

These are truly the... ..the back to school issue...



Hepper Spray Times

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

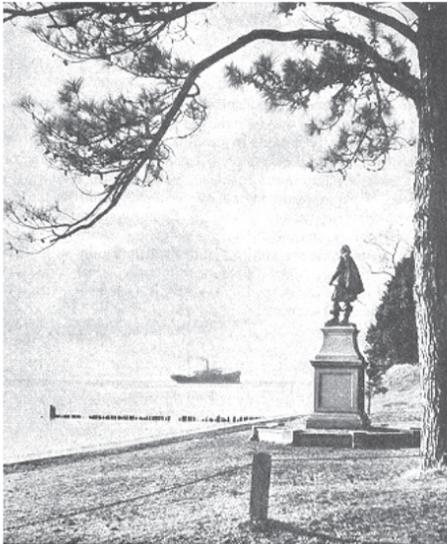
September 2004



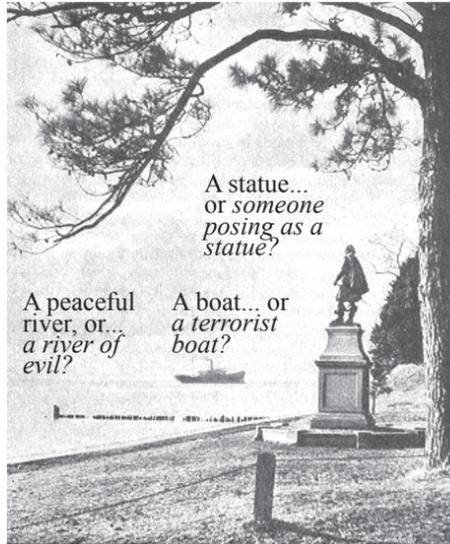
It's sialid...it's free...if you can find it

"...as valiant as the most wrathful dove*..."

Vol. VI No.8



A PASTORAL SCENE...or is it?



MAYBE IT'S... time to get really scared.

GET RESULTS: BUY YOUR BEAT COP A CELL PHONE

by Ray Beeshot

East Bay citizens are expressing great interest in a recent article describing a group of North Oakland residents as having special access to the Oakland Police through cell phones they bought for the police personally.

"It's just a kind of custom-style community policing," explained Mr. Cascio, one of the group of Auto Row neighborhood residents who participates in the program. "It's community policing for a specialized part of the community that has proven worthy of a little special attention."

"We know these guys," explained one Oakland police officer showing off his citizen-supplied cell phone. "We've built a kind of special relationship with them, which makes it fun to chat."

"Wow," exclaimed a merchant on Adeline putting fresh flowers in the vases of a shrine at the location of a recent shooting. "I would be happy to buy someone a cell phone to prevent this senseless loss of life. And a slice of

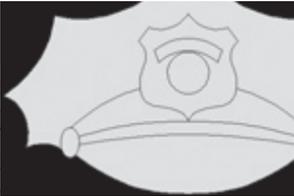
pizza, too."

"I would buy them dinner for two if it would stop the break-ins on my street," agreed a Fairview resident. "I'm ready to do my part."

"We could all chip in and get them opera tickets," agreed another homeowner on Harmon as she triple-locked her door. "We didn't know about this system, but we'd like to cooperate, and we'll do whatever it takes."

Critics argued that allowing special access to the police by citizens who have made private contributions was unfair to those who could not afford to buy special gifts for their beat cops.

"Oh, pooh," dismissed Oakland Chief of Police Word. "It doesn't have to be money. We'll accept in-kind donations, too."



SF MIME TROUPE TOOLS STOLEN BY MEAN, NASTY TERRORISTS

Gwen Home

The San Francisco Mime Troupe was the latest target of international terrorism, losing approximately \$5,000 worth of tools right at the beginning of their scheduled performance season.

"It doesn't make sense," commented one government spokesperson. "These people are a bunch of clowns. They have nothing to say of interest to anyone. Their plays stink. They're a bunch of pinkos in tights. They should be beneath the dignity of any terrorist worth his or her salt to bomb."

The administration's Office of Homeland Security agreed that although the

object of this latest terrorist assault was somewhat unusual, the normal precautions and protocols would be followed for the nation's safety.

