



# CEAC Newsletter

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## September 2007

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

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### *Register Today!*

## SECOND ANNUAL CEAC POLICY CONFERENCE

**Thursday October 11 and Friday October 12**

**At**

**CEAC Office and Conference Center  
Sacramento, CA**

*Your opportunity to meet with CEAC committees in the discussion of key issues affecting public works in our Counties and in the formulation of CEAC legislative priorities and work programs for 2008.*

*The price is right. Don't miss out .*

Visit the CEAC website or contact Katrina Thompson  
(kthompson@counties.org or (916) 650-8103) for questions or details.



**Reserve Your Spot Now!**

# POLICY CONFERENCE AGENDA

## Thursday, October 11

**9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

**Flood Control & Water Resources Policy Committee**

*Chair: Jeff Pratt, County of Ventura*  
CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**Surveyor Policy Committee**

*Chair: Mike Emmons, County of Santa Barbara*  
CSAC 1st Floor Conference Room (1100 K St.)

**11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**General Session/ Lunch**

**Implementation of the Local Streets and Roads Portion of Proposition 1B**

As you know all too well, this is shaping up to be a rather bureaucratic and paperwork intensive effort from what we are hearing. So join us to hear firsthand how the state sees this process unfolding, what the requirements and expectations of our member agencies is likely to be and what the timeframes are for all of this to actually end up as money that we can spend to get the work accomplished.

CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**Moderator:**

George Johnson, CEAC President Elect

**Speaker:**

Ross Chittenden, Proposition 1B Program Manager, California Department of Transportation

**1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Solid Waste Management Policy Committee**

*Chair: Birgitta Corsello, County of Solano*  
CSAC 1st Floor Conference Room (1100 K St.)

**Land Use Policy Committee**

*Chair: Wes Zicker, County of Placer*  
CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Oversight and Special Tasks Committee**

*Chair: Tom Finn, County of San Joaquin*  
CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**Quarterly Regional Meeting**

Northern California County Engineers Association + North Coast County Engineers Association  
Reports: Safety, CEAC, Co-op, ITS, Caltrans, and regional issues.  
CSAC 1st Floor Conference Room (1100 K St.)

**5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**Hospitality Night: Sponsored by Telfer Oil, TY LIN International & Willdan!**

Hyatt Regency Downtown; Suite TBA

## Friday, October 12

**8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

CSAC 1st Floor Conference Room (1100 K St.)

**10:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Transportation Policy Committee**

*Co-Chairs: Pat DeChellis, County of Los Angeles*  
*Pat Mintum, County of Shasta*  
CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Lunch**

CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**2:00 p.m.**

**Adjourn**



# COUNTY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA



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### **PRESIDENT ~ MIKE CRUMP**

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County of Orange  
P.O. Box 4048  
Santa Ana, CA 92702

## A Presidential Message By Mike Crump

The dog days of August are upon us and as of this writing, still no State budget! Most of us can make payroll and keep busy using our fund balance for a few months until our State representatives can do their jobs and get a budget passed.

The annual CEAC Bedroll Conference in Lake Almanor was another success. I missed the first day having to attend a Strategic Highway Safety Improvement Plan (SHSIP) in Sacramento, but I heard a clutch of CHICKS kept this conference lively!

The Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment is still moving forward. Payments and/or pledges have reached the \$500,000 goal. The County of Los Angeles in the form of Pat DeChellis has agreed to be the project manager. Pat will work with an Oversight Committee made up of DeAnn Baker (CSAC), Brian Lee (CEAC), Jim Biery (City of Buena Park) as well as a staff member from the League of California Cities. The goal is to release the RFP in September. We will be providing updates during the upcoming CEAC Policy Conference and the Annual CSAC Conference.

The 2008 CEAC Policy Conference is set for October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in Sacramento. Keep your eye out for upcoming notices and registration information. We have invited Ross Chittenden from Caltrans to speak to us at lunch on Wednesday. Ross will bring us up to date on Proposition 1B funds as well as other timely statewide transportation policy issues. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this important conference.

Finally, I hope you are also planning on attending the Annual CSAC conference to be held in Alameda County (Oakland) on November 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>. We have invited Wil Kempton and John Barna (Executive Director of the CTC) to join us at our Thursday morning General Session to discuss the statewide perspective of transportation issues and how they relate/impact counties. Hope to see you all there!

Mike Crump  
Butte County Director of Public Works

# **CEAC MEMORIAL FUND SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2007**

Tom Bolich, Chair of the CEAC Memorial Fund and Scholarship Committee, and Director of Public Works for Santa Cruz County, recently provided recommendations to the Board of Directors for the award of \$2,000 scholarships to three very deserving Civil Engineering students.

