

All hail the...

...the seated issue ...



Hepper Spray Times

May 2011



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

"...from point to point now have you heard..."*

Vol. XIII No. 5

Mayor Bates Claims Anti-Sitting Law Efforts Don't Really Exist

by Olga Getdapizza

A packed City Council meeting full of citizens opposed to Berkeley's proposed anti-sitting law was surprised to be told by Mayor Tom Bates that no such ordinance is being proposed, and that various meetings about the proposal are just figments of everybody's imagination.

"We're so amazed," responded one of the attendees holding a "Stand Up for the Right to Sit Down" protest sign. "I had honestly thought I attended a subcommittee meeting at the Chamber of Commerce about the proposed anti-sitting ordinance."

"Me, too," chimed in another protester. "It seemed so real. Linda Maio was there, and Max Anderson was there, and Roland Peterson..."

"Wow! And John Caner? And Polly Armstrong? I had the same figment right about the same time!" said another protester. "What are the odds!"

"Gosh, I did, too!" stated an amazed Michael Diehl shaking his head. "I know the mind is an amazing thing, but I really really remember getting a little Cal Bears notepad at that imaginary meeting and I think I still might have it. In my mind, of course."



THIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING did not really happen, it was just a delusion simultaneously experienced by all the people who were there which has been happening a lot lately. Even the kleenex box does not really exist.



BERKELEY MAYOR TOM BATES claims that although the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Berkeley Association, and both the Telegraph and North Berkeley merchant associations claim that the city is brewing up an anti-sitting law patterned on San Francisco's ordinance, that it isn't really true and nothing like that is really going on.

"How silly I feel having marched all the way across town with over a hundred people about something that just doesn't even exist at all," whispered an embarrassed protester. "I guess we should really check with city hall first so that we don't get all worked up over stuff that isn't really happening even though we got the little Cal Bears notepads."

City staff clarified that while they might at some point concede the existence of the little Cal Bears notepads, they would not concede the existence of the meeting, or any meetings or phone calls or emails with any of the business improvement district directors currently speaking to the press about the non-existent proposed anti-sitting law which currently has no wording so don't even bother sending your Public Records Act request.

"It just doesn't exist at all, period," stated one city staff member. "The collective hallucination regarding the Chamber of Commerce subcommittee meeting should be a lesson to people to pay no attention to things unless they get a doorhanger from us regarding an election."

* * * * *



THESE WEALTHY PEOPLE were incensed when offered services by the crisis intervention team.

Rich People Most Likely to Refuse Services

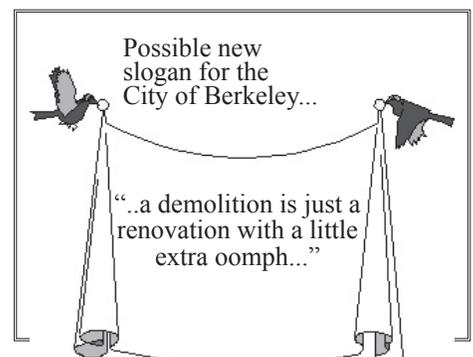
by Sir Cumstance

Experts confirmed the surprising news that rich people, rather than poor and/or homeless people, are not only much more likely to refuse social services but also much more likely to be surly about it.

"Our assumptions were completely backward," stated an amazed service provider. "For instance, we have a large population of rich people in this town who sincerely believe that the poor are responsible for them not having an enjoyable shopping experience. But when we offer them opportunities to address their bigoted misconceptions, they bristle and refuse to take advantage of them."

"The richest ones are often the worst," stated another service provider in agreement. "I know it sounds unbelievable, but the ones who own lots and lots of property whine the most about how the homeless are ruining their shopping experience. It's just so sad."

* * * * *



ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, is the mayor kidding about the Chamber of Commerce subcommittee meeting not really talking about an anti-sitting proposal even though it was on their agenda? Wouldn't that be kind of a weird thing to do? And wasn't I there? I think I was.

Dear reader, not at all. The best legislation is kind of like a spring bunny. It is often a little shy, and might be nervous around big crowds or Public Records Act requests. It is unsure of itself, and needs a protective atmosphere to grow and thrive. The mayor appreciates this, and is just trying to help. And you weren't there and even if you were, you really weren't unless we say so.

Dear Lena, I would like to have a business improvement district of my own that would have the immediate ear of the council without having to go to pesky meetings or write dozens of tedious letters. This way I can collect money from my neighbors and then use it to lobby the city council and staff to do stuff I want. Can I do this?

Dear reader, of course you can! This is a democracy, after all. All you need is to own a lot of property. Lots and lots and lots of property. Then it's amazing how your phone calls to politicians get returned. It's really magical, like that spring bunny thing.

Dear Lena, now that Osama bin Laden is out of the way, can we go back to normal? Can I keep my shoes on at the airport? I'm really tired of ruining my chic traveling outfit with flipflops.

