

...the
goose-
plucking
issue...

These
are
truly
the...

Hepper Spray Times

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

May 2005



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

"under the canopies of costly state..."*

Vol. VII No. 5

HUMAN BEINGS DESTROYING PLANET

Are They Evil? Or Just Really, Really Stupid?

by Otis Isgood

A recent study sponsored by the United Nations concludes that the planet is going to hell in a handbasket on greased wheels.

"Human activity is putting such strain on the natural functions of Earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted," stated the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in Oslo, Norway.

"Like, duh," responded one Bush administration official. "That's why we need to gut social security, hang onto our tax cuts, and take out huge balloon payments on a new Mercedes. None of this would make much sense if we had a future."

The study contends that ten to 30 percent of mammal, bird and amphibian species are already threatened with extinction, and that poor people were more likely to suffer the consequences of ecological degradation than rich people.

"Those species were underperforming anyway," pointed out the administration official, "and so were the poor."

The study called for "radical changes in the way nature is treated at every level of decision-making and new ways of cooperation between government, business and civil society" which administration officials pointed out is the same old blah blah blah they always hear from tree-huggers.

"You'd think after spending \$20 million they'd come up with something new," observed one official. "If they'd had the sense to invest that \$20 million in a personal account they could have bought a couple of senators by now."

* * * * *



VERLIE WAGNER, demonstrating goose plucking at the Winedale Spring Festival and Texas Crafts Exhibition, is not surprised by predictions of the end of the world, which has been foretold so often it is getting a little tedious.

Post Shiavo Run on Health Directives

by Jim Panzee

The recent end of the strange saga of the brain-dead Florida woman whose family couldn't agree on whether or not to artificially prolong her life has created a run on health directives.

"They're flying out of here," gasped one nursing home director. "Nobody wants to star in a movie where they're drooling and can't follow a balloon."

"Mine's going to be air-tight," announced one determined senior filling out his papers. "I'm going to make it very clear. If I blink twice, it means no, and if I fart, it means yes."

* * * * *

LOCAL GROUP WANTS EVERYTHING RENAMED

by Bernadette Housedown

The controversy over the renaming of Jefferson Elementary School in Berkeley has sparked a grassroots movement to constantly rename everything.

"Jefferson was a slaveowner," stated one of the group's members. "And who's to say that Rosa Parks didn't have a bad day?"

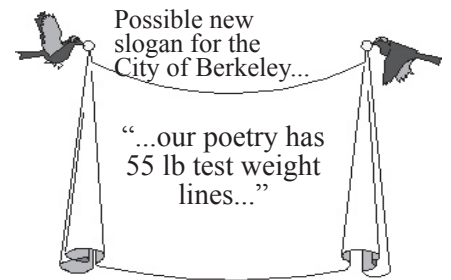
The group claims that starting from scratch and renaming everything on a regularly scheduled basis is the only way to be sure no school, library, or street is saddled with a baggage-ridden moniker which might prove to be an embarrassment in the future.

"We've discovered that almost every sign and street name is associated with something or someone with an unfortunate history," explained the group's spokesperson. "We figure that the names that seem okay are just waiting for research that uncovers something that will necessitate a name change. We need to be on the safe side."

Critics object that constantly renaming everything will cause confusion, not to mention upset the world of fundraising, which depends heavily on rich people's tendency to want their names displayed in obvious places on plaques and buildings. But the grassroots group says the constant re-baptism of streets and buildings will provide lots of new opportunities for vanity.

"There will be constant bidding and rebidding," explained one member. "It will be more like the Superbowl."

* * * * *



ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, why does the City of Berkeley get new parking meters all the time? As soon as I figure out the old one there's some new one I have to figure out. I'm ready to quit.

A: It's hard to have a fashion statement as a city, but the new meters have a sharp new cut and use a more modern font. The design is heavily influenced by video game technology, and I believe it makes the Public Works staff feel with it and hip. But do quit, if you're so inclined, so that I can finally find a parking space.

Dear Lena, well, speaking of that, where do you find parking in the City of Berkeley?

A. Oakland, Albany, or Emeryville.

Dear Lena, so if a siren goes off at Bayer, am I really supposed to seal off my house and just sit there?

A: Don't just sit there. You could dance, for instance. The hula is very relaxing.

Dear Lena, I sleep under the overpass. When the siren goes off, can I come to your house?

A: Sure. When Bayer's siren goes off at my house, it's time to break out the booze and play twister.

