

All hail the...

...the public sarcasm for everyone issue ...

Hepper Spray Times

November 2007



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

"...a hell of pain and world of charge..."*

Vol. IX No. 11



A FULL-THROATED CRY FOR BOYCOTT AND RECALL was the dominant theme of this year's How Berkeley Can You Be parade, led by these lusty bass and their harmonic choir of lobsters.

FLAPPING BASS, LOCAL LOBSTER SING OUT FOR RECALL

By Nona DeAbove

A unanimous, unruly collection of singing bass and lobster clinging precariously to an art car recently spear-headed a movement to recall Berkeley's mayor and to boycott businesses belonging to the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Berkeley Association who don't speak out against the Public Commons for Everyone Initiative, which City Hall staffers refer to by whispering its initials in an effort to avoid adding unduly to an imprudently comic and surreal sense of municipal deja vu.

In the light of the City of Berkeley's most recent effort to re-tool "quality of life" laws against panhandlers, homeless people, and poor people who dawdle unnecessarily in commercial areas, the noisy group of disgruntled sea creatures decided to enter the debate with a unity unseen before in local politics.

City Hall dismissed the fish and crustaceans as harmonic, but misguided.

"Homeless and poor people have tough lives," stated Lauren Lempert, the city staffer being paid \$6,800 monthly for a nine-month contract to shepherd the "quality of life" laws through a set of local commissions. "But local mer-

chants have it even tougher if they want to make some real money this coming Christmas."

Lempert argued that the bass and lobster chorus had the right to contribute their views, but that targeting local merchants was short-sighted.

"It's true that the impetus for this new anti-homeless effort came from Berkeley merchant organizations, and are only being lightly accessorized with social services to fool people into supporting possibly unconstitutional measures," mused Lempert. "But by the time they end up in court, Christmas will be over and the business owners will be rolling in cash."

"Even if they lose the court cases to a constitutionality challenge the way they did last time, the politicians look pro-business, which is the real political pay-off here," added Assistant City Manager Jim Hynes. "We've framed this whole thing as compassionate. We're not really worried about the bass and the lobster."

"That's right," chimed in a smiling Lempert. "We love lobster."

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NEVIUS MOVES INTO SHELTER

By Rose Beef

Chronicle reporter C.W. Nevius surprised his critics recently by moving into a homeless shelter in San Francisco.

"I was covering it for a story and fell in love," he confessed to observers. "It's clean, it's convenient to my work, and it has a social network I found I was missing in my life."

Nevius stumbled across the shelter while researching for his controversial series on homelessness, which critics claim has engendered animosity toward the poor, an accusation Nevius denies.

"I don't create animosity toward the panhandlers and street people," he pointed out. "I just exploit it."

Nevius sold his furniture and claims he will now stay permanently in the local shelter, which he raved about in a recent article.

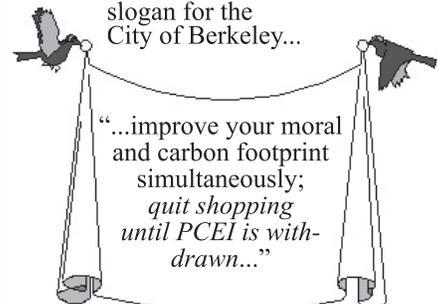
"Pure metal," he smiled, rapping on his cot with pride. "No bedbugs here."

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THE CITY OF BERKELEY'S legal department is working overtime to try to tweak an ambiguous set of "quality of life" laws even further against people with the gall to request donations from shoppers and passersby, which really ruins a shopper's day.

Possible new slogan for the City of Berkeley...



"...improve your moral and carbon footprint simultaneously; quit shopping until PCEI is withdrawn..."

ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, how many city staff and council representatives actually fit in a developer's pocket?

Dear reader, studies ordinarily show between five to seven as the standard, but contemporary density infill innovations have improved the ratio, which is now conservatively set at approximately 15, provided they are all somewhat flexible and wear loose clothing.

Dear Lena, the City Council doesn't come to these tedious public hearings. Why should we?

Dear reader, the council representatives may, in fact, be in disguise, but your point is well taken. There is as yet no proof that public comment, which manifests on large sheets of newsprint covered with colorful markers, actually does anything besides line well-placed waste baskets. But attendance at tedious public meetings is the first rung of the test of precisely those qualities required for public office, so take a close look at the nutballs who attend. They are probably trying to attain public office so that they can finally stay home.

Dear Lena, doesn't the city's paid facilitator have some kind of obligation to be neutral when facilitating a controversial matter?

Dear reader, this is a silly misconception. The city-paid facilitator is actually more like the host's four-year-old who has to play a tune on the trumpet. Just be glad it's something the host, rather than you, has to live with every day.