Critics argued that it might be an ordinary theft, but were dismissed.

"We've rounded up all suspicious artists and art-related tools in the area, especially anything that reeks of humor," assured Director Tom Ridge. "We're cracking down on anything that looks like any fun at all, you can be sure of that."



RATHER really put some tough questions to those Iraqi kids.

DAN RATHER DEFENDS KID INTERVIEW

Wanda Star-Dover

CBS News correspondent Dan Rather defended his decision to file a story based on an interview with a group of Iraqi children, stating that they were authentic Iraqi children, requiring an interpreter, and "really knew their stuff."

"Children know more than we think they do," he chuckled. "These kids have been in Iraq for the entire war, as opposed to me; I can't tell you whether I'm in Iraq or Afghanistan."

Media critics objected that the lack of hard coverage was partially responsible for driving foreign policy into the ground, leaving American credibility in shreds and costing lives.

"Nonsense," said Rather. "I'd suggest that the media has been irrelevant for quite some time. Interviewing Iraqi kids live was a good angle. I asked some really tough questions. Besides," he added, "the dead ones are just too hard to talk to."

RIDGE MIGHT POSTPONE ELECTION

Estelle Ticking

The Bush Administration, nervously eyeing the polls, is contemplating postponing the upcoming Presidential election until the war and his failing policies can summon a better international and domestic reception, causing consternation from all sides.

"What can they be thinking?" scoffed one Democratic representative. "That would play havoc with every golf date I've scheduled in the next three months."

Others seemed more receptive to the idea of postponing the election in the event of a terrorist attack.

"I wouldn't mind," offered one voter who hadn't missed an election since first becoming eligible to vote thirty years ago. "If the country is under attack I might like to get out of town."

"Me, too," agreed her companion. "It would be hard to vote and put up duct tape all on the same day."

Spokespersons for the Bush administration waffled when asked when a

ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, how can the intelligence services restore their reputation?

A: The best approach would be to sell a lot of Girl Scout cookies the next time they hold their cookie sale campaign. It not only requires hard work, but it builds good relations with the community, and makes a few bucks on the side as well.

Dear Lena, why did Tony Blair shill for Bush?

A: Look for a breaking news story about a straight trade between them involving a tank of Texas grit and a large envelope of English class. These two have a lot to offer each other, and managed a good straight trade while all relevant constituencies slept like babies.

Dear Lena, will Ken Lay's indictment help resolve California's energy woes?

A: Of course it will. All corporate leaders will experience a strong sense of shame and a renewed commitment to serving the public, which will influence board room and government policies and we will all join hands and sing.

Dear Lena, should I vote anyway if there is a terrorist attack?

A: Of course. Just don't take the bus or the subway.

possibly postponed election would be rescheduled.

"Well, let's see," stated one official leafing through his calendar. "We hit a run of holidays right about that time, and then the weather gets bad. Let me get back to you on that."

"What about next April? I'm back from St. Croix by the 18th," suggested one Republican Senator. "We can't put it off too long or the voting public will lose interest in the election altogether."

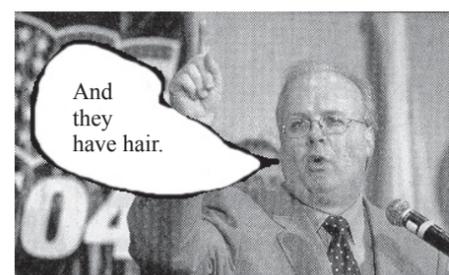
"Election?" asked one local voter. "What, again? Didn't we just have one of those?"

"Elections happen entirely too often anyway," added another voter. "The last recall ballot had so many choices it wore me out. A little break might do us all a lot of good."

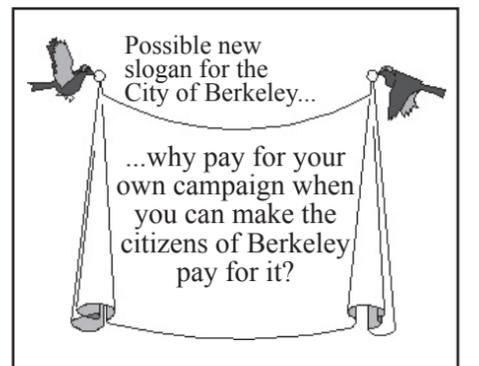
"While they're at it, I wouldn't mind postponing Christmas, too," chimed in another voter. "I still haven't caught up from the last one."

