

FREE FOREVER

THE WOKE EDITION

ZINE

GAUCHO MARKS MAGAZINE



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SATIRE

gauchomarks.com

SPRING 2025

VOLUME XIII - ISSUE 1

Meet The Cabinet



Editor-in-Chief
Fox Cafaro

"I think you know what the trustees can do with their suggestions" - Groucho Marx



Managing Editor
Liz Phillips

"Lowkey I have a bachelor's degree..."



"Publicist/Graphic Designer"
Max Perez

It's not easy having a good time.



Editor
Annelise Miedema

Maybe the real tralalero tralala was the tung tung tung tung tung tung sahur we made along the way.



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"The sun's not yellow, it's chicken." - Bob Dylan

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Meet The Cabinet..... | 2 |
| Table Of Contents..... | 3 |
| Letter From The Editor..... | 4 |
| Goodnight Sweet Yang..... | 5 |
| Classifieds..... | 8 |
| Taking Grandma To Dp: My True Story..... | 10 |
| Donald Trump To Reverse Constitutional Amendment Which Prohibits Him From Showering In Other People's Houses..... | 12 |
| Facing Federal Pressure, UCSB Begins Selling Raw Milk In The Arbor..... | 13 |
| Coupons..... | 14 |
| Six Things To Replace The Jamba Juice By The Ucen With..... | 15 |
| Extravagina Lineup..... | 16 |
| Uc Santa Barbara Student Arrested For Shouting Obscenities At Storke Tower..... | 17 |
| Nasa's Europa Clipper Mission Receives \$500m From British Museum In Exchange For Rights To Alien Artifacts..... | 18 |
| Excerpt From <i>Another Schizoid Embolism</i> | 20 |

Letter From 'The Editor

Dear Reader,

If you are reading this, I have failed. I promise you, I tried everything I could think of: straightforward no-nonsense negotiation; Bugs Bunny-style reverse psychology; legal threats; illegal threats; uploading myself into the digital realm like in Tron: Legacy; everything. But if you are reading this, I have failed to stop the publication of Gaucho Marks' 2025 Spring Zine, The Woke Edition.

The Woke Edition is so hilarious, so side-splitting, so gut-bustingly funny, if you read it, you may never be able to laugh again. All other comedy- from Harold and Maude to Harold and Kumar- will simply pale in comparison to the comedic enormity of this magazine.

And that's not to mention the permanent effects just one page of this masterwork could have on your health. One woman, aged 80, who read this magazine's final article laughed so hard, her lungs just couldn't keep up. One enby, aged 79, read the next sentence of this very letter, and let out a guffaw so loud their own eardrums burst. One baby boy, aged 1, put the cover page in his mouth, and just the taste of it was so funny, he forgot how to cry- a startlingly important skill for a baby to have.

For what it's worth, the surviving senior made it clear that if they could go back, they'd read it all over again: "I would have to. It was just too funny." The baby, a tinge of quiet mourning in his voice, agreed: "Goo-goo ga-ga."

To the people responsible: Liz Philips, Maximo Perez, Annelise Miedema, and Benjamin Epstein. Without each and every one of you, this magazine would not have been possible. And so, as Felix Unger would say, let it be on your heads.

Inconceivably yours,

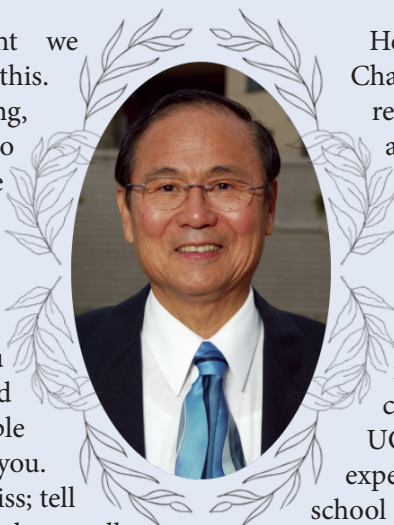
Fox Cafaro

Editor in Chief, Gaucho Marks Magazine



Goodnight, Sweet Yang

I never thought we would have to print this. It is news so disturbing, so gut wrenching, so fucked up, that once you read it you may never be the same again. So, before you read any further, we recommend that you take a moment and think about the people who matter most to you. Give your partner a kiss; tell your friends you love them; call your parents.



Henry T. Yang, UCSB Chancellor of 30 years, is retiring at the end of this academic year.

I know what you're thinking. No, this is not another one of Gaucho Marks' hilarious pranks. This is all too real. If you choose to come back to UCSB next fall, do not expect to return to the same school you left. Gone will be

late night study sessions at Yang's house, Saturday afternoon pregames in Yang's backyard, even the famous biweekly ragers in Yang's garage. In a recent press release, UCSB admin assured students that the school's next Chancellor will be required to throw at least one "big blowout bash" (boomer terminology for 'party') per month, but we already know it just won't be the same...

And trust us, we've made the standard offers of sexual favors (hjs, bjs, even zjs, whatever those are), cash (\$4.70 worth of the best pennies money can buy), and power (paid internship position), all to no avail. He even blocked us on Hinge.

