

...the
offensive
issue...

All
hail
the...

Pepper Spray Times

...or P.S.T...

March 2006



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

"You make me strange..."

Vol. VIII No. 3

CARTOONISTS SWEAR OFF HUMOR

by Monica Mittee

After witnessing a week of riots and at times deadly confrontations with police over political cartoons, professional cartoonists worldwide swore off trying to be funny.

"This is serious," they stated, to peals of laughter. "No, really. We were wrong to make fun of anything, ever. We take it all back, and we'll be good from now on."

A spokesperson for the cartoonists stated that the group regretted ever even attempting to be funny, and would solemnly swear off any attempted humor in the future for fear of offending some humorless group who might sincerely embrace both obscure religious dictates and also homicide.

Critics objected that most professional political cartoonists were never funny in the first place and had in fact just run out of ideas.

"Reality has been handing them the humor quotient on a silver platter for over a decade," pointed out one critic. "These slackers haven't actually needed writers in years."

Others rushed to defend the cartoonists, suggesting that humor is a subjective matter which varies from culture to culture.

"Take Brittany Spears, for instance," stated one local authority on humor and



NO ONE CAN TELL if these Mickey Mouse ears are being ridiculed or if it's the other way around. It's going to be a really, really weird year.

contemporary culture. "We may think she's hysterically funny, but people in other cultures sincerely find her music quite compelling."

Comics lovers protested that caving in to the pressure from extremists to eliminate potentially offensive humor ran the risk of robbing the world of really back-slappingly funny albeit racist cartoons, the absence of which would shake contemporary culture to its core.

"We'd have to scrap all of Disney," pointed out one comics defender. "Little kids everywhere would be lost without those embedded cultural clues clarifying that the character with the accent is always the bad guy, that the good people are always the pretty ones, stuff like that. Kids couldn't get through school without this vital information."

Cartoonists dismissed this concern, citing very real threats to their personal safety and the very real risk to sales of American products everywhere.

"Sales of Danish products are way down," they announced, although they admitted that no one is very clear which products they are. "We've given up trying to figure out how to avoid offending people. There just is no safe way to create humor without potentially stepping on the toes of some cultural or religious group which might decide that even the simple depiction of a certain topic, let alone its ridicule, offends them personally. We've found the weapons of mass destruction, and apparently they are cartoons."

* * * * *

MAYOR, MAIO COMMIT TO ALL- OUT WAR ON TRAIN WHISTLES

by Leda Sastre'

The embarrassing failures of American athletes at the Olympics were finally revealed to be directly caused by train whistles, which resulted in skaters and skiers tumbling every which way on national television.

Local politicians vowed to force passing trains to curb their assault on local citizens, and a small pressure group called "Society Demanding Protection Against the Perilous Dangers of the Sudden Sounds of Trains" (SDPAP-DSST) was formed so that the efforts' primary political supporters, District One Council Representative Linda Maio, and Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, would look less ridiculous.

Critics pointed out that starting a war on train whistles was potentially even more humiliating than having world-class athletes skidding into walls and falling on their butts, but politicians insisted that Berkeley's comic potential has yet to be fully exploited.

"Berkeley can be even funnier," said Maio. "Just watch."

* * * * *



THE MYSTERIOUS MISHAPS which toppled the world's best skaters were found to be directly related to train whistles, which also contribute to global warming.



ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Q: Dear Lena, what exactly did Max Anderson do wrong?

A: Dear reader, nothing at all. Most of the time you can sail out of the planning door and right past a neighborhood before anybody even wakes up. Now and then a neighborhood catches on to the fact that they're being swindled, but most politicians can count on this moment being relatively rare.

Q: Dear Lena, are train whistles really dangerous?

A: Dear reader, actually, the lack of train whistles is dangerous, but your political leaders would rather find this out the hard way, and one has to admit that we do need to thin the herds down near the 4th Street shopping district.

Q: Dear Lena, should we all just quit making fun of religion?

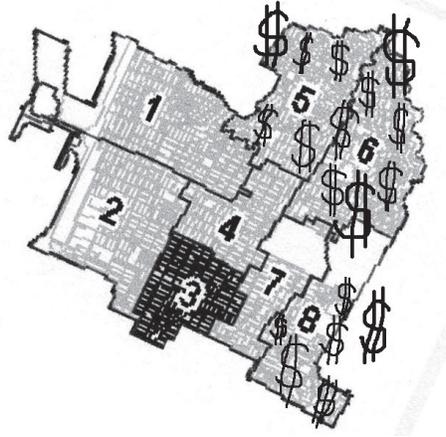
A: Dear reader, yes; whoever makes the next pope joke should be shot.

Q: Dear Lena, is the music industry really over? I mostly listen to stuff I trade around with my friends, and the truth is I have no idea what's on the radio. Should I feel guilty?

Dear reader, yes, and when the collective guilt builds to an appropriate level, count on the music industry to throw itself a huge benefit with appearances from the same old hacks hanging out in rehab. Be sure, when it happens, to reach deep into your pocket and do your part.

