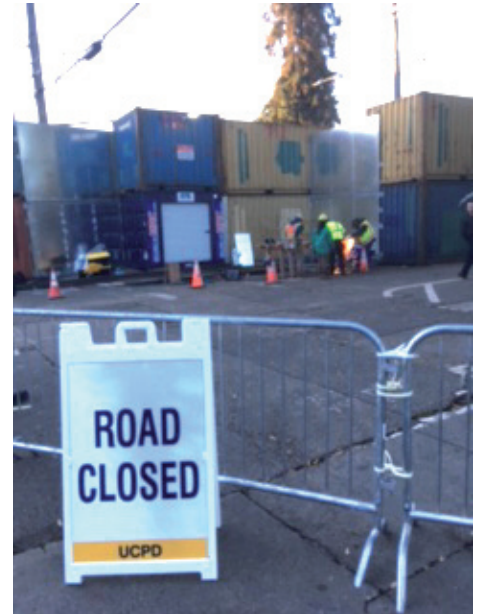
“She could be right,” mused one park supporter staring up at the razor wire topping the two-story shipping cargo containers now ringing the park. “But the university has given us decades of training in rebuilding whatever they destroy.”



NATURE is all about rebirth,” stated another park supporter. “We end up more connected than ever in moments like these.”

“The best response to the university’s destruction is to replant and rebuild,” smiled another park supporter. “After at least 72 freeboxes we’re pretty good at it.”

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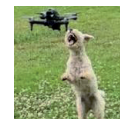


THOSE WHO CRITICIZE UC BERKELEY for making a mess of their neighborhood need to stop to consider what a great education that is for a life of uncontrollable inconvenience and indescribable annoyance.

Cesar Chavez Park Drone Pilots Target Off-Leash Dog Owners

By Tom Furdiner

“We had to convince them that targeting the dogs was kind of unfair,” stated a Cesar Chavez Park lover sick of having drones buzzing overhead. “But they caught on quick to targeting their owners.”



DOGS win this game.

“Off-leash dogs have reduced the threatened burrowing owl population to zero, so somebody had to do something,” shrugged another park lover. “And those drone operators are bored out of their skulls.”

“It’s true,” added a drone owner ruefully. “You buy one of these things and you get it going, and then what? This gives us something useful to do.”

* * * * *

We Can’t Draw Comics

by Franz Toast



Join the Growing War on Chess Players - Enthusiastic Recruits Needed Now

By Rose E. Cheeks

The Telegraph Avenue chess club is suddenly the center of a controversy no one is willing to own.

The local merchants, including Alex Knox of the Telegraph Business Improvement District, see no problem with chess playing generally or the specific group that gathers at Haste and Telegraph to dazzle onlookers



CHESS MAY LOOK like a quiet, contemplative game but the players are actually extremely dangerous people who are probably about to burst into flames.

with gambits such as the Italian Game and responses such as the Sicilian Defense.

"It looks so peaceful. But it's quite dramatic," acknowledged one player watching another's game near the open plaza created by former Cody's Bookstore owners Fred and Pat Cody to welcome and honor street culture. "If you know the game you can learn a lot by watching. This guy over here is getting killed."

The chess club's organizer waived off any suggestion that the club had political implications or ulterior motives. But he conceded that chess players tend to be categorically organized toward a singular goal.

"The objective is to checkmate the king," state Jesse, who sets up the boards for the players. "But each moment in a game has smaller objectives that build toward the end game. Staying focused on your goal enables you to handle the small stuff."

"It has practical applications for the real world," offered another player. "We can't understand what the issue is for the city."

Nobody in the city wanted to play; not the game of chess nor the guessing game

of how the recent proposal from Councilmember Kate Harrison's office purporting to resolve whatever the apparently unmentionable problem is with a "parklet" somewhere is supposed to work.

In the meantime, basic training is taking place in former People's Park for those interested in joining the war on both chess and chess players.



BASIC TRAINING for the war on chess is taking place inside what was once People's Park which is now a war zone.

"The university has its own objectives," chuckled university spokesperson Dan Mogulof. "We are, after all, one of the largest nuclear weapons contractors on the planet. These chess players need to put that into their long-term strategic plan."

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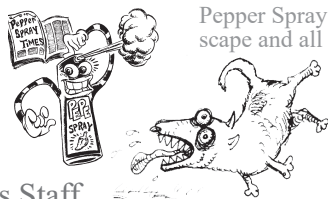
Next Issue: Tackling chess players with celebrities!

I Want My Present Now

by Juan Nathan Undergod



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Pepper Spray Times is made possible by the natural comedy inherent in the local political landscape and all its inhabitants, best exemplified by (see below)...Want to help distribute? Contact us for copies or better still, just make some.

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* Henry IV Part 2