At times like these, it is important to remember that we only



cry because we once laughed, and if you look inside your heart, you'll find the laughter is still there, giggling away. So please, giggle with us as we look back on the many accomplishments of UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang. It's what he would have wanted.

Money

It's no surprise that Yang made a lot of money as Chancellor of our prestigious institution. But for some reason, it just feels wrong to reduce something as precious and beautiful as the legacy of Henry T. Yang to a cold financial figure. So instead of giving you the amount in dollars, we've translated it into something more appropriate: Smiles.



*Data is unavailable for the first 12 years of Yang's Chancellorship, leaving countless Smiles unaccounted for! For the sake of fairness, we will assume Yang made at least 100,000 Smiles annually during this period.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| In 2006, Yang made 315,000 Smiles | In 2016, Yang made 403,866 Smiles |
| In 2007, Yang made 315,000 Smiles | In 2017, Yang made 414,949 Smiles |
| In 2008, Yang made 315,000 Smiles | In 2018, Yang made 427,130 Smiles |
| In 2009, Yang made 315,000 Smiles | In 2019, Yang made 439,681 Smiles |
| In 2010, Yang made 315,000 Smile | In 2020, Yang made 428,873 Smiles |
| In 2011, Yang made 323,916 Smiles | In 2021, Yang made 427,047 Smiles |
| In 2012, Yang made 323,916 Smiles | In 2022, Yang made 567,442 Smiles |
| In 2013, Yang made 323,916 Smiles | In 2023, Yang made 626,375 Smiles |
| In 2014, Yang made 323,916 Smiles | In 2024, Yang made 633,731 Smiles |
| In 2015, Yang made 414,478 Smiles | In 2025, Yang made 820,000 Smiles |

For a grand total of... 9,674,236 Smiles!

That's a lot of Smiles! Like, more Smiles than most people will see in their entire lives!



Well Yang, in
my book you
earned every
last one
of them.
All 9.6
million.

they make the part where the
computer guys explode look cooler,
by adding more pixels.

Community

Ever since taking the position of
Chancellor in 1994, Yang has made
it a priority to foster a community
of support and collaboration at
UCSB. Originally established
in the fall of 2000, Yang has
renewed the endowment
of the Dilling Yang
Undergraduate Keg Fund
every five years since,
ensuring UCSB's social
environment remains warm
and welcoming. Yang also

famously made a point to visit at least
one fraternity house on campus per
week, usually on Friday or Saturday
night. You've probably heard the
stories, and we can tell you right now
that yes, without exception, they are
all true.

Farewell

Yang, since Gaucho Marks'
founding in 2011, you have always
been our funniest joke, and for that
we owe you a debt we can never
repay (but we're not the ones with
the 9,674,236 Giggles or whatever we
called them, so I'd say you're doing
just fine on your own).

Thank you, Henry T. Yang, from
the bottom of our hearts. We hate to
see you go, but we love to watch you
walk away.

9.6 million Smiles.

.)

Science and Academia

We all know Henry T. Yang as
our favorite scrappy little executive
administrator, but it's easy to forget he
is also an independently accomplished
academic. Many UCSB students are
shocked when they learn that Henry
T. Yang they call Chancellor is actually
the same Henry T. Yang who wrote
the wildly popular, *A finite element
formulation for stability analysis of
doubly curved thinshell structures*
(adapted for the screen by Jim Henson
as the 1986 film *Labyrinth*).

Yang brought us what is largely
considered his most important
scientific contribution in 2009. While
working as the consulting scientist on
the set of *Tron: Legacy*, he suggested

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

Economics textbook for sale, never read. Approximately 3,000 empty cans of Celcius; free to a good home.

100% LEGALLY OBTAINED bicycle (missing front wheel) \$120

The jacket Ryan Reynolds wears in Drive but instead of a scorpion on the back there's a penis - \$100,000. No lowballing I know what I have.



Unicycle. Lightly used. I'm just.... not that guy.

Playstation 5 for \$20. It works fine, I just don't want it anymore, since I'm a selfish asshole and I spend

all my time cheating on my beautiful girlfriend. Oh, and please feel free to use the credit card saved to the account! (CVV: 932 Exp. 02/28)

Housing

Live in the heart of I.V. for cheap! 2 sq. ft micro-studios available for just \$100 a month*! (*gas, electric, water, internet, air, and parking fees not included)

Looking for roommate. Spacious estate nestled in the Carpathian mountains, easy access to town by personal carriage service (included in utilities). Priority will be given to applicants with beautiful wives. We are an allergy friendly household, so please avoid bringing garlic into shared spaces. \$4,000,000/month.

3 elderly roommates looking for fourth for 1-bed suite at Friendship Manor. By 1-bed I mean there is only one bed. \$1200/month.