We Can't Draw Comics by guest artist Franz Toast

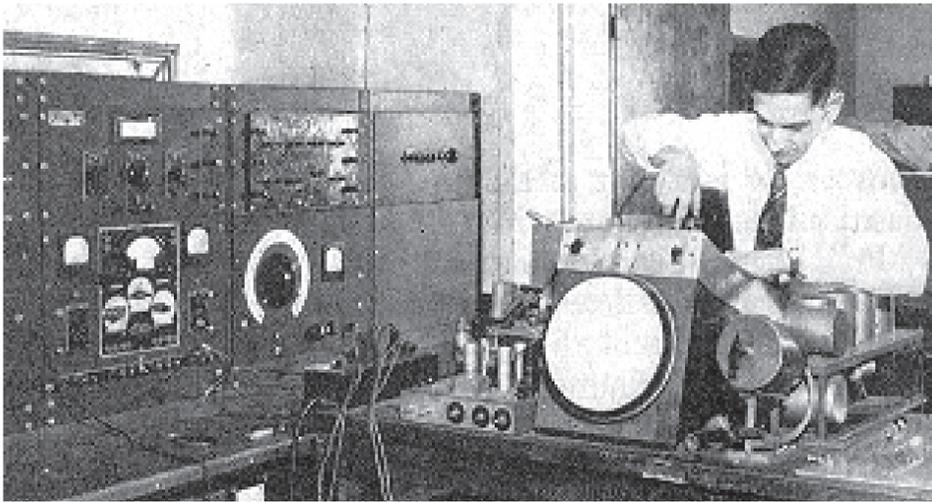
Karl Rove speaks...



When Karl Rove speaks.....people listen.



TOTALLY BUFF PLANNING DEPARTMENT DENIES STEROID USE



SENIOR PLANNERS at Berkeley's Planning Department work late into the night remaking models of Berkeley's landscape without the use of mind-altering or performance enhancing drugs.

by Bob Frapples

The Planning Department officially denied using steroids at a recent press conference designed to address community fears of rampant over-development.

"Our neighborhood is ruined," commented a neighbor of the Patrick Kennedy development at Acton and University whose backyard is now visible to several stories of people. "They say it's just greed, but I look through my window at that monstrosity and I have to think that drugs had something to do with it."

"I have reason to have serious doubts about the accuracy of all that," stated an attorney for Senior Planner Greg Powell, referring to the memo implying that Powell and others on the planning staff were regular users of an undetectable steroid called "the clear" and a testosterone cream. "These planners have an aggressive approach to their work, but that's just the fashion these days. Modern planning is pretty high-octane."

Critics charged that an investigator's memo listed nearly all of the department's planners as having used the banned substances, pointing to the newest developments in town as proof that some radical element was playing a role in planning.

"Our preliminary findings suggest that the developers are feeding the stuff to the planners, who get hooked," stated one investigator.

"There's no other excuse for these ill-fitting buildings being stuffed in right up to the sidewalk."

"Once a planner gets really pumped up on this stuff it's hard to tell them to cut down," agreed former planning commissioner Clifford Fred. "Just try telling them to take a couple stories off their building project; you're likely to lose a limb."

"You can't blame the planners entirely," commented another neighbor to the Acton project. "The city council could stop this abuse if they wanted to."

Planners confirmed that they had no-holds-barred attitude toward development projects, citing the destruction of an 1878 pioneer cottage which stood in the way of big-box, high-end condos, but insisted that their over-development projects were the result of a pure and natural enthusiasm for neighborhood destruction.

"Call it macho if you want," affirmed one planner. "When the bulldozer gets going it's hard not to get juiced up. There's nothing like the smell of diesel in the morning."

* * * * *



SECRETARY RIDGE HINTS FOR A RAISE

by Bill O'Sale

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge told the Associated Press recently that he would probably have to resign his position regardless of who won the November election because he just can't make ends meet on his salary of \$175,500 a year.