Ask Lena! She may not be right, but what expert is? At least she is absurdly generous with her expert advice. Contact her at cdenney@igc.org.



HUNDREDS OF PATRIOTIC AMERICANS converged on the Berkeley Marina to send a message to Cindy Sheehan, who is considering an electoral challenge to one of the most politically progressive and powerful Democrats in Congress, another example of the left's hallowed tradition of the circular firing squad.

BEACHGOERS IMPLORE SHEEHAN NOT TO RUN

By Barry Simple

Hundreds of people trudged down to Berkeley's shoreline recently to try to protect the razor-thin Democratic majority in Congress, threatened by the electoral hopes of Cindy Sheehan, who hopes to unseat Representative Nancy Pelosi.

"We appreciate her grief over the loss of her son," stated one of the group, "and her sincere wish to end the war. We just wish someone could acquaint her with some political basics. We kind of need Nancy Pelosi."

Sheehan's supporters are promoting an effort to impeach President Bush, which, in the waning days of his administration, has no chance of popular or electoral support.

"I completely agree that there is a reasonable case for impeachment," commented one of the hundreds of people lying for hours on a blanket in the relatively mild fall weather in an effort to try to convey a political mes-

sage to Sheehan. "It's just that we need healthcare. I need healthcare, and so do my kids."

Sheehan's spokespersons argued that impeachment should be the Democratic Party's top priority.

"Spoken like a woman with healthcare," responded one of the protesters, folding up a colorful blanket. "Sheehan's electoral challenge to Pelosi is a gift to the Republicans. There are so many ways to educate the public without pulling the rug out from under the first female Speaker of the House."

Supporters of the electoral challenge argued that the left just wouldn't be the left without the circular firing squad.

"They have a good point," acknowledged another protester walking back to town. "We appreciate, as do the Republicans, that for the left, this is a deeply ingrained and respected tradition."

* * * * *



GOOD TIMES ARE GONE in the City of Berkeley's legal department, which was known nationwide for wrestling with the naked people, the mud people, and sometimes even the naked mud people, and now will probably be no fun.

BERKELEY CITY ATTORNEY QUILTS: COMEDY PREDICTED TO SUFFER

By Mia Culpa

Comedy writers wept at the news that Berkeley City Attorney Manuela Albuquerque planned to retire, rending their clothing and wailing publicly on the steps of City Hall.

"It's not fair," sobbed one local satirist while he tore up his copy. "I got so used to the steady production of comedy out of City Hall and the legal department that I forgot how to write it myself."

"We haven't really had to stretch for

years," agreed another comedy writer. "Whether it was the specific language outlawing nudity or this latest effort to allow shouting for football games but not shouting in anguish about having the police confiscate one's belongings, the contortions and acrobatics of language were the legal equivalent of Cirque du Soleil."

"Most legal departments aren't capable of this order of finesse," agreed another local writer. "In Santa Cruz when

COLUMNIST STRANDED ON MELTING ICE FLOE

By Paris S. Burning

Debra Saunders, conservative Chronicle reporter and global warming nay-sayer, was spotted recently stranded on a melting ice floe.



Debra J. Saunders

"Let her go," cried bitter environmentalists, but rescuers managed to effect a helicopter rescue before her otherwise certain demise.

"We appreciate the irony," stated one rescuer. "But we didn't want her spending a lot of time with the polar bears. She is very persuasive, and they've suffered enough."

* * * * *

Next issue, Buttocks Liposuction with Celebrities

they go after the homeless, the wording is plain, brazenly outlawing sleep, for instance. They just don't have the creativity we have here in Berkeley."

Critics argued that the City Council could easily take up the slack on humor, but were easily dismissed by comedy professionals.

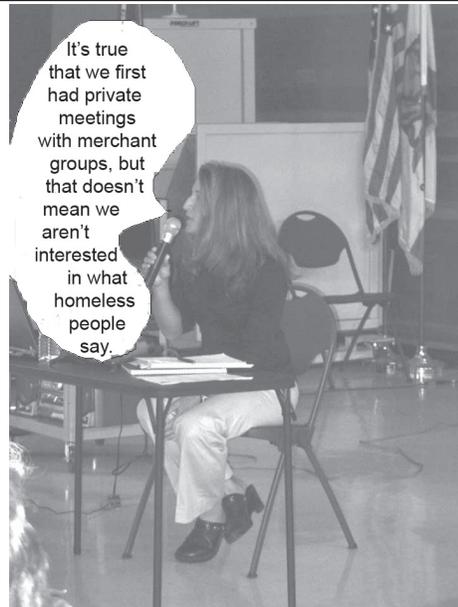
"I know that for me there is no way back," sighed one. "I'm just not funny anymore. I'm finally qualified to write obituaries."

