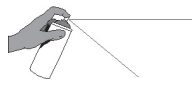


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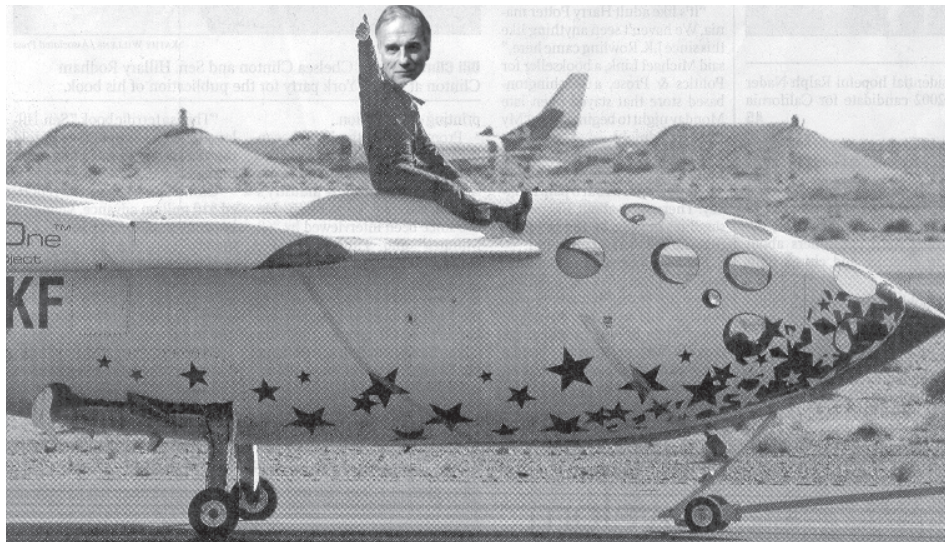
August 2004



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"...ever since thou hast blushed extempore*..."

Vol. VI No.7



NADER EGO INTERFERES WITH PRICEY PRIVATE SPACE FLIGHT

William Aickett

Independent presidential contender Ralph Nader's soaring ego nearly knocked a private experimental space flight off track recently, sending even the Green Party running for cover.

"We don't believe we threw the last election," insisted one Green Party operative. "But we'll be issuing press releases from our bunker until it comes down."

"We didn't see it coming," stated Mike Melvill, 63, of the close encounter with the once-Green candidate's ego, now

62.2 miles above the high desert in California. "We pitched violently hear the apogee and almost missed re-entry, but I guess that's politics."

"Sure, I'd vote for Nader," offered historian Howard Zinn. "In a safe state, with a ten-foot pole, I'd vote for Nader, and I hope everybody else does, too."

"A ringing endorsement," responded Nader, who is partially funded by wealthy Republican donors. "I'm really pushing the envelope now."

* * * * *

CLINTON COMES, BERKELEY COMES, TOO

Rudy Day

Berkeley proved itself an easy date for ex-president and player Bill Clinton during his recent visit to Telegraph Avenue where thousands lined the streets waiting for hours, clutching his autobiography and hoping for an autograph.

"We've trained for this," offered one autograph-seeker. "We've waited in line at Starbucks and Peets."

Queried as to whether there were specific Clinton policies which inspired their adoration, some people in line nodded in happy assent.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell," confirmed one man stroking his book reverently. "I thought it was a brilliant way to sidestep honoring the large ratio of gays currently serving in the military while still persecuting them for their sexual identity."

"Turning away the Haitian refugees," offered another admiring woman sporting kneepads. "The courage it took to send those frail, starving people back into the chaos they had suffered so much to flee, why, it takes a certain kind of person to be able to do that."

"Getting it on behind the desk of the Oval Office," acknowledged a young Cal student toting three books he hoped to sell on EBay. "It gives you something to shoot for in life."

Others admitted they had waited hours in line just to share the general fever of the moment.



BEWILDERED ONLOOKERS are stuck in traffic as Berkeley citizens congregate to get an autograph from former President Bill Clinton.

"He's a celebrity, that's all," commented one man in line who admitted he couldn't remember Clinton's presidency at all. "We all lined up the same way for Madeline Albright and before that for Prince Charles. We're Americans, so it's automatic. It's almost as good as meeting Brittany Spears. Let's just hope *she* writes a book someday."

* * * * *



VICE PRESIDENTIAL candidate Senator John Edwards experiencing a traditional wardrobe malfunction.

KERRY PICKS MILLIONAIRE

Alva Nothing

Presidential candidate John Kerry finally selected a vice president to fill out the Democratic ticket, causing the clouds to roll away, the sun to shine, and little singing birds to weave "Kerry-Edwards" banners out of twigs.

"It's not often you find a man who is both a millionaire and a man of the people, a trial lawyer and a nice guy," observed Kerry. "That, plus he accepted the rose."

Political observers suggested that Kerry was taking the obvious route, having been rebuffed by Arizona Senator John McCain, but Kerry disagreed.

"McCain wouldn't even come to the party," he complained. "People who can't distinguish between Democrats and Republicans should keep that in mind."

