

All hail the...  
...the newsrack menace issue ...

# Hepper Spray Times

May 2009



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

"...Peruse this, as thou goest..\*"

Vol. XI No. 5

## UNRULY NEWSRACKS TERRORIZE TOWN



By Padma Nickel

Terrified tourists and quaking citizens have united in agreement that if giving up their first amendment rights is what it takes to rid the streets of menacing newsracks, then that's the price they are willing to pay, according to City Hall staff.

"Free speech is great and all that," commented one shopper hovering nervously near a bus stop, "but I'm so scared of these newsracks I just can't think of anything to say."

Code Enforcement Supervisor Gregory Daniel has assembled a small but well-trained militia of both paid and volunteer newsrack-savvy personnel to try to address the crime wave sweeping across the East Bay, but acknowledges that without more funding and better weaponry the group has little hope of stemming the tide of newsracks drifting into town from parts unknown.



**THREATENING GANGS** of newsracks wait openly for victims to walk by them.

"They come for the services," Daniels stated. "They come because they hear this is the home of the free speech movement, and they think life will be easy. Then they get stuck on the streets and it becomes my problem."

Newsrack defenders admit that the often scarred metal boxes tend to congregate in groups, and that their tendency to blare headlines can intimidate people, but insist that the newsracks' activities are protected by the first amendment.

"I don't care what their rights are," said one local citizen in response. "They're so covered with graffiti I have



**NO ONE IN THEIR RIGHT MIND** would want to walk the streets while predators such as these newsracks are on the loose pretending to ask innocently for spare change.

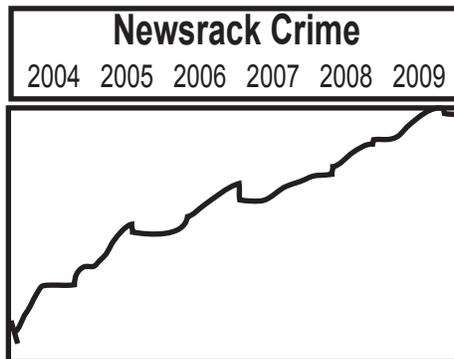
no idea what they're trying to say."

"I can't afford the news anymore," agreed another local resident. "I think it's creepy that they keep trying to communicate with me. I'll feel much safer when we've seen the last of them."

Daniels admitted that the city is searching for creative as well as traditional military solutions.

"Maybe without the actual news content they would behave better," he commented. "Maybe they could be planted with flowers or vegetables. That would be very Berkeley."

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## Newsrack Defense Classes Boom

By Harrison Annoyance

The Economic Development Department stated recently that the boom in newsrack defense classes has been the best tonic for the depressed local economy, filling up otherwise empty storefronts in commercial districts with shoppers and residents determined to fight back when confronted by the surly, graffiti-covered metal boxes.



**CITIZENS** are banding together to fight the newsrack menace with their neighbors in fashionable camouflage.

"It's partly the useful techniques I'm learning," stated one neighborhood resident who admitted she had given up attending events or shopping in the commercial districts where newsracks tend to congregate. "But the most important thing is the self-esteem I'm building, so that when I am confronted by the menace of newsracks I don't feel completely helpless."

"It's all about empowerment," agreed another former shopper practicing a confident stride past a newsrack. "Empowerment and a little pepper spray."

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# ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

**Dear Lena, what is the best defense against newspaper boxes?**

Dear reader, no defense is 100% effective against these wily grifters, which know a thousand ways to take you into their confidence and leave behind nothing but broken souls.

**Dear Lena, couldn't there be a truce between the newspaper boxes and the people? Isn't there any chance for peace?**

Dear reader, No. This is going to be a very long, very costly war. Keep your pepper spray handy.