Dear Lena, why would the mayor and the council allow Bayer to put the whole town at risk?

A: They got tired of waiting for those West Berkeley artists and craftspeople to make more money. Besides, it won't be the whole town at risk, just those people who didn't have the sense to buy hill property twenty years ago, and those people, poor souls, need thinned from the herd.

SECRET CONCLAVE FINALLY UNVEILS NEW METER

Happy Crowds Sing, Rejoice

by Cindy Works

East Bay citizens rejoiced in the streets when the secret conclave of city staff members, with a puff of white smoke, finally signaled the choice of the new, bilingual ParkeZ Stations selected to grace Berkeley's streets.

The untimely death of the previous meters had caused havoc, depressing city revenues and city officials alike.

"We had had faith in the Rhyno meters," confessed one city official. "With the exception of former Councilmember Diane Woolley-Bauer, everybody had no doubts at all that the Rhyno meters were the meters to end all meter replacement problems forever and ever. You can imagine how we felt when they came up empty."

"Not exactly empty," corrected one city worker in the Public Works Department. "They were chock full of hairpins, paper clips, little wads of cardboard, anything but money. A fair amount of them were full of styrofoam and some were full of beans."

Critics were skeptical.

"It's lovely that ParkeZ speaks several languages, but that wasn't exactly the problem with the old meters," commented one driver searching his pockets for a quarter. "Everybody around here speaks the language of vandalism pretty well out of sheer necessity."

"What's to stop the new meters from meeting the same fate as the old me-



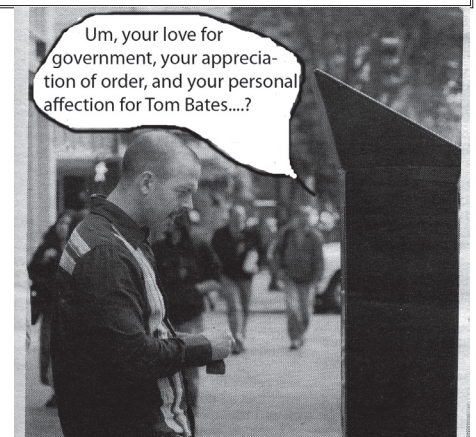
THE NEW METER claims it can generate more money than the old meters because it knows how to work the street.

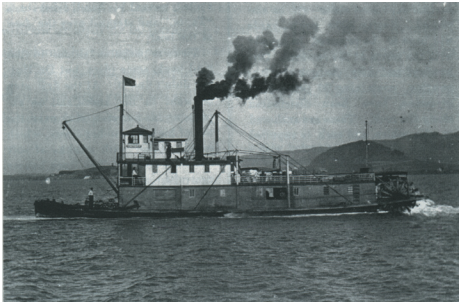
ters?" asked one local resident eyeing the credit card slot suspiciously. "They look more intimidating, true, but these meter vandals are grad students and hackers. They love a new challenge."

"These critics have no faith," responded Parking Services Manager Karen Moore. "We'll need the community's prayers, of course, but we have faith the new meters will rise to the occasion. At least the City Council is full of faithful believers."

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We Can't Draw Comics by Franz Toast





BOATS take more time, but allow for more crossword puzzle completion.

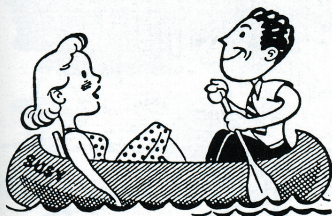
NO BRIDGE GROUP GAINS STEAM

by Geert Ready

Supporters of the no bridge alternative to rebuilding the seismically challenged Bay Bridge are gaining ground, getting support from conservatives, boating boosters, and ecologists.

"It's the most appropriate financial route for a state in trouble," explained one conservative. "We can't afford to pay for a new bridge locally, the governor won't pick up the tab, and rowboats are cheap. We see this as a real working solution and good exercise, too."

Boating and sailboarding enthusiasts chimed in with supportive information about bay area's climate, its topography, and its suitability for sustained oar and wind travel.



"The bay area is full of hot air and wind," offered Frank Ludwig for the U.S. Geological Survey. "And not all of it is coming from the activists and politicians."

A growing segment of no bridge support comes from environmentalists who claim that the bridge creates too much traffic, and a no bridge alternative would encourage people to work closer to home.

