

the
it is what
it is
issue...



Pepper Spray Times



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

"..Here is some gold for thee..."

Vol. XXI No. 9

Homeless Mother Runs for Seat on Santa Cruz City Council



SANTA CRUZ VOTERS FINALLY have a sensible alternative to their city's tradition of criminalizing poverty in the candidacy of Alicia Kuhl, shown here with her family.

By Armand A. Leg

Even critics who object to homeless mother Alicia Kuhl's lack of electoral experience admit she has proven more resourceful than most of the Santa Cruz City Council as President of the Santa Cruz Homeless Union and by keeping herself and her family healthy on the streets of Santa Cruz during months of a global pandemic.



IT'S JUST SO HARD for rich people to bear having to see poor people on the beach when they're trying to have a good time.

"She led the formation of the Ross Camp Council," observed one downtown Santa Cruz resident in admiration. "She initiated the Covid-19 Relief Center back in March and has provided thousands of pounds of survival gear including sleeping bags, tents, blankets, tarps, clothing, and always has a kind word for everyone."

"It's kind of a miracle," marveled one Santa Cruz resident familiar with Santa Cruz's extraordinarily creative war on the poor. "She hasn't just kept her family healthy, she's one of the best at breaking down the nonsensical map the city has of what you can legally do where at what time, which would send most people over the edge and appears to only apply to a specific subset of people in town."



SANTA CRUZ POLICE AT \$70,000 A YEAR patrol Santa Cruz's homeless in front of a monument to "Veterans of All Wars" as part of the frontline of outreach to poor people, a sizeable ratio of whom are veterans, being forced to continuously move around or lose what little they have *but it's for their own good.*

Santa Cruz shares the despair found in cities all over California after the Supreme Court let stand a decision of the 9th Circuit that "homeless persons cannot be punished for sleeping outside on public property in the absence of adequate alternatives."

"Criminalizing poverty just seemed so right," commented one Berkeley City Council aide. "We know what Santa Cruz is going through."

While simple logic, not to mention elemental morality, might have informed Santa Cruz policy on poverty and income disparity years ago, influential city and business leaders chose instead to create a patchwork of discriminatory rules for the use of public space, restrictions on parking, beach curfews, criminalizing sleeping,

- continued fervently on page 2...



MOST PEOPLE APPRECIATE the fact that having even neat and tidy tents in the background of tourists' vacation pictures is not the party-town look your city wants to have.

White House Hosts Partisan Party



THE MASK-OPTIONAL SHINDIG on the White House lawn was just like the egg rolling at Easter with a bunch more religion.

By Hanson Deck

Republican National Committee spokespeople dismissed criticism of the use of the White House lawn for their electoral nominee's acceptance speech.

"Sure it's a prop," agreed one insider. "It's maybe the best prop in the whole world besides the flag. What are we, idiots?"

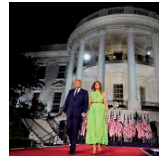
"The Democrats would do the same thing if they were in power," confided one Democratic National Committee (DNC) insider. "They would probably just be more cagey and cite the pandemic or something."

DNC spokespersons acknowledged they might use any similar advantage, but that the effect would probably not resemble a Hollywood Oscars ceremony quite so well given their lack of television talk-show-level experience.

Attendees were mostly excited to see the fireworks promised at the end of the show.

"I would get Covid-19 just to be here," stated one Trump enthusiast. "I've been shut up inside for too long."

* * * * *



RNC organizers, confronted with the criticism that the final night of their convention resembled a Hollywood Oscar night responded with an Elvis-like, "thank you very much."



ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, I thought the pandemic was medieval given the wealth of disinformation, magical thinking, cheap potions and homemade cures. But then I went to a bar. This pandemic has definitely gone punk. I haven't seen mosh pits like these since Mabuhay Gardens and the Temple. Is time still going forward? It is so hard to tell.

Dear reader, definitely forward. If Zoom is any indication, the musical sincerity soup is due for a refreshing international backlash. At the Pepper Spray Times newsroom we say bring on the punk. Let's go down with a bracing refresher of honesty.

