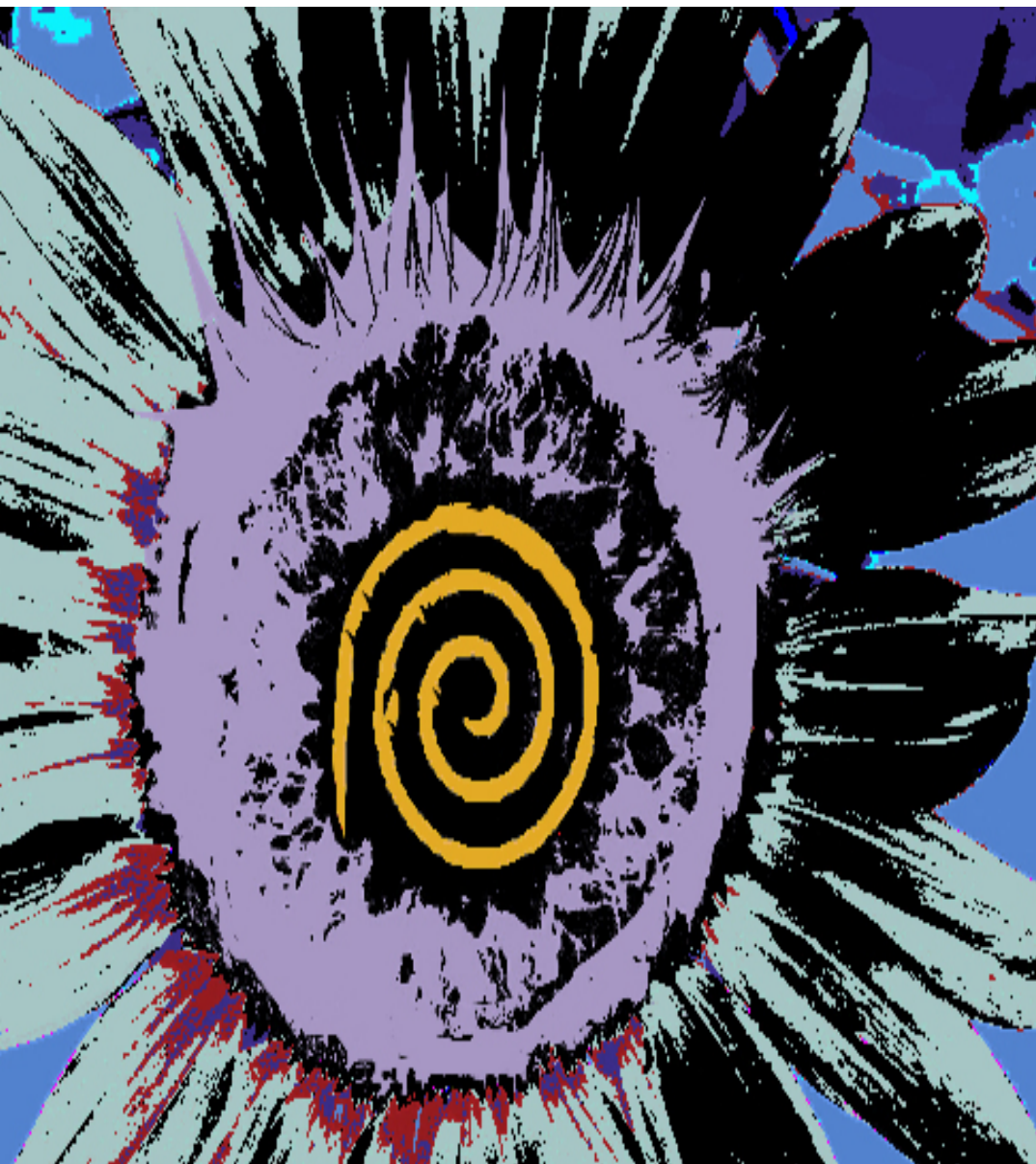


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To provide Ashland and the larger Southern Oregon and Northern California region with fearless reportage and critical analysis of local, national, and international issues. To give voice to topics of importance to people and groups that are screened out of media coverage. To serve as an example of how a small, independent publication can help a community recover its unique human and environmental identity. To reverse the trend toward homogenized media produced by information czars whose agendas are controlled by corporate and government apparatchiks.

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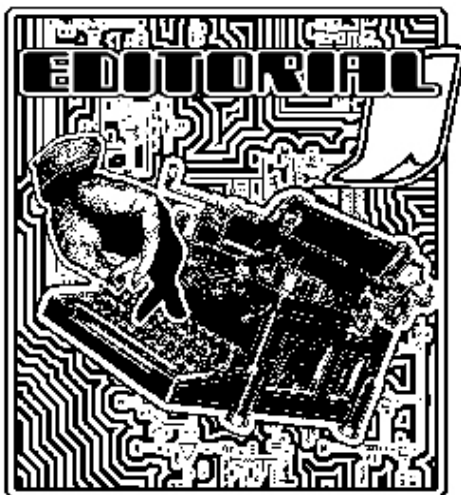
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Editorial: Will Write For Latte

CHARLES CARREON

It's not always possible to see where you're going until you get there. This has been especially true of the Ashland Free Press. When I started this adventure about sixteen months ago, I felt depressed about the state of the world, and powerless to change things. The Bush regime was triumphantly celebrating the success of its Big Lie. The Dean campaign proved that geeks have money but don't hit the streets. The Kerry campaign was a blatant co-option of liberal sentiment that drained the last of my enthusiasm for electoral politics. Local law enforcement were acting outrageously, arresting Wes Brain for shooting a video of a demonstration, and sparking a near-riot in Jacksonville when the President came to visit the old county seat. There was a lot of head-shaking, and people talking about leaving the country. I went to Europe, and discovered people don't hate us, they just want us to stop starting wars.

I returned to Ashland realizing I could do one of two things -- go on as if nothing had changed, when obviously everything had, or do something utterly outlandish that would satisfy my soul. I checked my bank account and saw that I was not yet destitute. I checked my age, and concluded that by reaching the age of 49, I'd done better than most human beings since history began. I checked the time

left on the planetary habitability meter, and decided that there was no time to waste. I'd better do the outlandish thing right away, or I would have no one to blame if: (a) I never got around to it, (b) the world went down the tubes while I was waiting, or (c) I got carted off to re-education camp for having a bad attitude about the Chief.

So I began this adventure -- playing the game of journalist, using the mainstream media as my guide -- if they did it, I wouldn't. Looking for topics that mainstream media doesn't cover, won't cover. And most of all, just lending my brain and analytical skills to my fellow-Ashlanders so they could take a look at the same stuff I was examining. Guess what? You liked it. You commented. You called me up, and buttonholed me in the street. You asked when the next issue would be out. You gave me ideas for other articles, asked my opinion about current issues, and often enough, gave me a big thank you. So to every one of you -- thank you right back!

Nowadays it seems as if the fog of blind belief is thinning out, and people are less afraid to speak out against the authoritarian mystique that held sway over the nation for about five years. We've got a crop of new politicians coming up. Carol Voisin is taking on Greg Walden. Randy Dolinger is seeking election to replace appointed councilman Dave Chapman. Eric Navickas and Nick Frost are seeking council seats. Alice Hardesty's taking over Jack's seat on the council. The real estate boom is sputtering, so there

“ I checked the time left on the planetary habitability meter, and decided that there was no time to waste. I'd better do the outlandish thing right away...”

is a possibility that the City of Ashland won't disappear under a wave of million dollar homes. The 9/11 Truth Movement is picking up momentum, primarily because people are starting to trust their own eyes, and opting to consider terrible truths rather than embracing ignorance.

But one thing has not gotten better, not at all. We still are almost entirely without an independent press on the newsstands. I can tell you why, too. Paper and ink are expensive. Distribution is hard work. Advertisers in a small town are hard to get, and your best friends, people who think your paper is just the very thing

our town needs, are still afraid to back an outspoken paper that attacks hypocrisy under whatever banner it masquerades. This is not a complaint -- it's realism. For merchants, it is intimidating to court the disapproval of the City Council, the Police Department, the Chamber of Commerce, the real-estate agents and landlords. For hippies, liberals, progressives, or whatever you want to call us, the disapproval of Peace House, the local New Agers, or the Green Party insiders, can seem like a life-or-death issue. Nationally, the stakes are even higher.

As a result, our nation simply lacks an independent press. Almost as much as a lack of literacy, the lack of an independent press is a huge hurdle to honest government. Locally, countwide, statewide, and nationally, people read what is cooked up daily in newsrooms that are powered by sound-bites, manipulated by publicists and spinmeisters, and operated by the same companies that own the TV, the cable, the satellite, and the big Internet portals. The technique for keeping the readership enthralled is simply overkill. Each day dawns, and the anchorwoman launches into a litany of concerns, telegraphing her earnestness, her respect for the government, her love of our soldiers, her deference to the rule of law, her willingness to gild with her belief anything that appears on the Teleprompter. New news is superceded by newer news, and the President's "approval rating" is monitored like a heart patient's blood pressure. When it seems he might flatline, they find Jean-Benet's Killer. Not. The Vice President harbors perjurers, shoots a man in the face, and menaces all opponents. A conservative dirtbag molests pages! The media yawns, and the FBI, on the alert for terrorists,

can't find one Congressional pedophile.

Is it any wonder that Americans have lost control of their ship of state? Any wonder that the nation spends on weapons as if there were a war in our streets, and spends on schools as if education were a luxury?

So we're putting the idea to the test. For the price of a latte, you can fund a local, independent press, and the AFP will keep delivering the truth to a community that isn't afraid to hear it. Because truth, my friends, is priceless. **AFP**

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The Last Empire: America's Nostalgia For Armageddon

BY LO-FI NIKITA

"We will build our defenses beyond challenge, lest weakness invite challenge. We will confront weapons of mass destruction, so that a new century is spared new horrors ... This story goes on, and an Angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm."

President George W. Bush, 2001 Inauguration Speech

Let us take stock. Our country is "the land of the free and the home of the brave." Our President is "the leader of the free world." Our Congress worships "the rule of law," and our Courts dispense "equal justice." Our military is "second to none." Our enemies are "terrorists." Our economy is "the envy of the world," and the dollar is "the world's reserve currency." We produce a new millionaire every few minutes, and the minimum wage is so generous that it hasn't been raised in nine years. Truly we are "the luckiest people in the world."

Why is it, then, that we don't feel so lucky? Why do we feel bound to our fates like serfs, serving corporate masters? Why does the economic good news ring so loudly at the top of the pyramid, and decay to an inaudible grumble by the time it reaches the bottom? Why does the pride of our cocky leader not fill us with confidence? Why do the cries of innocent people, cursing the name of America as they die, reach our ears above the roar of American Idol? Why does the word "Armageddon" have such a ring to it?

"I Am Become Death"

Let us turn for answers to the genesis of our present world. Most historians would pinpoint that date as the detonation of the atomic bomb on July 16, 1945, at White Sands, New Mexico, an event that prompted J. Robert Oppenheimer to say:

We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty, and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, "Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."

When the U.S. military detonated the atomic bomb by driving a bolus of radioactive uranium in upon itself with a spherical charge of conventional dynamite, even the physicists who created the bomb could not foresee the limits of its destructive capacity. Some thought the entire atmosphere would ignite and consume

the world in an all-engulfing holocaust. Nor was it necessary to incinerate vast numbers of humans to show that the bomb had destructive power not only previously unimagined, but unimaginable. As military historian Louis Morton wrote in "The Decision to Use The Atomic Bomb":

The military situation on 1 June 1945, when the Interim Committee submitted its recommendations on the use of the atomic bomb, was distinctly favorable to the Allied cause. Germany had surrendered in May and troops from Europe would soon be available for redeployment in the Pacific. Manila had fallen in February; Iwo Jima was in American hands; and the success of the Okinawa invasion was assured. Air and submarine attacks had all but cut off Japan from the resources of the Indies, and B-29's from the Marianas were pulverizing Japan's cities and factories. The Pacific Fleet had virtually driven the Imperial Navy from the ocean, and planes of the fast carrier forces were striking Japanese naval bases in the Inland Sea. Clearly, Japan was a defeated nation.

The decision to drop the new weapon on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 was made by the secret Interim Committee, led by Secretary of State Henry Stimson, who wrote of the decision: "I felt that to extract a genuine surrender from the Emperor and his military advisers, they must be administered a tremendous shock which would carry convincing proof of our power to destroy the empire." In other words, by demonizing the Japanese as an irrational warrior tribe that could be disciplined only with a surprise attack sure to kill hundreds of thousands of civilians, the United States justified its use of nuclear weapons, leaving the rest of the world in doubt and uncertainty about when we would do it again. As a result, the world has spent the last sixty years under the looming shadow of the mushroom cloud.

Don't Worry – We'll Build Enough Nukes To Kill Everybody!

“With the world's safety thus assured, the USSR and the US embarked on a bomb-building binge that continued for forty years...”

By 1968, four countries besides the US had acquired the bomb – England, France, China and the USSR. These heavyweights then came up with something called the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ("NPT"), that separates the world into "nuclear nations" and "non-nuclear nations." The nuclear nations promised not

to export nuclear weapons technology, and the non-nuclear nations promised not to ever try and get nuclear weapons. With the world's safety thus assured, the USSR and the US embarked on a bomb-building binge that continued for forty years, until



This was not, of course, a huge government boondoggle.

the USSR collapsed in 1989. The rationale for building huge, computer-guided rockets, topping each one with a nuclear cherry, and burying them in holes in the ground, was called “mutually assured destruction,” as comforting a phrase as has ever been spoken by a munitions manufacturer. As a practical matter, these so-called Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles were of unknown accuracy, and if launched, might well have exploded everywhere but their intended target locations. This was not, of course, a huge government boondoggle. It was a sane, well-thought-out policy developed by the compassionate, budget-conscious people at the State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA, with loads of help from Martin-Marietta, Lockheed, Honeywell, and General Electric.

Pakistan – One Hell of An Ally

Although 185 non-nuclear nations have signed the NPT, including Iran and Iraq, three of our country’s staunchest “allies in the war on terror” never did – Israel, Pakistan, and India. Pakistan and India both have nuclear weapons, and regularly threaten to nuke each other back to the stone age. Pakistan has exported nuclear technology as energetically as it distributes heroin, and Dr. A.Q. Khan, the man responsible for selling nuclear secrets to Libya, North Korea, and Iran, is a national hero. Our alliance with Pakistan in the war on terror is really important though, so President Bush never mentioned to his good friend President-for-life Pervez Musharaff that pardoning Dr. Khan and shielding him from questioning by international arms inspectors, might send the wrong message to someone

like, say -- Kim Jong Il? But that just shows how much you know about diplomacy. You would probably expect U.S. security officials to ask the Saudis to help catch the people who backed the 911 hijackers, not realizing how Arabs feel about that kind of talk, and then we’ll be talkin’ high gas prices! No, the world’s a complex place, and besides which, U.S. intelligence officers and agents of the International Atomic Energy Agency (“IAEA”) knew the nuclear horse was escaping from the Pakistani barn long before 2003, when Iraq confessed that it had been buying nuclear technology from Pakistan for fifteen years. What would be the point of shutting the door now?

“The Samson Option”

Israel is another story altogether. Officially, this newest of nations has announced that it will “not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the region.” Domestically, however, the pluses and minuses of having nukes have been debated widely, and most Israelis are said to favor having them. Internationally, the CIA and the Pentagon have repeatedly identified Israel, along with India and Pakistan, as “de facto” nuclear states. As Avner Cohen wrote in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists:

Israel’s nuclear project was ... a sacred matter of national survival, the only way to grant Israel the deterrence it needed -- Israel must be in a position to inflict a holocaust to prevent another holocaust.

According to Cohen, the “holocaust trauma” suffered by Eastern European Jews in prison camps run by Germans, Poles, Czechs, Rumanians, Bulgarians, and Yugoslavians, provides

a “moral justification” for the current government of Israel to maintain a secret nuclear arsenal. Since Israel’s nukes aren’t trained on Germany or Eastern Europe, but rather on Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon, the “moral justification” may be somewhat strained, but let’s not quibble about whether one mass murder deserves another. There can be little doubt that hyper-motivated holocaust refugees developed the mechanisms that leveled Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Albert Einstein was a German Jew who fled to the United States during the war, visited Israel freely thereafter, and declined an offer to become President of Israel in 1952. Enrico Fermi and his Jewish wife Laura fled from Mussolini’s Italy to the warm arms of the Manhattan Project. J. Robert Oppenheimer was an American Jew, as was Edward Teller, the “father of the H-bomb.” Author Seymour Hersch titled his book on Israel’s nuclear strategy, “The Samson Option,” alluding to how the biblical hero destroyed many of the enemies of Judah, and himself, in a single act of sectarian vengeance. The doctrine of mutually assured destruction can be colored with heroic highlights, but it remains a suicidal gambit.

Where’s Dimona?

The U.S. and other NPT signatory nations made no effort to prevent the transfer of nuclear technology to Israel, and indeed, Israel’s steady progress toward developing nuclear weapons was studiously ignored by the United States. After sourcing extractable uranium in the phosphorus deposits of the Negev desert, France violated the NPT by building a 24 Megawatt reactor for Israel at Dimona, near the uranium deposits. The U.S. spy apparatus knew Israel was making a beeline toward its nuclear goal, but according to the Federation of American Scientists:

Although the United States government did not encourage or approve of the Israeli nuclear program, it also did nothing to stop it. Walworth Barbour, US ambassador to Israel from 1961-73, the bomb program’s crucial years, primarily saw his job as being to insulate the President from facts which might compel him to act on the nuclear issue, allegedly saying at one point that “The President did not send me there to give him problems. He does not want to be told any bad news.”

Mordechai Vanunu -- Israel’s Prisoner of Conscience

The reactor at Dimona, and the weapons manufacturing conducted there, was made public when Mordechai Vanunu, who worked there for years, turned whistleblower in 1986 and provided the London Sunday Times with photographs and extensive descriptions of the reactor and the nine buildings where nuclear weapons are created for deployment via bombers, missiles, artillery shells, and from submarines. Shortly before the article was to run, Vanunu was lured to Rome and kidnapped by the Israeli Mossad (secret police), charged with “treason,” for speaking the truth, and imprisoned for seventeen years. Released from prison in April 2004, Vanunu refused to keep silence, and in March 2005, he said through a representative: “I want to work for world peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons. I want the human race to survive.” Vanunu is still restricted from speaking to the foreign press, has no passport, and is forbidden even attempting to leave Israel. He lives in East Jerusalem among Palestinians, hoping for an end to his ordeal, but unwilling to

compromise with Israel’s nuclear cabal.

State Secrets, Private Suffering

The most zealous opponent of Vanunu’s freedom is Yehiyel Horev, identified by the British press as “the head of Israel’s most powerful intelligence service, dealing with nuclear and military secrets.” Horev “operates with no law, no real scrutiny and no monitoring by the Israeli parliament,” according to Yediot Ahronoth, a security correspondent for one of Israel’s leading newspapers. It is easy to see why. Like the CIA’s secret prisons were until very recently, Israel’s nuclear weapons program isn’t officially acknowledged to exist, and therefore can be managed without any oversight. Nonexistent though it may be, Dimona was the subject of an Israeli documentary in 2002. The old reactor has been online for forty years, and workers interviewed for the film said explosions, fires and toxic leaks were routine, and had to be cleaned up without protection, because their bosses denied they were working with radioactive materials. Since then, many have fallen ill with cancer and other diseases, but the government of Israel refuses to acknowledge their claims, and has blocked legal efforts to obtain compensation in the name of secrecy. One of the workers, filmed without his knowledge, apologized that he could not speak freely: “I wanted to talk to you but I have been silenced. They came from intelligence and told me not to talk. They said I would be like Vanunu.”

Never Again, or Forever War ?

Perhaps it is not so difficult to understand why Israel has adopted this terribly clever posture with respect to its nuclear arsenal. This tiny nation, born in travail, founded by the survivors of centuries of persecution, was threatened with extinction from its earliest days. The slogan of its founders, scorched by the heat of the death camp ovens, was “Never Again!” These sentiments need no explanation, and with all the moral justification they will ever need for the next millennium, the Israeli Defense Forces (“IDF”) have become the most fearsome fighting force in the world, utilizing the absolute cutting edge of modern weaponry against some of the worst-trained, under-weaponed adversaries to be found anywhere on the planet. At present, the IDF has unleashed weapons designed by genius-level intelligences against the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, the most densely populated area on the planet, and a place where over ninety percent of the children have been traumatized by observing the death or dismemberment of other human beings.

The IDF’s favorite tactic, honed to perfection over the last fifty years, is the blitzkrieg, German for “lightning war,” used by Nazi forces to overwhelm Poland, France, and other European nations in the opening months of World War II. In a blitzkrieg, tanks, mechanized infantry, and close air support overrun the enemy’s forward positions, knock out power and transportation facilities, and occupy the seats of civil authority, striking terror into the civilian populations, who flood the roads in an effort to flee the attack, thus immobilizing the defenders, who find themselves gridlocked in a sea of terrified citizens. Precisely those tactics are on display now in Lebanon – perhaps the most violent manhunt ever staged in the effort to recover a kidnap victim since the Greeks set sail for Troy.