Critics argued that a couple of white male millionaires wasn't much of a choice, but couldn't be heard from their little fenced-off pen miles from the convention. Kerry disagreed.

"Edwards seems to think I've got a lot to offer," he stated.

* * * * *

ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, why would top Medicare officials intentionally withhold data from Congress about the real cost of drug benefits?

A: Certainly not because it benefits the Bush administration. Thomas Scully threatened to fire Medicare's chief actuary, Richard S. Foster, if he provided the data to Congress only because Congress is so overburdened already with facts and figures that Scully was concerned about their level of stress. Would that all government officials had similar care and concern for the delicate constitutions of their employees.

Hey, Lena, does the resignation of George Tenet as CIA director end the Bush administration's credibility crisis?

A: Yes, of course. The same way lipstick does wonders for a pig.

Hey, Lena, should Ralph Nader accept money from Republicans?

A: Of course. The mere mention of his name got a round of boos at a recent San Francisco Mime Troupe performance, so the poor boy needs all the support he can get. Not to mention the hope in our hearts here at the Pepper Spray Times that someday we, too, can be heavily funded by large Republican donors.

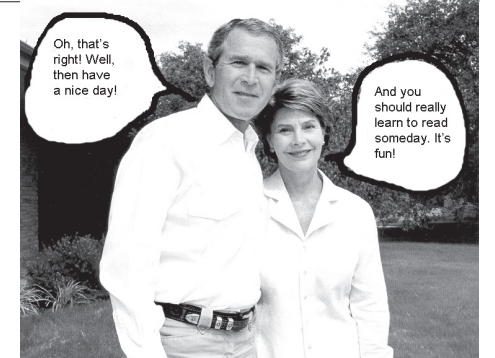
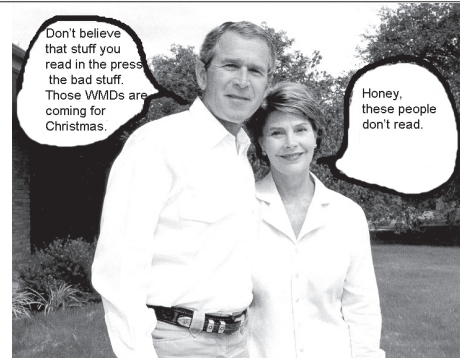
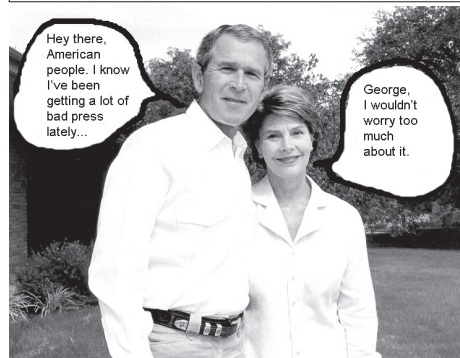


The Democratic Ticket

Political analysts say that the Democratic Party's ticket will improve your mileage, manage your finances, and shove that pig's foot a little further into the fire, for instance...

Background	Kerry	Edwards
Background	Wyeth, Rockwell, with a lot of New Yorker and Forbes	Jack London without the boat, Kennedy without the boat, Michael without the boat ashore
Public appeal	Seen as a wet piece of kleenex	Everybody wants to have his baby
Personality	Roadkill on a stick	Abe Lincoln with money
Experience	Years of tedious blah blah	Who cares check the hair
Defense and foreign policy	Big show-off	Just give the guy a gun

We Can't Draw Comics by guest artist Franz Toast



CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR LOS ALAMOS MISSING DATA

by Sam and Janet Evening

The latest misplacement of classified data at the UC-run Los Alamos National Laboratory is causing considerable embarrassment to the university, whose management of the nuclear weapons lab was already under fire.

"We're really, like, embarrassed," stated Los Alamos spokesperson Kevin Roark. "We thought we had a system like where everybody puts their names on their lunchbags, but I keep getting somebody's egg salad."

"They're around here somewhere," offered Los Alamos Lab Director George "Pete" Nanos about the missing storage devices containing classified data. "We just have to try to think hard about the last place we were using them. I do this with my glasses all the time."

Officials with the Project on Government Oversight were less optimistic, citing the previous incidents of missing hard drives, mysteriously re-appearing data, and the latest disappearance of classified data, which took place after the institution of a fail-safe system which the University of California had assured the government would preclude any further problems.

"These people are complete bozos," commented Pete Stockton, an official with the oversight project. "They couldn't find their own butts with two hands and a flashlight. We need to get this nuclear weapons program into responsible hands, so that when we need to blow up the world we've got the nuclear weapons we need when we need them."

Many observers have suggested that maybe transferring the management of



TEAR-STREAKED CITIZENS hold a vigil for the missing data from the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

the nuclear weapons program to some other group would be a good thing.

"I never understood why the University of California was so set on keeping this connection to nuclear weapons programs," offered one student. "It's kind of an embarrassment. If they really need to moonlight, they ought to start a cell phone company on campus, or just maybe an espresso place. People should stick to what they know."

