

...the
flag waving
issue ...



All hail the powerful...

Pepper Spray Times

July 2011



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

"...together with the common lag of people..."*

Vol. XIII No. 7

Downtown Not Quite Empty Council Raises Parking Fees in Urgent Effort to Completely Clear the Streets



THE DOWNTOWN BERKELEY ASSOCIATION IS REALLY HOPING to replicate this pastoral effect when it finally clears the streets completely of problematic people.

by Lou Sennet-Up

A majority of the Berkeley City Council voted recently to raise hourly parking fees.

"There's still a few people loitering downtown," stated one council representative who asked not to be named. "We have to find a way to clear the streets completely to keep the Business Improvement District people happy."

"This usually works," explained another council representative who wished to remain anonymous. "Hike up the parking rates and even more people run off to the malls and big Emeryville theater complexes."

The council voted to raise rates by twenty-five cents to \$1.75 an hour in a "premium" zone in which presumably "premium" people would enjoy being singled out for premium rates because they are just very special people.

Critics pointed out that parking hassles and costs were the number one complaint of Berkeley shoppers, but were dismissed by City Hall insiders who responded that those complaints were neck and neck with complaints about completely empty storefronts with nothing to buy.

Ironically, the increased parking rates are being driven by a need to hand over even more money to the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA), which institutes poli-

cies which make doing business in Berkeley costlier and more expensive with each passing year, contrary to its ostensible mission to improve the business climate.

"We need a raise," explained John Canner, Executive Director of the DBA. "And there's still a few people wandering around down here. We need to clear the streets completely to make sure none of them sit down."

In other news, the DBA invited the public to make suggestions for the films it plans to show in a nearby parking lot hoping to leach away the business of a stubborn contingent of theater-goers who insist on coming downtown.

"I suggest 'Les Miserable'," offered one downtown passerby. "It will fit with the rest of the theme of cutting services for low-income people while padding the pockets of the large property owners."

"I suggest that Chaplin movie where he boils and eats his shoes," suggested renowned theater critic Dan McMullan. "It gives a really creative suggestion to people who have run out of funds."

"How about 'Apocalypse Now'?" suggested a panhandler. "Sounds about right."

* * * * *

Pavement Rated Good for Every- thing But Sleeping

by John DeParty

Berkeley's pavement rated "fair" according to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), for biking, driving, roller-skating, skateboarding, dog-walking, and sitting.

"Sleeping is still kind of tough," stated an MTC spokesperson.

Local residents affirmed that while not perfect, Berkeley's streets function pretty well overall for wheeled vehicles as long as their drivers pay attention.

"I really enjoy slaloming through potholes," stated one local bike rider. "It keeps me alert and on my toes."

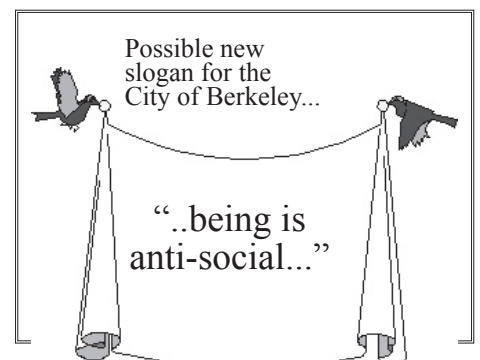
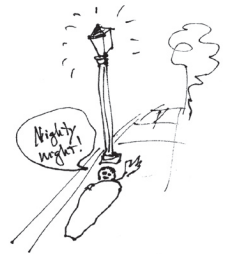
"It's like natural speed bumps," affirmed a Prius driver. "A sprinkling of potholes makes the best speed around 25 to 30 miles per hour, so everybody saves gas and accidents are reduced."

Pavement conditions got thumbs ups all around except from those who use them as mattresses.

"It's still pretty cold," acknowledged a Berkeley resident shaking out his sleeping bag near the University Avenue overpass. "I try to find some honest dirt somewhere so it's muddy but not as hard on your bones."

"I'm thankful there's still some dirt left," added another fellow seated nearby. "This town has a love affair with concrete. And empty condos."

* * * * *



ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Grace,
So now there's a new plan for People's Park? Didn't they just spend a couple of hundred thousand on a new plan two or three years ago? How many plans does it take til they know, etc.

Dear reader, that wasn't a plan. That was a plan for a plan, and besides, consultants have to eat.

Dear Lena, what exactly is the San Francisco Folk Club's accessibility plan for people with wheelchairs who want to attend the festival?

Dear reader, it goes like this. Call this number: 487-566.

Dear Lena, okay I dialed it and nothing happens, no dial tone, no ringing.

Dear reader, really? Dial it again.

Dear Lena, okay, I dialed it again, same thing; no ringing, nothing.

Dear reader, okay, Now dial it again.

Dear Lena, well okay, but I'm starting to feel really stupid.