Dear Lena, I'm starting to hate the word "disrupt" because of the way its being abused to excuse jumping scientific methodology. It's institutionalizing discourtesy, rationalizing impatience, and it was a perfectly good word.

Dear reader, we agree. We tend to infer what they usually really mean: corruption.

Dear Lena, are you satisfied with the way Berkeley is handling the pandemic?

Dear reader, we in the Pepper Spray Times newsroom confess that although we are not satisfied at all with the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't respect for medical best practices, we love watching the high-end diners pay \$60 a meal trying to eat and drink outdoors through their masks in front of the rest of us. That is rare entertainment for those of us who know how to cook.

Dear Lena, how much dried deer meat and toilet paper do I have to stock in a remote mountain cabin to get through these end times? And should I cancel my subscriptions? The government might track me through my subscription to Cook's.

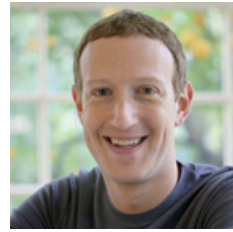
Dear reader, good news! The end times are going to last for years.

Ask Lena about running for mayor at cdenney@jgc.org.

Zuckerberg Tries, Fails to Pronounce "Kenosha"

By Tad Wobbly

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg chose not to apologize for Facebook's role in the "operational mistake" at a company-wide meeting after Facebook posts were implicated in a series of fatal shootings in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Portland, Oregon.



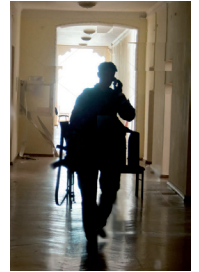
Facebook content moderators ignored warnings about Kenosha Guard's Facebook page, which used the page to organize an event that called for armed intervention in Kenosha on Tuesday, the night two people were killed at a protest.

"We can't apologize for legal reasons," explained Zuckerberg. "But we spent a lot of time discussing whether to call it an 'operational mistake' or an 'operational

failure,'" he said. "That was after rejecting 'operational malfunction,' 'operational ineptitude,' 'operational deficiency,' and top contender 'operational defect', which really has a nifty ring."

Zuckerberg admitted that the posts had violated Facebook's new rules dusted off last week labeling militia and QAnon conspiracy theory groups as "Dangerous Individuals and Organizations" but admitted that they left out armies and stuff.

Zuckerberg explained that certain content moderation contractors were not versed in "how certain militias" operate and is considering having its own militia so they can really get up to speed.



YOUR LOCAL MILITIA needs to have really good phone reception to get real-time updates on which people to shoot and favor camouflage phone cases.

"Cliffbottom" Upholds WV's Clifftop Tradition



"CLIFFBOTTOM" revelers sported masks while honoring local string band traditions.

By Horace Hairbow

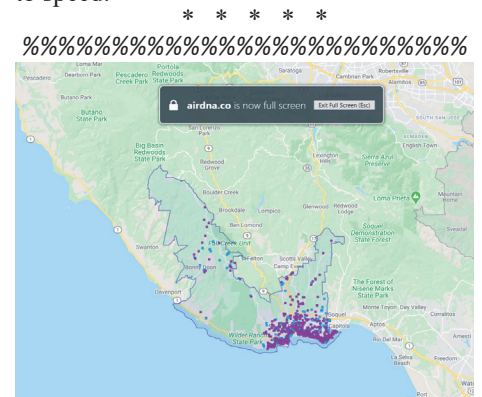
Attendees at "Cliffbottom", the alternative event saluting West Virginia's traditional Clifftop Appalachian String Band gathering, explained that theirs was a masked, distanced effort to observe pandemic restrictions but play some damned tunes.

"We're all in good shape afterward," reassured one Cliffbottom survivor. "And we respect the Zoom stuff. But the frogs and bugs need us as much as we need them."

The frogs affirmed the partnership. "There's something about banjo and fiddle," explained one frog. "All those rhythms intersecting."

"That's exactly it about the frogs and cicadas," responded one fiddler. "It's all those rhythms."

* * * * *



THE SHORT-TERM RENTALS in Santa Cruz, CA, explain a lot about how many people are spending their pandemic under bridges.