"We can totally relate," offered one young couple in K-Mart shopping for back-to-school clothes for their three young children. "We may not have the \$873,000 home Tom's got, but we sure know about how tough it is to make ends meet."

"I may not have the between \$122,000 and \$787,000 in stocks and funds the Ridges' have," chimed in one local school teacher, "but fighting terrorism is a tough job with no room for advancement, so I can relate."

White House press spokespersons denied that Ridge was often found staring at the current color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System in a state of catatonia, unable to choose an alert level to characterize a rising state of terrorist ambiguity, insisting that the Secretary simply needed a vacation.

"I can dig that," sympathized a local citizen pushing a shopping cart down 6th Street. "Picking the colors must be really tough. But I'd be willing to fill in until they find a replacement."

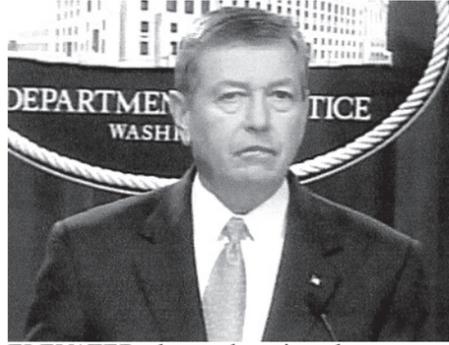
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LOW: keep shopping, report on your neighbors.



GUARDED: keep shopping, but watch your back.



ELEVATED: keep shopping, but wear a helmet.



SEVERE: keep shopping, but shop online or by catalogue.

SIMPLIFIED TERRORIST THREAT CHART

Celeste Bus

The Office of Homeland Security recently unveiled a new Homeland Security Advisory System in an effort to revise and replace the older, confusing model of color-coded bars.

"We wanted to simplify matters a bit. We've reduced the amount of categories by one, and replaced the visual color-coded bars with a depiction of happy, neutral, guarded, and severely panicky expressions, hoping to craft an advisory system which could convey a simple message in any language," stated Director Tom Ridge.

Most observers could at least differ-

entiate between the different terrorist threat levels, unlike the difficulties with the previous chart, but objected that Ashcroft's face was pretty scary in any event, so that nobody would look at the chart in the first place.

"Nobody looks at it anyway," countered Ridge. "We're just trying to use something besides a yellow happy face until we can acquire the rights."

* * * * *



CREEK CULVERT CAVE-IN ANY DAY



Councilmember Betty Olds suggests white-water rafting trips to off-set costs of repair.

Viola Fuss

Berkeley citizens were greatly reassured to hear that the imminent cost of the collapse of the creek culverts crisscrossing the entire town would be more than off-set by a variety of income-generating projects such as small hydroelectric plants and white-water rafting.

"Once we sort out the legal problems, homeowners who dam their creeks stand to make a bundle," stated Public Works director Rene Cardineaux. "Others could conceivably white-water raft all the way to work considering the

flooding we anticipate in the next several years."

Experts in wildlife and environmental resources agreed that the current contours of the Berkeley hills will change dramatically as the 90 year lifespan of hundreds of concrete culverts runs its course, creating scenic waterfalls and beautiful reflecting pools.

"Talk about green," enthused one homeowner. "I haven't had a chance to use a canoe since I was a boy."

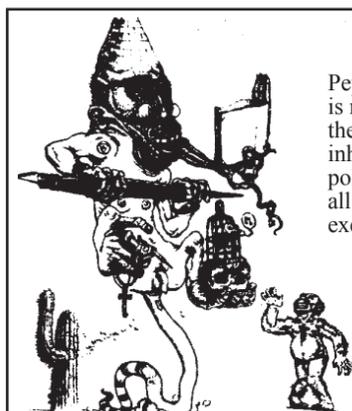
"We're all getting wetsuits for Christmas," agreed another. "White-water rafting is something we can do as a family, right after we get done filing suit against our neighbors."

* * * * *

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

The Pepper Spray Times deeply regrets that everything it has ever printed for many years is utterly untrue. Any resemblance to the truth is an accident. We can hardly help the fact that the universe is quite unintentionally funny. We deeply regret the confusion we continue to sow. - Editor

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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...you.

We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.

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

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* Henry IV Part 2

