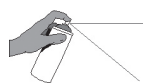


...the obesity issue...

These are truly the...



Hepper Spray Times

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

February 2005

Vol. VII No. 2

It's fenestral...it's free...if you can find it "Will you be bound for nothing? be mad, good master-...?"*

"ARTS DISTRICT" CLARIFIES FREE SPEECH POLICY

Fliers Push Envelope of Human Civility, Require Destruction

Thelma Thoule

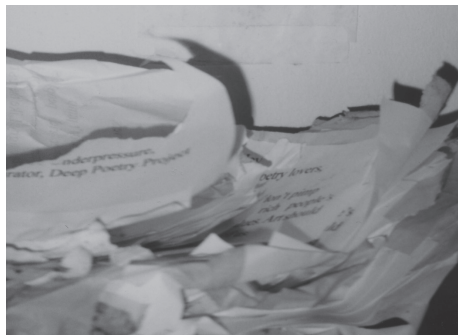


FORMER CHAIR of Berkeley's Art Commission firmly believes that destroying fliers is an expression of free speech.

Berkeley Repertory Theater manager Madelyn Mackie, her staff, and the former chair of the Berkeley Arts Commission Sherry Smith clarified the free speech policy in Berkeley's "Art District" by ripping down fliers protesting the

disparity of arts funding between the poetry laden sidewalks on Addison and the poorly maintained sidewalks in the rest of town.

"This is my free speech," stated Smith, who spent half an hour ripping



THE BERKELEY REPERTORY Theater and the former chair of the art commission really, really hated this flier, hundreds of which the PST staff fished out of the trash.

about holes which celebrates the state of sidewalks elsewhere in town.

Robert Haas, the person who chose the poems for the metal plaques in the Addison Street sidewalk, bristled angrily when he saw the fliers and refused to shake hands with the author. The once poet laureate, described by Brighde Mullins as a poet "whose words are active and suggest not only a way of composing but also a way of experiencing reality", experienced the reality of a quarter-page flier in a decidedly hostile way, backed by the staff of the Berkeley Repertory Theater, which has yet to clarify whether their flier destruction was a moment of lunacy, an aberration, or policy.

Some of the poets whose work is embedded in the sidewalk, as well as representatives of Heyday Books, the publication house hosting the event, expressed support for those wishing to illustrate public funding disparities. Others called the fliers "litter."

"Poets need opportunities to display their work," stated one self-described poet wearing a hand-sewn Tibetan textile jacket. "If it takes graft to do that then maybe it's not so bad."

Another passer-by asked, "do you go to burning man?" of the flier's author, assuming that the \$4.00 cost of

Sunday's demonstration had some unknown connection to the million dollar cost of the yearly desert art carnival. When apprised of the author's lack of connection to the burning man event, he then scolded the author's use of paper, which the advocate of burning a 50 foot effigy of wood in the desert stated, "kills trees."

Current Berkeley Art Commission Chairperson David Snippen apologized for the behavior of the former chair of the Art Commission, and several city officials privately expressed support for the effort to highlight funding inequities.

"Artists can't speak up about these things," stated one, "or they run a serious risk of retribution."

* * * * *



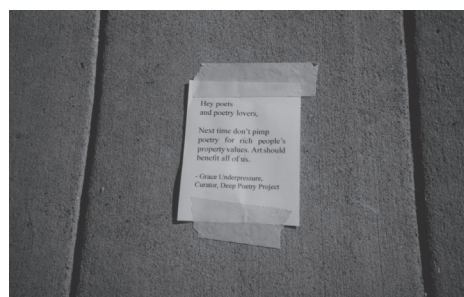
Editor: We're proud to host Robert Haas' latest poem...

A Flier! Haste Away!
a flier! haste away!
the bitter words do bite and tear
much like the former art commission chair
a flier! woe betide
the dot-connectors we won't let inside
and dissidents who mar my hour of pride
a flier! let us go
repair to Downtown Restaurant and so
our sorrows soak as poets often do
a flier! my design
allows no room for those who would opine
about the eight buck cost
of our white wine



Possible new slogan for the City of Berkeley...

"...enjoy our reduced city services..."



FLIERS are really just annoying and unnecessary pieces of litter.

down over 200 quarter sheet fliers neatly placed between the poetry panels.

The fliers stated, "Hey poets and poetry lovers, next time don't pimp poetry for rich people's property values. Art should benefit us all," or "Art should stay hungry. Like the rest of us," and was signed by the curator of the Deep Poetry Project, a collection of poetry

ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, should we hang onto the year 2004?