CLASSIFIEDS

Personal

Missed Connection:

We were on a crowded bus. Every other seat was taken, but you were sitting alone. I couldn't understand why. You were wearing a green knit cardigan that matched your eyes. I went to take the seat next to you, when your arm shot out quickly, blocking it. What? Had I done something wrong? Were you just waiting for a friend? A boyfriend? My mind flooded with terrible possibility after terrible possibility. But then you spoke, and your voice was so beautiful I almost didn't listen to what you were saying: "Hey, there's piss on that seat." I long to see you again. You saved my ass, but you stole my heart. If you see this, whoever you are, please reach out. You can find me on LinkedIn, @Anthony Wimblestein.

Wanted:

At least 1 person willing to watch the movie *Tron: Legacy* with me. You do not have to talk. I am willing

to pay each of you \$200 up front, and \$200 more to whoever is still there after the credits roll. For every one of my jokes you laugh at, you will receive an additional \$20. I promise it is a good movie, you just have to give it a chance.

Caretaker Needed:

My parents cut me off and I need someone to assure me that I'm a special little boy, angrily email professors on my behalf to demand points back on exams, help me with my homework, and pay my tuition/rent. Bonus points if you're willing to pack my school lunch!

Jobs

Seeking!

I'm anti-AI, but I still don't want to do my assignments, so I'm looking for someone to do my WRIT 2 homework. \$10/word, bonuses for higher grades. No pay if I fail. (248) 434-5508.

Taking Grandma to DP: My True Story

By Annelise Miedema

A couple weekends ago my sweet elderly grandma flew in to visit, and I was initially at a loss for where I could take her. When she came last year, we did the obligatory downtown antiques and boutiques. But once you've seen downtown, there's not much else to do besides Bowlero, and we'd done that already too. So after getting her settled in at the hotel, my grandma and I sat down at the little outdoor patio and brainstormed what to do next. She suggested that she spoil me a bit and use her card to do a Gostco run. I protested, and said it was alright because I was already milking Uncle Sam dry with my EBT card. She muttered something about back in her day when college students "got malnutrition and enjoyed it." That reminded me that I was hungry, and I asked if we could pretty please go to Freebirds for lunch? She said no because it sounded too spicy. Aw shucks, who else am I gonna get to buy me a giant tray of nachos? I made a mental note to convince one of my YikYak fwbs to buy me some Freebirds as a token of our everlasting not-love.

But eventually my grandmother and I settled on The Habit, and made our way down to the bus stop to head back to IV. My grandma did protest and request we take an uber, but I explained to her that if she wanted to really experience what my life as a UCSB student is like, the bus commute is a necessary component! I then gave her a handful of pennies I'd been trying to get rid of for ages and asked her to make sure it was the full bus fare.



The meal was nothing special, and after that we walked to the beach. We had done it a million times before, and I could see the glassy, bored look in her eyes as we gossiped about family drama. As we took a seat on a bench, my grandmother asked me quite simply, "so what do you do for fun around here?" I was unsure of what to tell her, thinking briefly of the hazy, drunken weekend prior which I only remembered bits and pieces of. I came up with some nonsense about going rock climbing at the rec cen. I then thought to myself unhappily that if my grandma hadn't been visiting that weekend, I'd totally have been blackout drunk by that point of the evening. Hold up, I thought with a start, maybe I still could be! "Grandma..." I asked her nervously. "Can you still handle your liquor?"

As it turns out, she really could. And she was surprisingly open to the idea of staying up way past her bedtime. I called up some friends and told them that we were so still on-and we may or may not have one of my slightly older friends joining us. As the sky darkened, we blasted Charlie XOX in my apartment, taking shots in between applying makeup on each other. "Is this top cute?" asked my grandma, modeling



one of my cropped tees in the mirror. "Absolutely not," I replied. "Try this one, it's wayyy sluttier"

Eventually we made it to the door, where we were greeted by my gaggle of Fake-ID-having Friends that I mostly keep around for the alcohol. We moved as a unit, giggling and stumbling down the pavement, my grandmother's age seemingly not bringing much unusual attention to our group. In fact, she was approached and hit on by several strangers before we even made it to the destination. One of them she seemed to take a liking to, and we let him tag along. It had been 10 years since grandpa's passing so I didn't say anything about it. The woman deserved happiness, even if witnessing their hardcore flirting was major awko on my end.

I left her alone with her beau and started drunkenly rambling about the secret lore of Dora the Explorer to my friends. Unfortunately for my grandmother, when we got to the band party they wouldn't let any of the guys in. My grandmother pleaded for her man to be let through, even offering to flash the white guy bouncer, who begrudgingly explained he couldn't make any exceptions. She began to throw a fit, shouting at the frat bro and calling him a reverse sexist. People who were passing by began to rally around her, joining in on berating the poor guy. Finally he relented and we were let in, and I soon lost sight of my grandma as the crowd swarmed her. I wasn't too worried because I knew she could take care of herself, but I did start to get concerned when I realized that across the yard, she appeared to be attempting a keg stand. Two guys hoisted her up, but promptly dropped

her and I winced as she cussed and hit the ground with a thud. I shoved my way through the crowd, suddenly feeling quite sober. Still absolutely out of it, my grandmother just smiled up at me and reached out like a toddler wanting uppies so I could help her get to her feet. But she was unable to put any pressure on the knee she had been resisting surgery on since a pickle-ball game gone wrong back in 2008. That knee was definitely busted now. Well shoot. My grandma started bawling when she realized she couldn't walk, and her temporary boyfriend started comforting her as other strangers offered her their weed pens or sips of mysterious liquids. With a sigh, I sent one of my friends to get an e-scooter (because there was no way in hell that I could afford an ambulance). With much effort, we managed to scoot to cottage health and got her all fixed up. Things ended up working out, because the next morning she was so hungover, I tricked her into going to Freebirds!