**Dear Lena, there's a newsstand on my block and we get along fine, greeting each other cheerfully and exchanging the news. Are you positive Berkeley's City Hall staff isn't making a big fuss over nothing?**

Dear reader, it's easy to minimize the threat we all face from newsracks, but the officials at City Hall, especially the elected officials, know that newsracks, the graffiti they carry, and the diseased perspectives they spread are the key to success or failure in the next election. Keep your children close, and your weapons loaded.

**Dear Lena, but without newsracks there would be no newspapers, and without newspapers people would vote for candidates based on last-minute doorhangers and fact-free campaign mailers. Without newspapers nobody would know anything and they'd never go outside.**

Dear reader, Yes. Especially without enough pepper spray.  
*Ask Lena for advice about color-coding your fava beans at [cdenney@igc.org](mailto:cdenney@igc.org).*



**THIS MAY SEEM LIKE** an easy job, but being the chief volleyball cheerleader in People's Park is so humiliating it usually requires years of psychiatric recovery. The volleyball court is gone now, but the scars remain.

## University Needs More Community Advisory Board Members to Humiliate

*By Bud R. Cup*

"Thanks, but no thanks," is the commonly heard refrain from most of those being recruited for the People's Park Community Advisory Board, most of the members of which exited in a huff when the university refused their "make it a mall" project complete with cappuchino-sipping yuppies.

"We gave it our best and we were ignored," snorted one former member. "Everybody knows you need to root the left-over sixties out of the park to improve it. We



had a plan with little tables and expensive coffee and lots more cops. If the university refuses to populate the park with yuppies, they deserve to spend the next forty years roughing up the usual tie-dye crowd."

University of California (UC) Community Relations Director Irene Hegarty admitted that the university was having trouble recruiting new board members after the former board members' mass exodus.

"The previous group was understandably frustrated," she acknowledged.

"But don't think the university had no sympathy for their approach."

Anonymous university officials confirmed that there was nothing they would like better than turning People's Park into a shopping mall, but the budget crisis was working against them.

"We'd love to vacuum out the hippies, the punks, the tattooed and pierced crowd," one UC official admitted. "But we'd catch hell from the small ratio of the community paying attention to what we're up to if we spent money re-making the park right now."

Students confirmed the concern. "We may not have been here when the park was born, and not all of us know the history," stated one student, "but we like the little park and we loved the concert. Plus, we know what's happened to our registration fees and our scholarship money."

"And some of us do remember the volleyball wars," added another student. "We appreciate that the university will actually kill for volleyball."

Hegarty claims that the recruiting may take some time, but that the university will succeed in repopulating the advisory board.

"People really love the illusion of participation," she stated. "We need to keep that illusion alive."

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**PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE** artists keep adding more and more permit-free touches to the traffic-stopping structure, which may soon have a couple of rope ladders, a playful fountain, and tire swings.

*By June Everknow*

The finger-pointing over controversial art installations at the Berkeley pedestrian bridge grew more heated recently when local artist Tyler Hoare's famed Red Baron sculpture suddenly appeared on top of the structure, startling drivers and delighting tourists.



**ARTISTS AGREE** that they are too big to fail, but are still being passed over for bailout funding.

City Hall staff member who wished to remain anonymous. "It's structurally sound, as far as we can tell, but we're concerned that drivers beneath

the bridge may become distracted and cause an accident."

The bright red plane is only the latest in a long string of "plop art" installations which either plague or brighten the local landscape, depending on one's personal point of view.

Pedestrians using the bridge to bike or walk to the shore seemed delighted by the addition of the plane to the bridge, which recently was decorated by a commissioned work featuring large metal figures of shouting, fiddle-playing protestors and anatomically correct pairs of copulating dogs.

"I'm not sure what any of it means," admitted one bike rider. "But we're bringing a tire swing down here next week so at least these cross bars don't go completely to waste."

Another pedestrian dismissed con-



**SCULPTOR FRED FIERSTEIN** placed a permit-free statue called "The Guardian" at the Berkeley Marina, alarming beaucrats, who organized to remove it until fans, in a city vote, forced the city to leave it alone.

cerns over the bridge's art causing distractions for commuters.