Dear reader, yes, it's all going to change now. You can get out your lace-up boots and bulky traveling jewelry again. They're going to take the no-fly list and turn it into celebratory confetti, and I heard they might stop ticketing flagless people in patriotic areas, too. You can relax now and go back to the way life was before the whole world hated America.

Ask Lena about setting fire to passing parades at cddeney@jgc.org.

Ten Reasons Why Berkeley's BIDs* Really Suck

**Business Improvement Districts*

By Luba Chassis

They claim that panhandlers are responsible for the obvious effects of a worldwide recession.

They are complicit in keeping over 200 storefronts empty, some for years, costing the community jobs and services and creating a burden on commercial areas.

They claim that the presence of homeless people on our streets depresses business, when the city's own economic reports (Caplan, October 2010) show the opposite.

Their only suggestions are usually crack-downs on the poor or recommendations for potentially unconstitutional and discriminatory legislation which burdens the courts, burdens the cops, burdens the targeted groups, and burdens the merchants caught in the middle.

They never seem to recognize that this is a college town and, like all college towns, will always attract a certain amount of tran-

sient, adventurous youth.

They never seem to notice that the approximate number of people sleeping on Berkeley's streets matches pretty well the number of single room occupancy units which the city planners, in their wisdom, have turned into high-end condominiums.

You never hear them offering to utilize some of their empty buildings as day shelters or job training facilities.

They still haven't noticed that the best businesses in Berkeley didn't fail – they just couldn't keep up with skyrocketing rents.

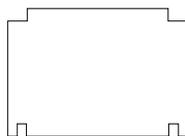
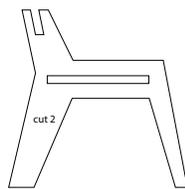
They are usually run by people who've never run a business.

Every five to seven years they start another well publicized nationally covered campaign about how terrible it is to shop in Berkeley!

* * * * *

Important Street Furniture Breakthrough; Cardboard Seating Approved!

By Hugh Chicoo



THE NEW STREET furniture approved by planning experts is easy to make, easy to assemble, and seems like something one could sit on except that it collapses if anyone actually does.

City planners and design review specialists are thrilled to announce a material breakthrough in street furniture which they hope will entirely change the thinking about streetscapes and urban design.

"It's so inexpensive, for one thing," stated of the engineers working on the project. "Cardboard can be created from industrial by-products currently being wasted, so we can spend very little and, in addition, we can really argue that reuse based cardboard furniture is green."

"Our prototype

is pretty plain, but we anticipate demand from other municipalities coping with the same dilemma we have of trying to make the streetscape look inviting, comfortable, and accommodating, but hoping that no one actually sits down," added another project staffmember. "At some point in our manufacturing stage, we can adopt designs that resemble classic park benches."

Critics scoffed that the fact that the street furniture collapses when used at all will make Berkeley a laughing-stock nationwide, but were dismissed by city staff who pointed out not only that Berkeley already was a laughing-stock nationwide, but having the street furniture collapse if used at all was its strongest selling point.

"We don't actually want people sitting down at all," explained one staff member. "We want them cruising through, spending money, perhaps walking in circles, and then getting out of there. After the collapse of the first few benches they'll catch on. Then we'll be all set."

* * * * *



THESE GUYS KEPT SMILING at the recent Cal Alumni Association Achievement Award Gala despite the absurdly small donation by Chevron Corporation, which is after all having a pretty good year considering profits soared to \$6.2 billion dollar in this quarter.

Chevron Really Gets Cheap

By Buck N. Bronco

The audience at a recent 2011 Charter Gala event gasped when they found out how little Chevron Corporation had decided to contribute to the University of California (UC) Cal Alumni Association's Achievement Award Program for students.

"One hundred thousand dollars? Really? They spend more on flowers for their corporate brunches," stated one shocked attendee who requested anonymity.

Chevron shattered analyst expectations in 2010 by tripling its second-quarter profits to \$5.4 billion compared to a year earlier and hitting \$6.2 billion as of this week. But

Chevron knows, like other large corporations know, that even the best of proprietary campus research labs are not nearly as valuable to its interests as having the right politicians in influential places and having a public who associates them with pretty landscapes on tv.

"The right advertising is its own kind of education," explained Shariq Yosufzai, vice president at Chevron Corporation. "Chevron wants to stay in the campus research game, but we know UC got laughed out of the big leagues over its Novartis deal and the biofuel stuff. This way three students go to school, we look good, and everybody's happy."

* * * * *

Democrats Get Their Budget On

By Hugh N. Whoelse

Democrats finally saw the light after years of resisting cuts to health and social services and joined Republicans in proposing a budget that identifies the poor, disabled, and elderly as the slackers they are.

"It's easier than we thought it would be," stated Democratic Assemblyman and committee chair Bob Blumenfield. "I thought my conscience would nag me more, but it just curled up and dozed off."