In fact, Israel’s military leaders are about the same business as the Greeks, who used the abduction of Helen as a pretext for all-

out war against the Trojans. The Lebanese people didn't kidnap anyone, and do not deserve to be run from their homes, least of all by a hail of rockets and artillery. The presence of Hezbollah weapons emplacements in Lebanon is a problem, and if Iranian rockets are indeed killing people in Israel, the international community should apply diplomatic pressure to bring a halt to those attacks. If necessary, the UN should deploy a peacekeeping force to disarm them, and thus assure Israel of safety within its borders. But the wholesale pillaging of Lebanon, treating it like a free-fire zone where its citizens may live or die as their fate befalls them, is barbaric, animalistic, and cannot be justified by raising the spectre of holocausts past. This is holocaust now, and empowering the victims of the European holocaust to run the world's most sophisticated murder machine is not justice, but a horrific exploitation of their ongoing agony.

The Last Generation?

The United States' Janus-faced policy toward nuclear proliferation has armed Israel with nuclear weapons sufficient to start, if not to finish, a worldwide nuclear war. Not only that, the stated policy of Israel, through the mouths of its apologists, is to hold the entire world in thrall to that threat of annihilation, if necessary, to protect its nationals from injury. The invasion of Lebanon, that killed nearly a thousand Lebanese civilians, injured unnumbered others, and destroyed the civil infrastructure of recently-reconstructed cities and villages, was prompted by the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. Calling this a "disproportionate response," as most national governments around the world did, is a gross understatement. Calling it an expression of "Israel's right to defend itself," as Bush did, is merely cloaking brutality with the language of national security, and I'm sure his "base" of evangelical Armageddon freaks are thrilled by the certainty that they are "the last generation." Nor is their enthusiastic celebration of the impending "endtime" unjustified. For there is no doubt that, regardless of their overt political affiliation, Israel's leadership would rather see a world without humans than a world without a Jewish state. Because of their preposterous religious beliefs, many evangelicals will candidly admit that such an "end of history" would suit them to perfection. Whether the citizens of the United States, including the evangelical planetary death-cultists, are well served by having a President in office who shares such deranged beliefs in another question. **AFP**

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A Legend In His Own Mind

Michael Ruppert Soldiers On

BY CHARLES CARREON

Met At The Goose

I first met Michael Ruppert on a karaoke night in the smoky Wild Goose bar, where he was sitting with some friends of mine. I'd watched one of his DVDs, a recording of a talk he gave explaining his status as a former LA cop who got bounced out of the corps after a run-in with CIA drug-runners. He was explaining why no planes were shot down on September 11, 2001, despite the proximity of many airbases staffed with throttle jocks ready to mount their aerial steeds and blow airliners out of the sky. He had then explained that America's military might had been deliberately tied up in knots by a spate of overlapping training exercises with names like "Vigilant Guardian" and "Vigilant Warrior." So I figured I should interview him and we would discuss 911. He gave me his email address, and told me to send him an email, but to write "met at the Wild Goose" in the subject line, so he would know to give it the attention it deserved. I made a note to do that.

What Columbo Would Ask

I have had a lot of questions about 911 for five years now. It looked so much like a controlled demolition, which I remember being an absolute marvel of engineering – far more impressive really than a moon walk. I mean, tearing a skyscraper down when I was a kid was a big deal. They had these things called wrecking balls that were a blast to watch, smacking away at a wall all day long to bring it down. It could take months to take down a big building, and now thanks to dynamite and human ingenuity, they could do it all in just a few seconds, whammo. So I didn't figure if the WTC towers burned down that they would do it neatly. I also knew that during the grisly firebombings of Tokyo, Hamburg, and other "Axis" civilian populations, huge firestorms with heats above two-thousand degrees had not melted the steel-frame skyscrapers, but merely turned them into enormous ovens in which their occupants were baked. Skyscrapers have flammable contents, so they can have nasty fires, but they don't catch on fire, which was always considered one of the advantages of steel and concrete construction. So from an engineering standpoint I had a problem with the whole scenario of Buildings One and Two being brought down by misdirected airliners, whether being flown by remote control or otherwise.

Fortunately my puzzlement about why Buildings One and Two came down was resolved when I saw Building Seven suddenly collapsing just like Buildings One and Two, without having been hit by anything, but rather upon the command of several bigwigs who agreed that it was time to "pull it," as Larry Silverstein, the building's owner said on national TV. The meaning of "pulling it" has not been explored to my satisfaction, but seems obvious – the building was full of explosives, and had to come down. Presumably it did have to come down, and Silverstein's weird

excuse that Seven was pulled to prevent further loss of life flew in the face of reason. The collapse of Buildings One and Two didn't save any lives, so why would the collapse of Building Seven? Could it perhaps be significant that the New York City Emergency Command Center, the State Department, the CIA and the FBI were located in Building Seven? Assuming, for argument's sake, that the same people used the same methods to destroy all three buildings, and staged it from a base inside Building Seven, then it would be logical to destroy all the evidence in the command post – evidence that would simply be too explosive, given the "loss of life," i.e., the number of murder charges that would be leveled against whoever pulled it off. If I were Columbo, I would want to talk to Larry Silverstein. Talk about somebody at ground zero. I would have to ask him, why did Building Seven have bombs in it? Do you tell your tenants you can blow them up? Is it the ultimate eviction threat? Why were all those bombs in Building Seven? Did he plant similar bombs in Buildings One and Two, that he also owned? These are my big 911 questions, and I was looking forward to getting Mike Ruppert's take on them.

When Ruppert and I met again, it was at the Wild Goose, this time for lunch and the official AFP interview. Not yet having read Mike's book, and therefore not realizing that he was pursuing a particular tack on the issue of 911, I sat down thinking we would have a rollicking discussion about the basic non-credibility of the government's position and the likely reasons why Bush, Cheney, Ashcroft, Gonzales, Condi, Rumsfeld and their pet Congress worked so hard to block a real investigation. But politeness takes first position, so I started by exploring Ruppert's background.

Born Cop

Ruppert was born and raised in a family steeped in police tradition. His father was a defense insider at Martin-Marietta, and his mother was an NSA cryptographer and a secretary to Cordell Hull. Ruppert placed meaningful emphasis on this connection – Hull was a man of immense power and influence, who raised himself from barefoot Kentucky beginnings by becoming a lawyer, a judge, a Congressman, and ultimately, FDR's Secretary of State for nearly twelve years. Ruppert's love of authority runs deep. He had so many other relatives in the CIA and OSS, the CIA's predecessor-agency, that "everybody had clearances." He cultivates the mystique of having government contacts in his blood, and name-drops compulsively. As a UCLA undergrad, Ruppert interned as a police-student worker under Chief Ed Davis, which I could see putting him in charge of donuts and briefcases. To hear Ruppert tell it, he had all the marks of a fast track career officer. When he graduated from UCLA in 1973, he had a single-minded career goal – to be an LAPD detective.

Narcs Don't Cry

He started in patrol and was on loan to the Wilshire Division undercover narcotics unit when a woman he calls "Teddy"

ravaged him body and soul in an effort to get him to join the CIA. As Ruppert explained to me, before narcotics cops request a warrant to search a drug-dealing location, or to arrest a known drug dealer, they have to put their request into a national database. This request lets all the other narcs know if one of their informants is about to get busted. In principle, this means that the Ashland Police Department won't execute a warrant on a known coke dealer if the DEA is using the coke dealer as one of their informants. In practice, it means that the CIA takes the heat off their people by claiming that they are working as informants. Additionally, it means that the CIA can finger people who are troublesome drug dealers, thus eliminating competition, maintaining high drug prices, and keeping everyone on a string. Teddy said it was a sweet deal, and lots of other cops were working for "The Company" holding down jobs at police agencies all over the country, keeping the Company's government-sheltered narcotics network running smoothly by keeping the heat off their pet dealers and putting the competition in jail.

In short, Ruppert had fallen for the wiles of a femme fatale working for the "Dark Alliance," as Gary Webb, the San Jose Mercury reporter whose career was ended by two bullets in his head, called the international web of drug dealers and intelligence agents. Webb proved that in order to buy weapons to wage a war of attrition against the Sandinistas, the Nicaraguan contras, remnants of the fascist Somoza regime, had shipped hundreds of tons of cocaine in US government aircraft for sale in American cities as crack cocaine – a drug literally engineered for its addictive power. Webb's accusations also gain support from the book by former Defense Intelligence Agency operative Lester Coleman, "On The Trail of the Octopus – From Beirut to Lockerbie," that explains how a group of rogue CIA drug smugglers blew up PanAm flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland by planting the bomb in a special suitcase that was normally used by the DEA for the monthly "controlled delivery" of 40 pounds of heroin to Chicago. Since PanAm and the German airport authorities were in on this arrangement, the bomb was thought to be the usual dope shipment, wasn't inspected, and killed everyone on board. PanAm was sued by the families of dead passengers for negligently allowing a bomb on board, and responded by issuing subpoenas to the CIA, that refused to produce any information, successfully invoking the "state secrets privilege" that the Bush administration is now trying to use to block lawsuits over NSA domestic spying. As a result PanAm, the world's largest airline, so big that its logo appears on a building in Ridley Scott's futuristic movie "Blade Runner," no longer exists. That's what can happen to the largest company if it runs afoul of "national security."

Ruppert eventually got permission from his boss in Wilshire Division to go to New Orleans to find Teddy, who had disappeared from LA, and investigate her activities. He says that what he found in New Orleans was outrageous – the CIA and the Mafia were locked in an embrace so tight that it encompassed virtually all of the heroin trade, and Teddy was a major player, watching through binoculars from her apartment as drug-loaded boats

docked and unloaded, setting prices, calling in hits, and generally being a major drug kingpin. Not surprisingly, Ruppert's LAPD career came to a screaming halt when he reported what he'd learned. He went from being the Wilshire Division's fair-haired boy to being perceived as a mental case, and in an effort to abort a plan to ease him off the force for medical reasons, he checked himself into a private mental hospital and underwent a battery of psychological tests administered by a doctor who tested the mental health of the people who babysit the nation's ballistic missiles in their iron silos. Ruppert says he got a clean bill of health from the superdoctor, and slowed the speed of his descent from the upper reaches of cop hierarchy, finding a perch as an instructor at the Police Academy for awhile, but eventually leaving in the midst of a career that had stalled before it started.

Career Wreckage

I used to do a lot of "wrongful termination" cases in LA when I worked for Mazursky, Schwartz & Angelo, and had represented lots of people fired from managerial positions in the LA area. So I tend to evaluate someone like Mike Ruppert in that light: Had he been screwed? Was he a fruitcake? Should I take his case on?

If I'd still been sitting in my office at MS&A in Century City, the answers would have been yes, maybe, and no. My standard for determining whether someone had been screwed was not hard to meet. I'm sympathetic by nature, even toward people who are stupid enough to want to be LAPD detectives, then discover what a

bag of shit they've bought. Having subjected himself to the psychological testing routine, however, seemed suspicious, and would certainly cause a jury to wonder why he did it. I definitely wouldn't take the case, because downtown juries would probably not respond warmly to an LAPD cop complaining that he'd been treated shabbily. I would have been put off by Ruppert's tendency to shade over the fact that he'd never been promoted to detective, and would question his inclination to live in his cop role for the rest of his life in a state of arrested development. Of course, there would be no way to corroborate the Teddy story or the New Orleans adventure, because the LAPD would strenuously deny any knowledge, the CIA would invoke state secrets, and the entire adventure would be an unhappy and unprofitable one.

Mike Ruppert probably tried to sue the LAPD, and probably

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**“A woman he calls
“Teddy” ravaged him
body and soul in an
effort to get him to join
the CIA.”**



The AFP Interviews

3 Local Progressive Candidates

There is a mood of change circulating through the entire country, and we are feeling it here in Ashland. Many people believe it is high time that local government began taking note of the wishes of the people, and we have some candidates up for local election who expressed the intention to take that approach if elected to office. There is no doubt that we are looking at a substantial shakeup in local politics, and the Ashland Free Press takes seriously its responsibility to bring our progressive candidates the attention they deserve. While it has not been

possible to interview all of the candidates, we have interviewed two candidates for City Council, Eric Navickas and Randy Dolinger, and one of our candidates for the Municipal Judge position, Joe Charter. Each of these candidates appears to be poised to bring new ideas and perspectives to our community, and this article is their forum.

Randy Dolinger – A Different Type of Politician

AFP: Tell us about your background.

RD: I grew up in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Went to high school in Greensboro, North Carolina. Didn't run for student office. Graduated when 18 in 1972. Went to college at the University of North Carolina – I sort of assembled my own major that I would call humanistic studies – for three years from 1972 – 1975.

AFP: Where else have you lived?

RD: I traveled through forty-some American states, walking, backpacking, and hitchhiking on the back roads. Mostly, I walked. I was trying to see the places I was visiting, and get to know the people.

AFP: When and how did you arrive in Ashland?



“Very large amounts go to consultants. Everyone wants a piece of the pie, and Ashland has become the pie. There are too many middlemen taking our money.”

RD: In 1989, I was living on the East Coast, and I was looking for something small and more peaceful, and a friend suggested Ashland. I hitchhiked here with a guitar and \$300. I lost the three-hundred dollars while doing laundry his first night in town. It was almost a relief to start with nothing in a new town. It was almost a sense of freedom and power to start with nothing in a new town, knowing no one.

AFP: That was seventeen years ago. What have you done with the time?

RD: For the most part, I have always played chess for

a living, and painted houses when I needed to. I don't want to make it sound like I'm a house-painter, because I'm not.

AFP: I take it Ashland has been a congenial place to live.

RD: It's been great. I find that everything I need comes to me. I found people here easy to meet and talk to.

AFP: You've enjoyed a cordial relationship with many of the local politicians over the years, haven't you?

RD: With all types of citizens.

AFP: What events have inspired you to pursue your current career goal?

RD: I've learned to really care about this community. I appreciate the way it holds together, the way we all seem to accept one another as neighbors.

AFP: Why don't you just sit back and enjoy it? Did something move you to action?

RD: I feel that what makes this town so wonderful is unraveling. Schools are closing, the grounds are drying up, public transportation is falling apart, our public bathrooms in the park, our water fountains are broken, our benches disappear. The whole public infrastructure is being dismantled.

AFP: What is your purpose in running for office?

RD: I want to return Ashland to Ashlanders. The town has been hijacked by money managers. They are smart, good-looking people who have only managed to lose much of our money or spread it out among themselves.

AFP: What do you intend to accomplish in your first term in office?

RD: The first thing is to stop wasting all the taxpayers' money. The quarter-million to the Chamber of Commerce every year. A tremendous amount to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Façade Committee. Very large amounts go to consultants. Everyone wants a piece of the pie, and Ashland has become the pie. There are too many middlemen taking our money.

AFP: What is your vision for Ashland?

RD: We could spend that money fixing the schools, fixing the parks, fixing the bus system. We could spend money learning how to build a sustainable community that uses creativity to address and solve social problems. We could develop a true Community Policing model.

AFP: What would you say to those who question your ability to be a City Councilor?

RD: I feel that I know Ashland. I know its schoolteachers, its small business owners and stockbrokers, its church-people and health-care professionals, its musicians and artists, its writers and actors. I know its activists and police officers. I know its wealthy people, living above the boulevard, and I know the people who don't have a place to live. I can do the job because I care about the people who make up this community, and I will represent them honestly to the best of my ability.

AFP: What would you say to those who question your motives?

RD: There will always be those who are happy with the status quo, who imagine they are doing well. I will serve them with the same diligence as I serve all other Ashland citizens.

Eric Navickas – An Architect On A Mission

AFP: Tell us about your background.

EN: I was born in the Central Valley of California, moved to Michigan when I was three years old, then to Virginia, Georgia, New Orleans, and Washington DC.

AFP: When did you arrive in Ashland?

EN: In 1991.

AFP: What have you done with the time?

EN: Worked at Parson Pine Products about a year. Then worked with Lenny Friedman at Pyramid Juice. I graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture from U of O, a five-year degree, that I obtained in 1998. I had started studying at Savannah College of Art & Design for two years back in 1989 - 1990. I had always had intended to return to architecture. My studies focused on sustainable design and Urban Planning, and currently I do design work for various clients. My brother and I are partners in a farm in Prospect. We have 10 acres, 1 acre under cultivation in row crops, pringleberries and trees.

AFP: What events have inspired you to pursue your current goal of getting a seat on the City Council?

EN: I have been actively involved in City government in a variety of issues, the environment, conscious urban planning, and civil liberties. The council has been somewhat negligent in reaching to small green industry to bring living wage jobs to Ashland. I believe there's a lot we can do to provide inexpensive housing for working people in Ashland. My main issue is maintaining cultural and economic diversity in this community by providing housing and jobs in Ashland.

AFP: What do you intend to accomplish during your first term in office?

EN: Looking at ways to protect industrially zoned land for

small green industry. We are seeing a lot of pressure to move that into residential.

AFP: How do we provide incentive programs so this property isn't warehoused? What resources do we have that would attract small green industry?

EN: AFN gives us an opportunity to attract media companies that are high-bandwidth users. The I5 corridor connects us to the mainstream. We could use more business working more through the Internet to bring revenue to the area.

AFP: Do you have any examples of local green industry that should be encouraged?

EN: Sure. Caldera Brewery, the Drill Doctor, Maranatha Foods, United Bicycle Parts, the United Bicycle Institute, and many more companies

like them. We need to do outreach to these industries.

AFP: How do we pay for that? Should we redirect the money being paid to Shakespeare? It's close to a quarter-million dollars per year.

EN: We shouldn't take that off the table, because money is needed to move to a broader base than just tourism.

AFP: Currently do we have a person to market the town to green industry?

EN: No, but we have a tradition for that in Ashland. Back in the twenties, we sent a representative to NYC to bring business to Ashland. Jesse Winburn, a millionaire came to Ashland. He built the Community Center, and a women's hospital, and brought the first swans to Lithia Park. He tried to create a Lithia water bottling plant. We have a tradition of doing outreach to bring diverse industry to our community to provide jobs for our citizens. It appears that we have become really single-sighted in our vision for Ashland, seeing it only as a tourist and retirement community.

AFP: What's wrong with having a tourist and retirement community?

EN: The health of any community demands that we have a diverse economic and social citizenry. Otherwise we see phenomena like we have now – schools are closing, cops, schoolteachers, mailmen, even realtors can't live in town. We are losing the businesses that gave our community its character, like Harrison Auto Parts, Parson Pine Products, Pyramid Juice. We should replace the industry we are losing with small green industry, that includes high tech, media, high quality food products, specialty think tanks, education. We need to utilize the surplus of environmentally conscious, well-educated, socially-committed individuals in this City.

AFP: Would that be an appropriate use of the Meals Tax?

EN: It's probably spoken for because the sewage treatment plant is still putting out water into Bear Creek at too high a temperature. They need cooling towers. We need to respond to that immediately.

“It appears that we have become really single-sighted in our vision for Ashland, seeing it only as a tourist and retirement community.”



MOUNT ASHLAND INC.

BY JOSHUA CARREON

How We Got Here

Since 1929, when the City of Ashland and the US Forest Service entered into a cooperative agreement to conserve and protect the City's water supply, until October 2006, when the City revoked Mt. Ashland Association's right to negotiate directly with the Forest Service, the ski resort has been a bone of contention. Like the storms that scour Mt. Ashland's steep slopes, its history has been rough. Rescued from bankruptcy in 1991 by \$2 Million of State and private funding, the ski resort became the City's oddest asset. After all, why own a ski resort far from the City limits, that provides no direct benefit to most City residents, and stimulates only a small amount of winter visitor traffic?

Enter the perennial solution for odd assets that devolve to the City of Ashland for lack of private profitability -- Mt. Ashland Association -- a "nonprofit public benefit corporation" -- to operate the ski resort in the public interest. MAA has certainly managed to keep the ski resort open, and is eager to engage in an expansion that would double the size of the resort, at a whopping cost of \$17 Million. MAA works hand-in-ski-glove with the USFS, so much so that the Forest Service not only approved MAA's expansion -- it refused to consider the City's environmentally softer alternative plan.

Perceived by many in Ashland as secretive, MAA doesn't make it easy to get information about their financial plans, citing competitive risks and legal issues. Nevertheless, General

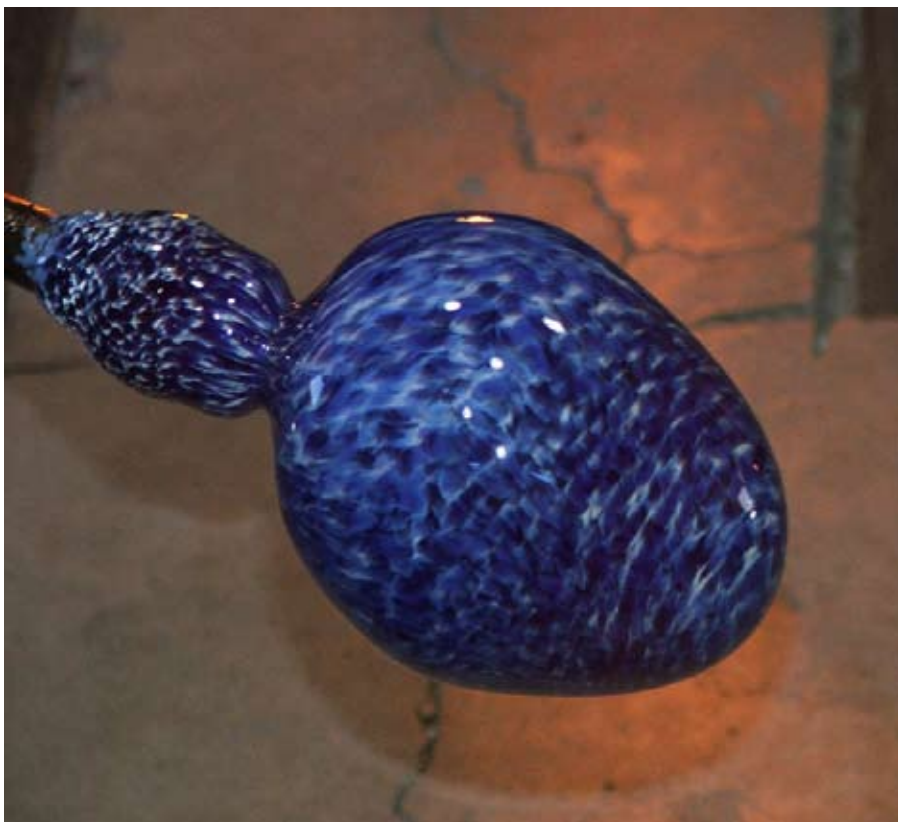
Manager Kim Clark was forthcoming when interviewed by the AFP. In order to put his responses in perspective, the AFP also interviewed Eric Navickas, an Ashland City Council candidate who supports City ownership of the ski resort, but opposes the current expansion so earnestly that he filed suit in an effort to block it.

