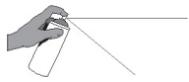


These are truly the... *...our closets are open...*



Pepper Spray Times

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

May 2004



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

"Not all the whips of heaven are large enough..."

Vol. VI No.4

CLOSET ART FINALLY DISCOVERED IN "ARTS DISTRICT"

"Closets are art," commission says

by Sheldon Peeled

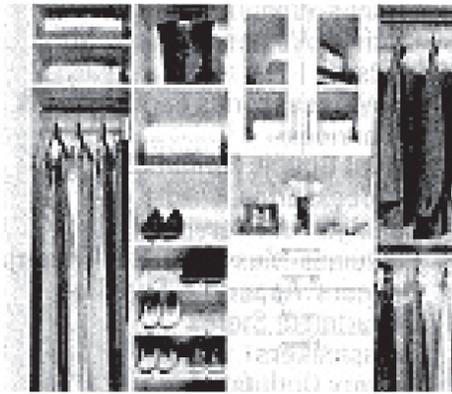
A majority of the Berkeley Arts Commission recently decided that a proposal for a small storage and rehearsal space for the Berkeley Repertory Theater open to the public less than 100 days a year satisfies the public cultural "fine or performing art" obligations required by the general plan, entitling the builder to two extra floors.

"Not only does this clarify the mystery of where the art is in the 'arts district'," stated Civic Arts Commission chairperson David Snippen about the proposed Center Street building, "it will delight Berkeley residents all over town to discover that their very own closets and storage spaces qualify as art, addressing the concerns we hear from time to time about the centralization of the arts downtown."

"I couldn't believe my ears," smiled Bette DaFarm, gesturing to her overloaded storage space in an aluminum shed next to her backyard garage. "I never thought I had an artistic bone in my body, and now I own a gallery."

Critics argued that DaFarm's storage space, like the Berkeley Repertory Theater's proposed space, was hardly public, but were quickly dismissed by city planners.

"The public gets a glimpse of what's inside now and then when the door



CLOSETS ARE A PUBLIC ART AMENITY according to the Civic Arts Commission, making you the proud owner of a gallery full of possible masterpieces.

opens," pointed out one planner. "And they can see the outside of the space every day of the year and imagine what's inside, which is very stimulating. The proposed Seagate building operates on a similar principle."

"We're very excited about the 'storage equals art' designation," added one local developer. "We thought we were really putting one over by calling the cumulative fake balcony space 'open space' to meet that requirement. This really raises new possibilities for us."

"We're thinking of raising our rates," commented Economy Self Storage in Oakland when asked about the new proposal. "We clearly have more art centralized down here than Berkeley ever will no matter how much closet space they designate as art. We're thinking now we should apply for a grant."

"At least it clarifies why they call it the 'arts district'," said one local resident. "Graft in this town is a real art."



RICH PEOPLE struggle helplessly to right themselves after attempting to boogie.

RICH PEOPLE CAN'T GET DOWN

Wealthy Try, Fail to Boogie

by Ron. N. Circles

Experts have concluded after lengthy studies and years of first-hand observation that rich people can't boogie to save their lives.

"We focused on behavior at celebrity and society benefits, but the same phenomenon is easy to observe at private parties," concluded one of the participating scientists. "What at first

we thought was aberrant data proved consistent throughout the trial. These people are truly dance-disabled."

"It's sad, really," agreed another researcher. "There they are in their expensive clothing with all their champagne and caviar, writhing on the ground like wounded animals. It makes you want to cry."

BLOW STRUCK FOR DEMOCRACY: NEWSPAPER SHUT DOWN IN IRAQ

by Alan Vain

US forces in Iraq struck a blow for democracy recently by padlocking the front doors of a popular Baghdad newspaper.

Thousands of Iraqis rallied in protest, pointing out that although the newspaper was known for its opposition of American policy, a free press was essential to the foundation of a democracy.

"Nonsense," responded an American authority. "Look at them all out there. They're experiencing a sense of unity, working cooperatively. We're just helping them get it all together."

Critics pointed out that official explanations for shutting down Al Hawza, a radical Shiite weekly, stated that the paper was publishing lies that incited violence, but American officials dismissed this as a minor .

"Truth is hard to pin down," responded one American operative. "If we used criterion like that we'd have to shut down the New York Times."

Iraqi protesters agreed that it would be foolish to use truthfulness as an excuse for shutting down the paper, considering the excesses of the American press, but continued to insist that the action was counter to democratic ideals and that repression would only fuel anti-American sentiment.

"We're off the charts as it is," responded American officials. "But we checked with Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates about this. The public has a short memory. This kind of stuff pays off in the long run."

"We tried to teach a control group to boogie," said a third scientist, "but their income and sense of class proved to be an actual deterrent to getting down. Or, rather, getting up once they'd tried to get down."

Concerned citizens agreed that it would make no sense to throw a benefit to fund further study of the matter.