- continued stridently from page 1...

fencing off parks, and creative tinkering with its Beach Management Plan.

"The pandemic appears to have had no effect on their basic approach," stated one amazed Santa Cruz voter. "Deputy City Attorney Cassie Bronson is satisfied with making this checkerboard of increasingly nonsensical requirements so onerous that people just end up in jail."

Bronson seemed to affirm this estimation, stating brightly, "Martin vs. Boise has no requirement that the city actually affirmatively provide shelter for individuals. Instead, it's an issue of enforcement of municipal code sections that have to do with camping and sleeping."

"That means we can keep the short-term rental market intact," stated one relieved city hall insider. "We love that money, and those units would house every single homeless person we have. If homeless people could just monetize as well as short-term rentals do they'd have a totally warm welcome at city hall."

* * * * *

\$9.2 Million Cut to Berkeley Police Budget Threatens Cool Tank Parades

Wash and Folds at Risk Without Special Response Team



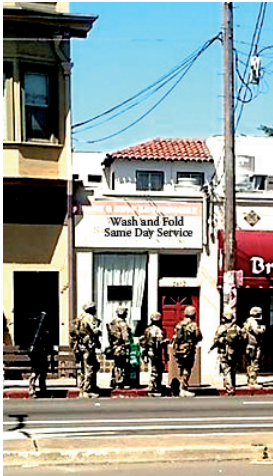
BERKELEY POLITICIANS KNOW that scenes like this get the occasional catchy headline but their real support is the law and order crowd.

By Holly Nass

Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin voted in favor of a small \$9.2 million dollar cut to the \$70 million dollar police budget in July describing it as a “down payment” on future cuts which confused everybody.

“How do you make a down payment on a budget cut?” wondered one city hall staff member tasked with crunching the actual budget numbers.

“We may need to reduce the Police Department by 30%— it may be 60%, it may be 70%,” he added, which confused everyone even more. “We don’t have that particular made-up number right



THE “WASH AND FOLD SAME DAY SERVICE” now includes pressing at gunpoint.

now.” Insiders assured the public concerned about losing big tank parades that new numbers would be made up soon and that the move was just to ensure favorable headlines, but police leadership worried that essential programs would take a hit.

“What about our calendar project?” one officer fumed. “The buff among us were really looking forward to that.”

“We’re no longer sure we can keep our chemical weapons cache up-to-date,” worried another officer.

“This stuff goes stale pretty quickly and needs constant replacement. Imagine what would happen if protesters if we sprayed protesters - and they just kept chanting.”

Other officers shared that the real concern was the potential for reducing police overtime, which sends some officers’ salaries sailing past the \$300,000 range, a pay echelon which in 2016 included Capt. David Frankel (\$359,412), Sgt. Peter Hong (\$356,632), Lt. Kevin Reece (\$350,774), Officer Jeremy Lathrop (\$349,219), and Officer Lionell Dozier (\$348,642). Seventeen of the 20 highest paid city employees are police



TAKING YOUR ARMORED TANK TO THE LAUNDROMAT is much harder than you might think because there is no parking thanks to the damn book clubs.



IMAGINE THE BOOK CLUB trying to figure out when to serve the fondant with a big armored tank out front.



IF YOU DON’T HAVE TANKS AND “SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAMS” AND CS GAS AND PEPPER SPRAY AND SPIT HOODS AND STUFF scruffy people like these start planting gardens and playing the autoharp and we all know you can’t expect the police to behave responsibly after that.

officers who need the overtime to feel good about themselves.

Others disagreed, saying Berkeley voters were fine with the super-sized salaries but concerned about the use of military equipment and tactics such as calling the Special Response Team to the Wash and Fold laundromat after a robbery.

The police admitted they used an armored tank and a squad of camouflage-wearing officers with military weapons who had conveniently been training nearby in Richmond at the time of the robbery.

“It’s unsettling,” confessed one neighbor. “My book club was completely unnerved. We didn’t know when to serve the hand-sculpted fondant.”

Councilmember Cheryl Davila abstained on the 8-0 vote, noting that the cuts were not substantial enough to matter.