Dear reader, that's part of how it works. Just go ahead and dial it again.

Dear Lena, okay I dialed it again, but this is just dumb. I'm not going to keep dialing and dialing forever. Is that really what you expect me to do?

Dear reader, yes, and eventually you go away. It works like a charm. The San Francisco Folk Club has been using this method for years and it is extremely successful. They can assure you and anyone who asks that at this point they are almost completely wheelchair-free. Oh, and keep dialing!

Ask Lena about setting fire to passing wheelchairs at cdenney@jgc.org.



The "Awkward Stage" Inaugurated at San Francisco Folk Festival

By Freddy Cat

Organizers of the San Francisco Free Folk Festival decided to christen their new performance area the "Awkward Stage" after rejecting thousands of contest entries where folk club members nominated their own names for the honor.



"It's a little embarrassing," stated one observer. "We tried the 'Lead-belly Stage,' but people changed their names to Lead-belly so they could claim the honor was

theirs. We finally decided on the Awkward Stage so we could address the ongoing accessibility issue as well.

The festival has for years been held in locations which the San Francisco Folk Club claims are "fully accessible" even though accessibility for wheelchair users requires access to elevators which are locked.

"It's a tradition," stated the festival director. "It's still theoretically accessible in

the best of worlds, on the best of days, for people who have cell phones and who can burn about four and a half hours out of their day waiting to go to the bathroom."

"We only want really motivated wheelchair users," stated another San Francisco Folk Festival organizer. "The absence of an elevator key keeps wheelchair users from cluttering up the hallways and workshops where they really get in the way. So far we've been able to keep it down to couple of nutballs with walkers, and that's bad enough."

Critics pointed out that keeping festival amenities off-limits to people with disabilities is a violation of the Americans With Disabilities Act, but were laughed at by San Francisco Folk Festival members and organizers alike.

"It's our tradition," they explained. "It isn't that we discriminate against disabled people. It's just that the buildings we rent discriminate against disabled people."

"That's right," affirmed the festival director. "Stairs are just so closed-minded."

* * * * *



No Sitting. Or Lying. Or panhandling. Or looking poor. Or being unemployed. Or smelly. Or on fire. Or not shopping. Or not spending money. And stay tuned because we'll probably think of something else soon.

Controller Cuts Legislators' Pay

Lawmakers Plan to Panhandle on Berkeley Streets to Make Up the Difference

By Wyatt Rabbit

Governor Jerry Brown's decision to veto the unbalanced California budget left lawmakers without paychecks thanks to Proposition 25, which strips lawmakers of their salary and any reimbursement for travel and living expenses if they do not pass a budget by midnight on June 15th.

Lawmakers dismissed concerns about their finances, pointing out that according to most media sources, the streets of Berkeley, California, are so easy to mine for money that they could easily make up the difference.

"Somewhere between \$100 and \$500 per day," stated one lawmaker calmly. "Everyone seems to know this for a fact, and it is useful common knowledge for those of us who really need to make up

PANHANDLERS have an easy time making money--about \$500 a day according to most media coverage. Most of them also have enough to retire, but just really love the work.



Controller John Chiang just couldn't make the numbers work even though he looked at the budget every which way, and even offered to buy lunch for any lawmakers who run out of lunch money until the next budget.

the shortfall."

"Campaigning is really expensive," agreed another lawmaker drawing "need help" on a little cardboard sign. "I need to bring in so much money every day to stay on my fundraising schedule that I'm thinking of hiring people on Berkeley's streets to help me, where apparently the money is really, really good."

Controller John Chiang's decision meant that each of the state's 120 legislators lost about \$400 a day until they passed a balanced spending plan, which went uncommonly quickly once their pay began to get docked.

"We have so much in common," explained another lawmaker. "And we really enjoy our work."

"And each other's company," stated a pale looking Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento. "It's not about the paycheck, anyway. It's about public service."

* * * * *

Food Pyramid Booted



Most People Thought Old Symbol Was Some Kind of Exercise Machine Which They Hate

by Leslie Verly

First lady Michelle Obama booted the Agriculture Department's traditional food pyramid out, replacing it with a plate of portions labeled with actual food in an effort to address mass confusion over whether the little guy climbing the pyramid was supposed to start eating it, or was just marching around getting exercise.

"Nobody could get a comprehensible message out of it," stated one Agriculture Department expert. "Some people thought he was just standing there like a spokes model."

"Other people thought he was going down backwards for some reason, like he'd dropped his watch," stated another expert, shaking his head. "Nobody thought it had anything to do with food."

The Agriculture Department had considered a lot of symbols, spent over two million dollars, and worked with focus groups involving more than 4,500 people trying to figure out how to get people to eat better while being bombarded with commercial

messages to eat junk.