Just before these interviews were conducted, MAA won a victory when Federal Judge Owen Panner swept aside objections by the Sierra Club and Navickas, ruling that MAA could proceed with the expansion. However, a few days later, MAA experienced a reversal of fortune that puts it at a crossroads. The City had long been restive about MAA's failure to respond adequately to its September 2005 request for a detailed business plan for the proposed expansion, and was not pleased when MAA finally submitted a bare two pages to explain its \$17 Million proposal. Since the City would likely suffer substantial financial losses if the expansion failed, and the City watershed might be damaged by an unwise expansion, the time was ripe for action. On October 3rd, the City Council revoked MAA's authority to deal directly with the Forest Service until it produces the long-promised business plan. Although the City has said the full plan will be disclosed only in an Executive Session of the City Council, it is not clear from a legal perspective why this should be so. The citizens have waited a long time to be heard on how the interests of skiing, the watershed, and the financial risks of the expansion should be balanced. With a new City Council waiting in the wings, and an interested electorate primed to be heard, attending City Council meetings could become the new Ashland winter sport.

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Art In The Hot Zone

On the corner of A Street and Pioneer, Gathering Glass Studios cooks creatively at 2300 degrees. GGS owners Keith Gabor and Scott Carlson are two brothers-in-law who jointly produce the products for the family business. Dipping long, hollow metal tubes into puddles of transparent, molten glass, they take turns as gaffer and assistant, breathing life into unique creations by manipulating the laws of nature cleverly during the brief moments while the glass transitions from a radiant blob to transparent solid. Keith and Scott describe their technique: "After agreeing upon a possible composition, the one who is gaffing gathers 2140 degree molten glass onto a stainless steel blowpipe ... and applies colors in the form of a solid glass bar for solid colors and/or crushed broken glass, called frit, for a mottled effect. Using steel tools, wet newspaper, wooden paddles, centrifugal force and gravity, the gaffer works the glass as the assistant fills the vessel with blown air. Throughout the process, the glass is kept at working temperature using a variety of torches and by reheating it in a 2300 degree gas and oxygen fired oven, called the glory hole." No need to try this at home -- Keith and Scott will let you watch for free. After you see what they can do, you'll have only one thing left to wonder -- why their prices are so low! Christmas is coming, and locally made glass is the ideal gift -- Gathering Glass packs and ships as professionally as they produce magnificent glass. **AFP**



To see more work by Keith and Scott, visit www.GatheringGlass.com, or call the Studio at 541-488-4738.

Joe Charter – A Judge With Experience and Community Commitment

AFP: Tell us about your background:

JC: I grew up in Michigan, went to U of Michigan, and got a degree in economics and general studies. I did an internship on the Hill (in Washington D.C.) in environmental study conference with a bipartisan membership organization that did research, presented fact papers to members on environmental issues. Carter was in office, and it was after the oil crisis. I got interested in energy, and I decided that I was a west coast person, so I decided to come out west. I worked for the San Francisco Bar Association lawyer referral service, operating an ad hoc caseworker for people looking for lawyers. They didn't always need lawyer, but I was able to refer people to the appropriate social agency so they could get the help they needed. I did that for a year, and lived on Nob Hill, so all I had to do to get to work was walk downhill to the Financial District, and take a cable car back home. The colorful character of San Francisco was delightful.

AFP: Where did you go to law school, and what did you study?

JC: I went to UC Berkeley, Boalt Hall, because they had environmental law journal, and that's the field I wanted to work in. My focus was on energy, as an aspect of environmental law. I became the Notes & Comments Editor for the Ecology Law Quarterly, and wrote a casenote on a nuisance remedy for obstruction of solar access, going back to the old English case law on easements for light and air. I enjoyed law school, and the Bay Area weather, but not the traffic.

AFP: When and how did you arrive in Ashland?

JC: I went to Juneau, Alaska, and did a summer clerkship there with a firm called Ely Guess & Rudd. I lived in an apartment upstairs from the office, so it was the shortest commute I ever had. I worked with an attorney who did some criminal

and general law, then clerked one year for a state court judge, Walter Carpeneti, who is now on the Alaska Supreme Court. It was the first indication that I'd like to have that job. He was a very ethical judge, and wrestled with his decisions. He taught me that you didn't just rule for the guy who wrote the best brief.

I wrote the decisions for Summary Judgment motions and Administrative Appeals, and got to wear the robe on uncontested divorces, restraining orders, name changes, and adoptions. The kind

“What I like about the job is the one-on-one contact with people trying to solve their problems, taking some time to walk through it and give people some options.”

of decisions where you had a list of things to establish, and the procedure was well-established.

AFP: What did you do after clerking for Judge Carpeneti?

JC: I took six months off, and traveled the South Pacific. I worked about a week in Auckland and a month in Melbourne. I went back to Alaska and worked for three or four years in a lawfirm where the main thing I did was work on the North Slope royalty litigation. Representing the State of Alaska, I took depositions of many oil companies to establish their transportation costs, which were all over the map, thus becoming the expert on the topic. Shortly after I left, the case settled. Then I returned to the Bay Area for awhile, but my wife at that time got a job with the DA in Yreka. I hung out my shingle there, and began my career as a small town sole practitioner. We came across the Siskiyou when my oldest daughter was a week old, and I took the Oregon bar. I started working with Lee Werdell doing employment cases, and some excessive force, police brutality and employment discrimination cases. The highlight for me was arguing some cases in front of the Oregon Supreme Court, and establishing some new rules on future wage loss.

AFP: Tell us about your judicial experience.

JC: I was elected County Justice of the Peace in 2004. Jackson County gave me an office in Central Point, and not much else. What I do there is traffic violations, minors in possession of alcohol, possession of under an ounce of marijuana, and a lot of other cases. I had to establish the court from scratch, set up the policies, procedures, forms and programs. We adjudicate about 1000 violations per month, and I now have two clerks. Each week I do around a dozen traffic trials and a hundred or more arraignments.

AFP: What events have inspired you to stand for election for the Ashland Municipal Judge position?

JC: I have reoriented my life towards Ashland, and while I am planning on keeping the Justice of the Peace position, the City would receive a

benefit because the County will pay my employment benefits, so the City would save money there.

AFP: Can you do both jobs?

JC: Central Point court is on Tuesdays, and we would do at least one day per week here. There is enough work that I'll put in one day in and one day out of the courtroom. My private caseload would be very limited.

AFP: What do you intend to accomplish during your first year in office?

JC: Judge Drescher has developed a lot of good programs people like, like diversion. There'll be a period of adaptation, while I figure out how they do things, then I would evaluate. National Judicial College helps there. One thing we could use is more Community Service options to build community. There are many people who have no ability to ever pay off their fines. Why not let them work in the Community Garden, rather than spending the money and time trying to punish them into paying their fines? One of the ways some judges use to obtain payment is to suspend a person's driver's license, which is highly dysfunctional. I like to give people some incentive to change their life, instead of racking up more fines for Driving While Suspended. What I

like about the job is the one-on-one contact with people trying to solve their problems, taking some time to walk through it and give people some options. You can do a payment plan, do traffic school, so it doesn't show up as conviction. People can do traffic school online, or do it once a month at a location in Medford. They try to educate people, and that benefits the community. We are also developing the Jackson County website to educate people about court processes, and to streamline payment solutions for busy people.

AFP: What about giving feedback to the Police Department about how they're doing their job?

JC: The way I do that is by writing a written decision, a one page letter that recites the evidence. Most often when I write, it's a not-guilty. The feedback to law enforcement is usually to remind them to avoid overreaching their authority. For example, one officer likes to give tickets for obstruction of view when people have a dog on their lap, but if it's a Chihuahua, that's unreasonable, and I let them know. Or explaining to the officer that it's not probably cause to stop the vehicle because the driver has previous infractions. It's amazing how often that comes up.

AFP: Have you read the PERF Report that was provided to the City of Ashland on how to implement community policing? How can the Judge help to get us into the Community Policing model?

JC: I've thought about that as a Citizen, but not as a judge. I've talked to Ron Goodpaster, and he's starting to provide some training, and assess people's receptiveness.

AFP: Can you help give us the insight to move away from punitive process like fining people and issuing multiple warrants for the arrest of people who have mental problems?

JC: You always have the option of throwing cases out. The trend is towards courts becoming a social service agency. Sometimes people can work with this. As a Judge, I'm familiar with facilitating social services. **AFP**



Funding Local Sweat Equity

BY TAYLOR MARKS

At 795 Park Street in Ashland, the Rogue Valley Community Development Corporation has organized Federal Government funding, City zoning and code approvals, volunteers, and future homeowners to create six affordable homes. Owner-builders who qualify for financing contribute 32 hours of work each week to build each other's homes. RVCDC has another, four-unit project planned in Ashland. Interested? Contact RVCDC Director Ron Demele (pictured below center) at 541-734-2355.



UNVALUE

BY MICHAEL WEAR

To clutch the Things produced
In the Mill of Commerce,
We give our backs to the whip,
And our necks to the yoke.
Selling mortal time for goods,
That Lack the Good ...
Blind to the true Value, creeping
In the Dark we grope.
Praying for the One Above,
To cast a rope ...
To recover our Vision Divine,
Not to drown in cultural-wine.
To see again The Mystery
Uncoil before us ...
Undulating and glittering, Alive
On the Tip of the Moment.
Where Memory is lost in movement,
And Movement is birth unfolding,
Awareness is a Deathless State.

No Good Deed Will Go Unpunished: The Mike Bianca Story

BY CHARLES CARREON

Well, for just a minute there during the last week of August, it looked like we might really need cops with guns in Ashland. The Tidings reported a carjacking at gunpoint in the Albertson's parking lot. Turned out it was just some gal tired of going to work and running out of excuses for flaking out on her boss, so it was just one more Class "C" misdemeanor for filing a false report. She must've garnered some sympathy down at APD, though, 'cause even not returning a video is a Class A Misdemeanor. The only thing lower would be a ticket for smoking pot, but that won't get you out of going to work, so I can see why she didn't go there. Oh, Ashland Police Department, how vital to the public good thou art. It's easy for me to joke, though – I'm not on a watchlist – at least not the one that was circulated to the Chamber of Commerce by Sgt. Selby. I don't get harassed for jaywalking like the homeless. I didn't get pushed out of my job as Chief by a cadre of cops who hated my guts.

Mike Bianca did, and the strain of it showed in every fiber of his being as we ate lunch together on the veranda at Pilaf, overlooking lively Guanajuato Way and noisy Lithia Creek. He looked very different from how he had in years past, when he was healthy, vibrant and full of good cheer. I had seen the stress building since he took the job as Chief, but in the bright summer sun, I could see a dark tinge had crept into his features, lines of pain were etched around his eyes, and the skin had drawn taut over his brows, cheekbones and jaw. Something very bad had happened to this man.

In 2002, Bianca had spent seventeen years on the force "as an outsider ... not being one of the boys, and viewed as a bit

of an oddball." He had made Sgt. Under Vic Lively, the Chief who retired in 1991. So perhaps it was surprising to some within the department when Bianca sought the Chief's position, left vacant by Scott Fleuter, who had the job from 1996-2002. Certainly it was a disappointment to Rich Walch, who held the position of Interim Chief, after Fleuter's departure, but didn't apply for the Chief's position. Bianca felt he could do the job, and expected to receive at least the level of

has been trained to think: "There is so much fear in policing. Everybody's going to kill them all the time. We whipsaw our police officers ... they think they need machine guns and armored cars because they're fighting terrorism and drug dealers who have them. I never thought we were fighting a war on drugs or terrorism. I felt we were serving the community. That kind of jive was lost on me twenty years ago. We're not making war on our own people. That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard."

As Bianca put it, the upside of Fleuter's tenure was getting a Federal grant for mobile computers and plugging into the larger law enforcement network. The downside was that an arrogant attitude infected the

department: "We're the cops. We're better than you. We'll do it our way."

Another development fed the atmosphere of self-glorifying paranoia at APD – the Columbine effect. Police had been utterly ineffectual during the one-sided firefest that Klebold and Harris unleashed on their fellow students before they killed each other. In Ashland, and all over the country, masses of kids were suddenly viewed as bands of potential homicide perpetrators. School administrators and some parents demanded assurances that "it won't happen here," noting that Columbine, too, was a nice mountain town full of white people with fat incomes and children with high SAT scores.

The entire law enforcement universe, of course, got a jolt from the destruction of Larry Silverstein's World Trade Center buildings and Building Seven, by a mysterious series of explosions that detonated the three structures shortly after a pair of jetliners smacked in buildings one and two. Police did nothing of importance during or after this event, allowed all of the evidence to

“We’re not making war on our own people. That’s the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard.”

respect the rank and file officers had shown for Gary Brown, the Chief from 1991-1995, between Lively and Fleuter. Brown, who had dressed the force in grey uniforms that they hated, and fostered an attitude of sensitivity that was derided by police insiders as "hug and release." Bianca observed that Brown had been a "conflict-reducer" who "blurred the lines between management and union and cut off APD from the larger law enforcement community." In retrospect, Brown's policy of forcing APD officers to march to a more sensitive beat may well have been a shrewd move. He, after all, was not ousted by his own officers. Brown also profited by the contrast with his predecessor, Vic Lively, who had been an old-school cop with a penchant for doing things his way, the police union be damned.

Bianca caught a pendulum swinging in the other direction. His predecessor, Scott Fleuter, had successfully shaped the APD attitude into the one that some people complain about – "professionalism." In practice, professional police are scary, and for a reason. Bianca summed up his perception of how your average patrol cop

be destroyed, allowed all the Saudis left alive in the country to leave without being asked any questions about why the other Saudis had crashed those planes into Silverstein's buildings. Nevertheless, police found plenty of new reasons to be spooked by the terrorist menace, and reason to hope that the wave of fear sweeping the nation would put civil rights back in their rightful place – on a little card in a cop's wallet. The President abolished all types of criminal laws intended to put the burden of proving guilt on the government, declaring that at his word, a man could be called a "terrorist" or an "enemy combatant," and be forced to spend years in prison without charges, without a lawyer, without a judge. Torture came back into vogue, the Geneva conventions were deemed quaint, and Congress signed something called the PATRIOT Act, all in a hurry to experiment with the new concept of being statesmen in time of war.

Into this atmosphere came Chief Bianca, a man plain-spoken enough to share his deeper musings, honest enough to admit that Ashland policing could be a bit dull for cops in search of "action," and trusting enough to think his fellow cops would give him a fair shake. Bad move on all three counts. Better he should have spouted lines by Sgt. Joe Friday, spoken ominously about gangs and drugs, and fired every person on the force who wouldn't come to his barbecues. Then, he would still be in office, and the police union would be complaining about how cops are entitled to free speech, too. Which would be a hoot.

But that Machiavellian strategy would not have served Chief Bianca's purpose, which was to protect Ashland from the wave of repression that the law enforcement cultists were actively promoting around the country. With money, training, databases, task forces, and fear-mongering propaganda, the federalization of law enforcement continues to be a threat to the freedom of every American. Mayor Potter has fought a mighty battle in Portland to get the FBI out of the Portland Police Bureau, and has even discovered FBI informants in city government. Portland, you will recall, is where the USDOJ put an Oregon lawyer, Brandon Mayfield under secret arrest for over a week after the FBI searched his home office with Patriot Act warrants, accusing him of being a terrorist in league with the Madrid train bombers, who had, in addition, a Muslim wife who had once made a phone call to Pete Seda, the Ashland peace activist. Perhaps you think I overstate the matter, but I was there when Chief Bianca took the microphone last year during Free Speech in the Park Day and told everyone assembled there that, if they were worried "about secret searches and people being taken from their homes in the night," that we didn't have to fear them as long as he was Chief of Police in Ashland. I for one slept better that night, and I believe it was what he was fighting for.

But the war one is fighting and the battle in which one is defeated are two different things. By the time he resigned this summer, many of us thought that Bianca's hour of crisis had passed. In fact, the toxic brew of hatred for him became the meal du jour at APD for a clique of managers, led by Dep. Chief

Rich Walsh, Sgt. . Selby, and Gail Rosenberg, a civilian training manager. Their strategy was to undermine Bianca's authority by all means necessary. Keeping him out of the loop, deliberately neglecting his policing priorities, and going over his head to complain to City Administrator Gino Grimaldi and Mayor Morrison.

First, why would Sgt. Selby hate Chief Bianca? It might be temperamental. Sgt. Selby is a grim woman. Last time I saw her we met inside the police station, where I was trying to get some police records about Terry Carr, the Hollywood director who disappeared from Ashland Market of Choice last year with his little girl, and they both turned up dead in Clearlake, California the next afternoon. Naturally, the APD refused to produce the full police report, and after I had taken all the lip I needed from the clerk, she called Sgt. Selby to deal with my intransigent ass. I've known Selby since I was a Deputy D.A. in 1994, and I still haven't seen her smile. A little tiny turn up at the corners of the mouth, maybe once or twice. On this

day, she was wearing a bulky bulletproof vest under her uniform, and when we met, she declined to proceed informally, directing me to enter the conference room as if it were a jail cell and she were about to lock me in. In the room, she remained standing, and promised to help me get the documents. Thereafter, she did nothing of the sort, failed to answer my email, and when I got her on the phone, blandly told me that she wasn't going to help me at all. So, she lies.

She has also had health problems, which for a police employee, can provide some latitude for the independent type. Police retire on disability at much higher rates, and with much greater ease, than the rest of us. In fact, up in Portland, there are so many disabled cops they're trying to get 'em back in the office to answer phones or fetch donuts. But that's generalizing, and

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“Better he should have spouted lines by Sgt. Joe Friday, spoken ominously about gangs and drugs, and fired every person on the force who wouldn't come to his barbecues.”



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

in Sgt. Selby's case, the sick leave thing had become a specific problem, and Chief Bianca had sent her a letter telling her that she's just have to show up to work a little more often. Things didn't get any better when time came to fill a vacant Lieutenant position. Selby was the only cop with five years supervisory experience, a prerequisite for the job, but instead of giving the job to Selby, he decided to keep it open while he groomed a field of candidates, who would each serve one year as "Master Sergeant," a training position. Selby was promoted into that job, and spent most of her year at home, convalescing from surgery, and working on "projects."

Selby evinced no gratitude to her Chief for the long months of accommodation of her illness, and in the summer of 2004 organized the other officers to attend a meeting with City Administrator Gino Grimaldi for undisclosed reasons. Once they were there, some of the officers were told that the purpose of the meeting was to badmouth Chief Bianca behind his back. When Grimaldi expressed support for Bianca, Selby was undeterred. She pushed forward with her campaign to undermine the Chief by riling up the police union, that ultimately issued a "vote of no confidence" in the Chief. She organized a second meeting, with Mayor Morrison, who agreed to hire consultants to identify the problem in the department. That was of course the beginning of the end. The corporate death march had begun, and predictably, when Chief Bianca submitted his forced resignation, Mayor Mike Morrison cited the report submitted by the consultants as the reason for letting him go. The report, said the Mayor, was "a roadmap" that would take the City down the road to "community policing," and he didn't have confidence that Chief Bianca could lead us down that road.

Well, the report is on the City website.

Conceivably, of course, if Chief Bianca had not chosen to fire Rick Spence for sexually harassing police recruits, he might have avoided appearing in a tragic role. Based on an internal complaint from a female police officer, Bianca learned and reported to the City Attorney what he believed was a severe charge of misconduct against Spence. As I fished for adjectives to describe Spence's conduct, suggesting the word used in the media – "hazing--" the look on Bianca's face suggested he thought the word far too weak. "More like torture," he followed up, looking deeply troubled.

Bianca made up his mind to fire Spence without first "instituting progressive discipline," a magic word that means you should paper the file with records of an employee's misconduct. One little problem. Spence had been a training officer for years, was the go-to guy on graveyard shift, and was looked up to by a lot of the younger officers. Nobody had been papering his file. Bianca observes now that under Spence's training, new officers went sour on an accelerated schedule. I asked him what he meant, and he explained that while all cops get worn down over time, and enjoy their job less, under Spence's training,

the downward curve was hitting very soon for most of the new Ashland cops.