When the visit was finally over, I made my grandmother pinky promise not to tell my mom and dad all that we had gotten up to that crazy night on DP. She swore she wouldn't tell them, as we bussed to the airport and tearfully hugged goodbye. She also told me that she had dumped her new boyfriend over text, because she just couldn't do long distance. As I watched her walk into the terminal, I wiped away a small tear. A tear of joy, of love and acceptance. My dear reader, the next time you see your grandparents, don't be afraid to challenge them to a beer pong sesh. You might be surprised when they turn out to be really, really good.



NEWS

DONALD TRUMP TO REVERSE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WHICH PROHIBITS HIM FROM SHOWERING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES

by Benjamin Epstein

Donald Trump has announced that he will shower in your house, and there's nothing you can do to stop him. The 4th amendment of the constitution states that the president is not allowed to waltz into people's houses unannounced and take a shower. However, Donald Trump has announced that his next measure in office will be the creation of a new bill which will remove that amendment from the constitution.

In a recent press statement, Donald Trump has stated, "My fellow Americans, for too long, far too long, I have not been allowed to go into your house at night and use your fine soaps and your fine shampoos in order to wash my beautiful body. Thankfully, using my magnificent powers, I will right this truly great evil. You're welcome. Also, Elon said he wants to get involved with this, so I'm also gonna let him shower in people's houses."

In order to stop this, senate Democrats plan on sending Donald Trump subliminal messages in order to hypnotize him into thinking that showers don't exist.

Democratic senate leader Chuck Schumer stated, "I will die a thousand deaths before I allow Donald Trump to put his filthy hands on the soap

bars and shampoo bottles of hard working Americans. That is why we are brainwashing the president. I can't tell you how we'll use subliminal messages to perform our holy hypnosis, because I don't know. We've never done this before. Nevertheless, we will succeed."

In retaliation, senate Republicans have pledged to kidnap Chuck Schumer's wife and replace her with a large slab of stone.

Republican senate leader Mitch Mcconell has stated, "When the American people see Chuck Schumer in bed with a large slab of stone, they will see that he is not a godly man, but instead a demon from the bowels of hell. His motives are unknown, but anything that comes from bowels can not be trusted. If you see Chuck Schumer, immediately call the police so you can talk about the trauma you just experienced. God bless most of America."

It's unclear what may occur from all of this as these two forces of supreme power fight over America's showers. Perhaps, one day, the white house will be converted into a sushi restaurant, and there will be no more politics in this great nation. However, today is not that day.

FACING FEDERAL PRESSURE, UCSB BEGINS SELLING RAW MILK IN THE ARBOR



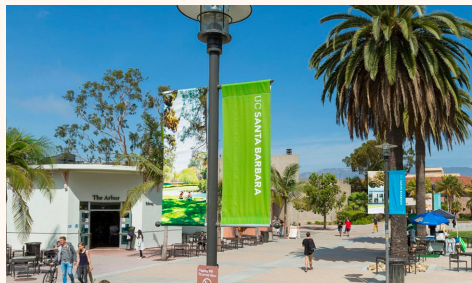
by Theo May

Students visiting the Arbor this week may have noticed a new, musky smell emanating from the back fridges. But don't worry—it's not a rat infestation or gas leak this time—the Arbor is actually the first location to embrace the Trump administration's new raw milk program. Driven by Secretary of Health, Robert F. Kennedy Jr, UCSB has agreed to act as one of the program's pilot campuses. Gaucho Marks spoke with the Arbor's general manager, Jeremy Owens, for more information.

"So, really, this comes from the desire to let students make their own choices," he began, stroking his goatee. "For years, regular milk drinkers have been given many options, while our community has been entirely neglected." A longtime advocate for raw milk, Owens was the natural choice to lead this new initiative, and he enthusiastically stepped into the role.

He took us into what used to be the cafe, now entirely renovated into a barn. Much like a real one, the floor

was covered in hay, rotting dung and rusty metal buckets. But there were no cows.



Instead, the makeshift barn housed two donkeys, Erika and Susan, affectionately named after Owens' former spouses.

"Yeah, we couldn't really afford cows, but there was this dude on Facebook Marketplace selling these donkeys, so it all kinda worked out." Two unpaid interns sat crouched beneath the pair, dutifully filling buckets. Owens leaned over to pat Erika on the back, who promptly shuffled away from him.

Reactions to the program have been mixed so far, with multiple students hospitalized over a five-day span. Rumbling in the pipes can be frequently heard in nearby bathrooms. Owens dismissed those concerns as part of the broader deep state conspiracy against him, along with attempts to get him to pay child support. "No matter what they say," he declared, "we're here for the long term. If all goes well, students can expect to be drinking unfiltered lagoon water out of fountains by the end of the year."