“That’s the whole idea,” whispered one city hall insider. “This town parades around as lefties, but they want law and order for breakfast, lunch, and dinner around here.”

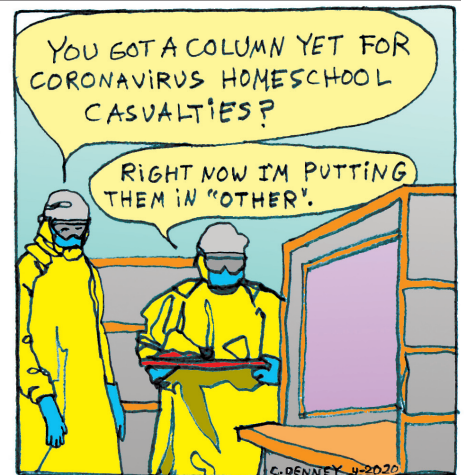
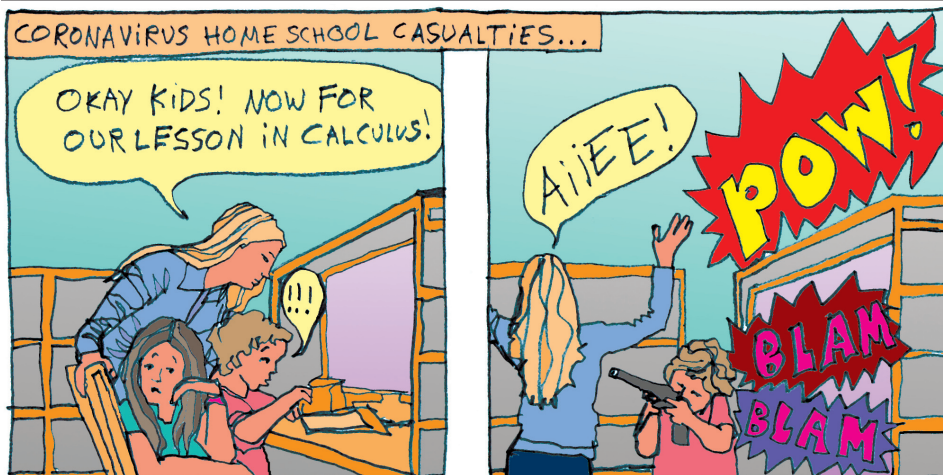
Experts agreed. “All it takes to turn a liberal into a fascist in this town is a tent. Even an empty tent.”

City hall insiders concurred. “One tent is a worried call to the City Manager. Two tents can lose an election.”

* * * * *

We Can’t Draw Comics

by Franz Toast



Baffling New Pandemic Restrictions Unveiled



WE'RE TRYING TO KEEP TRACK of what you can and can't do anymore and we think you can get a haircut if you're in a pool and also getting a manicure and tasting wine.

By Don B. Scared

Officials' announcement that people can finally get their hair cut as long as they are partially underwater and drinking wine was met with puzzled relief from the public.

"I look like a wrinkled version of all the guys in my high school yearbook," commented one fellow reading through the additional restrictions guiding the public health decision. "Now I just need to figure out how to drink wine underwater."

"I don't like wine, myself," observed a shopper waiting in line for a chance to pick up supplies at a hardware store, "but I'd toss some back to stop looking like Russell Brand on a bad day."

Federal, state, and local public health officials admitted they drew straws to figure out which tier of government would take the blame for this next round of baffling restrictive guidelines.

"We have no idea what we're doing," one official who wished to remain anonymous whispered. "The CDC just bailed and ev-