"That could be construed as cruel," pointed out local society writer Carolyne Zinko. "While the rich seem to have no self-consciousness about the phenomenon, the kind thing to do is slowly introduce them to people who can actually boogie in the hope that someday, perhaps with professional help, they can catch on."

"I had no idea this tragedy was taking place," said a bystander watching as stricken rich people were loaded into a fleet of high-end ambulances outside Danielle Steel's latest benefit party, their limbs waving helplessly in the air. "It really changes your perspective on the rich. And it's so brave of them to keep trying."



ASK THE EXPERT'S



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Q: Hey, Lena, what should we call the Gaia building since the Gaia bookstore isn't in it? It seems pretty silly to keep calling it the Gaia building.

A: A local public interest group is culling suggestions from the public, the favorite of which is the "Gotcha" building, considering the distortion of LU 19 section of the general plan which brought about the substitution of a retail enterprise for actual public cultural space. This would remind the public that their rights tend to adjust mightily under the pressure of campaign contributions.

Q: Hey Lena, how come I can't find a working parking meter in the whole stupid city?

A: Experts are currently investigating the possibility of a religious anomaly, but there is no truth to the rumor that overt symbols of religious affiliation will improve your chances of finding a functioning meter. Another opinion gaining scientific popularity is that the Australian meters are homesick, and their loneliness is manifesting in various forms of malfunction. Some local citizens are experimenting with humming "Waltzing Matilda" while feeding their meters and have reported success, but this information is purely anecdotal.

Q: Hey Lena, what exactly is "traditional marriage"?

A: Traditional marriage usually involves radically overspending on a ceremony designed to offend both sets of in-laws with inclusion or absence of specific religious rituals, and public promises to manifest attributes antithetical to the human species. Traditionally, marriage does not "last" without unspoken agreement that all parties agree to neglect to mention that they are utterly and consistently miserable.

UNIVERSITY TRIES TO BUILD BRIDGE TO COMMUNITY: COMMUNITY SAYS IN YOUR DREAMS

by Avery Day

"We're not sure what went wrong," said bewildered University planner David Duncan, after the Landmarks Commission flatly rejected a proposed pedestrian bridge as "unacceptable".

Observers agreed that the University's history of local landmark destruction must have played a role.

"We'd actually love a bridge," offered one. "Then we could burn it."



PEDESTRIANS gather rocks in preparation for crossing a busy intersection.

ROCK HURLING REPLACES ORANGE TRAFFIC FLAGS

by Ariel Winner



Although the traffic safety experiment which provided pedestrians with orange plastic flags to wave while attempting to cross dangerous intersections limped quietly out of the picture, a new experiment appears to be proving both less expensive

and more effective.

"An ordinary rock will do," explained traffic safety experts to interested pedestrians. "Fruit, pine-cones, and other small objects will work in a pinch, but we have found rocks to be more effective."

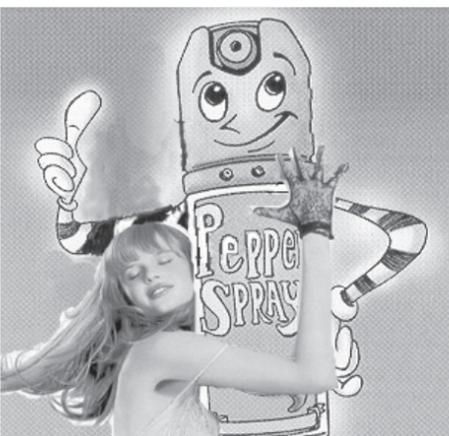
"Not only does traffic stop for me now, I'm getting a great upper arm workout," commented one Berkeley High student who normally has to wait five or ten minutes to cross a busy intersection each morning. "My aim is improving, and check out my biceps."

The new program requires no additional funding, since ordinary rocks are easy to find, and its reception by pedestrians appears to be positive.

"I come to work in a much better mood," mused one bicyclist who used to have difficulty crossing busy streets. "I just keep a couple extra oranges in my backpack and I believe I'm getting a clear message across."

Drivers were less receptive to the program, expressing concern about the possibility of dents and vehicle defacement, but agreed that a rock-chucking pedestrian was a lot less silly-looking than the flag-wavers were.

"The flag-waving stuff doesn't come naturally to people in Berkeley," observed one driver. "I believe I'll be able to take a smashed windshield a lot more seriously."



YOUR SOCIAL LIFE will really wake up when you make sure to keep a sensible supply of pepper spray on hand for your guests and loved ones...



RICE FRIES UNDER FIRE

by Ned A. Sweater



NATIONAL Security advisor Condoleezza Rice's live show's failure was blamed on a "wardrobe malfunction".

Condoleezza Rice recently reassured the September 11th congressional commission and a worried nation that the Bush administration was fully informed about terrorism on the morning of 9-11 attack in 2001, and that President Bush had in fact spent most of the morning with his fingers in his ears.

