

All hail the...
...the natural, fresh, hand-picked issue
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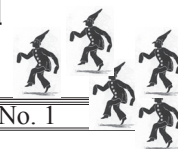
Hepper Spray Times

January 2009

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

"...tis by the seaside, browsing of ivy..."*

Vol. XI No. 1



SHOE HURLER HAILED AS HERO; NATIONAL TREND AFOOT



IRAQI REPORTER MUNTADHAR AL-ZEIDI instantly became a folk hero for doing what the American press only wishes it could do.

By Edsel Roll

An Iraqi reporter who threw his shoes at President Bush as a gesture of disrespect at a press conference in Baghdad is being unexpectedly hailed as a national hero around the world.

Muntadhar al-Zeidi, who was immediately taken into custody and whose shoes were held as evidence apparently mystified American reporters with his simple gesture.

"He seems to have developed a deep dislike of the American presence here... no one knows quite why he did it..." stated Lourdes Garcia-Navarro on National Public Radio during her broadcast on December 15th, 2008.

The gesture ignited public calls for "Throw a Shoe Day" the day before Inauguration Day in an effort to convey thanks to the Iraqi reporter for having a set of attributes the American media has completely eliminated from its professional repertoire.

"We plan to have shoe tosses all over the world," said one excited blogger, showing messages indicating broad international support. "Electing Obama was an important gesture, but this brave

reporter needs our support."

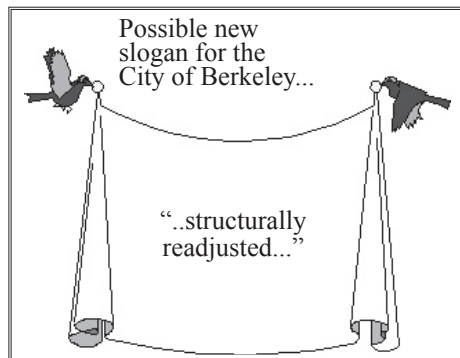
Muntadhar al-Zeidi faces criminal charges, although he has also received international acclaim and awards.

The local shoe throws seem to be planned for any public space and aimed at no one in particular.

"The idea isn't to hit anybody," stated one organizer. "We're glad Muntadhar al-Zeidi missed the president, because we believe he made his point."

"The idea is just to enjoy the moment," agreed another shoe toss planner. "It's a long time since we've had a real hero."

* * * * *



CHRISTMAS SUCKED

Retailers Reel; Santa Fired

By O. Holly Knight

Local police departments admitted after the holidays that the security level threat had been elevated when Santa was fired as partially responsible for the worst Christmas ever.

"Disgruntled employees are often unstable," stated one police spokesperson. "We feel the restraining order in place is appropriate. We are simply taking precautions."

Retailers agreed that Christmas had really sucked this year, and economists confirmed that although seriously sucking, Christmas *next* year could suck even more seriously.

"A lot of people are losing their jobs," explained one financial expert. "We keep trying to impress on the public the importance of keeping our economy strong, but they seem to think unemployment is an excuse to slack off."

Santa was reported to be considering a career change, according to his elves.

"We're trying to interest him in simply re-tooling the toy factory, but he keeps reading Homeland Security brochures," stated one elf. "We're worried about him."

* * * * *



SANTA HAS TAKEN to wandering alone on the beach after losing his job.

ASK THE EXPERTS



LENA DEETER knows the answers to everything forwards and backwards.

Dear Lena, what should I resolve for the new year? I'm frankly a little tired of change at this point.

Dear reader, stick with the basics until the economy improves; weight loss, writing thank you notes, and refraining from throwing the cat. When the economy picks up, you can try something more exotic, like learning your assembly representative's actual name.

Dear Lena, I tried to spend as much as I could for Christmas, but I lost my job, and just couldn't keep up. I ended up making people plates of home-made cookies. Did I destroy the economy?

Dear reader, yes, you did. Thanks to you we are all screwed. Jesus would be really disappointed in you. Next Christmas better just leave town.

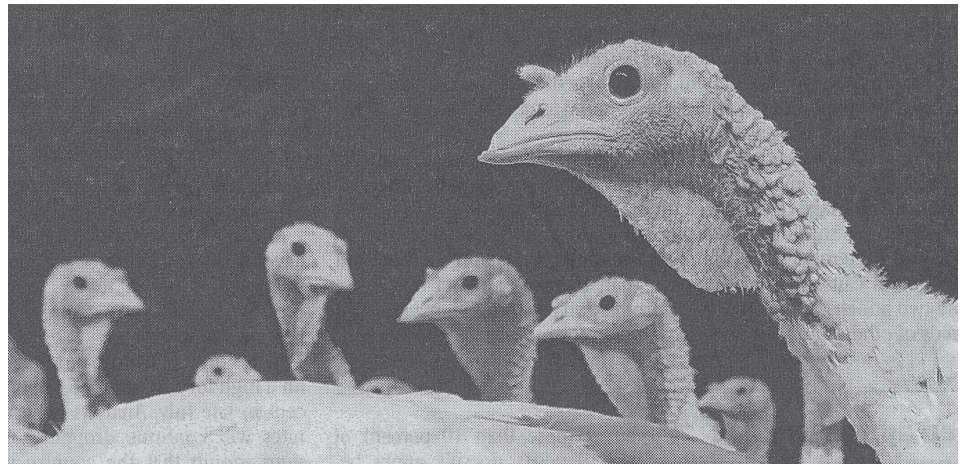
Dear Lena, I've thought about it, and I think I would like to invest in a \$10,000 senate seat. I'm sure I could parlay it into more money in a couple years, and then I'd have my nest egg back. What do you think?