"That didn't seem to be a concern when they agreed to the rutting dogs," he pointed out. "But most of these drivers come this way every day, and they know better than anyone else that if they didn't have a little distraction they'd be completely asleep."

CALTRANS disagreed, claiming that the collection of driftwood sculptures which once decorated the shoreline near the entrance to the Bay Bridge were both a nuisance and a threat to public safety. Officials refused to reveal any plans for removal of the popular plane.

"We learned our lesson with 'The Guardian'," stated one CALTRANS official. "If we let the public participate in this decision, the Red Baron will be there forever."

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## Pirate Newsracks Bring Shipping to a Halt

*By Cyril Lee Pancakes*

International shipping lanes are fast becoming the territory of newsrack pirates bent on hijacking expensive cargo and threaten to increase the already skyrocketing cost of international trade.

"They're brazen, and the economic crisis has made matters much worse," stated the captain of a vessel which barely escaped being boarded by newsrack pirates. "The administration and the international community of nations

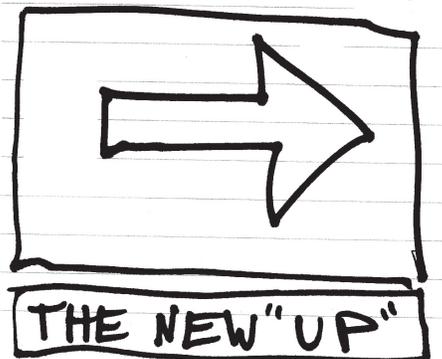
have to act, and act quickly, or South America will have to eat its own bananas again."

Security experts advise citizens to keep a wary eye on newsracks with eyepatches, wooden legs, or sporting parrots on their shoulders.

"Beware of horizontally striped clothing," stated one expert. "and if you hear the sound of sea chanteys, run."

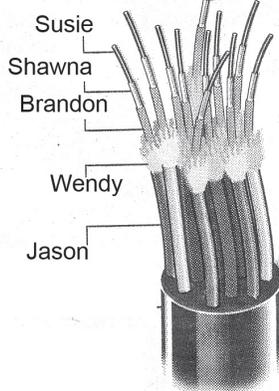
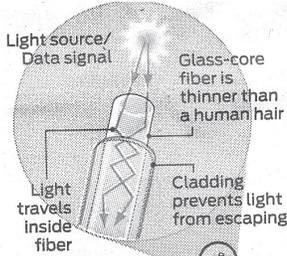
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We Can't Draw Comics by Franz Toast



## The hidden secret of fiber optics

Communications from one empty-headed teenager to another can now be audible on any bus or in any restaurant thanks to these little wires which some unappreciative person recently cut.



## Cell Phone Hater Cuts Wires, Interferes with Twittering

By Seth Who

A quarter million dollar reward has not revealed who was responsible for the vandalism which severed underground fiber-optic cables, disrupting phone service for thousands of chatting, texty teenagers whose discussions of food, music and fashion sets the stage for the pathetically empty lives of the rest of the nation.

"We thought people would leap for that \$250,000," muttered San Jose police Sgt. Ronnie Lopez. "But we've had to accept that the majority of phone traffic these days is young people ripping the fashion faux pas of the other young people at the parties the night before."

"I actually saved money thanks to the phones being down," commented one appreciative businessman about the interruption. "I couldn't get through to my broker, and was stopped from taking a bath on Wells Fargo after its stress test."

Police investigators are scratching their heads, unable to find a motive for the vandals, and equally unable to provide any motivation for tipsters.

"People are getting used to no newspapers, no news, no phones," stated Lopez. "They're almost being here now."

\* \* \* \* \*

## UCPD Captures Terrorist Bamboo Bike Cart

By Ferris Fair

University of California police captured a hand-made bike cart belonging to a prominent activist suspected of participating in terrorist activity shortly after the 40th Anniversary of People's Park, explaining that the cart had been heard speaking Arabic and indicating its willingness to participate in permit-free activities.