Dear Lena, has the Bush administration brought civil war to the middle east?

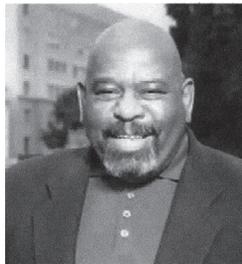
Dear reader, yes, but remember that all parties, such as the United Kingdom and the Democrats, played their traditional roles in it, and someday it will make an interesting opera.



INFILL DENSITY PROJECTS mysteriously concentrate themselves farthest from Berkeley's deepest pockets, despite the rich's pleas for cheap, crowded, poorly designed housing projects.

UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD BOOTS REALLY DUMB "SMART GROWTH" PROJECT

by Collette Aday



MAX ANDERSON has discovered that the future lies ahead, and that his mistakes should "fade into the background."

District three's relatively new representative, Max Anderson, withdrew his proposal to seek a Caltrans grant to study the feasibility of an Ashby Bart Station transit village, after realizing he had virtually no political backing for the project, unless you count

Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, whose support for the project meant that he had virtually no political backing.

Anderson expressed dismay that the neighborhood group which successfully pressured him to drop the grant proposal, which he neglected to discuss with them, had no interest in working with him on a new one.

"The future lies ahead," he pointed out, and some political opponents couldn't help but agree.

"That's the first good point he's made," commented one neighbor leaving a heated community meeting. "We can't park anywhere near our homes as it is. If Anderson's just going to grind us up and feed us to developers we want Maudelle back."

* * * * *



ENTHUSIASTIC AMATEURS beat the ratings of the music industry's tired award show, which featured the same old hacks who stumbled out of rehab just long enough to show up.

Viewers Prefer Amateurs to Grammy Singers

by Carlotta Tendant

Record industry executives struggled to explain why public disinterest in the Grammy Awards fell even further below last year's plummeting ratings despite millions spent on the glitzy televised show. Viewers, meanwhile, tuned in enthusiastically to watch "American Idol", where rank amateurs audition with sometimes excruciating renditions of both popular and unpopular tunes.

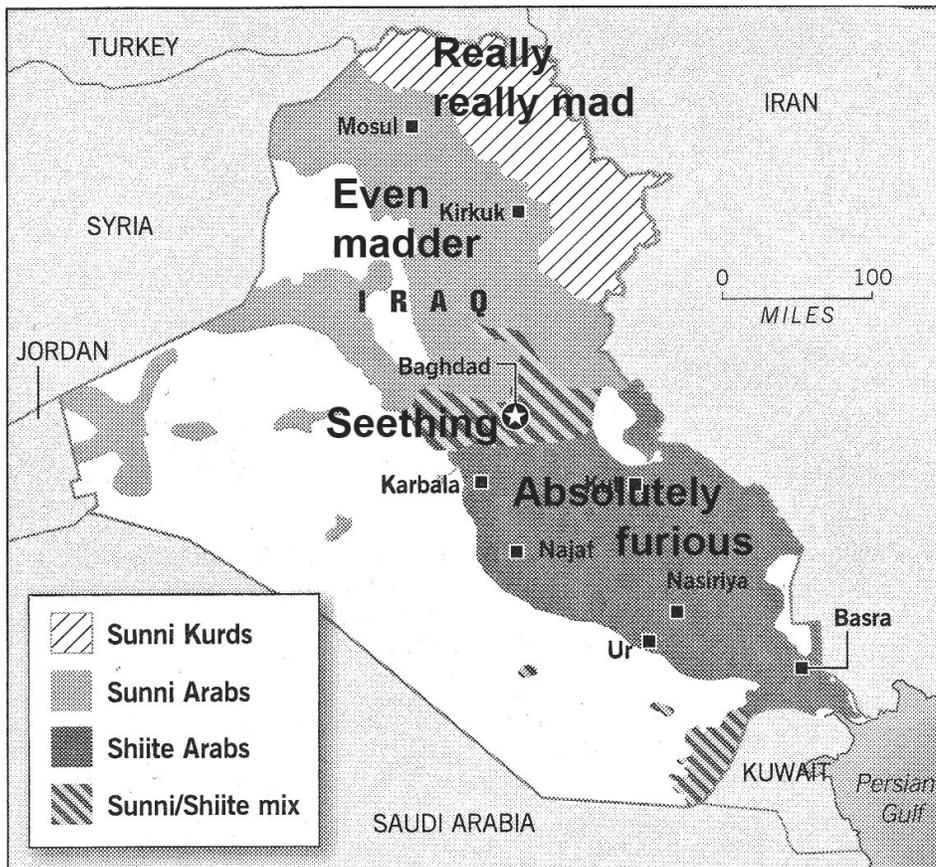
"We've spent millions buying airtime for our designated stars," grumbled one executive privately. "We have product to move. This is serious."

"We've peppered the tabloids with embarrassing stories about our product-related stars," explained another. "We need to have constant media reinforcement of celebrity names or our perfume and accessory sales can really suffer."