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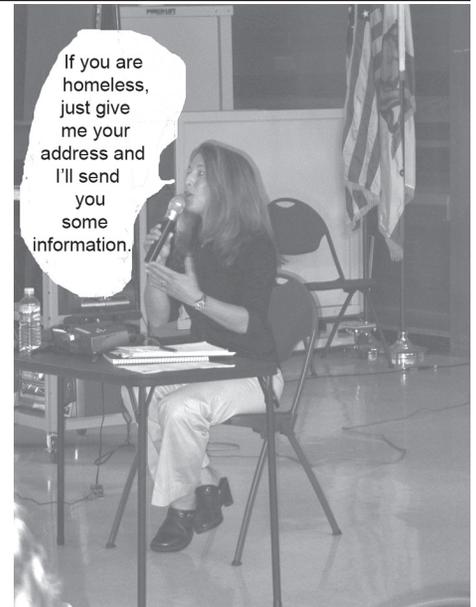
We Can't Draw Comics by Franz Toast



People say the Public Commons for Everyone Initiative is anti-homeless, but it's really not like that.

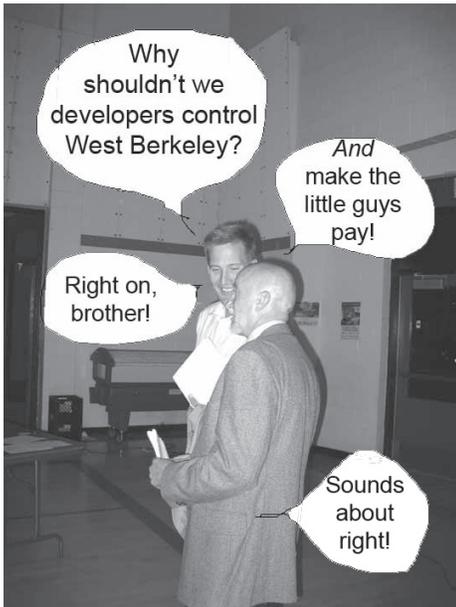


It's true that we first had private meetings with merchant groups, but that doesn't mean we aren't interested in what homeless people say.



If you are homeless, just give me your address and I'll send you some information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PUBLIC COMMONS FOR EVERYONE INITIATIVE



DEVELOPERS KNOW that despite getting stomped at the fake town hall meeting, they have the City Council and city staff right where they want them, in their pockets.

DEVELOPERS DEMAND POWER; CITY OFFICIALS SAY BOW WOW WOW

By Calder Bluff

Developers acknowledged defeat after a recent meeting where city officials got stomped, developers got spanked, and the facilitator hired by the City of Berkeley abandoned her neutrality like a frisbee at the beach.

"We can't figure it out," sighed Michael Caplan. "They usually eat out of our hands like puppies."

"It makes no sense," huffed Taj Johns, the city-paid facilitator. "I can usually herd them right into the pen."

West Berkeley neighbors courteously declined an opportunity to pay into an "improvement district" governed by

What is the Public Commons for Everyone Initiative (PCEI)?

The City wants every Berkeley resident, no matter how smelly or how rich, to abide by some simple rules and have some essential credit cards in public places. Is that so much to ask?

What do you mean by "public commons"?

We mean other-than-private places. If you have a house or private boat, you can be as eccentric or inappropriate as you want to be. What's wrong with that?

What are the main components of PCEI?

Dangle "support services" in front of politicians and commissioners in exchange for further tipping the scales against the homeless, who, after all, have it too easy in this town. Our jails are pretty cushy, after all, and our police are really gentle when they handcuff you for having a shopping cart.

Is the PCEI targeted at homeless people?

Not at all! If rich people sit down on the sidewalk outside a warm cafe, or sleep in a park, they would be treated just like homeless people will be treated. Isn't that fair?

How can I get involved?

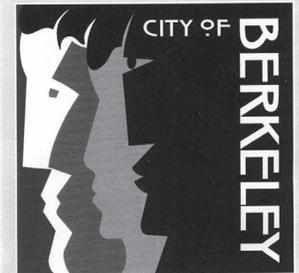
Just sit still! This game is already rigged. By no means contact:

llempert@ci.berkeley.ca.us
City Manager's Office
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704.

But if you accidentally do, don't worry. This goose is cooked.

What's next?

The usual quiet crack-down on the poor and mentally ill, while ordinary citizens party down and compare notes on their summer vacations.



an elite, unelected group of developers who spend their free time counting car campers and shuddering at the sight of graffiti.

"Not that they aren't a lovely bunch," added one neighbor. "It's just that we have unaccountability in spades down

here already."

City staff, conferring after the meeting, agreed that the setback was minor.

"We're very good at creative interpretation of public input," stated Johns. "And next time we'll bring the taser."

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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.

*Troilus and Cressida