It is apparent that Bianca didn't act rashly in deciding to fire Spence without prior discipline – everyone above him supported the decision, including City Attorney Mike Franell, someone with authority from the City's insurance company, and Mayor Mike Morrison. There were no dissenting voices. Whatever Spence did, it must have been really upsetting to a lot of people, because on any given day firing a cop with a union is something a City official thinks twice about. So it must have been that everyone agreed that it was probably more of a liability risk to the City to keep Spence around than to try and use some progressive discipline. Of course, failing to discipline him at all would be as good as encouraging him in his depredations upon his fellow employees, so that surely wasn't an option. There might have been some middle ground, but apparently no one wanted to

occupy it – Spence was a bad hombre and he had to go now.

But a worm will turn, and with the help of police union lawyers, Spence filed for arbitration. As settlement discussions proceeded, Morrison told Bianca to negotiate directly with Spence's lawyers. After rejecting

Spence's settlement proposals, Bianca expected the City to back his position, but instead, Morrison and Franell overruled him, and put Spence back on the force. Doesn't that give you a creepy feeling?

It sure upset Jan Janssen, who abruptly ended her long tenure as a civilian APD employee in protest over the re-hiring of Rick Spence. Known to hundreds of Ashlanders as the probation officer with a heart, she was a pillar of the criminal court system. Before her abrupt resignation, Municipal Judge Alan Drescher had described her as an indispensable person, the one person who addressed the need for social rehabilitation of young people who have run into trouble with the police. In our interview, she was careful not to say too much, but expressed consternation at how her own police union exercised its leverage against Chief Bianca, while simultaneously acting in secret. She did not support the "vote of no confidence," but was unable to learn how her fellow-union members had voted, or even the final vote-count. After she submitted her resignation, Mayor Morrison asked her to stay, and explained his decision, but she couldn't work for a department that would rehire Rick Spence.

Jan said she was looking forward to a new beginning, but I had to ask myself what kind of thinking had driven the City to re-hire a sexual harasser, a torturer, if the Chief's assessment was fair, at the cost of losing someone as genuinely valuable to our community as Jan Janssen. Why should a nice town like Ashland be constrained to lose a Chief that it wanted, and a probation officer it needed, to keep a cop that everyone in the top levels of City government had agreed should be fired?

Mayor Mike Morrison was just a little bit difficult to get ahold of, but after a couple of calls, he gave me an interview that was very cordial, but not very informative. I asked him about why Rick Spence had been rehired, and he responded that it was "all

“Morrison said it was like the O.J. Simpson case – the City knew what Spence had done, but Mike Franell didn't think they could prove it in a court of law.”



legal stuff,” and he wasn’t able to discuss it in much detail. Posing a question for my benefit, he asked, “Am I particularly happy that Rick Spence is still in the APD? No.” However, he assured me, “I sleep very comfortably with my decisions.” I ran through the facts that Chief Bianca had shared with me, and the Mayor confirmed that he and City Attorney Mike Franell had all agreed to fire Spence without progressive discipline. So, I asked, why did they bring him back? Morrison said it was like the O.J. Simpson case – the City knew what Spence had done, but Mike Franell didn’t think they could prove it in a court of law. I asked him if he could tell me just what it was that Rick Spence had done that couldn’t be proved in a court of law, but he smiled and said, “that may be a legal matter.” Well of course, but isn’t it strange that it’s a secret from us, the taxpayers who pay Rick Spence’s salary, and have to accept him as a peace officer in our town? Yes, said the Mayor, it was “antithetical to public accountability.” He added to this by saying, “It goes against the grain of me because truthfulness is the basis of public policy.”

So there you have it. Thanks to the two-faced, flip-floppy political atmosphere that prevails at the top of the administrative food chain in Ashland, we have lost a Chief who was popular with the citizens. We have lost Jan Janssen, a much-loved and very effective probation officer. We have retained Teresa Selby, rewarding her for going over her boss’s head and pouring a sob story into the ears of the Mayor. And after taking out the garbage, Mayor Morrison held his nose and brought it right back in by rehiring Rick Spence, whose record would apparently qualify him for a job at Guantanamo. Now Spence, who would apparently be a total loser as a civilian, is back in uniform, driving a car loaded with a computer full of secret data about you and your neighbors, not to mention a shotgun and a TASER. If you meet him, on duty or off, he will probably be carrying a gun. He is getting paid his full salary, and probably got a nice sized check to cover his pain and suffering for being fired, but that is a confidential number that you will not get to learn because you just pay the bills. Unlike you, Spence has the power to stop, question, arrest, even kill his fellow citizens. And while you can’t ask about his personal business, he’s free to pry into yours.

Everybody says you can’t fight City Hall, but in researching this article, I discovered the reverse. City Hall can’t fight the cops. Our Mayor and City Attorney are pushed around by the police union. We will get the kind of policing the police think we should have. Just think about that the next time you see an Ashland cop tailing you. It might be Rick Spence. **AFP**

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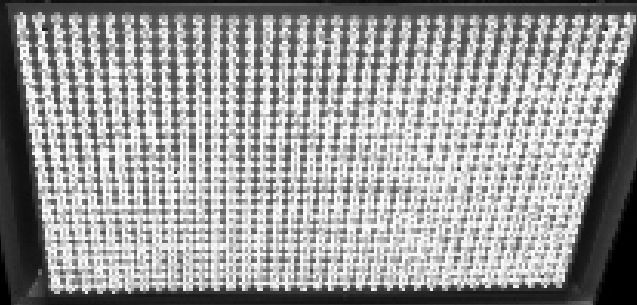


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Burnt, Man

BY CARLOS RAMONE

The apocalypse is a tricky subject to deal with creatively. Once, down in LA, I was enthusing to my friend Mike, a sharp-tongued northeasterner, about Road Warrior, Mel Gibson's most enduring epic. Mike's response was as sharp and swift as a towel-snap in a locker room — "Oh God, stoopidest movie I ever saw. So stupid I couldn't watch the whole thing. I mean, here the whole world is running out of gas, and they're standing around revving their engines!" Well, that put paid to my enthusiasm for a movie that is all about what happens when you loose a bunch of crazy Australian gearheads in the desert with a budget. I'm still trying to figure out how they pulled that scene where the idiot biker tries to punch a hole in a spinning truck tire, and he gets swept under the rig in a trice, his bike reduced to pig iron in seconds.

All this by way of saying that high-speed misbehavior is something with which I greatly sympathize. Acceleration is a stimulant that mixes badly with youth, alcohol, and other inebriants, but I fancy I can handle it now, after three motorcycle accidents in a riding career that spans twenty-three years. Nevertheless, I have not been to Burning Man, and am not going, no matter how many friends invite me.

My friend John wrote a fantastic poem about how to have the Burning Man experience without leaving home, but he just did that for me, since he must make his yearly pilgrimage to the Nevada sands, his excuse being that it's an easy place to find sexual partners. I don't know about that. I say quality before quantity, and the smell of body paint and sweat has never qualified as an aphrodisiac in my hierarchy of pheromonal favorites. Personally, I think if John just stayed put in Boston, and gave away the entire amount of his plane fare five dollars at a time in Harvard Yard, he'd get laid just as much and by a better cut of person. In fact, I have it on good

authority that on Venice Beach, if you straightforwardly ask every person who seems like an attractive sex partner if they would like to have sex right now, you will get a "yes" one out of twenty times. The point is, hoping to have sex with one of our modern temple prostitutes isn't a good enough reason to go to Nevada.

Before you go to Burning Man, you should consider that it does take place in Nevada, where marijuana possession is still a felony, and Linda Ronstadt got pitched out of the Aladdin casino for trying to dedicate a song to Michael Moore after the audience rioted. It is a place that was literally shaped in the cradle by the mob, where gambling, mining and prostitution are major industries. It is a place where Wayne Newton is considered a big entertainer, and a synthetic volcano belches heat on the main drag while down

“Since most Burning Man attendees strive to be politically correct, let's consider the political correctness of having a party focused on burning huge piles of stuff in the desert while global warming takes hold.”

the street pirates and pirate wenches duel with cutlasses to a pounding disco beat, taking big falls from the rigging into the artificial lake below, twice a night. It is also a place where the heat is as bad as Arizona, but there are fewer rivers and less shade.

But, people say, it is such an awesome scene. Take the art vehicles, for instance. The art vehicles? You mean the tricked-out Winnebagos made up to be rolling nightclubs? Why not got to Vegas itself, where they have great DJs, air-conditioning, painted women, and lightshows produced by people who work for Cirque de Soleil during the week? Maybe I skipped a chapter in modern history, but aren't Winnebagos some of the supersized detritus of suburban life, symbols of the "freedom" to burn gas like a petroleum-mad Neanderthal, the chosen vehicle for those who are ostentatiously

"spending their children's inheritance?" These rigs are parked under tarps all over middle America, while their tires dry out and water accumulates in their gas tanks, because the day of the gas hog is over. But as P.T. Barnum said, "there's a sucker born every minute," and there's no idea so bad that someone won't buy it. So hell yeah, let's lavish a bunch of decorating skills on an old dinosaur and pay fifty cents a mile to drive it to Burning Man! Who thinks this stuff up? Dick Cheney?

Since most Burning Man attendees strive to be politically correct, let's consider the political correctness of having a party focused on burning huge piles of stuff in the desert while global warming takes hold. Nor is the folly all one side of the gender divide. Just to prove that having a clitoris doesn't mean you can think clearly, a group of Bay Area women called something like "the Flaming Lotus collective" burned seven-thousand gallons of propane to fuel a fire-belching dragon, producing a chorus of oohs and ahs, setting off some passionate lovemaking in various art vehicles, and permanently contributing to the greenhouse gases now choking our planet. Talk about a sacrifice for the sake of art!

We are all grateful to donate a few breaths of oxygen to the cause. And since it's a good idea to make fires in the desert, the Burning Man organizers should promote carbon burning by honoring famous carbon burners from around the globe. Saddam Hussein would get the first award, for his awesomely punk act of setting all the oil wells ablaze in Kuwait, an event notable both for its size, and for the fact that he did it with someone else's oil! Talk about sticking it to the man! Yeah!

I haven't even gotten to the fact, of course, that you have to pay some serious bucks to get into this festival of pyromania that takes place in a desert so devoid of natural resources that the native Utes and Pah-Utes were the poorest of all Native Americans. For your money, you will get next to no amenities -- there so few

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How to have The Burning Man Experience from the comfort of your home:

ANONYMOUS EMAIL

*Tear down your house. Put it in a truck. Drive 10 hours in any direction. Put the house back together. Invite everyone you meet to come over and party. When everyone leaves, follow them back to their homes, drink all their booze, and break things.

*Stack all your fans in one corner of your livingroom. Put on your most fabulous outfit. Turn the fans on full blast. Dump a vacuum cleaner bag in front of them.

*Pitch your tent next to the wall of speakers in a crowded, noisy club. Go to sleep. Wake up 2 hours later in a 110+ degree tent.

*Only use the toilet in a house that is at least 3 blocks away. Drain all the water from the toilet. Only flush it every 4 days. Hide all the toilet paper.

*Visit a restaurant and pay them to let you alternate lying in the walk-in freezer and sitting in the oven.

*Don't sleep for 5 days. Take a wide variety of hallucinogenic/emotion-altering drugs. Pick a fight with your boyfriend/girlfriend.

*Pay an escort of your affectional preference subset to not bathe for five days, cover themselves in glitter, dust, and sunscreen, wear a skanky neon wig, and dance close naked;

-- then tell you they have a lover back home at the end of the night.

*Cut, burn, electrocute, bruise, and sunburn various parts of your body. Forget how you did it. Don't go to a doctor.

*Buy a new pair of favorite shoes. Throw one shoe away.

*Buy a new set of expensive camping gear. Break it.

*Spend a whole year rummaging through thrift stores for the perfect, most outrageous costume. Forget to pack it.

*Listen to music you hate for 168 hours straight, or until you think you are going to scream. Scream. Realize you'll love the music for the rest of your life.

*Get so drunk you can't recognize your own house. Walk slowly around the block for 5 hours.

*Sprinkle dirty sand in all your food.

*Mail \$200 to the Reno casino of your choice.

*Go to a museum. Find one of Salvador Dali's more disturbing but beautiful paintings. Climb inside it.

*Spend thousands of dollars on a deeply personal art work. Hide it in a funhouse on the edge of the city. Blow it up.

*Set up a DJ system downwind of a three alarm fire. Play a short loop of drum'n'bass fortissimo until the embers are cold.

*Have a 3 a.m. soul-baring conversation with a drag nun in platforms, a crocodile, and Bugs Bunny. Be unable to tell if you're hallucinating

*And I might add: Do all that and spend a whole year thinking about doing it all again but bigger.



A Highly Improbable Production

The BBC Version of Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

BY TAYLOR MARKS

The BBC production of Douglas Adams' "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" is filled with humorous dialogue, dealt with Adams' trademark understated style, probably because Adams, a longtime BBC writer, was substantially involved with the production. The recently-released Hollywood knockoff didn't have the benefit of Adams' input, since he died at the young age of forty-eight shortly after signing the movie deal and moving to Santa Barbara. The BBC production is thus the one to watch, and if you haven't read the book, the two-minute summary below will show you why you must. Fear not that the story will be given away -- it's far too improbable for that. The notably passive central character, Arthur Dent, the only "earthman" in the entire story, never gets out of his bathrobe on one very long day that begins with trying to prevent a work crew from razing his home to make way for a bypass, a matter that becomes rather moot when the entire earth is suddenly annihilated by an alien species who are engaged in constructing a galactic hyperspace bypass.

Arthur would have perished with the rest of humanity but for the timely intervention of his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, who is doing an update on planet Earth, which so far has a short entry: "harmless." Ironically, just before the destruction of Earth, a young woman had just realized the truth that would turn our lives here from hell to heaven, but sound as her understanding was, and beautiful as its unfoldment would have been for all humanity, the Vogons put an end to that precious potential. Arthur and Ford escape instants before the interstellar Armageddon

descends from the skies, thanks to Ford's possession of a clever little device. Thus, after fortifying themselves with three pints of beer each and stashing as many peanuts as possible on their persons, the two teleport themselves into the storage hold of the very same Vogon spaceship that has arrived with the mission of destroying earth. Naturally, they are discovered for stowaways and ejected from the airlock by a rather loutish Vogon underling, after being forced to listen to the Vogon Captain's truly atrocious poetry. Improbably, but not completely impossibly, Arthur and Ford do not decompress in outer space but find themselves aboard the extraordinary spacecraft recently christened The Heart of Gold, powered by the utterly unique Improbability Drive, and stolen before her maiden voyage by a two-headed celebrity by the name of Zaphod Beeblebrox, who has somehow picked up the lovely Trillian to serve as his navigator and source of feminine distraction. In what is truly improbable, Arthur realizes that he had met Trillian some months before at a party, and they had seemed close to hitting it off when this guy named Phil, actually Zaphod in a one-head form, came up and stole her away with a line of nonsense about being from another planet.

After various narrow escapes from death, Arthur, Ford, Zaphod and Trillian are leaving the hollow planet of Magrathea, where some very advanced white mice have expressed an interest in swapping Arthur's brain for a computer, as a way to extract the information they had hoped to glean from the whole experiment called planet Earth, which was actually a complex experiment the mice had set up to learn the meaning of life, the universe and everything. Despite being the experimenters, in the context of the experiment, the mice had ironically appeared as small,



white creatures content to run mazes in human laboratories. Unfortunately, in a cockup of astronomical proportions, the Vogons stupidly destroyed Earth just as the answer was about to be produced. Now the only way to get the total gestalt of the answer, and thus avoid having to recreate Earth anew and run the very long experiment again, would be to dice and analyze Arthur's brain. None of which is relevant to the fact that the cops are hot on Zaphod's trail, and cops being cops, they are going to shoot some sense into the situation.

First Cop: OK, Beeblebrox, hold it right there, we got you covered!

Zaphod's Extra Head: Cops!

Zaphod: Anyone else want a guess?

Ford: Yeah ... this way!

Second Cop: We don't wanna shoot you, Beeblebrox.

Zaphod: Suits me fine!

Trillian: Back to the lift?

Zaphod: Back to the lift!

(Cops open fire)

Arthur: Hey, I thought they said they didn't want to shoot at us!

Ford: I thought so!

Zaphod: You said you didn't wanna shoot us!

First Cop: It isn't easy being a cop!

Ford: What did he say?

Zaphod: It isn't easy being a cop.

Ford: That's *his* problem!

Zaphod: *I* think so!

Ford: Listen, we've enough problems of our own having you there shooting at us! If you'd like to avoid laying your personal problems on us, I think we'd all find it easier to cope!

Second Cop: Now, look, buddy, you're not dealing with any dumb, two-bit, trigger-pumping morons with low hairlines, little piggy eyes and no conversation! We're a couple of caring, intelligent guys you'd probably really like if you met us socially. I don't go around gratuitously shooting people and then brag about it in seedy space rangers bars. I go around gratuitously shooting people, then I agonise about it afterwards to my girlfriend!

First Cop: And I write novels!

Second Cop: Yeah, he writes them in crayon.

First Cop: Though I haven't had any published yet, so I'd better warn ya, I'm in a mean mood!

Ford: Who are these guys?

Trillian: I preferred them shooting.

Second Cop: So are you gonna come quietly or you gonna let us blast ya out?

Ford: Which would you prefer?

(Another fusillade ensues)

Second Cop: You still there?

All: Yeah!

First Cop: We didn't enjoy that at all.

Ford: We could tell!

Second Cop: Now, listen to this, Beeblebrox. And you'd better listen good!

Zaphod: Why?

Second Cop: Er ... because it's gonna be very intelligent, and quite interesting ... and humane.

Zaphod: OK, shoot. I mean, fire away! No, no, I mean ...!

(another round of shooting)

First Cop: Sorry, misunderstanding there.

Second Cop: Beeblebrox, either you all give yourselves up, and let us beat you up a little, though not too much because we are firmly opposed to needless violence, or ... er ... or we blow up this entire planet! And one or two others we noticed on the way over!

Trillian: That's crazy! You wouldn't do that!

Second Cop: Yes, we would! I think we would, wouldn't we?

First Cop: Yes, we'd have to. No question.

Trillian: But why?

First Cop: Tell her.

Second Cop: You tell her!

First Cop: You tell her!

Trillian: Will one of you tell her!

Both Cops: It isn't easy being a cop!

Ford: Listen ... if we keep them talking, maybe their brains will seize up.

First Cop: Shall we ... shoot them up again for a while?

Second Cop: Why not?

First Cop: Yeah.

Ford: Wait ...

Zaphod: Well, that just about wraps it up for this lifetime, I guess.

Ford: Well ... it's really been nice running into you again, Zaphod.

Zaphod and Ford *(singing loudly)*: Zaglabor astragard,

Hootrimansion Bambriar ...

Arthur: What the hell are you doing?!

Ford: A Betelgeuse death anthem. It means, "After this, things can only get better." **AFP**





BY: CHARLES CARREON

"One of the weirdest of our phantastica or hallucinogens is the drink of the western Amazon known as ayahuasca, caapi or yaje. Although not nearly so popularly known as peyote and, nowadays, as the sacred mushrooms, it has nonetheless inspired an undue share of sensational articles which have played fancifully with unfounded claims, especially concerning its presumed telepathic powers."

The Visionary Vine of the Amazon

In the essay from which this quote is taken, Richard Schultes recited what he considered the sum total of Western botanical and pharmacological knowledge concerning Ayahuasca in a few pages, identifying the source plant as the Yage vine, and the active ingredients as harmine and harmaline. There was, Schultes admitted, a great deal left to know about the visionary vine of the Amazon, and he concluded with the statement: "This is how far 100 years has brought us. How much farther is there to go? Should we not step up the speed of our studies before time blots out much of the native lore of the Western Amazon?" Over forty more years have gone by since Schultes' essay was

published in the sixties, and we have learned a few things. Most importantly, we learned there's more than one plant ingredient in the best brews of ayahuasca tea. The first substance is the Yage vine. The second substance is leaf material from a shrub known as Chagrapanga. The Amazonian natives who use Ayahuasca brew it according to special recipes, cooking the tea in open pots over the course of day-long ceremonies, often accompanied by songs and prayer. While the first combination of the two plants is in the pot, the interaction of the chemical essences of these two jungle plants inside the human brain is the primary focus of our concern, because it is not just a matter of two drugs having an enhanced effect, but rather the revelation of an entirely new experience due to the creation of a special climate in our perceptual organism.

A Binary Psychedelic

Ayahuasca is a binary psychedelic. Yage (Banisteropsis

Caapi) contains the Potentiating Substances -- harmine and harmaline, that create a special chemical environment in the human brain. Mildly psychedelic in themselves, harmine and harmaline are active at doses around one tenth of a gram. Chagrapanga (Psychotria Viridis) contains the Activating

Substance -- Dimethyltryptamine -- that has no effect whatsoever when taken orally unless the brain has been properly prepared by an adequate dose of harmine,

“A single half-gram dose has caused the addictive cravings of hopeless addicts to go into remission for months or weeks.”

Night

BY TOM BRILL

It was stuck on night.
The sun groomed her hair.
whistling something from "South Pacific"
and murmuring curses as
bobby pins dropped from her grasp
lodging in cracks in the crust
of the earth.

We attached lightning bugs to bellows
and pumped them to twenty times normal.
World leaders measured the twinkly
creaking of the milky way and
tried to beat rhythms in time
with the galaxy to capture its pulsing wave.