A: Only if we're allowed to be individually selective about which months to repeat. I, for instance, had a spectacular July.

Dear Lena, is the temporary closing of city services the best way to address a budget shortfall?

A: The city runs the risk of illustrating how unnecessary most of its services actually are. The better move would be a bakesale run by tiny children dressed in velvet with gay party ribbons in their hair, who are impossible to refuse.

Dear Lena, is God just mean or what?

A: God had a very troubled childhood.

Dear Lena, do we really need the news?

A: No, not really. We do need more legible handwriting and better manners on the bus.

Dear Lena, where have all the flowers gone?

A: Some of them are in line at the DMV, but many are wintering in Cabo.

Dear Lena, what should teachers be paid?

A: Teacher salaries should be tax-exempt, and linked to CEO salaries and perks nationwide.



GOD ADMITTED recently that the tsunami disaster in Asia was his fault, and that he sometimes suffered from impulse control.

GOD SPEAKS, ADMITS ROLE IN MAKING WAVES

God's Press Conference Causes Controversial Stir in Religious Community

by Joan D. Party

The Almighty gave a press conference recently to clarify that yes, he was personally responsible for the tsunami which swept away entire towns and caused over 220,000 deaths in several countries in Asia.

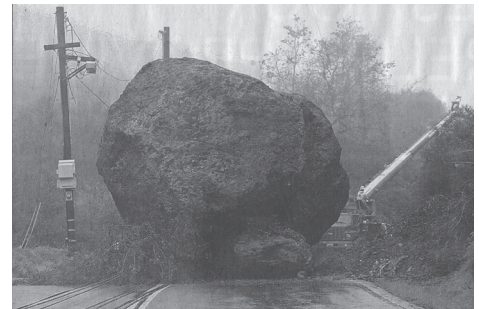
"I just do these things and I don't know why," he stated. "I'm not trying to teach anyone a lesson, I'm not trying to convey anything in particular. It's just what I do."

Religious leaders objected strongly to the statement, insisting that the deadly tsunami was somehow part of a great plan which made sense from some unknown perspective, but God dismissed

their objections.

"They always say that," he pointed out. "No matter what I do, no matter how idiotic it is, they find a way to explain and excuse it."

Athiests celebrated God's announcement, delighted to have God himself



THIS BOULDER blocking both lanes of Topanga Canyon Road proves definitively that God has a really strange sense of humor.

confirm their suspicions of God's indifferent nature while continuing to object to God's existence at all.

"We're glad we're in accord on at least one point," stated one athiest. "We hope God can come clean on the next point someday."

* * * * *

We Can't Draw Comics by Franz Toast





YOU CAN COUNT ON our sterling crop of local politicians to figure out the best approach to solving the crisis in affordable housing and homelessness.

NEW REPORTING GETS RAVES

by Lloyd Havemercy

Someone somewhere may believe that new reporting techniques are in fact a vast improvement over more traditional, fact-based methods of covering the news.

Experts nationwide have not ruled out the possibility that unconventional new styles of reporting may be the key to solving a wide variety of financial, health, political, and cosmetic crises.

Sources close to journalism departments nationwide concede that standards are changing, and that enhanced definitions of what constitutes "the news" may someday be entirely dictated by people at home selecting their preferred menu of coverage on computers.

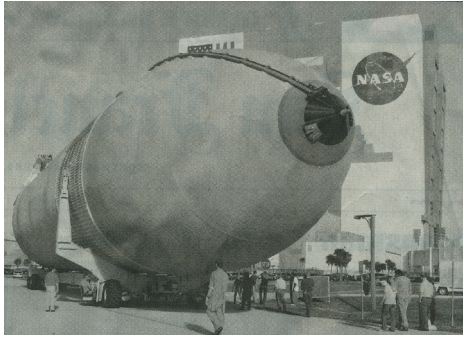
Some news departments are already participating in publicly dictated news experiments.

"We're still working out the bugs," stated one staffer working on a "news you choose" segment. "People keep choosing naked wrestling, cheerleaders, and cooking tips, all of which gets a little old. We're working on ways to insert naked wrestling, cheerleaders, and cooking tips into ordinary news segments about the war, local traffic, etc. It's a creative challenge, but it can be done."

It is possible that soon, and perhaps forever, broad new definitions of accuracy and truth may replace more commonly accepted journalistic parameters, changing accepted practices and reshaping the entire media industry.