"There's no breaking point for people who are willing to live in Sacramento and work in San Francisco," stated one supporter. "These people are sitting in dead-stop traffic for hours, peeing into bottles, missing out on family life, and even listening to National Public Radio. Unless we remove the bridge entirely they'll be doing that for decades. These people really need us."

* * * * *

ICE CUBE TRAY FOUND ON MARS

by Carrie D. Bags

Images from the European Space Agency's spacecraft suggest that flat, fractured plates near the Martian equator are remnants of a party on the planet just a few million years ago which included several prehistoric ice cube trays in various states of disrepair.

Scientists, who earlier had found only evidence of much older water, were overjoyed.

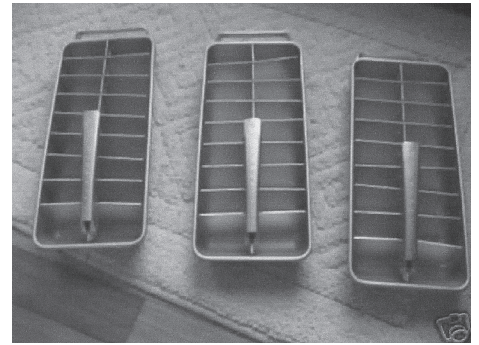
"Compared to billion-year-old water, million-year-old water is relatively fresh," stated Dr. Jan-Peter Muller. "I can almost hear it tinkling in a shot glass."



The research team speculated that the fossilized remains of an ice pack on the Mars surface meant that it must have been some party.

"We've compared the features with similar ones in Antarctica," stated Muller. "In my experience, ice packs like this means somebody had a hell of a headache."

Critics argued that the Europeans were colluding with the National Aeronautics and Space Agency's Mars rover team, trying to shore up funding for the



SCIENTISTS think their latest speculations about Mars, which involve these Frigidare ice cube trays, have their earlier speculations beat all to hell.

ailing space program by leaking well-spiced but idiotic rumors to the press.

"What will they think of next," laughed one NASA spokesperson. "Next they'll be suggesting these plate-like features were formed out of lava flows."

One observer remarked that the NASA team itself was making precisely that suggestion only a few months ago, but the NASA spokesperson scoffed that there was nothing precise about their suggestions and that lay individuals wouldn't understand complicated scientific issues anyway.

"Just give us the funding and get out of the way," suggested one scientist. "We're only trying to keep the public's imagination stoked so they don't ask us to make fuel efficient cars or affordable mass transit. They like this water stuff, they really do. Next month we're going to discover sprinkler heads."

* * * * *

Bayer HealthCare Alerting & Warning System

Bayer HealthCare has installed a siren notification system to inform the community of what to do when the whole thing blows.

DO NOT CALL 911 IF YOU HEAR A SIREN.

IF YOU DO CALL 911 YOU'LL JUST HEAR A LOT OF PEOPLE CRYING.

THREE STEPS TO TAKE WHEN YOU HEAR THE SAFETY SIREN:



Go inside your home, unless you don't have a home, in which case kiss your tush goodby.



Shut all the doors and windows, unless you don't have doors and windows, in which case never mind.



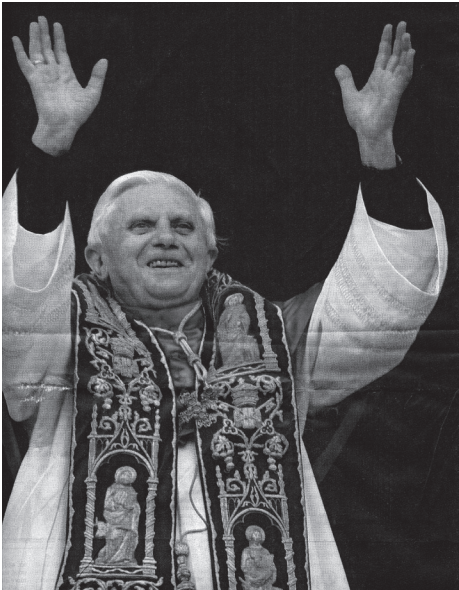
Tune to 1610 AM unless you're one of those outside guys, in which case hum a little goodbye tune.

For more information regarding the Bayer HealthCare Warning System, call the toll free information line 1-800-905-4079.



& C. Denney

WORST POPE PICKED; QUICKIE CONCLAVE PLOT UNVEILED



“GOD’S ROTTWEILLER” is only one of the many nicknames former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has earned along his holy path to popedom.

by Doris Ajar

“You have to think the conclave food really sucked,” shrugged one local Catholic upon hearing that arguably the worst possible choice of pope to replace the dead one had just been selected in near-record time by a secret conclave of cardinals from all over the world who should have known better.