"It's better than the pyramid, but that's not saying a lot," said Marion Nestle, professor of nutrition at New York University looking dubiously at the plate. "Junk food is winning this game."



AT LEAST this symbol seems to have something to do with food, unlike the other one which seemed like a bizarre exercise routine at a gym you don't go to.

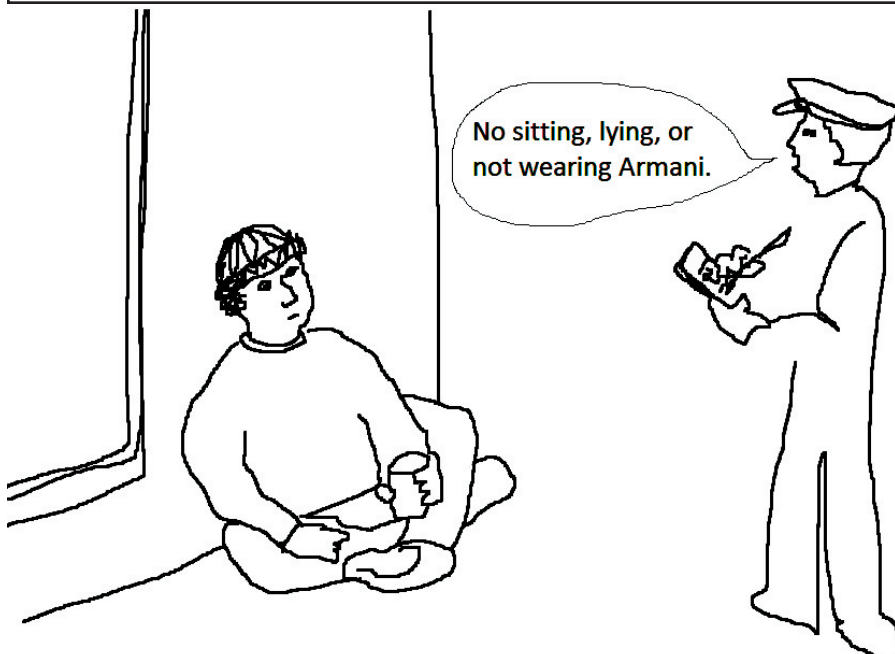
"It's a plate," offered one focus group member while experts nodded their heads furiously. "The food looks pretty awful, but I get that it's a plate of food."

"People like plates of food," sighed one expert in relief. "This is real progress."

* * * * *

We Can't Draw Comics

by Franz Toast



New People's Park Plan Provides "Welcoming" Conditions for Uncomfortable Rich People

By Jules N. Crusted

Details are still sketchy, but the draft outline of the new People's Park Plan has exciting possibilities for a complete upgrade.

"We're looking for G4 People's Park," stated Telegraph Business Improvement District Director Roland Peterson. "With all due respect to the landmark of old, we need to move with the times."

- Income-based admission system
- Dress code
- Picnic food standards requirements
- Tobacco-only smoking regulations
- Reservations required
- Sitting for 10-20 minutes at a time
- Only Armani bags
- No tie-dye
- Approved sports only
- No video equipment or cameras (police excepted)

The university of California (UC) expressed enthusiasm for the plan.

"We want that elbow-length white glove crowd," affirmed a UC spokesperson. "If there are any left."

* * * * *



Stand Against Sit/Lie

For more information: www.cohsf.org www.standagainstsitlie.org

Get your wheelchair-free bumpersticker free from the San Francisco Folk Club by calling: (415) 661-2217

Next Issue: Painting toenails with Celebrities!



San Francisco Folk Club

Wheelchair-free since 1985!

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

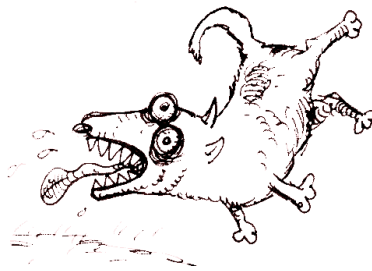


Pepper Spray Times
1970 San Pablo Ave. #4
Berkeley, CA 94702
cdenny@igc.org
www.caroldenney.com

Pepper Spray Times Staff

Editor.....Grace Underpressure
Art Director.....Egon Schiele
Comics.....Don D. Ferrara
Staff.....Lou Sennett-Up, John DeParty,
Lena Deeter, Freddy Cat, Phil Allen, Wyatt
Rabbit, Leslie Verlie, Franz Toast, Doug
Minkler, The San Francisco Folk Club

Pepper Spray Times is made possible by the natural comedy inherent in the local political landscape and all its inhabitants, best exemplified by...
Want to help distribute? Contact us for copies.



Hardly available anywhere; mailed or emailed to your door for a modest bribe of \$12 - \$20/yr
. Plagiarize wildly; donations gladly accepted.

* Timon of Athens

We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.