Local citizens, in the meantime, have planned a series of candlelight vigils for the missing data.

"We know it's out there, scared and lost," said one vigiler cupping a candle. "We're here for its family. We care."

* * * * *

Critics argued that the building's name should at least be changed from the "Fine Arts Building" to something else.

"People still call that other building the 'Gaia' building even though it has no bookstore, no art, nothing," grouched one unsympathetic cineaste. "It should be called the 'No Arts Building' or the 'Got Fooled Again Building'."

"I think the name is fitting," countered another neighbor to the project. "Working that density and cultural space bonus scam is a fine art."

* * * * *

CURTAINS FOR THEATER

Ben Had

Local developer Patrick Kennedy shook hands with grinning supporters as word spread that "cultural space" in his recent development was no longer slated to be a theater, thus netting him extra variances in exchange for nothing at all.

"It's that demolition permit trick," grinned one admirer. "I know everybody is doing it now, but this building pushed the envelope by destroying a film tradition Berkeley was famous for all over the world."

"It took courage," observed another. "You never know when the city council will wake up to this stuff and take a stand, so you have to bulldoze as much as possible while Bates is keeping a lid on it. It helps to have the Landmarks Preservation Commission replaced or muzzled in the meantime."

Kennedy insisted that he was not at fault for the unwillingness of the most recent theater owner to find a way to fit out the theater space at the cost of \$800,000 or more.

"We're advertising the space, and we'll see what happens," he stated. "I'll make money on the space anyway, so life sure looks like a pretty good movie to me."



GIRLIEMEN tend to have an uncanny sense of taste.



THE FUTURE looks bright with a group like Screwable Berkeley leading the way.

SCREWABLE BERKELEY GROUP BORN TO 'DOZE

Philomena Bathtub

A new planning group called Screwable Berkeley is making its debut in the fashionable development scene and pushing buttons all over town.

"Screwable Berkeley believes that Berkeley is a lovely city with a very strong potential, and we think if we stand right behind it and position ourselves just so, we can really have some fun," said David Early, an urban planner with the group. "This town is one big opportunity site."

Screwable Berkeley cites the nine-story Seagate Building project being planned for Center Street as an example of good development.

"Stable households with higher incomes and an attitude of affluence are just the ticket for downtown," stated Early. "Rich people are more fun to be around since they don't whine about money and health care all the time, and they're going to think living like rats in a maze is an interesting change of pace."

Early's comment is considered an effort to deflect criticism from those who argue that the over-sized condominium projects are Berkeley's new slums, concentrated camps of people who, without other housing choices, live with the leaks and shoddy craftsmanship because they have to.

"We're told being crammed together like this is creating open space somewhere near Marysville," commented one big-box condo resident. "I hope to enjoy that open space someday, but in the meantime, those of us living with buckets catching drips in the hall sure know where the new wetlands are."

Critics argue that the pro-development group's connection to the University of California through ex-UC Assistant Vice Chancellor for Property Development Dorothy Walker is an unholy alliance, which will enable UC to swallow the town whole.

"Nonsense," countered Early. "We think that 'Beware Dorothy' skywriting message is just some stunt from the NIMBY groups afraid of progress. Under the guise of affordable housing and bike-riding we can make an enormous amount of money."

"We welcome their input," stated one senior planner in the Planning Department. "We may not be directly connected to the money, but without groups like this we'd be sitting around with nothing to do. It helps justify our salaries, and lord knows none of us will have to live in these crappy places."

"Growth and change are inevitable," said Early. "And we're positioned to make some mighty fine change."

* * * * *

JOIN THE ARMY; GET SOME

by Julie Daway

Internal Army data and a new task force report indicate conclusively that allegations of sexual assault in the U.S. Army have skyrocketed over the last five years, amid concurrent allegations that the data reflects a new approach to recruitment.

"It's tough getting people

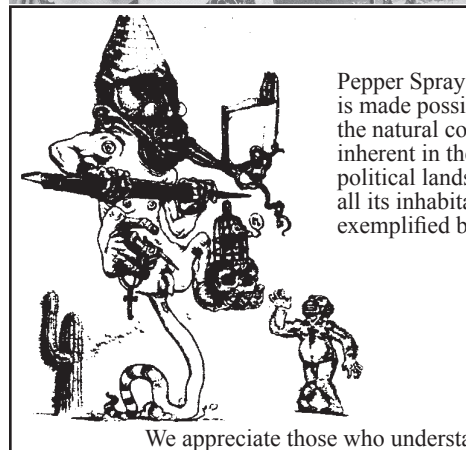


to sign up for duty right now," admitted one Marine recruitment officer wandering the halls of a near-empty video arcade in Henrietta, Kansas. "If they think they can get laid we have a much better chance."

The total number of reported cases of sexual assault increased by 19 percent from 1999 to 2003, while rape increased 25 percent according to the data released.

"It hasn't been easy," admitted one Army official. "It's hard to get cooperation from the troops, so we've had to rely on weak prevention efforts, slow investigations, inadequate field reporting and poor managerial oversight. As the last five years show, we're starting to make a difference."

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