Scientists tumbled into Amtraks
scurrying in coach cars across
the midwest toward the nation's capitol
to examine the problem
but after toasting each other's health,
found they could not turn back tonight.

The moon held its breath
and puffed and glowed
like a neon balloon.
Planes carried bags of day
and spilled them into the sky,
but it was still stuck on night.

stars pierced the darkness far away
forcing their pointy heads in
but unable to reach their arms through
to open up night and make day again.

All the electrical wires were tied
together on television and
squeezed into a single socket,
and the short circuit lit up
the world for just a moment,
then collapsed into night.

Finally, they set the world on fire,
and it was day more beautiful
than ever before.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

harmaline, or some other monoamine oxidase inhibitor. Separately, these two types of substances have generated substantial interest in the psychological community. Harmaline and harmine have shown promise in treating chronic heroin and cocaine addiction. A single half-gram dose has caused the addictive cravings of hopeless addicts to go into remission for months or weeks. Claudio Naranjo's book, *The Healing Journey*, describes very rich experiences suggesting that harmaline and harmine induce a strong connection to images of inner strength, physical warmth, and release from self-confinement.

Dimethyltryptamine, abbreviated to "DMT," has powerful but very short-acting psychedelic effects when injected intravenously, as documented by Dr. Rick Strassman of the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, in his book *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*. Dr. Strassman hypothesizes that DMT mediates the entry and exit of consciousness into the human body prior to birth and at death. His hypothesis centers on the undeniable fact that DMT precursors are present in the pineal gland, a vestigial eye located in the center of the forehead, and referred to by Descartes as "the seat of the soul." Among Amazonian natives, snuffs derived from seeds containing DMT and its relative, Diethyltryptamine (DET), are popular, and are associated with spellcasting, sorcery, and some rowdy behavior.

Traditional and Religious Uses of Ayahuasca

Schultes describes various psychic goals natives seek to achieve through drinking Ayahuasca, such as inducing clairvoyance, learning the truth about a lover, and gaining foreknowledge of strategy to aid in tribal diplomacy. Ayahuasca healers believe they can diagnose disease, discover appropriate plant medicines, and intuitively learn the pharmacopeia of the jungle by consuming the psychedelic tea. Ayahuasca sorcerers also believe they can learn who is casting malignant spells and how to avert their effects.

From these native traditions, there have evolved several churches, primarily in Brazil, that use Ayahuasca as a sacrament in the context of traditional religious liturgies. The two best-known churches are the Santo Daime (the "Daime") and the O Centro Spirita Beneficiente do Vegetal (the "UDV"). They have fairly informative websites at www.santodaime.org, and www.udv.org, respectively, that lay out the structure of their belief systems. Of the two, UDV has the "slicker" look, but both the Daime and the UDV look like religions operating under a full head of organizational steam. Both ascribe the origins of their religion to revelations received by humble spiritual seekers who drew inspiration and guidance from their Ayahuasca experiences, and both endorse the validity of the Christian religion while combining elements of nature wisdom and a philosophy of planetary healing.

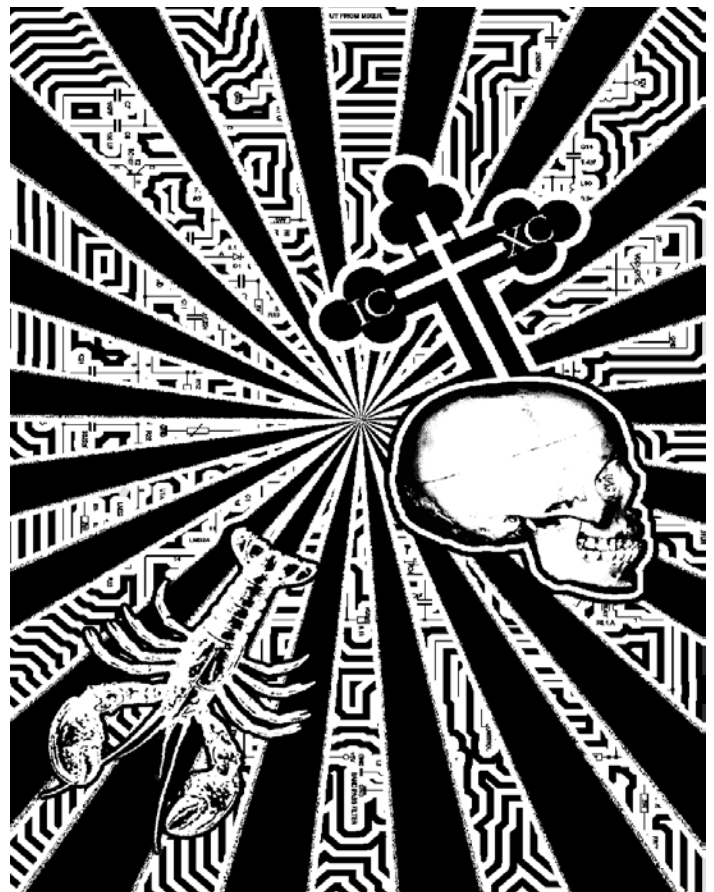
A Bright Spot In The Legal Universe

Until recently, the use of psychedelic substances for spiritual purposes in South America had little importance to those of us living here in the United States. Recent legal developments, however, have opened the door to greater religious freedom in this country. In particular, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (the "RFRA") provided the basis for a recent legal

victory by the UDV that has entirely changed the landscape of visionary spirituality for ordinary Americans. Thanks to the enactment of this law, and its remarkably clear-headed application by the United States Supreme Court, an unexpected ray of light is shining for those who believe that genuine spiritual insights

may flow from the wise use of plant sacraments. On February 21, 2006, Chief Justice Roberts issued a unanimous opinion in *Gonzales v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente Uniao Do Vegetal*, 126 U.S. 1211, upholding an injunction barring the Department of Justice from prosecuting UDV members for importing Ayahuasca tea (that the UDV calls "Hoasca") from Brazil in 30-gallon drums. Issued pursuant to the RFRA by the United States District Court in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the injunction requires the UDV to import Hoasca under a permit to be issued by the DEA, to restrict distribution of Hoasca to UDV authorities, and to warn prospective Hoasca-drinkers of health risks.

“Ayahuasca healers believe they can diagnose disease, discover appropriate plant medicines, and intuitively learn the pharmacopeia of the jungle by consuming the psychedelic tea.”



We've Come A Long Way, Baby

To appreciate the journey that American law has made to reach this point, we need to look at a 1990 US Supreme Court case that came out of Oregon, and motivated the US Congress to enact the RFRA. In *Oregon Department of Human Resources v. Smith*, 494 US 872, the high Court considered the claim of two men who were fired from their jobs as drug counselors for "misconduct" when they ate peyote at a Native American Church ceremony. The Oregon Supreme Court had overruled the Employment Department, holding that denying people unemployment for eating peyote as a religious practice infringed the "Free Exercise Clause" of the First Amendment, that states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Thanks to the zealous advocacy of Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer, the US Supreme Court reversed the Oregon Supreme Court in a divided decision that split the high Court three ways. The battleground among the justices was over whether to evaluate the Employment Department's peyote policy using a "balancing test" to determine whether the State of Oregon had a "compelling state interest" in keeping peyote out of the hands of its citizens, and if so, whether denying unemployment compensation for violating the controlled substance law was the "least restrictive means" of furthering that compelling state interest. The problem with applying this test, as any Constitutional lawyer will tell you, is that when the test is properly applied, the policy under scrutiny rarely passes "Constitutional muster," and is struck down. This balancing test is called the "strict scrutiny standard,"

because most laws fail when subjected to it.

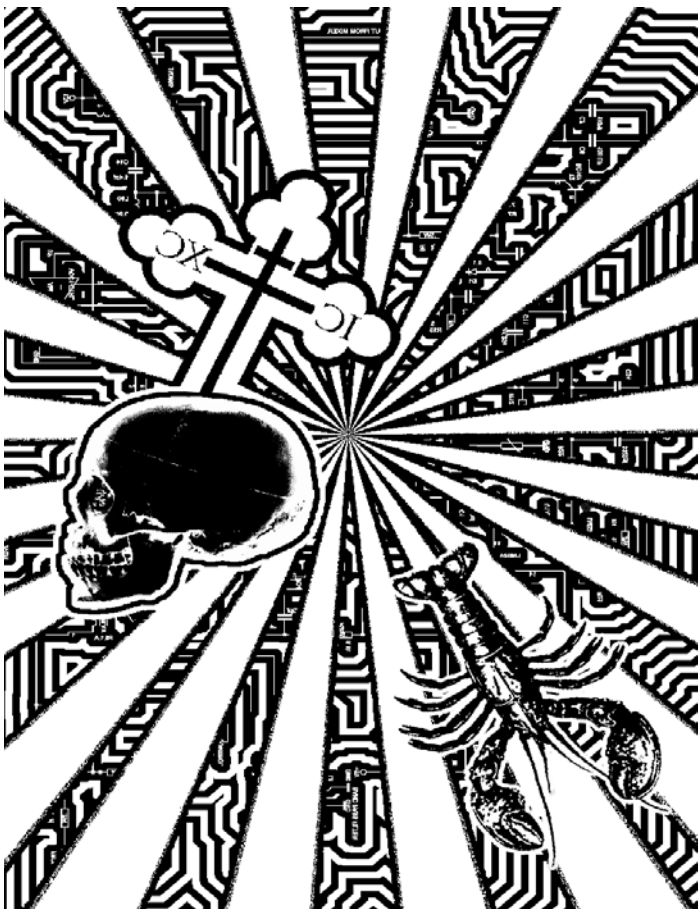
With Justices Rehnquist, White, Stevens and Kennedy joining in, Antonin Scalia engineered a way around the strict scrutiny test, twisting precedents to argue that the Court applied strict scrutiny only to Free Exercise claims that were buttressed by "expressive" and "associational" rights. The case before the Court, Scalia explained, was far simpler. Oregon had adopted

“Neither the State nor the Feds pursued drug cases against Native Americans, with the Feds seizing only 19.5 pounds of peyote that year, compared with 15 tons of marijuana.”

a criminal law of "general application" that had nothing to do with speech or freedom of association, and everything to do with conduct. Just keep away from peyote was what the law said, and if every believer could question any law by saying it stuck in his or her religious craw, then each man would be "a law unto himself." That, said Scalia, would be "courting anarchy." While the State was free to grant a religious exemption to its controlled substance laws for religious use, it was also free to jail any of its citizens for possessing peyote. Since the State would thereby be depriving its citizens of liberty, it could certainly deny lesser rights, like the right to collect unemployment. Case decided.

Justice O'Connor disagreed with Scalia's approach, insisting that they should apply the strict scrutiny test. But she agreed with Scalia's result, because when she balanced the individual's Free Exercise right to take peyote for religious purposes against Oregon's right to keep its people away from peyote, the State won. Why? Because peyote had been blackballed by the controlled substance legislation, and it wasn't her job to second-guess the legislature on that call, just because some Native Americans said it helped them to worship more effectively. She likened the peyote prohibition to laws against dangerous religious practices like snake-handling, or laws requiring parents to vaccinate their kids despite their religious objections.

Justice Blackmun agreed that O'Connor was applying the right test, but, along with Justices Brennan and Marshall, believed she should reach the opposite result and give the peyote eaters their unemployment compensation. Blackmun argued that the Court "must scrupulously apply its free exercise analysis to the religious claims of Native Americans, however unorthodox they may be." O'Connor had given the State the advantage by giving excessive weight in her "balancing test" to generalities like "public health and safety," next to which the individual's right to worship in the silence of their own spirit seemed trifling. Blackmun gives full weight to that very private right to talk to the divine each in our own way. He then puts the teeth back in strict scrutiny, closely examining the State's reasons for punishing peyote users by withholding unemployment benefits, and finds them "entirely speculative." Neither the State nor the Feds pursued drug cases against Native Americans, with the Feds seizing only 19.5 pounds of peyote that year, compared with 15 tons of marijuana. He



cites scientific evidence recorded in other legal cases that peyote “works no permanent deleterious injury to the Indian.” Citing the Native American Church’s own “internal restrictions on, and supervision of, its members’ use of peyote,” and the known efficacy of the Church in reducing alcoholism in the community, Blackmun concludes that “far from promoting the lawless and irresponsible use of drugs, Native American Church members’ spiritual code exemplifies the values that Oregon’s drug laws are presumably intended to foster.” Blackmun concludes his dissent with an accusation – for the Native American people, the majority’s decision reduced the words of the First Amendment and the assurances of Congress to “an unfulfilled and hollow promise.”

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act

Three years later, the Congress declared in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 that “the framers of the Constitution, recognizing free exercise of religion as an unalienable right, secured its protection in the First Amendment to the Constitution.” Congress then observed that “laws ‘neutral’ toward religion may burden religious exercise as surely as laws intended to interfere with religious exercise,” and that “in *Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990) the Supreme Court virtually eliminated the requirement that the government justify burdens on religious exercise imposed by laws neutral toward religion.” Congress enacts something like this when it has gotten a hot-foot from some interest group, and I wouldn’t pretend to say I know who that was, or that they figured on how it would be used by the UDV.

Congress Talks Back To Scalia

Having thus addressed the precise matter at issue in the peyote versus unemployment-compensation case arising from our home jurisdiction, Congress adopted O’Connor’s view from the *Smith* case, that the Court should apply strict scrutiny to conflicts between religious practices and criminal laws: “The compelling interest test,” Congress found, “is a workable test for striking sensible balances between religious liberty and competing prior governmental interests.” Congress then stated the two purposes of the act: “(1) to restore the compelling interest test as set forth in *Sherbert v. Verner*, 374 U.S. 398 (1963) and *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972) and to guarantee its application in all cases where free exercise of religion is substantially burdened; and (2) to provide a claim or defense to persons whose religious exercise is substantially burdened by government.”

The Congress then told all of the government law enforcement agencies -- state, county, municipal, tribal, and Homeland Security, that they “shall not substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability [unless the governmental entity] demonstrates that application of the burden to the person--

(1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and

(2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.

In response to Justice Scalia’s dismissive analysis, Congress specifically set the goal posts on strict scrutiny for people claiming religious exemption from enforcement of laws prohibiting use of psychoactive chemicals. There can’t be much doubt that the RFRA should apply to that situation, especially after the UDV decision, in which Chief Justice Roberts says that it is significant that Congress directly cited the *Smith* case as its reason for adopting the law. Ironically, a Bush appointee has provided more relief to the users of plant-helpers for religious purposes than any prior Justice, through an extraordinarily honest opinion that has given surprising vitality to the RFRA.

This Law’s Not Racist Anymore

The RFRA says nothing about Native Americans being the only ones who can assert this defense to a controlled substance offense. That’s a good thing, because the idea that you had to have a certain ethnic origin to qualify for exemption from a law that restricts freedom of thought was more than a little racist. Not only is this law not racist, it has teeth. Under the category of ‘Judicial Relief,’ the RFRA provides: “A person whose religious exercise has been burdened in violation of this section *may assert that violation as a claim or defense in a judicial proceeding and*

obtain appropriate relief against a government.”

Just The Defense That Was Needed

The RFRA is thus specifically focused on providing an exemption for religious conduct that runs

afoul of any law. That it can be asserted as “a claim or defense in a judicial proceeding,” means that anyone charged for any crime or regulatory violation can assert the RFRA as a defense if it is factually applicable to them. This is something that every public defender should learn about, and hopefully will, because as a practical matter, having an interest in psychedelic religion rarely coincides with having easy access to private counsel.

In civil actions, you can assert the RFRA proactively, as the UDV did, by suing the DOJ to prevent the DEA from seizing their tea and throwing them in jail. Congress essentially told Scalia and his fellow-justices that the sky would not in fact fall if judges created exemptions to laws of “general application” if they determined that the harm to a person’s religious beliefs was outweighed by harm to the State’s own interests. The law also gives religious practitioners a right to file a lawsuit to protect themselves against enforcement of laws that would prevent them from worshipping according to their chosen practices.

The UDV case was evidently well-thought-out in its approach and well-funded. The UDV established to the satisfaction of the trial judge that its own system of controlling use of Hoasca was sufficient to protect the public at large from the dangers inherent in providing a psychedelic tea to its adherents, and while it

“The law also gives religious practitioners a right to file a lawsuit to protect themselves against enforcement of laws that would prevent them from worshipping according to their chosen practices.”

gave some weight to the drug-control interests asserted by the Department of Justice, found that the evidence was “in equipoise,” and granted the UDV’s request for an injunction against prosecution or interference with importation and distribution of Hoasca. The DOJ appealed the ruling to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, which affirmed the District Court’s ruling. The DOJ then took the case to the US Supreme Court via “writ of certiorari,” and the Court agreed to hear the Government’s appeal.

Writing an opinion that was unanimously adopted by all the other members of the Court, including Scalia, newly-appointed Justice Roberts didn’t agonize much about the issues, finding that, applying RFRA’s “strict scrutiny” standard to the issues, the DOJ had failed to show a compelling interest in uniform application of the Controlled Substances Act (the “CSA”), and granted the UDV an exemption from enforcement of the CSA. The DOJ had smoothed the road to this result by admitting that the UDV had a legitimate religious practice based on drinking Hoasca, and that the Government’s refusal to grant an exemption for Hoasca-drinking would substantially burden the UDV’s exercise of religion.

The DOJ’s concession the UDV’s Hoasca-ceremonies were a sincere religious practice put the burden was on the DOJ to show that the Government had a “compelling interest” that would justify its refusal to grant the requested exemption from enforcement of the Controlled Substances Act. The DOJ was unable to carry that burden. Justice Roberts observed that although the Government claimed that “no exception to the DMT ban [could] be made to accommodate the UDV” because it had “a compelling interest in the uniform application of the Controlled Substances Act, the “RFRA requires the Government to demonstrate that the compelling interest test is satisfied through application of the challenged law ‘to the person’--the particular claimant whose sincere exercise of religion is being substantially burdened.” Justice Roberts’ individualized consideration of the case was exactly what Blackmun argued for in his dissent against the outcome in *Oregon v. Black*.

Justice Roberts explained that under the “focused inquiry” required under the RFRA, “the Government’s mere invocation of the general characteristics of Schedule I substances cannot carry the day.” In saying this, Justice Roberts rejected Justice O’Connor’s position in *Oregon v. Black*, because she explicitly found the mere categorization of peyote as a Schedule I substance to be a sufficiently “compelling interest” to justify Oregon’s policy of punishing peyote users by denying them unemployment payments. Justice Roberts took another tack. Instead of focusing on the fact that DMT is a Schedule I substance, he emphasized the availability of exemptions: “The Controlled Substances Act’s authorization to the Attorney General to “waive the requirement for registration of certain manufacturers, distributors, or dispensers

law, i.e., ‘if I make an exception for you, I’ll have to make one for everybody, so no exceptions.’ But RFRA operates by *mandating consideration*, under the compelling interest test, of exceptions to “rule[s] of general applicability.” (Emphasis added by the Court.)

Your Visionary Religion

It is very important to remember that the RFRA is more than a law that says you can file a lawsuit to protect your religious beliefs from bureaucratic infringements. That’s just the clause that guarantees that the law has teeth in it. The important thing is right at the beginning: “Government shall not substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion...” That is huge language, and it applies to every municipality, state and federal agency in the country. Peace officers who attempt to interfere with entheogenic religious practices should be given a copy of the RFRA and a request for exemption from enforcement of the law. This presumes, of course, that the people whose religious activities are being disrupted by peace officers are in fact engaged in a legitimate religious ceremony.

As in every situation in this country, it is important to look like a duck to be treated like one, and the same is true of religion. To be recognized as a legitimate religion, I would suggest your congregation and faith have:

- A nonprofit corporate base
- A specified sacramental substance
- A book of beliefs establishing the purpose for using the sacrament
- A schedule of religious events when the sacrament is consumed
- A liturgy or sadhana during which the sacramental substance is shared
- A commitment to consume the sacramental substance only for religious purposes
- A set protocol for limiting use of the sacramental substance to believers
- A written disclosure of any hazards associated with use of the sacramental substance that is provided to all prospective students
- A controlled setting for the sacramental ritual to comfort, protect and guide students
- An outreach program to skillfully integrate the activities of the religious

“Peace officers who attempt to interfere with entheogenic religious practices should be given a copy of the RFRA and a request for exemption from enforcement

if he finds it consistent with the public health and safety.” Additionally, Justice Roberts noted, “The peyote exception also fatally undermines the Government’s broader contention that the Controlled Substances Act establishes a closed regulatory system that admits of no exceptions under RFRA. The peyote exception has been in place since the Controlled Substances Act’s outset, and there is no evidence that it has undercut the Government’s ability to enforce the ban on peyote use by non-Indians.”

Pinning the tail precisely on the ass of the bureaucratic donkey, Justice Roberts reveals the thinness of the DOJ’s position: “Here the Government’s uniformity argument rests not so much on the particular statutory program at issue as on slippery slope concerns that could be invoked in response to any RFRA claim for an exception to a generally applicable

group into the life of the community

What is a legitimate religious ceremony? The doors are not quite wide open on this question. The Courts have, until now, rejected every attempt to classify anything that looks like recreational drug use as a religious practice. The cases denying such efforts are cited in detail in Justice Blackmun's dissent in *Oregon v. Black*. However, that doesn't mean that sincere practitioners of plant-wisdom belief systems should give up.