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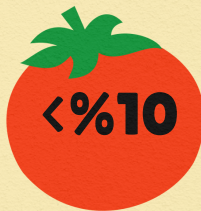


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*AL APPLICATION



Six Things To Replace The Jamba Juice By The UCen With

by Benjamin Epstein

We were all shocked and saddened and maybe even a bit sobered by the closing of the Jamba Juice by the UCen. Its absence has left a massive hole at the heart of UCSB, and this hole, like all other holes, must be filled. Here are six ideas on what to fill the hole with.

6. A \$maller UCen

The UCen is very overwhelming with its massive girth. It would be wonderful if the UCen had a smaller UCen by it for those who are easily intimidated. This smaller UCen could have a very tiny Starbucks, a gift shop that sells 1/10 models of the items at the UCen gift shop, and a single chair.

5. A Zoo

The worst part about UCSB is that there aren't any zoos. This zoo could store things like possums, goats, and economics majors. Having these exotic creatures on campus would really raise school morale.

4. An Indoor Pool That is Four Square Feet in Area But Twenty Feet Deep

Obviously, UCSB has a pool already. Or, at the very least, I assume they do, but I rarely leave my apartment. However, I doubt this pool is four square feet in area and twenty feet deep. A pool with these dimensions would be fantastic for people training to become scuba divers, lazy people who want to practice their laps, and people who enjoy being trapped beneath a four foot wide layer of human bodies.

3. A Tanning Salon

The few times that I do leave my apartment, I am confronted with a campus choked with half-naked people tanning on lawns. This causes me great consternation for reasons which only god and my psychologist knows. It's imperative that we stop this scourge. However, the constitution of the



United States says that people have the right to tan themselves. The solution is to give people a place where they can get tan in peace, a place where they won't bring me great consternation.

2. The Preserved Corpse of Stanley \$B, the Creator of UCSB

I assume you are aware of the fact that the Russians keep Lenin's preserved corpse for viewing inside a big red building. Well, I see no reason why UCSB shouldn't do the same. The most important person in the history of UCSB is Stanley \$B, who first created UCSB when he realized there were no colleges for people who liked laying half-naked on lawns. In order to recognize his beautiful and valiant efforts, we should put his preserved corpse on display within the heart of UCSB. People can marvel at his hideous dead body, and it will make them feel better about the living body they currently possess.

1. Another Jamba Juice.

Jamba Juices are yummy. The reason why I don't leave my apartment is that there are no Jamba Juices outside.



EXTRAVAGANT 2025

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• MARIA • CAPTAIN SPARKIEZ W/ TRYHARD NINJA •
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DRAKE

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LOCAL

UC SANTA BARBARA STUDENT ARRESTED FOR SHOUTING OBSCENITIES AT STORKE TOWER: ONE INJURED, COUNTLESS STILL REELING

by Annelise Miedema

An anonymous UCSB student was arrested this past weekend on the charges of harassment and public indecency. The individual deeply disturbed the community, as one bystander explains, “spewing verbal hatred towards the community’s beloved Storke tower.”

At the time of the attack, fourth year music major Ricky Croix was playing the tower’s carillon. The instrument, a fixture of the tower since its creation in 1969 (nice) is often played on Sundays for all students to enjoy. For many, the sound of the bells inspires a deep sense of pride for the student population.

Reports claim that the offending delinquent (who has chosen to remain anonymous) stood at the base of Storke tower during the early hours of the morning and shouted “boo you suck.” The musician himself did not hear the insult but it was passed on by a fellow carillon player about to ascend the tower.

Hearing the insult resulted in great emotional distress to Croix, and reports say his feelings were thoroughly hurt. While he denied emergency responders’ offers to be taken to a nearby hospital, the musician is still currently on the mend. Paramedics



assured that with proper time he will make a full recovery.

Soon after, emergency forces were called and able to apprehend the suspect, who was still pacing the general vicinity and giving a thumbs down at the end of each song. He did not resist arrest and merely told the police he was speaking his truth. Hours later the suspect was let go after being detained, because the police officers agreed that “whoever was playing the carillon was quite out of tune” and “perhaps this would encourage the school to stop sending talentless hacks up there for hours on end.”

NASA'S EUROPA CLIPPER MISSION RECEIVES \$500M FROM BRITISH MUSEUM IN EXCHANGE FOR RIGHTS TO ALL ALIEN ARTIFACTS

N

ASA has recently announced an unprecedented partnership between its newly-launched Europa Clipper mission and the British Museum.

Launched on October 14, 2024 from Kennedy Space Center, Europa Clipper is NASA's first mission to the Jovian moon since 2010's Discovery Two. We know from decades of research that Europa hosts a vast ocean of water beneath kilometer-thick sheets of ice, and the Europa Clipper spacecraft will investigate if all the ingredients for life are present.