The investigating commission expressed curiosity about a formerly classified briefing document titled "Bin Laden Determined to Strike the United States" dated August 6th, 2001. Despite acknowledgments in the briefing that al Qaeda cells were currently operating within the nations borders and planning hijackings, Rice echoed administration officials' dismissal of the document as unimportant, irrelevant, and really badly written.

"We were just really, really embarrassed about it," commented Rice. "It's all passive voice and full of split infinitives."

MCDONALDS MURDER PLOT REVEALED

"We hate people," explains corporate chain

by Sue DeMall

The nation's largest fast food chain, whose CEO recently collapsed and died of a heart attack, confessed under intense congressional scrutiny that they purposefully loaded lard into their products in an effort to kill their customers.

"The ketchup, the milkshakes, you wouldn't believe what's in this stuff," chuckled one industry executive. "I can't believe it was even called food."

A recent study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that about 400,000 preventable deaths were linked to poor eating and exercise habits, leading government experts to blame consumers themselves.

"People share a certain amount of responsibility for the problem," conceded Tommy Thompson, head of Health and Human Services. "But McDonald's industry executives have confessed they just got tired of the traffic, you know, the long lines at the movies. They just wanted to clear the place out for a bit. God knows they don't eat that stuff."

PUBLIC ON ALERT: GAYS INFILTRATE EVERYWHERE

by Rhonda Corner

Citizens shivered at the news that the over 4,000 same-sex couples who obtained marriage licenses in San Francisco came from 46 states, eight countries, represent hundreds of different occupations, and with exception of being well-educated, appeared to be average in every way.

"It's worse than we thought," said Benjamin Lopez, legislative director for the Traditional Values Coalition. "They're everywhere spreading their insidious agenda of love and respect. We're lobbying the Bush administration to declare a national emergency."

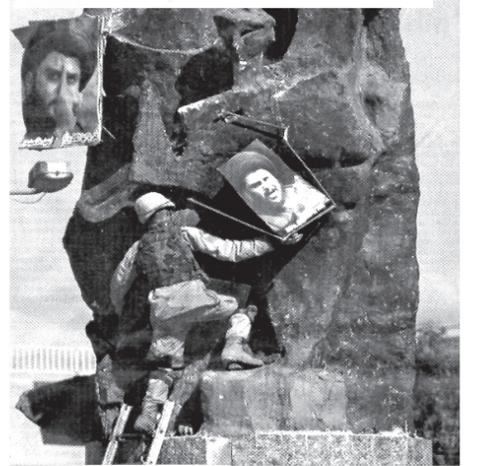
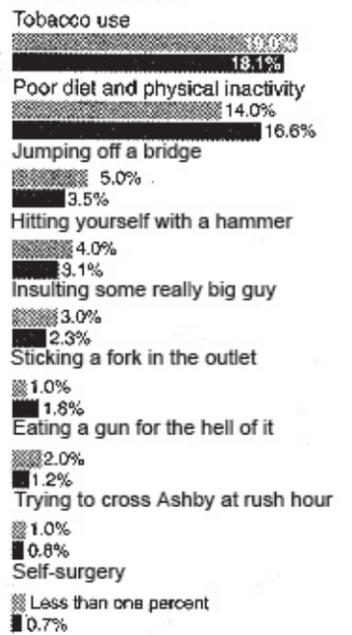
The Bush administration suggested a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage when the epidemic began, but backed away when public support for same-sex marriage and civil union protections appeared to grow stronger, focusing instead on modernizing Medicare, streamlining the workforce, and democratizing Iraq.

"We know when we're licked," stated one administration official. "We need to play to our strengths."

A growing problem

The number of deaths in the United States due to poor diet and physical inactivity rose between 1990 and 2000.

Actual causes of death, by percentage of total deaths



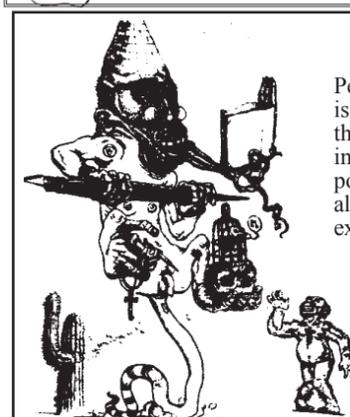
U.S. MARINES tear down posters of Islamic cleric Muqtada al Sadr as part of a beautification project.

"We feel so lost," shuddered one member of the Traditional Values Coalition casting suspicious looks at passers-by. "We thought we knew where to find them and how to recognize them, but now we realize that anybody we know might be gay."

Many same-sex newlyweds admitted that they'd adopted traditional values a long time ago.

"We're ridiculously conventional," confessed one same-sex couple in a whisper. "We winter in Cabo."

We Can't Draw Comics by guest artist Franz Toast



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* Merry Wives of Windsor