“What were they thinking?” observed another, shaking her head at the thought of more generations of fellow Catholics obligated to suffer hardship and poverty as a consequence of the cardinals’ choice of a pope certain to continue the previous pope’s repressive policies and delusions of infallibility.

The curiously quick decision by the conclave of cardinals obligated to

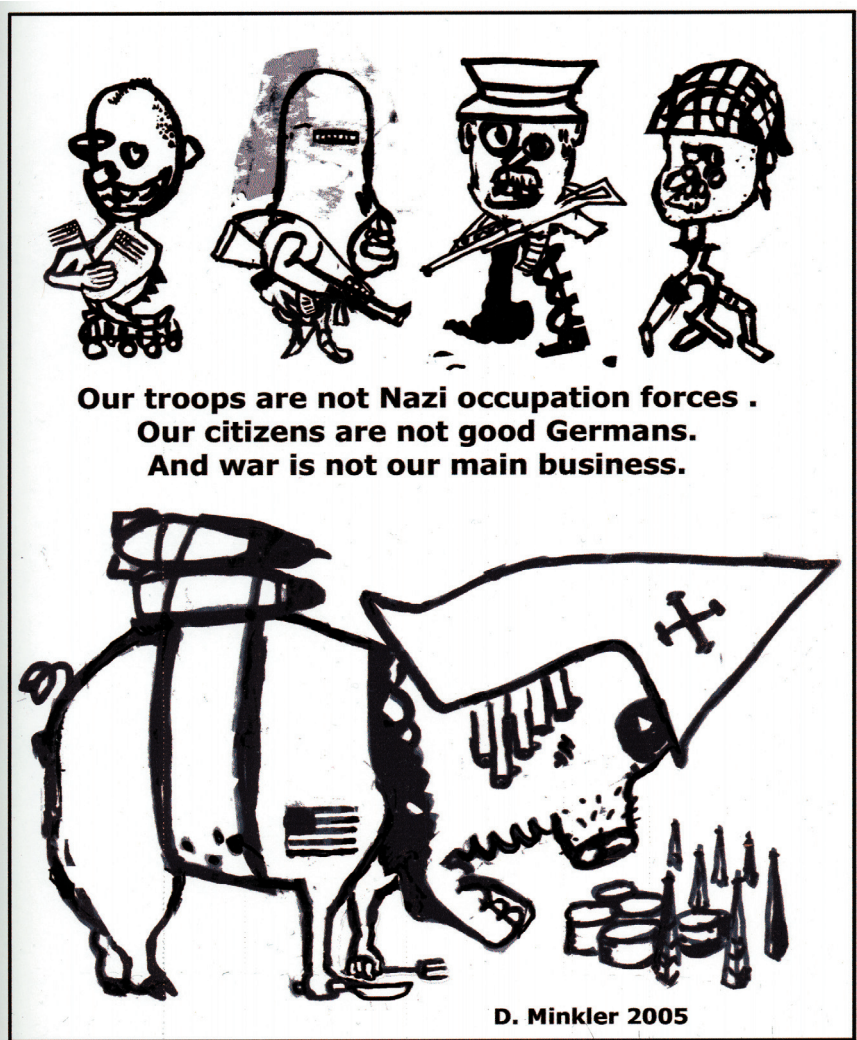
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**Our troops are not Nazi occupation forces .
Our citizens are not good Germans.
And war is not our main business.**

D. Minkler 2005

choose a successor to Pope John Paul II baffled religious observers worldwide until recently, when a plot was revealed which may have played a dramatic role in the cardinals’ choice.

“The cell phone blackout was tough,” acknowledged one of the conclave participants. “Lots of us are hooked on the goofy little games, and we were going nuts.”

“Yes, that was really hard,” said another participant on his way back from Rome. “Plus, I keep in close touch

with my altar boys, and I have to say I missed them a lot.”

“The cell phone blackout, the isolation, the food, these were all factors,” stated one expert on religious affairs. “But it was actually the dissident priests who pulled off a strategy of a strange sort. They figured people need to realize they can’t count on any help from the church leaders to better their lives. This was the best way they could think to illustrate it without doing something like electing Michael Jackson.”

* * * * *

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.

* Henry IV Part 2