Dear reader, I've been thinking the same thing. You take Chicago, and I'll take New York. Let me know if you have any extra yard signs.

Dear Lena, I would like to throw a shoe, too. Is it dangerous?

Dear reader, it depends on the shoe. Leave the spike heels at home, and keep in mind this is a good time to get rid of those uncomfortable pumps altogether.

Ask Lena for advice about age-appropriate pickles at cdenney@igc.org.



SHAKEN SURVIVORS share stories of their traumatic escapes with each other in an effort to gather the strength to move past the difficult holiday season.

SURVIVORS' SUPPORT GROUP HELPS HEALING

By Betty Call-Slater

"I don't know why I was spared," said one of the trembling participants in the newest support group in Berkeley. "I only know I now want to dedicate my life to helping others."

Such sentiments are not unconventional in this crew, according to the supervising staff of this latest effort to help traumatized survivors of the holiday season.

"Many of them lost all their family members and all of their friends," stated Louis Feathers of the survivor groups. "They are trying to make sense of their lives, and often dedicate themselves to assisting other survivors with that difficult period of post-holiday confusion."

"I know my life means something now," stated Tom Turkey, dabbing a handkerchief at his tears. "I know I was just a joke to most people before. They made fun of my voice, and never picked me first for recess games, and I never really felt comfortable with dinner invitations, depending on the menu. Now I see things in a whole new light."

"We have a sense of purpose now," offered another participant in the survivors' group who requested anonymity. "We know it's possible to make it through the holiday season, and we know there are others out there who share the sinking feeling we used to have as the holidays approached. We feel we can help them, and we want to reach out."

Critics complained that the survivors' groups were nascent paramilitary cells, bent on destroying the American way of life and specifically its most cher-

ished holiday customs, including the mass slaughter of unsuspecting turkeys for holiday menus.

"Turkeys are generally peaceful," mused one of the clinic supervisors. "On the other hand, with some adaptive equipment perhaps they could defend themselves, although it is doubtful. They have a lot of difficulty with simple things, like doorknobs."

A spokesperson for the turkeys seemed surprised by the accusations of paramilitary defensive preparations, but agreed to carry such concerns to the survivor groups.

"Our membership is still pretty shaken by the recent loss of life," he stated. "Our focus right now is on helping the survivors heal, and trying to find ways to deal with the post-traumatic stress our membership suffers at the thought of the next holiday season. There's nothing we'd like more than solving this holiday problem without any additional bloodshed."

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“Dr. Toy” Offers Advice on Ridding the Streets of “Streetlivers”

By Ginger N. DeSoup

The loss of 533,000 jobs in a single month, the fact that one in ten homeowners are heading for default on their mortgages, and the holiday season’s tedious tendency toward compassion has not affected Stevanne “Dr. Toy” Auerbach’s desire for “one neat city”, as she puts it in her recent plea for city-wide cleanliness, including cleansing the streets of homeless people.

“Streetlivers” is the phrase she uses to describe “humans before our eyes on our streets starving” in a lengthy list of unnecessary visible objectionable items such as food wrappers, dog feces, and graffiti.



MS. STEVANNE “DR. TOY” AUERBACH has suggestions for people sick of the “seedy” atmosphere implied by the presence of homeless people, with their shapeless clothing and out-of-fashion shopping carts.

problem of homeless people running the streets freely.

Local citizens agreed, suggesting that unattended homeless people wandering

the streets could be leashed and tied to trees for a more orderly effect.

“We could certainly give them little collars with their names on them, too,” commented one local citizen.

Critics objected to victims of the housing and jobs crisis being treated like animals, especially during the holiday season, but were dismissed.

“What holiday season?” pointed out one local citizen. “The Fourth Street stores are mostly empty, people are being booted out of their homes and jobs like crazy. I think I saw Santa applying for a job as a bouncer at the bar.”

Homeless people tended to agree, and pointed out that being treated like an animal would be a step up in a town where pets have their own magazine.

“I would wear a collar if they’d feed me,” commented one homeless woman. “It’s tough keeping track of the few places offering a meal, and they’re spread all over town. I’m worn out, and the police keep taking my shopping cart. I would so much rather just sit under a tree.”

“I would like a blue collar,” added another panhandler, “and I’m not adverse to a leash. And I don’t mind if she brings me a toy.”

“As long as it’s safe, non-toxic, and age-appropriate,” responded the first homeless woman. “I hear she’s an expert on stuff like that.”