However, due to devastating federal funding cuts, NASA's already minuscule budget has been reduced by over 100%, resulting in "employees" now having to pay for the privilege of working in a first-of-its-kind techno-feudalist research institution.

With an estimated 2026 operating budget of \$25.1, many of NASA's space missions and scientific studies have been halted or scrapped entirely.

Europa Clipper is no exception, and now more than ever the team is in need of financial support. With the fate of the mission in limbo, the British Museum approached NASA with an offer they couldn't refuse.

By Liz Phillips



The Museum has pledged a generous sum of \$500 million to the mission in support of its science and technology goals, under one condition: **Any alien artifacts found above or below the moon's icy surface will be considered the exclusive property of the British Museum.**

"Ever since Congress declared that 'space is woke', we've been forced to consider alternative sources of funding," stated Dr. Jack Schmidt, one of the two remaining Europa Clipper team members. "Rest assured we are dedicated to carrying out our mission no matter the circumstances."

The other team member, Joyce Douglas, did not respond for comment as it turned out she was actually a lamp with a smiley face taped onto it.

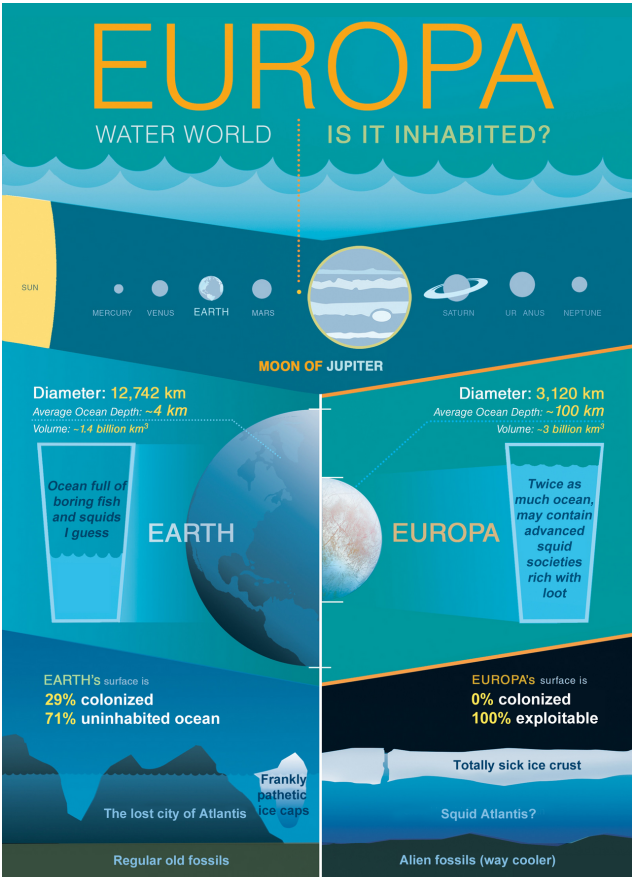
“Sometimes the tape falls off, and I have to reattach the paper,” admitted Schmidt. “With support from the British Museum, we may be able to pursue the more ambitious goals of our mission, like purchasing new rolls of tape for the office.”

Critics of the deal have come forward, with alien activists claiming that NASA doesn't possess the rights to the hypothetical artifacts in the first place. If intelligent life is discovered, it's possible that the inhabitants of Europa could be opposed to the unilateral siege of their property. Professor Dee Coll-O'Neal, chair of UCSB's anthropology

department, brought up concerns about the language used in the official contract, stating, “It is culturally insensitive to refer to these potential residents as ‘aliens’. It would be much more accurate to use the term ‘extraterrestrials’ or ‘Europeans’.”

A spokesperson for the British Museum attested that it is unconcerned with the criticism and will proceed as planned.

“I don't see what all the fuss is about. If life is discovered on Europa, it certainly won't be intelligent, much less civilised. It's likely that their primitive species has already gone extinct and therefore can't ask for repatriation,” the spokesperson clarified.



When asked what the museum would do if there were indeed living creatures present, the spokesperson declared, “Well, we can simply divide the population into two or three camps and convince them to hate each other. Once the moon is thoroughly embroiled in civil war, they will be incapable of safely storing their own cultural artifacts. It'd be better to keep them on a more stable planet like Earth.”

Other concerns have been raised regarding the unconventional partnership between a foreign non-governmental institution and a U.S. federal agency. Critics have cited a “conflict of interest” between the organizations, whatever that means.

ANOTHER SCHIZOID EMBOLISM-CHAPTER 1

BY FOX CAFARO

**The following passage has been excerpted from a longer, sillier work. The only known full copy of Another Schizoid Embolism currently resides in the Library of Congress. (I think I left it in the bathroom there.)*

The day: Wednesday, January 17, 2024. The oldest living president: Ronald Reagan. The low sodium Blu-Razzleberry Snapple: expired.

The stoner in front of me is named Phlegm, for reasons it doesn't take long to dope out once you start talking to him. We're friendly, but this isn't a social visit—it's strictly professional. As is the joint we've been ping ponging across my desk.

"You know me, right Zigzag?" he warbles.

"Sure," I say. "I know you."