Viewers, on the other hand, expressed enthusiasm for the wildly diverse spectrum of singers and non-singers vigorously belting out show tunes for bewildered industry talent scouts, often with only a hail of withering criticism in response.

"They are so brave," commented one dedicated viewer. "You can really relate to them."

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THE PEPPER SPRAY TIMES takes its responsibility to educate the public on matters of current events very seriously, and provides this free map at no charge which will help describe the theological distinctions between the Shiites and the Sunnis.



MILLER TIME may be lots of fun, but alcohol-based Olympic training has mixed results impressing Olympic judges, as demonstrated by American skier Bode Miller, who actually did make it down the mountain.

Olympics Newsflash: Bode Miller Not Always Drunk

by Mandy Battlestations

Sponsors criticized for supporting national embarrassment, Olympic skier, and proud boozier Bode Miller responded that careful scrutiny of Miller's Olympic training schedule proved definitively that he is not always completely soused.

"He appeared to be almost completely sober last Tuesday around

11:00 am," stated a spokesperson for the Barilla Group, one of Miller's sponsors. "He managed to put on his own ski equipment without any assistance. We're confident he'll be a positive influence on our tagliatelle sales."

"He was sober again last Thursday," proudly reported Nike spokesman Dean Stoyer. "At least he was sober when he got on the chairlift at the bottom of the mountain."

Miller's occasional sobriety did not appear to discourage his sponsors, but neither did it help his Olympic efforts, as athlete after athlete proved Miller's alcohol-based training had its downside, and Miller came away with no medals at all.

Scientists and politicians are investigating claims that Miller's difficulties are not entirely caused by his willingness to ski while under the influence, but also might be partially the cause of train whistles, which are well known to contribute to inner ear disturbances and athlete's foot.

Miller did not appear to be deeply affected by his losses.

"The Olympics, like, wow, yeah," commented Miller. "Awesome. Is it over? Was I there?"

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Important
Advice
from the
Bush
Administration

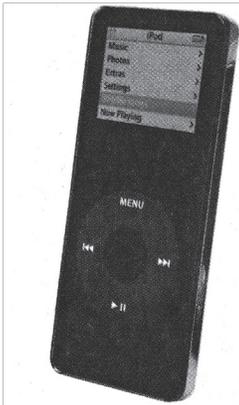
The Upside of Getting Shot By the Vice President

or,
*Always Look on the
Bright Side of Life*

- * Everybody learns your name.
- * Free ambulance ride.
- * Sudden ability to empathize with quail.
- * Get well card from Cheney worth lots on eBay.
- * Letterman wants you.
- * Doctors try even harder to make sure you don't die.
- * Guaranteed ticket to the next Republican inaugural ball.
- * Lengthy, luxurious hospital stay on White House tab.
- * Get well card from the NRA worth lots on eBay.
- * No one expects you to contribute to the Republican Party anymore.
- * Cheney shuts up.



SPYING IS THE NEXT SPRING FASHION but often requires a modest investment in the proper equipment; this vehicle may cost a bit more than your Lexus, but the interior is roomy and nobody will ever cut you off in traffic again.



Hey, guys, what about me? Talk to me.

SOME DEVICES, like this nano thingie, are starting to get really lonely.

WIRELESS THINGIES START TALKING, CONSIDER TAKING OVER WORLD

by Howie Duzzit-Idano

BlackBerry e-mail devices will soon be able to talk to Google Talk instant-messaging devices and Google Local mapping programs, the handheld maker said recently, sending great numbers of googling, instant-messaging geeks securely attached to various electronic devices out dancing in the streets.

Google Talk will Blackberry, and Blackberry will Google, and both will possibly Yahoo and Palm, although industry insiders don't yet know whether or not Blackberry will fully appreciate Palm palming Yahoo.

"It is so cool. I chat and I also get lost a lot," enthused one giggling, googling Bay Area resident wildly dancing to his attached iPod. "Now I can do both at the same time while looking a lot like all the fashionable billboards."

"Nothing thrills me like getting the



D. Minkler 2006

"Let them march all they want, as long as they continue to pay their taxes."

Alexander Haig, U.S. Sec. of State, June 12, 1982

Northern California War Tax Resistance

www.nowartax.org (Bay Area)

www.nwtrcc.org (National)

AIM and ICQ on my handheld while gyrating wildly to my tunes," nodded another. "I think it is really important to be connected."

The new BlackBerry version of the Google Local service will let giggling gaggles of grinning google users view maps and satellite images, find local businesses, get driving directions on their handsets, and view so many com-

mercials simultaneously that advertisers' drool is beginning to cause serious flooding in Santa Clara Valley.

"FEMA may have to step in and help out," acknowledged one telecommunications executive. "Without planning some levees or arranging for help from the Coast Guard, we run the risk of washing entirely away."

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The Pepper Spray Times gratefully accepts donations, death threats, mailing list additions, etc., at:



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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...

Available at some of the finest public meetings, or mailed to your door for a hefty bribe. Plagiarize wildly.

We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.

* MacBeth