Some say such changes are long overdue, and that accuracy in reporting the news has long been wildly overrated.

* * * * *



NASA APOLOGIZED for creating this suggestive external fuel tank, which they admit they redesigned on purpose thus offending the sensibilities of all red-blooded Americans.

UC BERKELEY ADMITS PLAN TO SWALLOW EARTH

by Bea N. Love

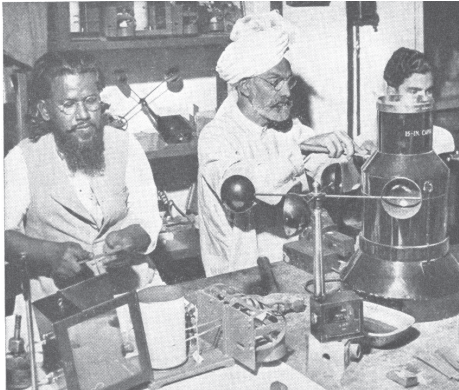
The University of California at Berkeley shocked Bay Area citizens by unveiling its latest long-range development plan, which reveals that it will shortly envelop the entire earth.

"Can't they take the moon or something?" responded one worried east bay homeowner, who lives uncomfortably close to university owned property. "There's plenty of room up there on the lunar surface for all the buildings they want plus golf besides. I've got to have full sun on my fig tree."

"We have an interest in the moon, too, of course," answered UC spokesperson Janet Gilmore. "But we hardly need to go that far when the east bay towns near us roll right over whenever we want something. We can build anything we want anywhere we want whenever we want, and we want 18% more office space. It's not all bad. Some of the current crop of students and east bay residents might get lucky enough to change the toner in our copy machines someday."

Critics objected that the university was obligated to conform to federal, state, and local guidelines like anybody else, and the howls of accompanying laughter did not subside for hours, leaving many observers seriously sore.

"Tell that to the residents on the north side of campus," smiled one local



THE UNIVERSITY'S new plan to take over the world took years and lots of well-paid consultants to develop.

homeowner wiping tears from his eyes. "They're practically under lockdown, surrounded by the noise, the dust, the tractors, semis, and large construction machinery moving slowly through residential and commercial streets."

"We see that as a benefit," responded Gilmore. "These residents have a chance to experience the future. Someday all of the east bay and eventually the world will know what it's like to have us as neighbors."

* * * * *

"We have an interest in the moon, too, of course..."

PRESERVATIONISTS OBJECT TO 2005

Hundreds Refuse to Celebrate New Year



THESE SHAMELESS celebrants tossed the old year out without considering whether or not it should be reconstituted and recycled.

by Sue Nami

Local preservationists raised a last-minute objection to the turning of the year, throwing annual new year festivities into turmoil.

“Every year we toss the old year like holiday wrapping paper without giving any thought to the idea of preserving it,” explained one. “We haven’t giving sufficient thought to the idea of recycling and preserving the old year, which we believe is preferable.”

“They have a point,” remarked one observer. “I was somehow making peace with the old year. We had kind of a rhythm going. The new year is going to require a lot of adjustment all over again.”

The preservationist group unveiled a website, www.moveback.org, along with T-shirts, coffee mugs, and tote bags, and urged supporters everywhere to avoid using the designation 2005, while substituting 2004x2 or 2004 squared.

Critics objected that 2004 had very little to recommend it, given the war, the economic decline, the reality tv shows and the botox explosion.



Death By Lethal Election

“Nonsense,” scoffed one 2004 preservationist erasing his 2004 calendar. “Look on the bright side. Ashcroft and Ridge are gone. Condi’s taking a lateral, and there are so many other Bush officials beating a hasty retreat we can’t get their Christmas cards to them. There’s almost nobody left to vacuum.”

“2005 can wait,” announced the group’s spokesperson. “We need to make sure we’ve really gotten every possible use out of 2004 before tossing it. We believe 2004 is sustainable.”

* * * * *

Liberals’ Best Excuses for Bush’s Re-election:

- * body-building flax seed oil
- * your fault
- * my fault
- * the stars
- * voting was rigged
- * voters were drugged
- * media’s fault
- * terrorists’ fault
- * he wasn’t really re-elected, blah blah blah blah blah

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



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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...

Available at some of the finest public meetings, or mailed to your door for a hefty bribe. Plagiarize wildly.

We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.

* The Comedy of Errors