

...the
poll-driven
issue... All
hail
the...

Hepper Spray Times

August 2006

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



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

"Therefore perpend, my princess, and give ear..."*

Vol. VIII No. 8

Freebox Discovered to be Type of Mushroom

By Gunnar Down

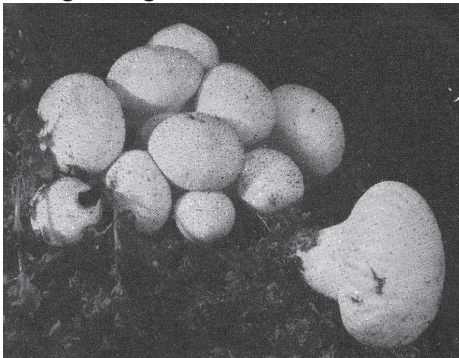
Scientists revealed a breakthrough which explains the strange appearance and disappearance of freeboxes on the southside of campus, a phenomenon which has been puzzling locals and annoying opponents of the sometimes gaily painted receptacles for free goods and clothing.

"'Mushroom' has always been a somewhat elastic term for the fruiting bodies of certain of the higher fungi," stated the local mycophagist responsible for the finding regarding the freeboxes. "It is not uncommon for a single mushroom to produce more than a billion spores, which clarifies why the University of California is having such difficulty getting rid of these freeboxes."

"They appear in the blink of an eye and disappear just as quickly," stated one of the People's Park gardeners. "We couldn't figure it out until this recent discovery. Now it all makes sense."

The most recent freebox was destroyed without comment by the University of California, but another appeared in its place just as suddenly.

"We thought it was some kind of political movement, which was bad enough," sighed Director of Commu-



LYCOPERDON GEMMATUM appears to be related to the freebox mushroom species, as they both can be found either scattered or in tufts.



FREEBOXES LIKE THIS ONE keep appearing just like the mushrooms they actually are. This one, as you can see, has no permit and is shamelessly distributing clothes to people who probably don't deserve them in the first place.

nity Affairs Irene Hegarty. "It might be much harder to eradicate these freeboxes now that we know they are some kind of fungi."

Local scientists suggested that the University of California might consider studying the new life form rather than wasting taxpayer money rounding up midnight crews to battle them back in the dead of night.

"The university may not realize that mushrooms are very peaceful, and often tasty. This freebox variety may have interesting qualities worth study."

Experts agreed that the freebox variety of mushroom was probably going to be a constant presence on Berkeley streets no matter how much money the university spends trying to eliminate it.

"Mushrooms are wild," explained one observer. "They tend to come and go quite quickly, and although some are location specific, others may be found almost anywhere. The distinctive freebox variety clearly likes the climate on the southside of campus, and could possibly make a lovely addition to a soup or souffle?."

* * * * *

Nosy Settlement-Mandated Downtown Advisory Group Actually Wants Details

By Vera Heights

The advisory group privileged to get an insider's look at the concept of a new, fresh, exciting downtown facelift is wasting staff time asking for detail.

The group, mandated as part of a legal settlement with the University of California, is welcome to as much information as they like about the project as long as the detail is missing and the language is ambiguous, according to Planning Director Dan Marks.

"I feel hurt," sniffed Marks. "It's like they don't trust us. The Planning Department visionaries' creative juices get really stifled when they have to nail things down. Ordinary people have trouble understanding that."

Advisory group participants responded that it was their job to have some idea what they were being asked to sign off on.

"How can we be even an advisory part of something we can't see?" asked one participant. "I know it's going to be new, fresh, and exciting. But what is it?"

Marks dismissed the advisory group's repetitive demands as nitpicking.

"Detractors always want detail," he stated. "We're trying to infuse them with the broad sweep of a concept that would possibly wither under the weight of a lot of petty detail. I'm not sure this advisory group really shares our sense of adventure," added Marks. "We're artists; we think in big, bold, beautiful strokes."

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Possible new slogan for the City of Berkeley...

"...a subsidiary of the University of California...."

ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Q: Dear Lena, did the fruit flies in space actually teach us anything?

A: Dear reader, it is too soon to tell, although the word is that future shuttle flights will offer agar in a variety of exciting new flavors.

Q: Dear Lena, if Cody's was really failing, how come Andy Ross opened two more stores?

