

THE STATE OF THE ONION SPEECH

JANUARY 25, 2004

They came from the great salt flats of Palo Alto. They came from the embattled bungalows of Marin City where cars perch up on blocks for years in the front yard until they stop being cars, only homes for the birds. From the wastelands of Hayward and the freeway overpasses of Babylon where the thousands huddle each night from the freezing rain. From the abandoned warehouses on the Point they crept in the dawn and sunset gone violent with frost. Down from Berkeley where compassion softens the road and even from far flung Sacto, which houses the Incorrigibles they sent their delegations. From all over the Bay Area they came, in dribbles and drabbles from the State streets of Babylon under the green Apple seed and perfect blue buildings on crutches, in wheelchairs, on railway freight cars, on hitches and rides and crutches they came.

Yes, from Texas and Vermont and Virginia and Ohio, and many others, the bums of Northern California sent their delegations to the Island Jetty, where

the President of the Bums holds his annual Speech, the most famous State of the Onion Speech before the most high and mighty Congress of the Bums.

There on the Jetty, President Eugene Shrubbs held forth while seated upon his throne of porcelain that was set upon a raised dais of old tires. And all about him the Legislature of Bums sat, lolled, reclined and snored.

The President began with a small encomium and a toast to the valiant warriors who were even now engaged in the dangerous task of subjugating Newark. He then went on to declare that the war on Terrierists and their nefarious Poodles was going great guns, notwithstanding a few downed warriors here and there and the failure to catch the notorious Osama Bin Lassie.

Nevertheless, since the capture of Saddam Husky, the Major of Newark's Best Friend, the world had become a safer place.

Afterward, disgruntled commentators remarked that they could not see how the devil capturing the Mayor's dog could have in any way an impact on the sort of Terrierism which had resulted in the attempted hijacking of City Hall a few years ago on the 9th of November, especially since it appears quite clear that there never were weapons of Mass Doo-Doo in Newark California and that Newark certainly has never had the slightest connection to Osama Bin Lassie.

Since questions are not allowed during the State of the Onion Speech, the President continued his insistence that WMDD would be found any day in Newark, but that the process of discovery had been slowed by persistent attacks from the Resistance and the necessity to secure the liquor supply lines.

Turning his noted silver tongue and great linguistic gifts to other matters of importance, the President addressed the Economy of the Onion. Which is odiferous and therefore indicative of change coming just around the corner -- if only the lousy bums would hold the course, stay on track, abjure radical changes (unless proposed by his StinkTank, the Project for the New American Smoochy) and kindly allow the President and his friends to continue to make money and booze hand over fist.

Regarding badly needed health reform, Shrubbs indicated that his remedy of a pint of booze per patient and RX's from Canada had been recently approved by the Senate. He mentioned with a witticism that now prescriptions were cheap due to NAFTA. While the native RX makers might temporarily object, Shrubbs noted that since all manufacturing is being outsourced beyond the borders, those objectors would soon follow suite and thereby reap the benefits of increased productivity.

"Imagine trusting your headache to aspirin from Mexico!" Eugene shouted triumphantly. Since everyone present was a bum and without employment in this area, and consequently had nothing personally to lose by sending jobs across the border, the entire congregation stood to applaud with admiration at this stroke of genius.

"And everyone who misses out on the new health plan will simply die and free us all from onerous obligations! More booze for everybody!" he added.

This last comment was not appreciated quite as well as the first.

On quite a roll, and well into his second bottle of Tokay, Shrubbs continued on the jobs theme, remarking that the loss of more jobs in one period than has been seen since the Great Depression is actually a boon, for when three people are laid off, a single employee then must do the work formerly done by the three as well as his own. Any idiot can see that productivity per capita then goes through the roof and the sun shines down on all with increased profits.

Shrubbs apologized to those who had experienced a bit of trouble at the entry points: the state of heightened security necessitated heightened measures, including strip searches -- especially of suspicious and comely individuals -- appropriation of contraband booze and confiscation of weapons and good boots.

"So what is the surrender of a few liberties over the increased security of our Onion?" Shrubbs said.

"Consider the Onion, small and odiferous that it is, but entirely ours, a perfect metaphor kept in my side pocket like the world surrounded by the infinite vastness of Space, space which we are presently on the verge of colonizing with strip malls, fast foot joints and body shops. At times, when life seems hard, when the pawn shop just will not take another accordion and the credit is all gone down at the Local on the corner, when your main squeeze has run off with the keys to the car you been sleeping in for the past six months, consider this: in this age of marvels, our best minds have found that there is enough water and ice on Mars to make ten million highballs! Don't worry: be happy!"

Standing now, Shrubbs rocked up on top of his throne set on the quivering pile of tires as he waved his bottle about in the manner of the great orators of old,

calling in mind Socrates, Julius Caesar, Albert Speer. "I say hold the course and get behind the mule! Lets invade somebody else again for we really showed them we can wreck a State and mess up a dictator's hair really bad. They'll have more respect for us bums now we are on a roll. I propose nothing less than a total Revolution in Society that will make everything go Our Way! We do what we please, account to nobody and we even got the judges now on our side. But society ain't finished being changed. not everybody has been hooked on Jesus . . .".

Here his wild gesticulation led to the tipping over of the throne sending Eugene plummeting down from the mount in a hail of tires and toilet parts.

The Assembly rose to applaud and everybody got really drunk. Thus ended the State of the Onion Speech of the year 2004.