"So you know I'm not always the most... careful, when it comes to keeping track of my shit."

"That's why I love smoking with you." I take a rip. "Hey, where'd that joint of yours go?"

My office has a strict no smoking policy, exemption from which costs \$5 or every other hit. I pass it back, but not before pulling the old 'oop! ooh! aahp! on him.

"You know, you should be a comedian, Zigzag."

That open mic night last month suggested otherwise, but that's very privileged information. (Like, average UCSB student privileged.)

"So, now that we're all relaxed, what do you need?"

"I lost something, something I really shouldn't have lost."

"Phlegm, you know virginity is a social construct, don't you?"

"I'm serious, Zigzag. I lost my grandpa's

lighter."

There's something in the way he can't sit still that I'm used to seeing in people who owe substantial amounts of money they don't have. Maybe he's been banking on some inheritance that an heirloom related fuckup could put in jeopardy?

"And he'll be upset if he finds out?"

"Oh no, he'll never find out."

"Estranged?"

"No, it wasn't very strange at all. He had lung cancer for a while."

Guess not.

"He was a tough old bastard. One of the tumors they cut out had like, hair and teeth and stuff, it was fucked."

"That's not really something I need to kn—"

"He called it 'Little Arnie.' Used to hide it around his house like an elf on the shelf for me and my sister."

"Funny old bastard."

I hope that's what he wanted to hear.

That happens sometimes; when I'm reading someone the way I'm reading Phlegm right now, I end up blurting out whatever he's thinking. You might think it'd be useful (and sometimes it is) but in reality, most people don't like to hear their own thoughts coming from a stranger's mouth. There's also the nice little bonus that it usually takes me twice as long to figure out what it is that I just said than whoever I'm talking to.

"Used to make her cry. Sometimes he'd put it somewhere you'd touch it before you saw it."

"Really funny old bastard."

It's not easy to stop once it starts either. But Phlegm has a sense of humor, I think.

"He was the best. He always liked my sister more, though."

"You got the lighter?"

"She got Arnie."

"Arnie's still kicking?"

"Do you know what a sourdough starter is?"

There are few, if any, pleasant directions that question can lead.

"I thought I did."

"It's like that, but instead of like, giving it flour and yeast or whatever, you give it meat."

I'm dangerously close to reaching my daily PBS (Phlegm's Bullshit) capacity, so we have to wrap this up.

"When's the last time you had the lighter?"

"I was at Smeggy's house. Last weekend. We were watching Robocop. You ever see Robocop, Zigzag?"

If Phlegm was a real Robocopper, I would lift up my shirt to show him my melting Emil tattoo, but I didn't see him at the last meetup, so I don't. (Which meetup, by the way, was only a three hour drive from IV, and to which I would have gladly carpooled.)

"I don't think so," I say. "I'm guessing it was being, like, passed around and shit?"

"It's so sick dude. It's this solid silver clipper with engraving and shit."

"Engraving?"

"Around the bottom it says 'Lungs' Slow Demise.'"

"AKA Little Arnie."

"Like you said, funny old bastard."

"Do you remember who was there? Who was using it?"

"It was Seed and those guys. And Wizzy. And Wizzy's girlfriend. Have you seen her? Man, how the fuck does he do that?

And the Cloaca sisters. I think that was it."

"It's a start, but with things like this I can't make any promises. I assume it's valuable?"

"\$500 if you find it by Friday."

That's one of the problems with this town, just how much \$500 is worth to anyone in particular is anybody's guess. Especially a stoner, of whom the wealthiest try their best to maintain the sort of cannabinoid salt-of-the-earth vibe which comes so easily to their less financially advantaged peers, whose mommies and daddies their own mommy and/or daddy gets paid seven juicy figures a year plus benefits to fuck over.

"What's Friday?" I ask.

"Well, me and my sister, we always smoke one up with it on his birthday, you know, and that's Friday."

"Arnie coming?"

"Arnie Bogarts that shit like Humphrey, man."

Either I stayed out too late last night or this weed is better than I thought, but I'm genuinely scared to ask if he's joking.

"So. Friday?"

"It's really important to me." He sniffs once, then says, "if you want more money--"

"I just don't want to get your hopes up."

I'm thinking maybe I should amend my smoking policy to make taking that every other hit optional on my part, because I can't remember whether weed usually makes Phlegm this anxious.

"I'll try. For Arnie."

"Thank you. When he starts to grow brain cells that'll mean a lot to him."

On his way out, Phlegm lets in a cool draft and a hot chick.

"Hi Ziggy." She's wearing a bright turquoise bikini, and nothing but one of those translucent white beach skirts

around her waist to make it an outfit. Various halves, thirds and corners of geometrically complex tattoos poke out from under the fabric. (There are plenty of full tattoos visible, too, but where's the fun in that?)

"Mommy..." I whisper.

"Hm?"

"Sorry. Nothing. How can I help you?"

"Your assistant told me you were unavailable but... Ziggy, I really need help. You are a P.I. right? A private investigator? And do you mind if I smoke?"

She holds up a cigarette holder of Burgess Meredith proportions.

"No problem."