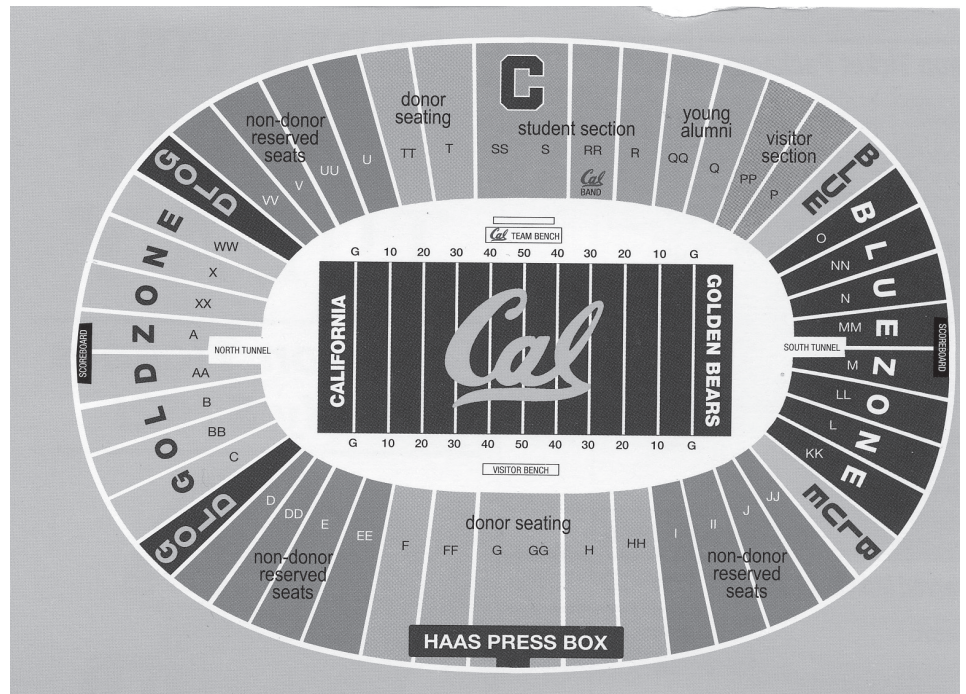
A: Dear reader, it's really rude to request to see rich people's books. When they say they are going broke, it is understood in their culture that it means their profit margin is not healthy enough to sustain the lovely sparkle in their eyes.

Q: Dear Lena, the UC regents just approved another retroactive \$1 million in unauthorized extra compensation for top executives, and nobody is stopping them. What is going on?

A: Dear reader, now and then it begins to gently dawn in one's mind that putting actors in public office has its downside.

Q: Dear Lena, but what about California's kids? The public schools get worse and worse, they can't afford any higher education, and no offense but they are getting to be stupid as wood.

A: The entire staff of the Pepper Spray Times thanks you for noticing. You can do what the 60's generation is doing and tuck your own kid into private school while the public schools go up in smoke, if your conscience is elastic enough. Just be sure you carry a reliable firearm.



THE UC BERKELEY PLAN for downtown is really shaping up, especially for the really lucky people in the donor seating area.

START-UP "BOOK" OPENS SOON

By Leif and Trudy Pages

An adventurous local start-up company will soon unveil a new product projected to compete with Apple Computer Inc.'s wildly popular iPod and iTunes entertainment devices.

The company's announcement states the new product, called a "book", is expected to be available this year if scientists can iron out some hardware glitches which baffle consumers, such as the absence of an on-off button.

The company refused to provide more details, such as whether anyone left on the planet has expressed serious interest in literary products.

Entertainment industry analysts briefed on the project state that, conceptually speaking, "books" are an important jumping-off point for getting people to embrace similar technologies such as newspapers and racing forms. This is key for the company, as the traditional market for literature is completely saturated by the advertising on a printed napkin.

The company is hoping to expand the usefulness and popularity of "the book" by adding features such as exciting aromas and small cameras inside the traditional book binding.