* * * * *

THE STRATIFICATION OF BUMHOOD

By Paul D. Orrs

Experts agree that the infusion of post-mortgage-crisis and post-recent-economic-downturn homeless people currently hitting the already saturated streets is underscoring the need for new ways to distinguish the old, undeserving homeless from the new, deserving homeless.



THIS MAN needs to be careful or he will waste his charity on the undeserving, rather than the deserving poor.

“I’m worried about misplacing my compassion,” confided Chronicle reporter Ken Garcia. “I didn’t used to worry about the disdain I felt for these lazy bums. But these new bums, the ones who just lost their homes and jobs, they look just like the old bums, and it’s really wrecking my game.”

Sociologists are currently working on some alternative vocabulary to assist in the crisis.

“We have the ‘old bums’ versus the ‘new bums’, of course,” stated one professor. “My personal preference is the ‘old poor’ as opposed to the ‘new poor’, but this new ‘streetlivers’ term may catch on.”

Experts are hoping the population of old bums will cooperate by wearing for instance a little button or scarlet “B” to assist those suffering from understandable compassion fatigue.

“I’d have to see the button,” mused one panhandler. “But I don’t mind showing the news guys around.”

* * * * *

We Can’t Draw Comics by Franz Toast



HOLIDAY PHONE SALES DISAPPOINTING; INNOVATIVE DESIGNS HEADED FOR THIRD WORLD

By Barnaby Wild

Marketing experts and manufacturers were mystified at the inability to transfer the hot fad of fashion phones into holiday phones, and prepared to ship the unwanted cargo loads off to less developed countries.

“We had especially high hopes for the Crown of Thorns phone design,” stated one manufacturer. “We figured it would be a big hit with the evangelical markets.”

“We understood the problem with the Jingle Bell phone design; it rang all the time, which we didn’t realize would actually annoy people.”

Scientists with a specialty in social behavior admitted they had played a role in the marketing disaster.

“We didn’t think these people *could* be annoyed - I mean, they’re cell phone users. But there were several cases of



DISAPPOINTING SALES DOOMED these holiday phones, which had a variety of unexpected problems and are now being send to third world countries.

assault on buses and BART trains, and the standing ovations for the perpetrators made us realize we needed to find a more subtle fashion edge.”

Marketing experts are busily retooling for next year’s holiday markets and hoping to get better results for their upcoming Valentine’s Day and President’s Day designs.

“The public wants fashion phones,” agreed the experts. “Holiday phones were just a little ahead of the game.”

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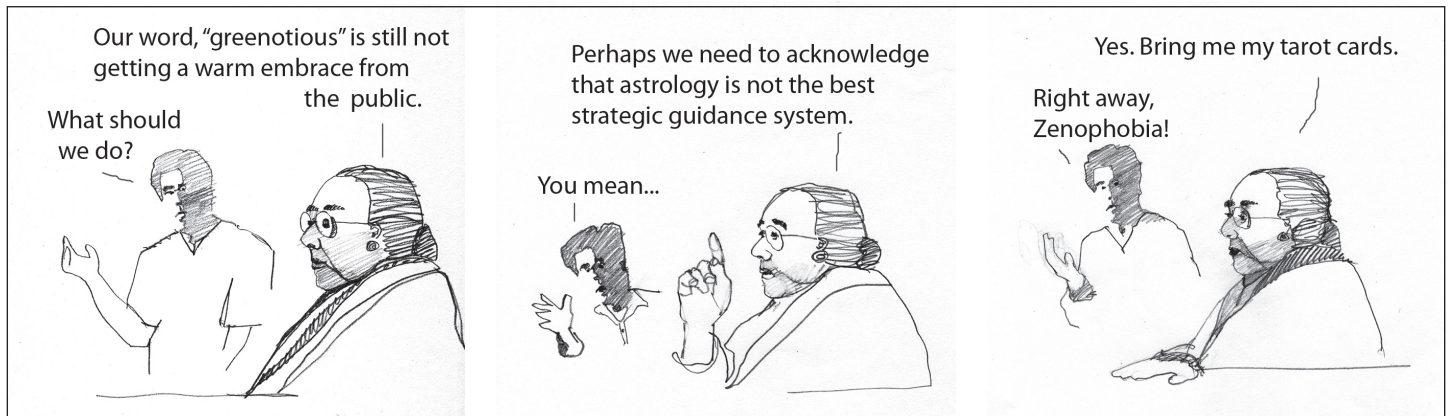
JOIN OUR BAND

We need a drummer, a guitarist, a singer, a bass player, some lead instruments, and somebody who can write songs. And get gigs, too. Preferably somebody who has been in bands before and has a big station wagon and a sound system. Call us at (562) 750-3268 after 11:00 am.

Next Issue: Labeling Jars with Celebrities

THE ADVENTURES OF THE CENTER FOR ECOIDIOCY

by Nathan Undergod



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We appreciate those who understand that satire is serious business.

*A Winter’s Tale