Sincerity is of course the key to undertaking such a project. There are any number of plant helpers that have been known for many years, and are now more available than ever. Throughout the Northwest, many species of mushroom containing psilocin and psilocybin are discoverable, and the hardy *Psilocibe Cubensis* can be cultivated from spores. The sources of DMT to create Ayahuasca-type mixtures are also increasingly available, with *Mimosa Hostilis* providing a more potent replacement for *Psychotria Viridis*, and Syrian Rue providing a more convenient source of harmala and harmaline than *Banisteropsis Caapi*.

Knowledge As Religion

That the earth has provided so many plants that have connections with our physiology and psyche should cause us to reflect upon what this correspondence means. Used without reflection, potentially sacramental substances are a source of trivial diversion. Plant compounds have profound effects on us because we share a unified chemical makeup, in which correspondences naturally arise among living beings.

The Amazonian native people survived and thrived in one of the most challenging and botanically endowed places on earth. They explored their environment boldly, yet we know little about what they learned. As Schultes noted in his essay forty years ago, there is a great deal left to learn from the wisdom of these ancient people, but it is not all a matter of studying their characteristics, taking photographs of their native appearance, and shelving it all away. The bravest scientists make their own lives an experiment, and in the realm of psychopharmacology, the only way forward has been through the efforts of those willing to take the plunge.

The quest for knowledge is the truest religion of our day, and in pursuit of knowledge we should not fear to tread where generations of humans have gone before. At long last, for those sufficiently interested in exploring the inner realms with the aid of plant-helpers, another path, through the thicket of governmental obstruction, appears to have opened. To all interested seekers, I have this word of advice – enter quickly, and make this path fruitful, otherwise it will fall into disuse. **AFP**

NATURE TRIPPING

BY MICHAEL WEAR

The coarseness of wood,
 Rippling ridges under my fingertips,
 Roughness ... Smoothness ...
 Such is a Tree.
 Gravel Pointed in sharpness,
 Pine-needles, Sticky tree-sap,
 Dust and Wetness ...
 A carpet for my barefeet,
 Such is a Ground.
 Large and rough,
 Large and smooth, Warm and Cold...
 Ridges Knifelike and blunt,
 Moss and lichen, an occasional ant,
 Strength Personified ...
 Such is a Rock.
 Rippling sheets of plastic-wrap,
 Studded with silver foam,
 Rollicking, frolicking, bursting,
 Bubbles of Tranquility ...
 Dancing in time to Water-music.
 Slippery, slimy, green laden boulders,
 Shrouded by encompassing pools,
 Of Shaded Bliss ...
 Such is a River flowing.
 Windblown Hair ...
 Body robed in breeze,
 I greet the Sun,
 And bathe in a stream,
 Then dry in sheets of Light ...
 Such is a day in a Life.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

received many sympathetic refusals from other wrongful termination lawyers, some possibly sitting in the same building I was sitting in. In its own way, LA's a small town. In any event, Ruppert didn't sue the LAPD, and found himself blackballed by his former employer. He couldn't get a job at a Seven-11, or if he did, he'd soon be fired, after Wilshire Division narcotics cops dropped by to ask his new boss if he had actually hired Mike Ruppert. Hounded into the one employment he couldn't be fired from, he became the notorious author of "From The Wilderness," a publication dedicated to – well, dedicated to Mike Ruppert. "FTW" is emblazoned on the company logo, an eight-pointed star that resembles the CIA logo. Cops often see the initials "FTW," which stand for "Fuck The World," a common prison tattoo.

The Gary Webb Un-Story

After we finished our lunch at the Wild Goose, Mike invited me back to his office. I was kind of surprised to find him sharing space next to the Forest Service. He showed me his office proudly, and I admired the huge secured parking lot out back that was used only by the federal government. Strange place for an anti-government crusader to shack up, but what the hey, I wasn't trying to ask a lot of difficult questions. There was a poster of Gary Webb on the wall, autographed to Mike Ruppert, saying something like "To Mike Ruppert, who was on the story before I was." Ruppert said Webb had been a very good friend. I felt so bad to be wondering if Ruppert had forged the inscription. I volunteered that most people didn't think Gary Webb shot himself twice in the head, just because it's so hard to do, and this provoked a firestorm of contempt from Ruppert. God, how he hated hearing that crap. No one knew, like Mike, how much Gary had suffered from depression, and as far as a double-shot suicide, they were hardly unheard of. Oh, I explained, they were heard of, they were just implausible. No, no, no, insisted Mike, with so much disgust in his face that I just dropped the subject.

The Dangers of Physical Evidence

About that time, I thought it would be a good idea to start discussing 911. I started by saying I just didn't think that buildings One and Two could collapse that fast without being intentionally detonated. He grimaced, and said that was really not the thing to focus on – there was too much speculation involved in dealing with engineering concepts. I insisted that I thought based on the laws of physics, combined with the information available from the building plans and the precise specifications of all the materials that went into the structure, and the completely anomalous nature of the event in the history of architecture, it didn't seem very speculative. I had even seen the video taken in January 2001 of one of the top engineers on the WTO project, who die in the September 11th disaster, saying that the buildings were built of such a dense net of enormous steel that an airliner, even multiple airliners, would not meaningfully damage the essential structure, because it would be like "poking a pencil into a screen door." Ruppert didn't seem to like hearing this type of discussion, and it rapidly became more than he could bear. Grimacing really earnestly,

he explained that he avoided all of this dangerously non-provable stuff, because, he warned me, expert witnesses on the mechanical causes of structural collapse would be vulnerable on cross examination. I couldn't buy that story. In a twenty-year career as a trial lawyer, I've questioned a few hundred experts, many of them mechanical engineers, and actually when they've got their numbers right, they're pretty hard to cross up. And I think that, thanks to physics being such an old field of study, what with Galileo and Newton having worked on the falling problem, most of these numbers are available or derivable to figure out everything in units of load-bearing capacity, explosive force, distance, and time. Given the availability of detailed architectural drawings, and the whole project being executed with materials of known strength, I would expect the numbers to bear out what the eye perceives – the towers were an inside job.

Oil-Centered Reality

Having exhausted all my reasonable efforts to discuss 911 from my own direction, I was ready to give in to Ruppert's approach. Since he clearly wanted to deal with it as if he were a journalist-cop setting out to convict somebody with a litany of uncontroversial statements, I asked him, who was guilty of 911? Cheney, he responded, without hesitation. Suddenly I felt as if the gates of speculation had boomed wide again, so I asked him where Cheney was when the towers were hit. Down in a bunker, running the whole show. What show? All of the overlapping military defense exercises that were being conducted to keep military aircraft tied up, so no one would shoot down any terrorist planes. What evidence was there of that? As hijacked planes still prowled the skies, Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta heard Cheney tell an underling, when asked whether "the orders still stood," that of course they still stood, and why was he asking? That was interesting, but why would Cheney want there to be a terrorist attack on the US? In order to provoke the war with Iraq. Why? Because Iraq has an immense amount of oil. So it all came down to Peak Oil, the driver of history.

Many Words, Not Always Well-Chosen

Mike wrapped up our interview nicely, by autographing a copy of his enormous book, "Crossing The Rubicon – The Decline of the American Empire and The End of the Age of Oil" with the inscription "Bruins Rule!" to commemorate our status as fellow-UCLA-alumni. Chapter One, entitled "Petroleum Man," enunciates a disturbing assumption in Ruppert's reasoning:

"But it comes to this: first, in order to prevent the extinction





The FTW offices after the mysterious break-in.



Apparently, a secure area.



Mike had a cozy relationship with the Feds.

of the human race, the world's population must be reduced by as many as four billion people."

This fearful article of faith has been repeated throughout my lifetime by the "Limits to Growth" people, "The Club of Rome," and their hysterical cheerleader Dr. Paul Ehrlich, author of the now-forgotten pessimist prophecy, "The Population Bomb," that visualized mass extinction through nuclear war well before the end of the last millennium. The repeatedly disproven notion that there are just too many people on the planet has been used to whip up anti-immigrant sentiment, to justify forced sterilization campaigns, and to denigrate the humanity of those who "breed too much." Adolf Hitler, for one, took the need to get rid of extra people very seriously, so when says we must rid the planet of some four-billion souls to assure our planetary survival, I take notice.

As I kept pushing through the book, I discovered that it is a loosely strung-together narrative in which Ruppert plays the part of a super-sleuth with deep insight into the workings of high government officials, covert operations, financial systems, national economies, and courtroom procedure. We wouldn't know that Ruppert is incredibly insightful if he didn't keep reminding us with lines like, "From my knowledge of covert operations this had to be a cover story." He regales us with quotes from smarmy emails to CIA officers stuffed with allusions to his military pedigree: "I pulled out all my aces and namedropped shamelessly. I mentioned that I was good friends with the widow of famed CIA pilot Francis Gary Powers, shot down over Russia and captured in 1960." Ruppert's

hyperbole about the all-knowing powers of intelligence agencies serves his thesis that the FBI and the CIA were lying when they said they couldn't "connect the dots" before 911. The PROMIS software, Ruppert asserts, is a virtual eye-of-God, so how can the government claim ignorance of anything? Mike has a naive faith in computers, believing them capable of turning Arabic speech "into substantively reliable English automatically." For this dubious claim, Ruppert's cites only an online article in Technology Review that falls far short of supporting his novel assertion.

“The PROMIS software, Ruppert asserts, is a virtual eye-of-God, so how can the government claim ignorance of anything?”

Ruppert makes the going difficult by adopting the tone of a lecturer on police procedure, inflating his credentials with unctuous sermons like this one: "In a sound investigation, the simplest explanation must also encompass the known facts without any of those facts being disregarded as a measure of expedience." It would be less annoying if he would at least follow the rules of police work he so earnestly announces, and not exclude, for example, engineering evidence from his analysis.

For Ruppert, the really important facts are learned by schmoozing people in the know, asking questions of highly-placed government officials, comparing the pronouncements of various politicians, and trying to find the person in authority who is pulling the strings. Logically, he shines best when he is working

on deconstructing someone else's theory, and his attack on the official Congressional 911 Commission report is excellent. In aid of that attack, he marshals much of the evidence that the Commission refused to consider, including the large bets against American Airlines and United that were made in the stock market just before their planes were hijacked, the simultaneous military exercises that distracted the Air Force from protecting the East Coast on September 11th, and the persistent lying by the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) about when the FAA told NORAD about the hijackings.

Ruppert often reminds us of the impact he has on important events, introducing one of the many reprinted articles with great modesty as "the October 2001 From The Wilderness story ... that ground the propaganda machine to a halt." Since the publication of that article, he claims, "the entire United States government – as well as the entire world financial system – has gone completely silent about the insider trading." Well, that just might be a slight overstatement. Many writers continue to discuss insider trading in American Airlines and United sell-options, wondering aloud why nobody picked up the cash when the bets came in. Maybe Mike just stopped reading about it.

FTW Suffers Extensive Property Damage

I guess the big question about the credibility of Mike's role as a counterspy for the forces of freedom is, if he's so damaging to the powers that be, why isn't he dead? Mike's friends sometimes die, of course. There's Gary Webb, who Mike is so sure accomplished the amazing feat of shooting himself twice in the

head. There's Bill McCoy, investigator for Bill and Nancy Hamilton, the folks who had their PROMIS software stolen by Ed Meese. Ruppert seems to opine that McCoy was likely murdered, although he had a heart condition. And the list of people who have died, often by supposed suicide, when they dug too deep into the mysteries of drug money and the CIA is fairly lengthy.

On the night of June 25th, Ruppert's office was vandalized by a person or persons unknown, destroying seven computers, and thereafter many curious circumstances came to light. One of the odd things was that Ruppert's office was in a building that was otherwise occupied entirely by a Federal agency, the Forest Service, which meant that the entire parking lot outside Ruppert's back door was secured with a ten-foot chain link and barbed

wire fence with an electronic gate with key-card entry. Investigation by the AFP disclosed that none of the other Southern Oregon Forest Service offices share their space with non-governmental entities. However, in what seems an odd lack of surveillance in these terrorized times, there were no security cameras anywhere. Rather strange for government offices, and for Ruppert, who goes on at length at his website and in person about how many times government infiltrators have tried to destroy his publishing business.

Mike Investigates Himself Thoroughly

The police investigation was apparently a bit of an embarrassment to Ruppert, because one of his employees speculated aloud that Ruppert might have destroyed his own computers, and the police didn't rule out that possibility. The employee, young and female, also accused Ruppert of sexual harassment, a claim that Ruppert seemed to acknowledge when he admitted that he had danced around his office in his underwear while the employee was in the room, explaining of course that it was a bold investigative tactic intended to flush out the woman's true intentions, trying to get her to "show her hand," as Ruppert

puts it in his own spoutings on the matter. These were, as you might expect, voluminous and filled to overflowing with closely-argued cop-logic, complete with compelled conclusions and obvious cant. In mounting his defense, Ruppert demonstrates a cop's expert ability to interpret facts in the light most favorable to himself, and uses the old trick of making evidence do double duty. For example, watch how he turns an uncorroborated alibi into a basis for accusing his employees of the crime: "It is almost certain that the burglary was perpetrated, at minimum, based upon inside information provided by recently fired or resigned FTW staff members. There is – or was – only one television

seven computers with a sledgehammer would be "physically exhausting." Although he admits that the office was on little-traveled Washington Street, where the vandalism took place in the middle of the night, he argues vociferously that someone would certainly have spotted his "Blue and Gold, 1996 Ford Bronco" that "stands out like a sore thumb." Similarly, he places it in the realm of impossibility that "I could have walked a block or two with a sledge hammer over my shoulder without risking being noticed." It is obvious that whoever broke into the building would have been equally likely to be noticed, as there is nothing about Ruppert, who has an unremarkable rotund profile, or about

a blue and gold Bronco, that would evoke particular notice. AFP investigation, conducted from an unmarked car parked in front of Ruppert's office for eleven minutes at 10:30 pm on a weeknight, resulted in sightings of no vehicles, pedestrians,

or domestic animals for the entire eleven-minute time period. Thus, it is no surprise that whoever smashed the computers did so undetected.

What stood out like a sore thumb was Ruppert's panicked response – issuing elaborate denials of his own culpability, analyzing the crime with pseudo-expertise, and throwing accusations of drug use at an employee whom he had assaulted with a rather gross impropriety. Like small town cops are likely to say of such stories – I don't know how you do it in LA, but here in Ashland, we keep our pants on around the employees.

When Mike posted on his website that he was going to Venezuela to avoid being hit, I thought, yeah right, by a sexual harassment lawsuit. Who knows who smashed his computers? Maybe it was a desperate gambit to refuel his crisis-powered career, or maybe the breakin just caused Ruppert to crack, broke his nerve, after all those years. Once again, he'd let a woman get under his skin, and everything just blew apart. Suddenly, he's sweating, crazy fearful that they'll get him, like they got Gary Webb. No of course, they didn't get Gary Webb. But maybe they got Hunter Thompson. Well I tell you what, Mike, you're no Hunter Thompson. **AFP**

“In other words, he had been alone when the crime occurred, and no one could confirm his whereabouts ...

program I cared about, HBO's Deadwood. It was common knowledge in FTW's new offices that I was obsessed with the show, and on June 25th I was certain to be home watching one of the first episodes of the new season I had been anticipating for a year." In other words, he had been alone when the crime occurred, and no one could confirm his whereabouts, which for most people would be a disadvantage, but not for Ruppert – it proves that his employees did it!

Ruppert is sure that three motorhomes full of road people were spying on him, because for months they parked down on Washington Street, that runs parallel to the freeway out where the cops rarely go, and they all disappeared right after the break-in. Although Ruppert says he assumed the motorhomes were stuffed with spies put on his tail by people who want to silence him, he apparently took no photographs of the vehicles, never wrote down their license numbers, and never reported their presence to the police. Now he bemoans that these, the only witnesses, have disappeared! And who is to blame for failing to record the evidence?

Never fear, Clouseau is on the case. He is certain there were two perpetrators, because the work required to destroy

President Wolf

BY LO-FI NIKITA

"Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." President Bush once tried to say that in a speech, got lost in the attempt, and finally explained to the audience that, whatever the saying was, the meaning was clear – you shouldn't allow yourself to be fooled twice. Some people focus on the wrong part of this story, and think Bush comes off looking stupid, but actually only a boorish "hater" would look at it that way. Sometimes the words don't come out right – but that's not the point – the point is that the guy is trying to be straight with you. When he fumbles his line, he takes another tack and trusts you to understand his point. That's called reaching out to the audience. It works, and it's the type of elegant save that has made Bush the sort of President who can stay popular with a burger-eating, RV-driving, tax-paying, national security conscious electorate.

“When our President cries ‘Wolf!’ you know he means it. There’s a wolf out there. It may not be threatening particular sheep right now, but all wolves are scary, fanged beasts who kill sheep.”

But what if Bush's folksy bumbles and straight-to-the-camera pleas were just the bland deceptions of a bald-faced liar? What if Bush's pants exploded in flames in front of the entire world? Then you would just be left with a graceless lout for a President, a man who talks with his mouth full, says "shit" over lunch with Tony Blair and other world leaders, refers

to heads of state and the chief of the UN as if they were lackeys, and sexually harasses the Prime Minister of Germany with an unwanted shoulder massage. Hey, Condi loves it! Loosen up, babe!

Many liberals predict a reversal of fortune for the President that has yet to be reported in the major news media because Karl Rove is not dead, the Congressional mid-term elections may yet be fixed, and Dick Cheney has about a foot of toilet plunger left before he's done giving the American public the Amadou Diallou treatment. Have you noticed how, now that Bush's disapproval rating is at least 67%, Dick is the guy still dealing aggressively from the deck of lies? Cheney's popularity is not in issue – he's popular in South Dakota, in corporate boardrooms, and on Fox News. His irredeemable rascality has become the administration's last resource in the war on truth. He will say anything, then deny saying it, while picking up campaign contributions for having said it. Like IV drug users who inject themselves with water to create the illusion of getting high, the media is still shooting up TV watchers with Cheney's zero-percent truth solution, although fewer report getting the much-desired experience of belief.

What ever happened to "checks and balances?" Let us turn for interpretive guidance to the original spinmeister, P.T. Barnum, who assured us that "no one ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American people." Barnum also famously divided people into those who could be fooled all of the time and those who could be fooled some of the time. At present, the US Congress wishes to be fooled as much of the time as possible. Witness the stubborn support that Lieberman has received from Congressional pseudo-Democrats who defend his defection from the party as an act of conscience, instead of a baldfaced, Cheney-supported effort to split the Democratic ticket in Connecticut. Outside of Congress, most Americans now fall into that other category – those who can only be fooled some of the time. For them, the days of getting high on

patriotism and security threats to forget the pain of living in a debt-based economy are over. "You're lying," says the public to a disbelieving chorus of prostituted news agencies. "How can you tell?" respond the news agencies, with crestfallen looks. "Your lips are moving," we reply.

“Like IV drug users who inject themselves with water to create the illusion of getting high, the media is still shooting up TV watchers with Cheney's zero-percent truth solution”

Just a few days ago, twenty-one Generals, professionals in the science of modern warfare, sent Bush a letter telling him that Iran is not a nuclear threat, urging him to quit "saber-rattling" and start negotiating. Yet with a puff of wind from Condi's Department of State, these emeritus warriors were dismissed as amateurs. We will get another war cocked and loaded. The President will engage in brinksmanship with religious zealots. He will use inflammatory rhetoric if he is so inspired in his communions with the Lord. Our God can beat up your God, and if you don't think so, just ask Saddam, and he thought he was God.

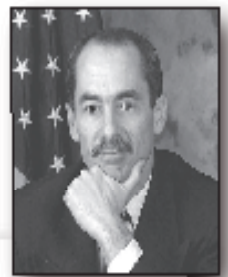
Bush is, after all, a "war president," as he was so eager to tell the TV cameras once that he said it nearly twenty times in under an hour. Sounds like a boy with a new puppy, but a lot more dangerous. Aren't you glad we have a war president? He comes with super eyes that can see the future, super muscles to beat up your enemies, a super credit card to buy everything he wants for himself and his friends, and a super public relations budget that produces new lies when the old ones wear out. He is so super that he even believes that his leadership has been

a blessing for the nation. Along the way, he may have had to tell some stretchers, but it was all for the best. Just ask all the people on military bases who cheer every time he makes a speech. He has to keep those people cheering, because those are the small group of people who can be fooled all the time, and it's his job to keep fooling them.