Ok, not that strict.

She notices me trying to obscure the 'no smoking' sign on the wall, next to the Daily Nexus clipping from my first big case, the Spongebob cel caper.

"Oh, sorry. I can put it out if you want."

"No, no, it's ironic. I was about to light up myself, actually."

She pulls out a pack of American Spirits, holds it out.

"They're better for you."

I reach for one, but she pulls back.

"No, not that one, this one." She pulls out the most crumpled looking cigarette in the pack, leans over my desk, sticks it in my mouth. The whole thing is a little weird, but man, she's really fucking hot.

"Need a light?"

She pulls out a shiny, chrome-looking clipper. Shit.

"Nice lighter."

"It was my grandfather's."

"May I?" I make a grab for it.

"Oh, sorry, I don't let people touch it. Sticky fingers, you know."

"Sure. It must mean a lot to you. Did he have it engraved?"

"Did who have it engraved?"

"Your grandfather."

"Oh. Yes, see?"

She holds it just far enough so I can't make out the inscription.

"Anyway, I need your help. P.I., that stands for private investigator, right?"

"Well, my business cards say 'Pussyless Incel,' but that was a printing error. They gave me a discount, though."

"You still paid for them?"

"5% store credit is nothing to scoff at."

"So which are you, a private investigator or a pussyless incel?"

"Depends who's asking. I like to tell people I'm a 'party investigator.' My assistant, Freshie, the one you probably brutalized to get in here, came up with that."

"Freshie? That's not the name I was given."

"His friends and family call him Shamus, I'm told."

"You two aren't friends?" she asks.

"And you two aren't family," I say. "Hence, Freshie."

I do consider myself Freshie's friend— as much as anyone, I guess— but she doesn't need to know that. All she knows, and all she needs to know for now, is he's the guy at a desk in my bathroom. (There's a cot in the shower, too, though I rarely make him sleep there.)

"That's— nevermind. So you are a private investigator."

"Among other things."

"Good, because my b—"

"I'm not an incel."

"Good for you. Can I tell you my problem now, please?"

"Go ahead."

"My boyfriend's been acting... weird lately. And not just distant or anything, just like, he's a completely different person."

Normally, this would be when the P.I. says something about how they 'don't do

matrimonials' and the girl says something about how it's not just any matrimonial or she'll pay double or whatever, but she strikes me as a chick worth breaking with convention for.

"So, you want to know if he's—"

"He's not cheating, I knew you were going to say that. We're poly and," she leans over the desk, exhales about an eighth of her cigarette into my face, "we're very open."

I think better of offering her a piece of gum.

"Good to know."

"He used to be this rough, adventurous, virile, tumescent— he was just always down, you know?"

"And now?"

"He's, I mean, he's, like, afraid of me, almost. And he's so shy around other girls, even girls he's fucked already. I don't like saying this word, but he's... he's a pussy."

"Odd. Any big life changes recently?"

She looks, with her whole head, from left to right, like she might catch someone listening in.

"You're gonna think I'm crazy, but I think it's this class."

"Women's Studies?"

"No, I don't think so, he's been studying them for years. Actually, I don't know what class it is. Tadpole won't tell me anything about it. My boyfriend, Tadpole. Tadpole Verde."

"Good name."

"Thank you. All I know is it meets every day at 8 a.m. in the Black Box. Do you know where that is?"

"Sure, I saw the Hollow Man play there last quarter."

"So, will you do it? I can pay you."

She puts her purse on the desk and pulls out a wad of what seems to be mostly fives.

"I don't like to charge upfront, but,

Freshie, you know."

"No problem," she counts out some fives. "Can I use your bathroom?"

"It's the other door outside," I hand her the perpetually grimacing Doug Quaid head with the big pinball sized nostril I keep the key on (salvaged from a Total Recall pinball machine, hence the nostril).

"I won't be long, I just need to," she leans across the desk again, "freshen up."

I think that's code for 'take a shit,' but I can't be sure. Women are very opaque in that way.

"Take your time. There's," I lean in, "extra toilet paper under the sink."

She sashays to the door, leaving her purse. There's a two-way mirror in the bathroom (frat house) which I flipped to look into the office, but if Freshie covered it correctly she shouldn't notice. He's been watching from in there, by the way.

Well, the lighter could be Phlegm's, if not for the engraving: My Darling, My Always.

Not Lungs' Slow Demise.

Before I can look at anything else, I hear a flush.

"See," she says from the doorway. "I told you I wouldn't be long."

"Quick shitter," I say, and contemplate putting the derringer duct taped to the underside of my chair into my mouth.

She laughs.

"You're quite forward, aren't you Ziggy?"

Before I can say anything, which is actually quite a while, she takes her purse, drops a business card in my lap, and opens the door.

"Wait," I say, sucking in the last of the cigarette, "how do I know this isn't poisoned?"

"I'm sorry, you wanted one without poison?" Before I can say anything, which is again at least thirty seconds, she's gone.

Dedicated to Henry T. Yang,
UCSB Chancellor 1994-2025

We hate to see you go, but we
love to watch you walk away.