The state's leading business group stated it would support the plan and defend individual lawmakers who take heat if they vote for it "by any means necessary," including hefty campaign donations in strategic places.

"I don't know why it took us so long to realize that it's the poor and elderly who are really at fault here," stated one Democratic congressional representative, while a Republican representative nodded vigorously nearby. "I never felt comfortable around



RICH PEDRONCELLI AND MARK LENO are really going to try to tax the rich someday but it is just so hard.

people with walkers, but now I realize how much they've been holding us back."

Adult Day Care and in-home support services programs will be replaced by improved programs where elderly, low-income clients will participate in new, more efficient programs to be named later.

"Preferably much, much later," stated Blumenfield.

* * * * *

We Can't Draw Comics (well, some of us can) by Phil Allen



Just because the business improvement districts with the highest concentration of transients and homeless people are doing the best economically according to the City of Berkeley's most recent financial reports from October of 2010 doesn't mean that you shouldn't marshal your sympathy in the direction of the rich, rather than the poor. They may be a bunch of whiners, but after all, they have the most to lose.

Alarmists Freak Out Over Rising Level Mercury Levels in Birds

by Housa Burning

Experts dismissed a recent report citing dramatically rising mercury levels in Pacific seabirds in the past 120 years as overblown propaganda by alarmists and birds determined to stop progress.

Industrial emissions containing mercury are associated with fetal and brain damage. Higher mercury levels in birds may indicate that mercury levels are climbing the food chain, endangering sensitive species and possibly human health, according to a spokesperson for the Alarmists Determined to Stop Progress (ADSP).

Scientists with closer, more reliable ties to mineral mining and coal-burning enterprises scoffed at the ADSP findings, pointing out that all of the study's tests were done on breast feathers from the black-footed albatross, an endangered, dusky-brown bird that is known to drink inordinate amounts of mercury in the backstage green room and shouldn't be used as a reliable test subject in the first place, especially after a gig.

Anh-Thu Vo, the doctoral student who conducted the study, maintained that the feathers gathered from the 1880s to 2002 from museums nonetheless represented accurate measurements and should inform current policy regarding emissions.

Scientists closer to the coal and mineral mining community pointed out that the only



THESE WIMPY BIRDS need to step up and adjust to environmental toxins and rising mercury levels just like the rest of us do, for heaven's sake.

real risks are to rare and dwindling species, and that species that can't pull their weight are always trying to hold back progress.

"The species that shake it off and stay in the game – those are the ones we want," stated one scientist who advised using the study for packing material. "Marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems need species that can buckle down and kick ass."

* * * * *

PG&E Offers to Guess "We're pretty good at it."

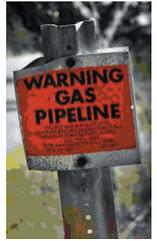
by Plato Beans

PG&E's sincere offer to make educated guesses about pipeline safety in lieu of expensive, time-consuming physical examinations of hundreds of miles of pipeline for which PG&E has no records was turned down by regulators.

Richard Clark, the head of the commission's consumer protection and safety division, stated that PG&E's offer to use high-resolution cameras, X-ray inspections, and dream interpretation really sounded like fun, but agreed that most PG&E customers had had enough excitement for the time being.

PG&E expressed disappointment.

"We will be working over the commission to help them better understand the impacts actually testing the pipelines may have on our willingness to help out with certain political campaigns," stated company spokeswoman Brittany Chord. "We spent millions trying to stamp out public power options for California communities. Because we care. We really care."



WHO wants these unpleasant signs all over the place, well, nobody does. They'd rather take their chances.

* * * * *

Next Issue: Staring at walls with celebrities!

THE ADVENTURES OF THE CENTER FOR ECOIDIOCY

by Nathan Undergod



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

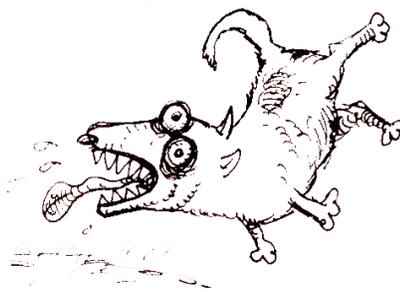


Pepper Spray Times
1970 San Pablo Ave. #4
Berkeley, CA 94702
cdenney@igc.org
www.caroldenney.com

Pepper Spray Times Staff

Editor.....Grace Underpressure
Art Director.....Egon Schiele
Comics.....Don D. Ferrera
Staff.....Olga Getdapiizza, Sir Cumstance,
Lena Deeter, Hugh Chicoo, Luba Chassis,
Buck N. Bronco, Hugh N. Whoelse, Phil Allen,
Housa Burning, 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 or emailed to your door for a modest bribe of \$12 - \$20/yr. Plagiarize wildly; donations gladly accepted.

* All's Well That Ends Well

We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.