When our President cries "Wolf!" you know he means it. There's a wolf out there. It may not be threatening particular sheep right now, but all wolves are scary, fanged beasts who kill sheep. Who, after all, could claim there are no wolves? Only one who wishes the wolf to devour the flocks! A person who isn't a shepherd -- a wolf-sympathizer. We aren't talking about the petty matter of whether a wolf-attack occurred on this or that occasion. We're talking now about whether you believe in wolves or not, and whose side you are on. That's what you call controlling the debate, and that's how you neutralize concerns about silly things like who told the truth when. Welcome to the world of the wolf. **AFP**



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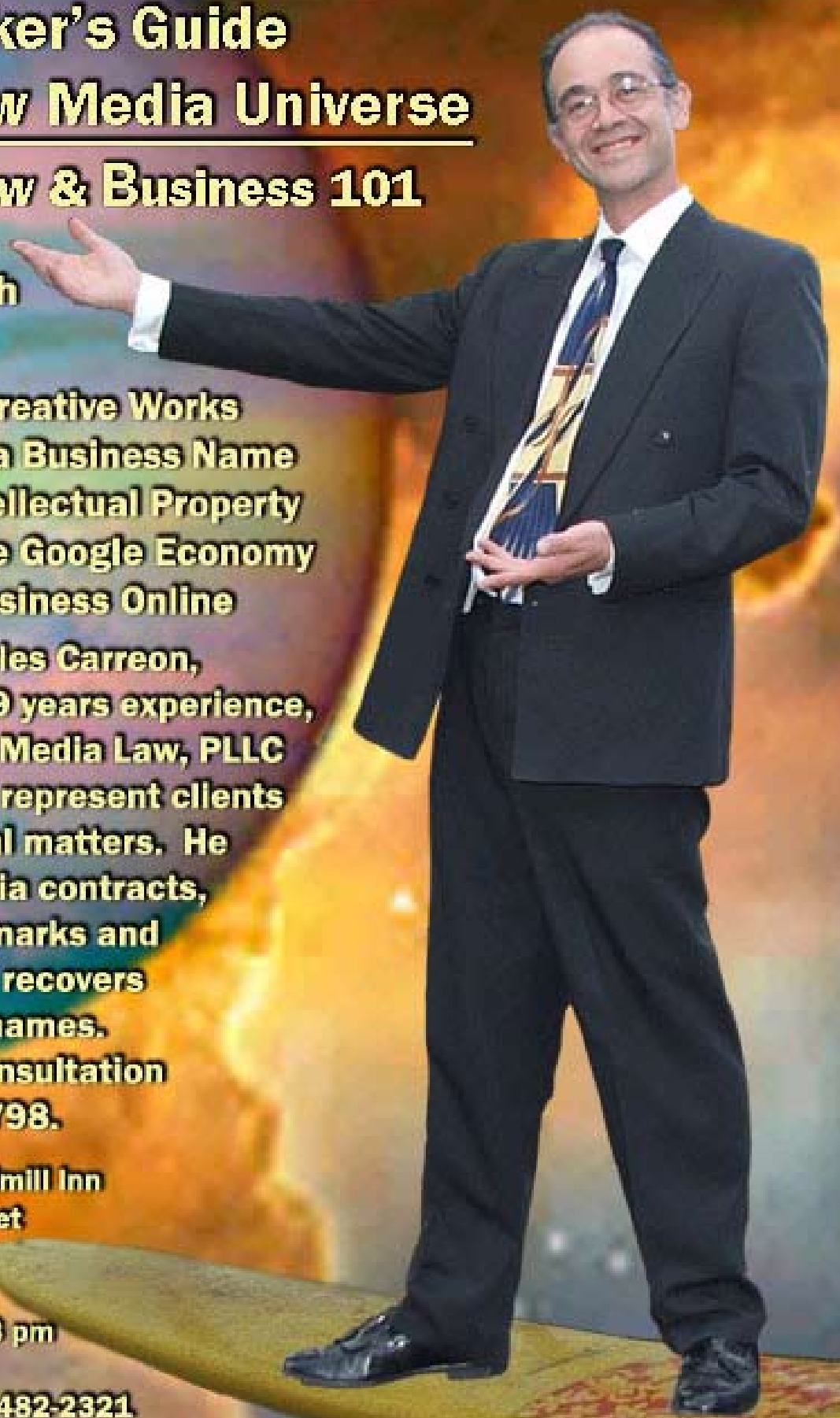
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BY SUMNER WELLBOURNE

I. The Werewolf Expert

"It is not true in every case that the werewolf becomes a cannibal on the night of the full moon." As he wrote these words, Professor Probst realized that statement contradicted the expressed view of many experts, but he was sure it was true. Were he unsure, he would not have recorded it in his diary. He had a rule about what he wrote in his diary, a document that he meant to serve as a scientifically accurate record of his observations. On the inside front cover he had written as a reminder the phrase: "Clear observation – No speculation." The rule had served him well. It was necessary to maintain psychic hygiene, especially when dealing with matters involving the supernatural, as Probst routinely did. He was, after all, the world's greatest living expert on werewolves.

Probst was so dedicated to his study

of lycanthropy that he hadn't noticed when the community college where he had taught in California eliminated all of his teaching hours and took him off the payroll. He didn't figure it out until he went looking for a class schedule, and discovered his name wasn't on it. He

“Probst was sitting up in his sleeping bag, writing in his thirteenth composition notebook on the secret lives of werewolves.”

had moved to Ashland, Oregon eleven years earlier, and had seen plenty of evidence of werewolves in the area, more than once observing the telltale signs of lycanthropism among certain members of the populace.

In addition to its unusually large werewolf population, Ashland was an excellent place to network with other supernatural explorers, although there were some phonies at work. Housing was

a problem, and particularly so during nights of the full moon, when cops made use of the additional light to hunt up homeless people flaunting the law against having no money. Which is why Probst's old VW van was pulled up under the spreading arms of a huge cedar that was dripping wet on this rainy summer

morning, and Probst was sitting up in his sleeping bag, writing in his thirteenth composition notebook on the secret lives of werewolves. The other twelve volumes were stored neatly in an orange crate to his left, an anachronism from a prior era decorated with the bright illustration of a buxom caramel-

skinned woman with blue-black hair spilling from under her red bandana, bearing a basket of oranges over her left shoulder. Probst had preserved the crate, a relic from the era when oranges were still shipped in crates, in memory of a girlfriend who had somewhat resembled the attractive fruit picker. Carla had been her name. Or perhaps Marla.

Perhaps her name was Marla, he

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mused, then abandoned his daydreaming about her caramel skin, and resumed his writing. "The full moon transformation does not affect all lycanthropes in the precise same way, and in certain places and times, far from being considered grotesque, the wolfmen have been considered a form of deviant nobility." Probst had been broadening his searches on the Internet. New information appeared all the time. He would do more research today down at the library. He would continue observing the local werewolves. At this stage in his research, he needed to dig into the fieldwork -- stalk them in their nocturnal haunts, watch them surrender to animal abandon, and record it all in his careful, draftsman-style

handwriting. His intuition told him that werewolves might be resurging because of global warming, that was paradoxically increasing precipitation and snowfalls in the area, but he wasn't ready to write it in his notebook. He needed evidence. This next full moon, if it wasn't raining again. His eyes fixed in the middle distance, he grasped the silver bullet that hung 'round his neck -- a keepsake from his wanderings in the Balkans. He had no ill will toward the lycanthropic race, indeed he suspected he was romantically attracted to them, but the weighty cartridge comforted him on lonely nights when the howling and barking got too close to the van. Deviant nobility -- he liked that term. He smiled and chewed the end of his pencil.

Probst heard a rap on the side of the van, and looked up to see his friend Rodney smiling in the driver side window. He probably wanted to take a walk. Rodney lived in a truck, and took long walks as a way of keeping himself occupied and exercised. Rodney didn't believe in werewolves, but that was all right with Probst. Rodney played chess and published a poetry magazine on an occasional basis. He climbed inside the front seat of the van, and pulled the door shut.

"Whaddaya workin' on, Probst, your life story? Better get some exercise, or it'll be a short one." Rodney laughed as if he'd just taken Probst's pawn in a chess game,

and pushed ahead with his usual bravado. "C'mon, let's take a walk, amigo!"

"You didn't bring me any coffee, man," replied Probst. "It's all wet. I'll have to put on my rain gear."

"Don't worry, it's barely drizzling. Live dangerously, or better yet, use an umbrella, professor," said Rodney.

"I'll just suit up," said Probst. Probst pulled corduroy pants over his long underwear, a plaid coat over his flannel shirt, and some thick woolen socks over his feet, while Rodney launched into a

Probst had first become aware of werewolves in Nam, when he realized that his sergeant was one.

monologue about local politics. Rodney didn't always require responses to his statements, and Probst had gotten the hang of nodding at the right time a long time ago. So he and Rodney got along perfectly well. They walked out from under the big, dripping cedar, onto the little gravel track Probst had found leading up to his hideout, and down onto the road.

Probst had set up his squat with careful attention to "the three S's" -- "shape, shadow and size," an old military acronym he'd picked up during his service in Nam as a spotter for the B-52s that pummeled the Ho Chi Minh Trail every night with high explosives bombs like seeds that trickled from the devil's overflowing maw. To identify rebel supply and construction locations on aerial photographs, the places where huge Russian and Chinese bulldozers and trucks would lie hidden during the night, spotters searched for unusual shapes and shadows, and objects of unusual size. Anything square or blocky, or casting straight line shadows, or just too damn big to be a natural form, would be marked for destruction.

Probst had first become aware of werewolves in Nam, when he realized that his sergeant was one. Racine was the sergeant's name, and Racine's secret was no secret to anyone. One night when their platoon was in a forward position separated from the rest of G Company, the huge Vietnamese full moon came

up over the Mekong River, he underwent the classic transformation in front of the entire squad. Racine was a decent fellow, actually the best kind of sergeant, and after the event he remembered nothing, so everyone covered for him, even though the scene was weirder than anything you'd see in *Apocalypse Now*.

It started with Racine heating up a cup of instant coffee in his canteen cup over a little sputtering fire he'd made from a pinch of plastic explosive. Usually by this hour of the night, everyone would've

loosened up with a heroin-laced spleef, but the squad's drug dealer had been injured by a booby trap a week before and nobody else had been able to score since he got helicoptered out. So they were all straight except for a couple of the guys

from California, who had a stash of acid. That stuff didn't agree with Probst, so he was just jonesin' for a joint when Racine started coughing.

Nobody said anything until the coughing had kept up for a couple of minutes, and Racine was doubled over in a squat, his head between his knees, hacking in a hoarse voice deep in his throat. Then all of a sudden he whipped his head up and snapped his whole body into a wolf posture, his mouth tilted open to the sky, and emitted a howl that could've come out of the mouth of a timber wolf. Then he kept doing it for so long that even the acid heads stopped laughing and got scared, confused looks on their faces. What the fuck was Sarge doing, howling like a goddamned coyote? Then the huge moon came up over the rim of the jungle foliage and cast a ray of light on Racine. The sergeant's face was shockingly transformed, as was his entire body. His shoulder, neck and arm muscles were bulging with strength, his tongue seemed elongated, his canines shone brightly, and his facial muscles had shaped themselves into such a doglike resemblance that the acid heads freaked out, shouting simultaneously, "He's a fucking werewolf!" and reached for their weapons.

Probst liked ready firepower, and grunts could carry any sidearm they wanted. He'd opted for a sawed-off twelve-gauge pump shotgun. He'd carved the stock into a pistol grip, and loaded the

magazine with alternating deer slugs and double-odd shot. The slugs would punch through twelve inches of wet phone book, and the shot would melt the skin off bones. Probst thought of it as his personal shield, and so far nobody had gotten past it. When Probst racked the pump and leveled it at the trippers, fumbling with the safeties on their M-16s, he got their close attention.

Probst's head shook lightly in the moonlight as he assured the men in a calm voice, "Sarge is on a bummer. Stand down, gentlemen. I'll take care of him." A gentle wave of the sawed-off reassured them that Probst was in charge, and the acid heads released their automatic rifles.

"It's cool, man," said Retro, a black nineteen-year old from Pomona who looked like he was comin' down fast off the acid buzz.

"Yeah, cool," echoed Lenny, the second tripper, a Pacific Palisades boy who seemed far from sure that anything was cool.

The third tripper, Carlito, a Latino from Silverlake in LA, said nothing, still riveted on the sight of Racine, whose howls continued to split the night.

Then Lt. Darcy showed up, pulled away from the warm arms of his underage prostitute by the sergeant's ear-splitting howls. Flashing his light around, he saw Probst with his leveled gun, the nervous acid heads with eyes glittering, and Racine howling like Rin Tin Tin mourning the death of Lassie, turned right around, and walked into his tent. Then he came back out with his service .45 in his hand and walked over to Probst.

In a breathy voice loaded with good whiskey, Darcy whispered in Probst's ear in his cultured southern drawl, "What the fuck is going on here? Is Racine high, or what?"

"I have no idea. I'm just watching. Why don't you go back to bed Lieutenant. I'll see this through." Probst kept his eyes on the acid heads while talking to Darcy.

Darcy continued his twangy whispering, "Perhaps it hasn't occurred to you, Corporal, that this might give away our position to the enemy."

"Yes, I did, but I'm hoping they'll think it's a dog, and the US Army rarely

operates with canine patrols."

"Can't you shut him up?"

"He just started a minute ago. I'm hoping he'll shut up soon. If he doesn't maybe we'll have to call for a medic. Gimme a little bit."

“The acid heads looked around and up at the sky in wonder, and started howling, too, laughing their asses off as a war zone turned into a primeval forest.”

Then, something even stranger happened. Another howl burst out of the jungle to Probst's right, and it sounded remarkably near. Then, in an eerie chorus, the howls began to sound all around them, blending with Racine's into a moonlight serenade of soaring unity. The acid heads looked around and up at the sky in wonder, and started howling, too, laughing their asses off as a war zone turned into a primeval forest. As the moon rose higher, the scene of pandemonium unfolded, Probst lowered his sidearm and turned to Darcy, nodding as if he knew something. Darcy sullenly returned to his tent, the embraces of his bedtime companion, as the jungle around them echoed with an ever-increasing number of howling voices. In the morning, Racine was himself again, sleeping like a baby next to a canteen-cup of cold coffee.

II. Saigon Days

The incident with Sgt. Racine had been a one-time event that never recurred. Although not a dooper on a regular basis, from then on, Racine slept through every full-moon night, retiring early to his tent with two shots of vodka laced with a dose of pharmaceutical morphine. Racine was a lifer, then in his early fifties. He had stormed beaches in the South Pacific and served in the postwar occupation of Japan. He was a committed non-com who had refused a promotion to officer status more than once. He was fanatical about handling prisoners according to the rules of war.

Racine had a run-in with Darcy once, when the lieutenant was on the verge of

executing an old man who had concealed a stash of mortars in his rice bin.

Quoting Army regulations, Racine swiftly recited: "Sir! Persons captured or detained by the U.S. Military Services shall normally be handed over for safeguarding to U.S. Army Military Police as soon as practical."

Of course, Darcy, with his fuck-your-procedure attitude, had aired back the hammer on his pistol, and kept looking straight at Racine, as if he would splatter the old man's brains if he felt like it. The old man hadn't flinched – he was twice the man Darcy tried to be – and neither had Racine, who

just quoted another regulation: "Sir! All military personnel shall ensure that suspected or alleged violations of the international law of war are promptly reported to the appropriate authorities and investigated in accordance with Department of Defense directives."

A look of disgust distorted Darcy's blonde good looks, and without taking his eyes off Racine, he moved the pistol two inches to the right and pulled the trigger next to the old man's ear, simultaneously destroying the man's hearing and firing a round into the dirt floor of the bamboo hut. "Well then," said Darcy, "take care of the prisoner, sergeant." He spit the last word.

Racine didn't like Darcy, either, but early on, he had saved the lieutenant's ass from becoming a casualty of friendly



Continued...

fire. The grunts had made a list of Darcy's most hate-able traits, among them commandeering the best-looking prostitutes for himself, hoarding liquor, and his tendency to order minorities to walk point on patrol. This lists of unofficial beefs, Racine well knew, amounted to an indictment that would culminate in a regrettable accident. As the hatred for Darcy in the unit had seethed and simmered, Racine nipped it in the bud, but not by quoting procedure to the grunts. He'd had a little sit-down with Darcy that went like this:

He began, "Excuse me, Lieutenant, may I have a moment with you."

"Yes?" Darcy responded in irritation, lifting his eyes but not raising his head from the paperback novel he was reading.

"Sir," continued Racine, "You know you are the third lieutenant this platoon has had in the last sixteen months."

Annoyed, Darcy looked up fully from the book and asked, "Are you suggesting something?"

"No sir, I'm just reviewing the facts," answered Racine.

"Yeah," responded Darcy laconically, "well I'm not going home like the rest of them. My great grandfather fought at the Battle of Bull Run under Stonewall Jackson."

Racine shook his head and leaned forward gently, "Precisely, Sir. General Westmoreland isn't Stonewall Jackson, and the men in your unit aren't southern gentlemen. They're young draftees, they're scared, and frankly, they don't like you."

Darcy blanched whiter than usual, swallowed and said, "They wouldn't dare."

"Sir," responded Racine, "I would not bet on that." Then he took one step back, snapped to attention, delivered a crisp salute, and left the silent lieutenant alone in his tent.

Probst heard this story from Racine while they sat having drinks in a Saigon bar during the last few months before the fall of the South Vietnamese government. The two were reminiscing about Darcy,

who had been promoted several times and shipped back to Washington to take a job at the Pentagon. While they sipped their drinks, Racine grew nostalgic, and started talking about his days in the South Pacific.

Racine began, "I was on some tiny, no-name coral atoll with some palm trees, a helluva lot of spiders, and a shitload of Japs. My buddy and I got sent out on recon to find a source of fresh water, and got lost around nightfall. We ended up hiding out in a collapsed palm hut, and damn if the Japs didn't come and set up camp right in front of the damn thing. They built a fire and cooked some fish. Man, I was hungry smellin' that fish, but we couldn't move. We were hidden away in a big pile of palm fronds at the back

buddy was not only dead, there wasn't much left of him. Some wild dogs had been eatin' on him, and they were startin' in on me. I woke up with one of 'em biting into my right shin – right here –" Racine stopped his narrative to raise his pants leg, roll down his sock, and expose the scar.

After rolling his pants leg back down, Racine resumed. "My sidearm was still strapped on. I couldn't get it out of the holster, because I could barely move my hand. But I got the safety off and fired a round that spooked the bastard and his buddies. They were howling all around the hut after that, but they didn't come back in. I wasn't bleeding too bad, and the pain kept working on my brain, so pretty soon I was regaining some strength. I dragged myself out of the goddamn hut, and kept crawling toward the beach. I laid on the sand all night, as close to the water as I could. Every now and then a wave would wash over me and wake me up. I knew I had to stay out of that jungle, and away from that hut. The spiders or the dogs would get me if I stayed. As it was, the dogs kept watch all night over me, their eyes glowing like the waves. The next morning, my strength was gone. I couldn't

move from the spot. I figured I was gonna die there, one more soldier dead on a beach with no one to cry over him."

"How'd it turn out?" asked Probst, eager to know the end of the story.

"Never saw that fuckin' island again. My unit found me the next day on the beach. I woke up on a hospital ship on the way to Manila with a morphine drip in my arm and a Filipina nurse giving me a nasty look. First thing she said to me was 'GI, hands off!' Cracked me up. Like I was thinkin' about her body! After all I'd been through, all I wanted was for nothin' to happen ever again. I just wanted to sit for about six months. Instead they sent me to the VA hospital in Los Angeles. You know the place."

Probst knew the place, of course. So many vets had been through that medical hell-hole over the years, and few had good memories. Lobotomies, electroshock, insulin shock, chemical restraints, you name it, the VA medicos had tried it on

“The grunts had made a list of Darcy’s most hate-able traits, among them commandeering the best-looking prostitutes for himself, hoarding liquor, and his tendency to order minorities to walk point on patrol.”

of the hut, just watchin' 'em eatin' and talkin' Japanese. My buddy wanted to kill 'em and steal their food, but that would've been crazy, I thought, and I told him so. Probably woulda brought a whole bunch of their pals down around our neck. Mighta been a better idea than what we did, though."

"What did you do?"

"We laid there all night in the palm fronds while the Japs stuffed themselves with fish and swapped dirty jokes. In the morning, I was the only one alive."

"Why's that?"

"The fuckin' spiders. Fuckin' spiders, man..."

"Whaddaya mean? Spider bite killed your buddy?"

"Yeah, and nearly killed me. I probably woulda died, actually, except for ..."

Probst interrupted Racine. "Knocked you out for a while?"

"For how long, I don't know, man."

"You're kidding..."

"No, I'm serious. When I woke up, my

some poor vet.

"Why'd they send you there?" asked Probst.

"Said I was a headcase."

"Were you?" Probst didn't place great on emphasis this question, just kept peering into his beer mildly.

"No, I wasn't"

"So why'd they say you were?"

"You remember that night with the platoon, when Darcy was still our CO?"

"The night you made like Wolfman Jack and scared the piss out of the Cali boys?"

Racine first grunted and shifted his shoulders forward to acknowledge Probst's recollection, then resumed his explanation. "That happened before. It happened around my family. I had a wife. She wouldn't have me around. Said on the full moon I got crazy, acted like a dog, treated her like a dog." Racine seemed humiliated.

"You don't have to tell me this, Sarge," said Probst, leaning forward even farther over the bar to whisper this with a meaningful, sincere glance. "You don't have to explain. It never happened again."

"It doesn't happen if I'm knocked out, so that's why, y'know, the vodka and the hard stuff. I never do that otherwise."

"I know, Sarge. You're a straight guy. It's a problem you deal with."

"Yeah, I deal with it," said Racine, looking straight into Probst's eyes. "I deal with it, but I don't understand it. And if it happens again, don't call a medic. I don't hurt nobody. I just scared my wife that one time. But the medics, they like to study strange problems. I don't want to be a lab animal."

"Right. Gotcha, Sarge. Happens again, no medics."

"It won't happen again," emphasized Racine with a small smile, "but just in case it does."

"Sure, no worries," replied Probst, extending his hand to exchange a soul-brother grip with Racine. Then he turned to the waitress, raised his eyebrows, lit up a Park Lane, and asked for another round – "Another couple of Tigers over here, okay Lily?"