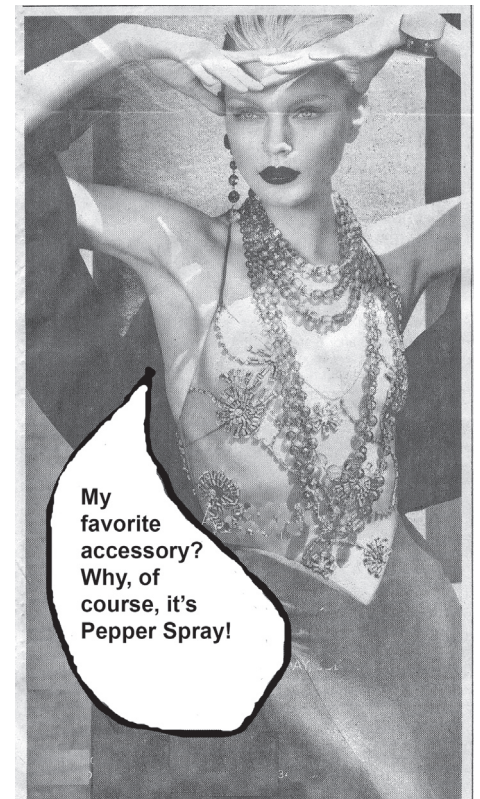
"We could also make them edible," states Maudelle Airplane of the start-up proposal.

It's not clear how "the book" will fit into normal life for people who no

longer read, but the company recently partnered with the writers for IHOP menus, who specialize in making the inedible sound enticing.

"We're excited," stated Airplane. "We're taking off."

* * * * *



My favorite accessory? Why, of course, it's Pepper Spray!

GUIDELINES FOR LIVING NEAR RICH PEOPLE

It's a baffling political climate! The gap between the rich and the poor gets wider every day, and yet your political leaders' concerns are dictated by the wealthy. If you want to join the party, you'll need guidelines from **Felicia Flock**, who knows the nuance of wealth and can help you steer clear of an embarrassing faux pas.



Felicia Flock

* **"Should I wear my best clothes around the neighborhood?"**

- No need to bother. Your best clothes are a joke to the truly wealthy, who can tell exactly where you shop with one glance. On the other hand, your comical, poverty-imposed attire helps make your nearby rich people feel all the more elevated, so in a strange way they appreciate it deeply.

* **"Am I dragging down their property values?"**

- Yes, but not for long.

* **"Should we invite them to the barbeque?"**

- Of course you should, although the probability is strong that they will decline with regret, explaining that they are expected at the Bohemian Grove.

* **"Should my kids invite theirs over to play?"**

- What a lovely thought. By all means invite them for a "play date", but make sure to clean up around the house, and bring some lemonade out to the chauffeur.

* **"What should we talk about?"**

- Let your rich people do the talking. Let them describe in detail the things they've bought recently, and make little cooing sounds of admiration. They will walk away thinking you are a marvelous conversationalist.

* **"Do you think they'll like me?"**

- They will love the way your clothes, your speech, your consumer selections highlight their willingness to embrace 'diversity', and possibly send you a lovely card.

SHUTTLE FRUIT FLIES SAY OUTER SPACE OVERRATED

By Mindy Thickovitt

Fruit flies recruited for the next space shuttle flight have changed their minds about the mission, according to spokespersons at NASA.

"We're not sure what happened," confessed Sharmila Bhattacharya of NASA-Ames, who heads the fruit fly research team. "They got a call from the fruit flies who returned from the last mission and then came back to the office and turned in their little space suits."

Thomas Reiter, the recent shuttle flight astronaut in charge of feeding the fruit flies during the flight, admitted there had been some unforeseen problems.

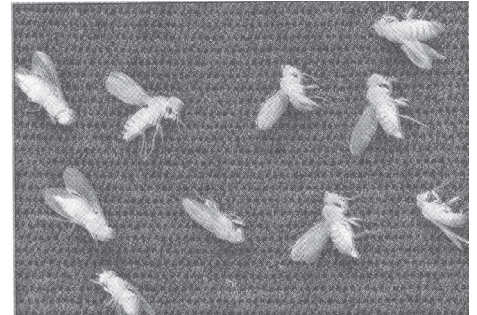
"They were upset about the accommodations, for one thing," stated Reiter. "They assumed they would be able to see out the window, and we had them cooped up in a container only slightly larger than a shoebox. They were upset about the view."

Scientists outside the project conceded that fruit flies were chosen in part because they have yet to develop a protective advocacy group.

"We couldn't bring dogs or cats home from a space mission and then expose them to disease-carrying bacteria," pointed out one scientist. "We have animal rights people all over us. NASA can fool around with fruit flies because, let's face it, nobody loves them."

Bhattacharya agreed that the recent shuttle mission had probably given the fruit flies an opportunity to organize for better working conditions.

"It's possibly that they were somewhat misled," stated Bhattacharya. "We gave them little instant cameras and



FRUIT FLY ASTRONAUTS recently returned from outer space and dismissed the trip on talk shows, saying that the scenery was boring, the food was terrible, and the movies were bad.