"We couldn't arrest anybody during the 40th Anniversary activities," explained UC Chief of Police Victoria Harrison. "They were too peaceful, too blissed out, and the park hasn't been that crowded in years. The bamboo cart, on the other hand, was lurking alone the day afterward, so we did extended surveillance, and finally asked it for specific and reliable identification."

Another officer confirmed that the cart refused to answer simple questions.

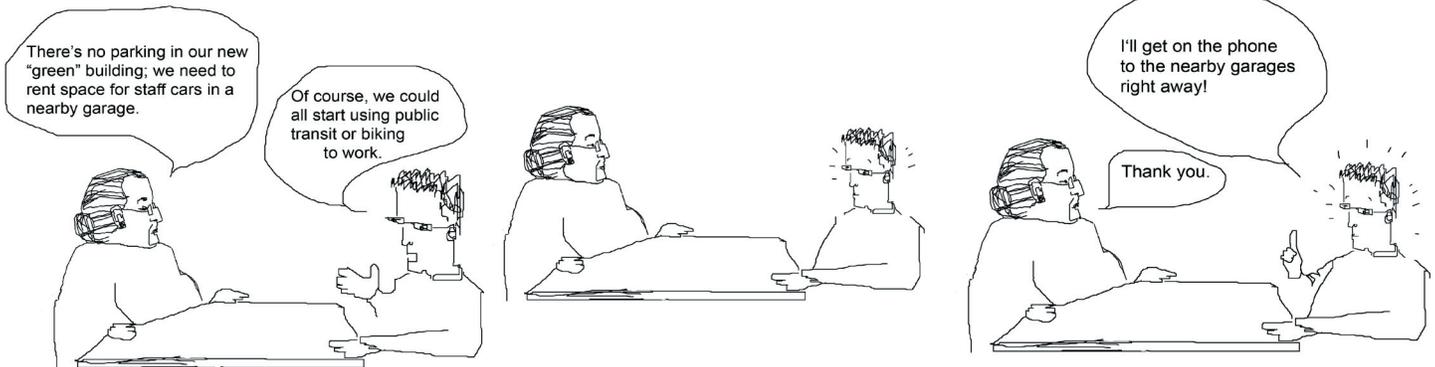
"We put it in the dumpster to protect it," stated the officer. "It then disappeared. We believe it might be in Pakistan."

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Next Issue: Scone Buttering  
with Celebrities

## THE ADVENTURES OF THE CENTER FOR ECOIDIOCY

by Nathan Undergod



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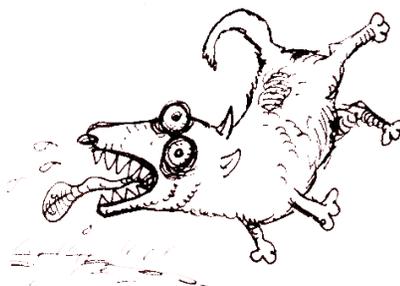


Pepper Spray Times  
1970 San Pablo Ave. #4  
Berkeley, CA 94702  
cdenny@igc.org  
www.caroldenney.com

### Pepper Spray Times Staff

Editor.....Grace Underpressure  
Art Director.....Egon Schiele  
Comics.....Don D. Ferrera  
Staff.....Padma Dues, Harrison Annoyance,  
Lena Deeter, Bud. R. Cup, June Everknow,  
Franz Toast, Cyril Lee Pancakes, Ferris Fair,  
Seth Who, Nathan Undergod

Pepper Spray Times is made possible by the natural comedy inherent in the local political landscape and all its inhabitants,  
best exemplified by...



Hardly available anywhere; mailed to your door for a modest bribe. Plagiarize wildly and send money.  
\* Romeo and Juliet

We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.