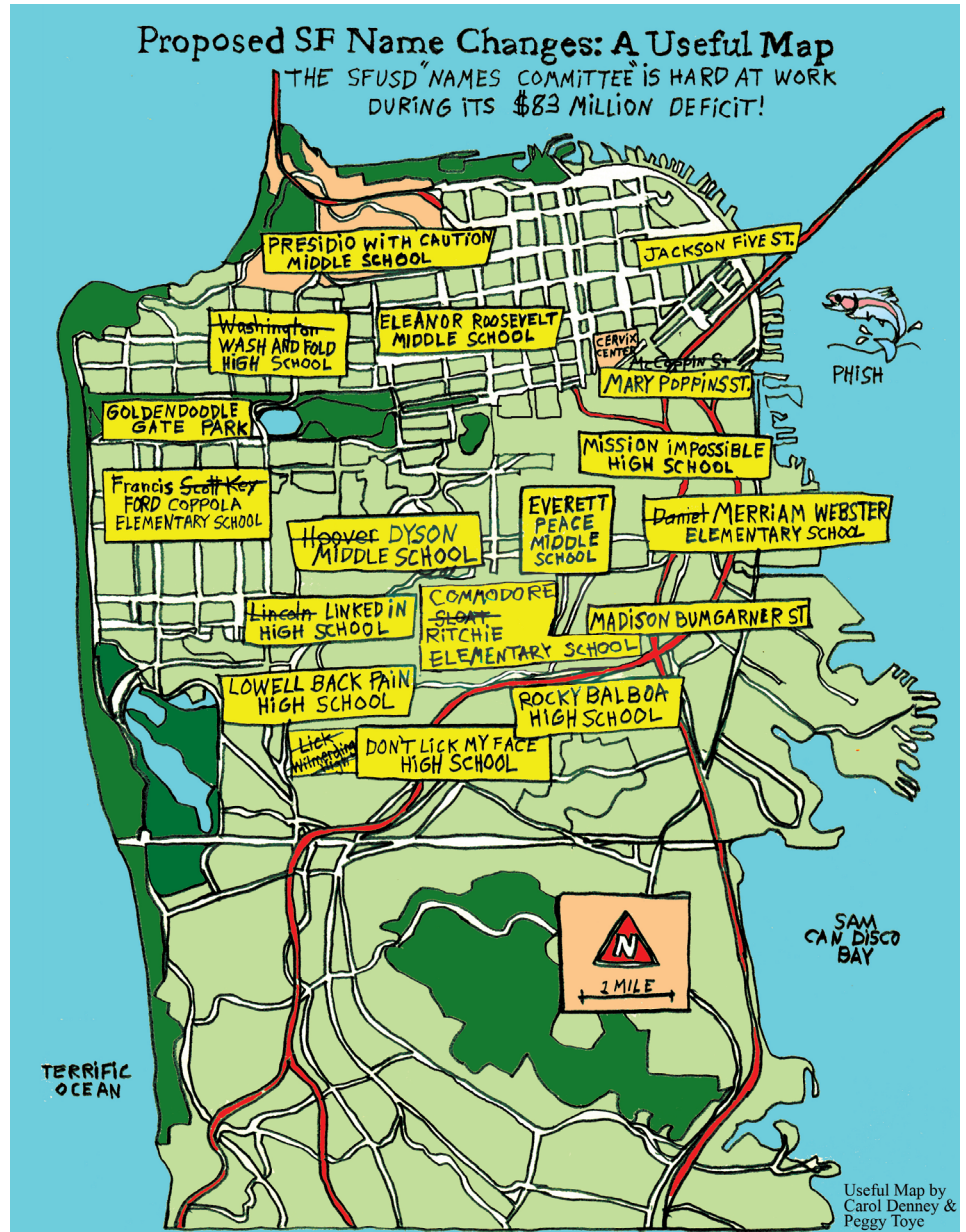
Next Issue: Muttering under your breath with celebrities!

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



Pepper Spray Times Staff

Editor.....Grace Underpressure
 Art Director.....Egon Schiele
 Comics.....Don D. Ferrara
 Distribution.....Rhoda Boat
 Staff.....Armand A Leg, Hanson Deck,
 Lena Deeter, Tad Wobbly, Horace Hairbox,
 Holly Nass, Franz Toast, Don B. Scared,
 Pauline, Marvin, and Peggy (Useful Map),
 and beleaguered Public Health Departments
 all over the world



WE'RE ALL IN FOR CHANGING NAMES OF SCHOOLS IN SAN FRANCISCO and glad to incorporate additional suggestions from inspired members of the public such as the above.

erybody else is off the rails." haircut, but we're not sure," stated one local barber. "We're ready for anything."

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

To:

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

We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.