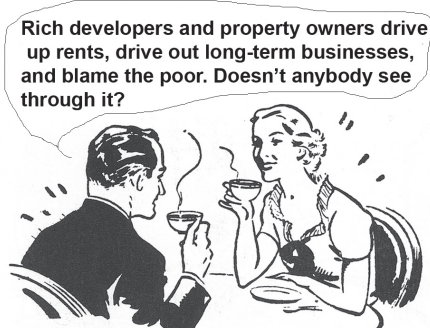
left them with the impression it would like a working vacation. Somebody let it slip that they were going to be infected when they got back home, and now there's this extraordinarily tiny picket line outside of NASA-Ames. You can hardly hear them, but they're out there chanting."

"We bought this whole line about being heros," admitted one fruit fly holding a micron-sized picket sign and leading the other flies in a chant. "Discoveries about the immune system, contributions to science, seeing the stars, all that stuff. Then it turns out all there is to eat is agar. I'm serious; agar. Even airline food is better than that."

"I'm as patriotic as the next fly," called out another fruit fly walking the perimeter of NASA-Ames. "But if they want us on the next shuttle mission, they need to negotiate about better working conditions. After all, life is short."

* * * * *

We Can't Draw Comics by guest artist Franz Toast



SF'S HYDE STREET MERMAID DAY A BUST

By Silvia Lining

What was thought to be a winning concept to delight tourists and residents strolling Hyde Street's San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park turned ugly recently when Mermaid Day proved a costly disaster.



"We didn't know mermaids as well as we thought we did," admitted Peter Kasin, one of the park rangers working overtime to repair damage to the pier. "The water aerobics class sounded like a good idea on paper, but mermaids play kind of rough. We had a lot of bruises and complaints, and one near drowning."

"The concept was great," agreed a local police officer called to the scene. "The mermaids' agent said they would work for free, but they nearly wrecked the Visitor's Center and it's going to end up costing us a bundle. We could have told them there was no room for a contra dance."

MERMAIDS are apparently touchy, opinionated, and overly fond of rum.

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THIS PROPOSED PLAN was misidentified as the plan for Telegraph Avenue in our last issue. This is actually the proposal for the addition to Edwards Stadium. We apologize for the error.

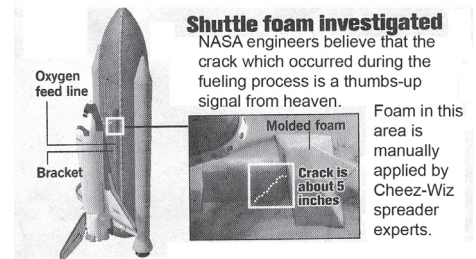
The mermaids' representative stated that the problems with Mermaid Day were minor, and that the park rangers were exaggerating the difficulties because of basic miscommunication.

"These gals are enthusiastic, but they have a lot of heart," he stated. "If the rangers didn't want seaweed all over the rigging, they should have said something in the rider."

"We loved the seashell Martha Stewart sculpture," stated Kasin, sweeping sand and broken bottles off the Balclutha decks. "We didn't realize she was a kind of goddess to the mermaids. But we're a family-friendly park, and it was a little risqué' for small children."

"Those mermaids can really put it away," added a bartender from a nearby establishment. "If there was a mermaid equivalent of a DUI, the whole lot of them would be in jail."

* * * * *



NASA scientists, like local cops and firefighters in the Bay Area, can't keep their hands off really good fireworks.

COY NASA DELAYS, THEN LAUNCHES SPACE SHUTTLE

By Wadia Doon

After delaying the shuttle for days because of obvious damage to the insulating foam on the external fuel tank, NASA's Mission Control launched the spacecraft anyway in a burst of boyish enthusiasm.

"It was the 4th of July," stated Wayne Hale, shuttle program manager. "We were getting a little loose, feeling a little crazy, and well, *you* know. We just had to light that rocket."

Shuttle managers stated that visual images showing small pieces of foam breaking away and striking the spacecraft were not troubling them at all, especially not after barbecued cheeseburgers and a couple of sixpacks.

"We are really cruising," stated one Mission Control technician. "I believe I speak for the whole ground crew when I say that."

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Next issue, Eyebrow Tweezing with Celebrities

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



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best exemplified by...

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We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.

* Twelfth Night