The bargirl joked -- "You guys drink too much. Don't you want girl?"

Probst pulled in another lungful of reefer smoke and exhaled, smiling through the intoxicating cloud and watching Racine's reflection in the mirror behind the bar -- "Just the beer."

Racine nodded his head in agreement, and took a long drink. **AFP**

WEREWOLVES IN ASHLAND WILL BE
CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Let's Get Off Our Butts!

A SEMI-NONYMOUS EMAIL

I am constantly bewildered by how many cars I see whizzing down Oak Street at speeds exceeding the limit by ten or more mph. A lot of these drivers are Ashland residents who are consider themselves PCSA (Progressive, Conscientious, Socially Aware). So why do they keep getting in their cars as if it's our number one right in the universe? When I go to the Food Coop on my bike, I see few empty parking spaces, and fear for my life dodging cars. My fellow Coop shoppers have in their bags various assortments of natural products, and presumably care about the world and sustaining a healthy planet, but then again, we must exercise our right! I hope I don't sound like I've never driven. I lived out in the country for a long time and drove a lot. I just figure, being in a small town where everything's close, if I can get some much-loved and needed exercise, I'm going to walk, mostly bike, and love every second of it!



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Free Speech Weathervane

BY LO-FI NIKITA

Just Gimme Some Truth

Dow Jones, the company that monitors the financial markets like an aging relative's blood pressure, owns The Wall Street Journal. The WSJ was once the best place to get all the news the elites allowed themselves to learn about, without fear that it would be learned by the rest of the world. But those days are over -- the truth is too hot for any major news agency to handle. Just look at this Mark Foley scandal. A brace of young boys had been accusing ex-Congressman Foley of pervy behavior for over a year, and telling the press about it. Sure, you wouldn't expect the FBI to investigate -- if it's not terrorism or a bank robbery, they don't have time. You wouldn't expect Congress to investigate -- they're busy trying to bankrupt the nation by selling their vote to the carousel of lobbyists who alternately terrorize and seduce them. But we cherish a hope that the newspapers will move on this stuff. What a pain to learn they are as crooked as the cops and the Congress.

Crime, What Crime?

The WSJ covered the Clinton scandal very thoroughly, as I recall, because that involved the unforgiveable crime of having sex in a special room where, apparently, only symbolic acts of fellatio are permitted. The current Oval Office occupant has committed many crimes, but the WSJ never bothers to report on law-breaking by the President, because the Attorney General persuades Congress to alter the laws retroactively to eliminate any taint of illegality that might have attached to the initial misdeed. Of course, then it's not news anymore, so there's no point in reporting on it at all. Let's face it. There's no point in reporting on a crime if it's just going to be made legal as soon as it's discovered. That's just a waste of ink.

Truth is, the WSJ stopped reporting anything controversial once the War on Terror became the number one concern of every news-person. You may recall that Hollywood also froze up, and hasn't really made a good movie since the three towers collapsed. The first casualty of war, as they say, is the truth. Since this war on terror is scheduled to last forever, that must mean that the truth has been permanently banished from our nation.

www.DailyCensorship.com

The Internet is going to save us, right? There will be robust debate on bulletin boards. The Ashland Daily Tidings, for example, allows readers to post comments on its articles. They have to be short comments, because the Tidings only lets people post about five lines. This is as at best as stupid as Dilbert's boss thinking his company would save computer memory if everyone

word-processed using smaller fonts. Now I realize that short posts are better because none would be best of all.

On August 25, 2006, the Tidings ran Bob Plain's article on Michael Ruppert, "Wilderness Relocates to Venezeula." The article provoked many comments, and a poster we'll call Teesee was doing her best in the restricted space format to post some serious information about Ruppert and his CIA connections. The Tidings actually *employs a censor* to review posts before they appear online, though, and Teese was uploading faster than the censor was reading. The censor then jumbled her posts so they didn't make sense. Soon she started to harvest a stream of nasty comments from some online bullies. Then the Tidings censor refused to post her replies to the bullies. The Tidings censor added decisive strength to one side of a debate,

allowing Teese to be pelted with verbal abuse, and depriving her of the means to respond. Somewhere, a corporate halfwit was working hard damping down digital conflict. The Tidings' fluffy reporting accentuates the positive, while the censor eradicates the offensive. Under the guise of protecting itself from liability, or readers from offensive speech, the Tidings is

abusing its media power, distorting the image of our community. The censor doesn't protect the Tidings from liability, either. Comment boards have an absolute exemption from libel and other forms of "publisher liability" for third party statements under 47 USC Sec. 230(c)(1). *See Zeran v. AOL*, 129 F.3d at 331. The Tidings enjoys free speech rights under the First Amendment. It should accord some to its readers.

Oh, That Community Forum...

For a couple of days in August, The Tidings opened a "Community Forum" that allowed posters to post comments about any topic, of any length, with image-upload capabilities. Neat! Teesee started posting. After two days, the Community Forum went offline, and stayed off. The AFP sent an email to Tidings Editor Scott Bolsinger asking what had happened to the Community Forum. He replied that the Forum was still up. What? Is everyone on the Bush plan? Just saying whatever's convenient? It's gone! Why is the Community Forum gone, Scott? Did the censor fear impending unemployment? Did it keep you up at night thinking what someone might post?

Ashland, New York

The Tidings, like 23 other newspapers, is owned by Dow Jones subsidiary Ottaway Community Newspapers. The company website says that Ottaway's CEO John Wilcox, "has residences in Washingtonville, New York and on Cape Cod, Massachusetts." You need those on the east coast. He has the advanced degrees, the management training, the pedigree. Perhaps he's been to Oregon. The website quotes former CEO Jim Ottoway, Jr.: "We're constantly walking a tightrope to avoid benign neglect of papers or, on the other hand, too much management." Benign neglect, huh? I'll go for the "neglect" part.

“Under the guise of protecting itself from liability, or readers from offensive speech, the Tidings is abusing its media power, distorting the image of our community.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

The AFP Interview with MAA General Manager Kim Clark

AFP: Does MAA hold private board meetings?

KC: All board meetings are open to the public. The meetings are held once a month, usually on the third Monday of the month. Times and locations of board meetings are posted at the Mt. Ashland office on Washington street in Ashland. There is also an annual meeting which is on Monday, October 9th. The meeting will be held at Rogue Valley Medical Center in Smullin Center, rooms 101-103. Occasionally the top ranking board members will call an executive session during which they may discuss issues protected by attorney client privilege. Executive sessions are not open to the public.

AFP: The mtashland.com website states: "No public tax dollars were used to purchase the mountain nor have any been used to operate and manage the resort." The author of the web site www.mountashland.com claims that is inaccurate: "The State of Oregon gave \$500,000 to help the Mount Ashland Association buy the ski area in 1992, gave them another \$100,000 grant in September 2003 to reimburse their costs of studying the expansion, the City of Ashland pays \$150,000 annually for the special use permit to operate the ski area." Please comment.

KC: The State of Oregon awarded Friends of Mt. Ashland (Now MAA) a \$500k Economic Development Grant in 1992. The grant was from a State lottery fund earmarked for public recreation projects. No tax dollars were involved. The State also reimbursed MAA for the cost of the Environmental Impact Statement. The City of Ashland pays \$0 as far as costs for permits or anything else regarding the ski area. Mt. Ashland pays a percentage of their total sales to the Forest Service every year and it is the same at every ski area in the United States. MAA provides affordable winter recreation, and public education programs, while upholding the highest environmental standards possible, and it doesn't cost tax payers a dime. In fact, MAA pays the City \$1 per

year, as stated in the lease agreement. The special use permit costs the City nothing.

AFP: The Sustainable Slopes Environmental Charter is mentioned frequently on the web site www.mtashland.com. The First Principle in the Charter states: "Engage local communities, environmental groups, government agencies and other stakeholders in up front and continuing dialogue on development plans and their implementation." M.A.A. recently refused to enter into mediation proceedings with opponents of the proposed ski expansion. In 2001, M.A.A. suggested to remove the public appeals option from the NEPA process. Does this indicate unwillingness on the part of M.A.A. to engage in continuing dialog with environmental groups?

KC: We have engaged the public through the NEPA process. There are over 40 pages of public comments included in the NEPA draft. The expansion alternative 2 has already been modified based on the concerns expressed by the Public. It has been reworked to protect environmentally sensitive areas and we take people's concerns very seriously. We have been in mediation proceedings twice before with the Sierra Club. They have proven themselves unwilling to negotiate. If we had decided to enter mediation proceedings yet a third time, cases which we currently have pending in the court system would have been put on hold by the Judge. The reason being that the Judge would figure if we are going to mediate through these things then there's no reason to make a decision in the case. We would rather have the case decided in court and feel we have honored the First Principle of the Sustainable Slopes Environmental Charter. As for removing the public appeals option from the NEPA process, I don't know anything about that. I haven't been here that long. I will say that MAA has a responsibility to this community and the surrounding communities, to inform people of any changes to be made on the mountain before we make any changes. That doesn't mean I'm going up to the mountain with a chainsaw in one hand and a cellphone in the other.

AFP: M.A.A. is a public benefit corporation and a non-profit organization. The lease agreement (Dated July 9, 1992) between the City



of Ashland and M.A.A. gives the City of Ashland the right to conduct inspections and investigations of ski area operations (Section 13.4)." General Manager Kim Clark is quoted in the Daily Tidings: "The Mt. Ashland Association is a private business, and we need to remain competitive with other businesses," and "We don't need to let everyone know what our hiring wages or practices are when we're competing against Subway or any other winter job." Does M.A.A. have the right to keep secret from the Public anything regarding ski area operations or financial matters?

KC: All of our financial reports are certified by a C.P.A. and are a matter of public record. The public can obtain this information at no charge by contacting the Mt. Ashland office. As far as competing against other businesses, MAA has a responsibility to operate in a manner that is fiscally responsible, therefore we recognize that there is a risk when you let competitors obtain critical information. We believe our duty to be fiscally responsible requires us to maintain secrecy around certain matters. For instance, season pass prices are not announced until we assess what operating costs will look like in the next year.

AFP: By providing Public education and outdoor programs, M.A.A. is obligated in the lease agreement to contribute "Substantial Public benefit" to the local community. Is there a specific method used by M.A.A. to calculate a set portion of revenue which will be put towards Public Benefit projects or programs in any given year? How does Mt. Ashland compare to other publicly owned ski areas in terms of the amount and quality of public benefits provided?

KC: There are only 20 publicly owned ski areas in the United States, the closest being in Boise, Idaho. We do not have any set amount which goes towards public benefit programs. We tend to look at what we can do best or most effectively for the community. This includes summer

science camps, the give a kid a lift program, the mountain shuttle program which brings people from as far away as Grants Pass, all of which are completely underwritten by MAA. The average cost of a day at most ski areas in Oregon is \$51 per day. The average cost of a day at Mt. Ashland is \$23, which is a substantial difference in price. We try to provide the best services at the most affordable price. By doing this, we believe we are fulfilling our obligation to provide public benefit to the community..

The AFP interview with Eric Navickas, Ashland City Council Candidate

AFP: Do The People of Ashland have any measurable influence on decisions made with regard to the proposed Mt. Ashland ski area expansion?

EN: Hypothetically they do as the City of Ashland holds the Special Use Permit with the Forest Service and the lease with the Mt. Ashland Association for the Forest Service. Unfortunately, both the Mt. Ashland Association have arrogantly disregarded specific requests from the City. The City passed a resolution specifically requesting that the Forest Service consider a community-based alternative that would have had significantly less environmental repercussions. The Forest Service refused to consider this alternative. The City is currently requesting that the MAA present a business plan, show that they have funds set aside in case the development fails and work with a city approved team to oversee implementation of the project. The MAA is threatening to sue for interference with their business operation despite the fact that the city is ultimately financially responsible if the business fails.

AFP: Is there a person who has the responsibility to represent and relate the interests of the people of ashland to the MAA board of directors? Is there an intermediary who works on behalf of The People of ashland?

EN: The Board of Directors for the MAA is self appointed; there is absolutely no democratic oversight of internal decisions of the Board.

AFP: What would be the next move for MAA if it was up to you to decide?

EN: Back away from expansion and begin realistic improvements on the development. The costs to push forward the expansion have exhausted the MAA funds and caused them to defer much

needed maintenance and restoration of the current development. Ariel lift is an antique, visitor services are poor, soils throughout the runs are in need of stabilization, the rental building is undersized and in poor condition, and staff and employees are underpaid. They need to invest in improving what already exists.

AFP: Is there any possibility of a compromise, or are the people of Ashland being forced to choose between two extremes?

EN: Yes, there are several alternatives that the environmental community have presented that would expand the area in a more sensitive way. However, my personal view is that we have a good ski area that needs improvements as stated above.

AFP: What can people do to participate more in the decision making process with regard to the Mt. Ashland ski area?

EN: So far the Forest Service and the MAA have completely disregarded broad community opposition to this proposal, perhaps it's time to prepare for nonviolent direct action.

Mt. Ashland History

* 1929- Cooperative agreement between City of Ashland and U.S.F.S. made for the purpose of conserving and protecting the water supply of the City of Ashland, Oregon.

1963- Local skiing enthusiasts build the Lodge, Ariel chair, and a T-bar and rope tow through a grassroots effort.

* 1970- Southern Oregon State College Foundation manages the ski area.

* 1975- Memorandum of understanding between U.S.F.S. and City of Ashland. Details an agreement where City of Ashland agrees to hire consultants to monitor conditions of local watershed. Forest Service agrees to assist and implement any measures necessary to maintain quality of the watershed.

* 1977- Dick Hicks purchases the ski area and raises funds to build the Windsor chair lift in 1978.

* 1983- Ski area sold to Harbor Properties of Seattle. Night lighting, vehicle shop, Sonnet, and Comer chair lifts installed.

* 1991- \$2 million is raised to save Mt. Ashland from bankruptcy. Money for

the purchase is raised through donor-restricted contributions and a grant from the Oregon Economic Development fund. The mountain is then donated to City of Ashland who hires Mt. Ashland Association to maintain and operate the ski area. In 2003, MAA lists their marketable assets as having fair market value of \$1,251,093.

* 1992- Lease agreement signed between City of Ashland and Mt. Ashland Association. Option to be renewed or terminated on June 30, 2017. "The sole relation of the parties hereto to be landlord and tenant".

* 1996- Memorandum of understanding between U.S.F.S. and City of Ashland. City of Ashland agrees to provide fire protection services within the watershed area. U.S.F.S. agrees to implement a new wildfire prevention plan.

* 1998- Watershed restoration agreement- "For the purpose of facilitating cooperation between the landowner (City of Ashland) and Forest Service in specific restoration, enhancement, or protection efforts." "Provides for the interchange of services, equipment, and funds...to meet the mutually agreed upon objectives of a watershed restoration project."

* 1998- \$17 million expansion plan to double the size of the ski area is proposed by MAA. Met with strong resistance by local environmental groups who oppose logging and construction within the Ashland watershed.

* 2004- Expansion proposal upheld by the U.S.F.S. Proposal includes construction of a new lodge, a new lift and 200 more parking spaces.

* 2005- The City of Ashland requests that Mt. Ashland Association provide a Business Plan showing capital expenditure and operating projections for the planned expansion. Requests that MAA include the following details:

Projected construction expenditures for each year of the expansion build out.

Projected sources of funds for financing the expansion for each year of the build out.

Projected operating revenues and expenses reflecting historic skier visitation variability for at least a 10-year time frame during and after the expansion build out.

Sources of funding for financing restoration/rehabilitation reserves.

Sources of funding for financing the QA/QC team.

* August, 2006- MAA submits an "Abbreviated business plan", refusing to release many financial details publicly, citing "Obligations to our stakeholders" as a major concern of MAA.

* September, 2006- City of Ashland hires attorney to represent interests of the City to MAA. MAA threatens to sue City of Ashland for interfering with their business plan.

* October, 2006- City of Ashland revokes MAA authority to deal directly with the U.S.F.S. MAA is informed that no construction or logging will be allowed to proceed until a proper business plan is submitted. **AFP**



Costruction of the Mt. Ashland Lodge.



The first ski patrol on Mt. Ashland.



1963 Construction begins on the Ariel ski lift.



Mt. Ashland T-bar.



Rope tow on Mt. Ashland 1963-64.



Proposed expansion area looking South



Locals take their message to the slopes.



1953 Logging truck on Mt. Ashland



2006 Citizens demonstrate on the Ashland Plaza.



A recent demonstration in Ashland.



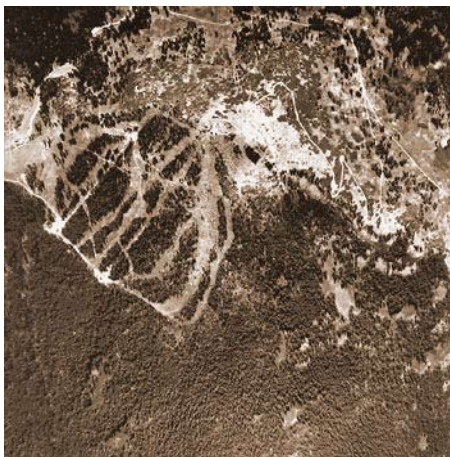
"The Bowl" 1950's



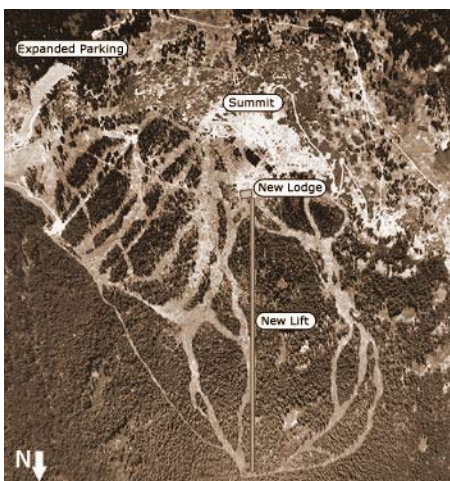
A recent demonstration in Ashland.



Ski Patrol on Mt. Ashland 1963.



Mt. Ashland Ski Area has 200 acres of skiable terrain, four lifts, and a lodge.



MAA's expansion proposal would more than double the size of the ski area.

KSKQ RADIO

BY LESLIE DELOREAN

KSKQ studios have moved to a new studio at 330 Hersey, #2, where we are producing several local shows and streaming programs over the Net at www.kskq.org. We are close to securing a place for our transmitter, and getting on the air is within our grasp.

The Program Schedule:

M-F 5:30 pm Free Speech Radio News (also M-F 6:30 am)

M-F 6:00 pm Democracy Now! with Amy Goodman (repeated M-F 7:00 am)

Wed 7:00 pm KSKQ Public Open Mic

— members of the community can bring announcements of events and issues and announce live from the KSKQ studio.

Wed 7:30 pm Live at Studio 2-B with Rick Sultan and Jayme Creller, where you'll catch the latest in art, music, and entertainment. This show has interviews and live performances.

Fri 7:00 pm The Not-Too-Serious Relationship and Love Show with Scott. A talk show about the man-woman interplay, romantic partnerships, seeking and meeting potential mates, personal emotional health, creating magnetic attraction, deep self-love, responsible and fun communication, and everything in between. Live phone-in will be added soon!

Fri 8:00 pm The Leslie Love Show. A widely varied, contrasty music show about, what else? Love! Finding love, keeping love, crazy in love, and lost love. Help build the KSKQ music library, bring in your dedications and music that inspires love.

Fri 11:59 pm Captain Mike's Pirate Radio Hour. Recreating the pirate radio ...arrrr... of the early 70's with great music such as: King Crimson, ELP, Neal Young, YES, early acid rock, and music that is uncatagorizable.

Sat 11:59 pm Rogues in the Night. Donnie and Chris bring to the listener what can't be found anywhere else: underground, punk rock, industrial music, and talk. Leslie the Chairman has been know to "LMAO" while listening to this show.

To get involved or get more information, please call the station at 482-3999 or email Leslie@kskq.org.

Craft, Meet, Swap, Groove

BY CARLOS RAMONE

This town once had "a thriving crafts scene" and a "local economy." Some folks are trying to bring it back. Help out!

Underground Craft Mkt (Third & Main Streets) Nov 11 & Dec 9

Noon - 6 pm

Find a cool handmade gift that will lift someone's spirit. Values abound and buyers are loved at the Underground Crafter's market. And if you're a crafter, call Ariel and Aura at Small Crafts Advisory (488-9698) to get a table.

Annual Musician's Swap

(Bellevue School, 1070 Tolman Crk Rd), Dec 10, 11 am to 6 pm

More guitars than you could pick in a month of Sundays, more musicians than you could shake a stick at. This is the 9th time they've done this, and it gets better every year. Call Tom or Linda Fredferick at 482-4830 to get a table.

Burnt, Man

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

toilets, showers and water sources that everyone goes around constipated, dusty and thirsty for the duration. In the end, all of the entertainment is provided by people who are either part of some art commune that you have to pay to be part of, or who just show up and pole dance for free. The people who organized this are geniuses — soon they'll be charging people to masturbate in public while charging other people to watch and encourage them. And people thought Vegas was a rip!

No, this Burning Man thing is utter bullshit, and the more approval it gets from the mainstream press, the less I like it. The world, people, is on fire already. Instead of helping to burn it down, grab a bucket! Instead of marinating in "art," lend a hand to your fellow-human. At least, for god's sake, don't add to the problem under the guise of just having fun, just getting laid, or just wasting time. There is no time to waste. **AFP**

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