In his report, Tom advised that the Committee received twenty (20) applications from well qualified young people currently attending twelve different colleges and universities statewide and who have selected civil engineering as their future profession. After carefully screening each student's application, the committee determined that each of the applicants had complied with the CEAC Scholarship Guidelines. During its July 25, 2007 Board of Directors conference call meeting, the Board authorized scholarship awards to the Committee's three recommended applicants.

This year's recipients are as follows:

**Jennifer Shore**, University of the Pacific (San Joaquin County).

Jennifer is a Senior with a special interest in improving water quality, sustainability and sanitation world-wide.

**Cardiel O. Bugarin**, California State University at Los Angeles (Los Angeles County).

Cardiel returned to school after serving on active duty in the U.S. Marines for 4 and a half years and is beginning his Senior year with a goal of working in the area of Transportation Engineering.

**Adam Bogage**, University of California at San Diego (San Diego County).

Adam returned to school after ten years of work in the computer industry and is completing his Senior year. He has recently been accepted into the graduate program at UCSD. His interest is in the area of structures with a desire to eventually work as a bridge designer.

Award letters and checks were sent to each of the recipients in time for the start of the new school year.

***“CEAC EXPRESSES ITS CONGRATULATIONS TO EACH ON THE AWARDEES AND SENDS ITS BEST WISHES FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS IN THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION”***



# More Political Engineering Commandments

*By George C. Protopapas*

During my 24 years as an engineer for San Luis Obispo County, it became clear to me that civil engineering knowledge is not enough to succeed. One also needs to understand "political engineering." "Political engineering" is the "technology" of getting along with an elective body as your boss.

I have written two previous columns for Tech Transfer on this subject. "The Ten Commandments of Political Engineering" was published in October 1992. "Ten More Commandments of Political Engineering" appeared in October 1993.

## 14 More Commandments

Since there is virtually no material available on political engineering and I continue to take an interest in this subject, I have once again expanded on my original idea. This time I have developed a third group of 10 commandments, along with four commandments of political traffic engineering. Although the commandments relate to a county board of supervisors, they could equally apply to a city council or a special district's board of directors.

The additional "Commandments" are:

1. Never intrude upon the policy prerogatives of your board. If pressed for commitments by persons or organizations, always make it clear that your board will make the decision and that you will only recommend a course of action.

2. Never criticize a board member in a private or public gathering. Be loyal and always try to increase the respect accorded to your board by the general public and by your own staff.

3. Never get so comfortable that you forget that you are working for the board. If their decisions or your relationship with a board member begin to affect your sanity, then you have two choices. Either leave or wait for the next election, knowing that board members are elected for four-year terms and hopefully you will outlast the one with whom you are having problems.

4. Always try in a public meeting to defer to any board members who are present so that they may be the county's spokesperson. Substitute your presentation for theirs only upon their request, and never attempt to take the limelight from them.

5. Organize ribbon-cutting ceremonies so that the board member whose district includes a project gets to cut the ribbon. If the project is of county-wide interest, invite the chairman of the board to be the ribbon cutter. To provide a little levity at these ceremonies, I made a silly looking hard hat for the ribbon cutter. If the board member has a big ego and no sense of humor, don't use the silly hat.

6. Be helpful and on good terms with members of the press. Get to know the reporters and notify them of newsworthy items. Never be belligerent, and remember they are only trying to do their jobs.

7. Never carry on a running battle in the "Letters to the Editor" column or editorial columns. You won't win.

8. Get to know your county administrator and county auditor-controller. To make life easier, be sure to make friends with them.

9. To minimize the inevitable irritation of property owners adjacent to construction projects or special maintenance projects, particularly where traffic control or street closure is involved, have your staff hand-deliver to each business or homeowner a fact sheet in letter form to advise them of the details of the project and how it will affect them.

10. Work closely with any citizens advisory committee formed by the board even if, as a professional engineer, you don't agree with the direction a committee seems to be taking. If there is a disagreement, bring your recommendation and present it along with the committee's. It is the board's responsibility to choose which recommendation will be adopted. Of course, it is always better for you and the advisory committee to be in agreement.

## Political Traffic Engineering

Traffic engineering, especially in small cities, can become very political. Here are some commandments that could help to keep local politics from crowding out the relevant traffic engineering issues.

## Traffic engineering, especially in small cities, can become very political.

1. Formulate your traffic engineering recommendation in accordance with professional traffic engineering standards, but don't ignore the viewpoints of citizens and board members as you go through that process. If your recommendation still is not adopted by the board, don't take it personally.

2. Have your board adopt traffic warrants such as the California Department of Transportation's Traffic Warrants, which are recognized statewide. This will take the heat off you when a citizen or a board member would like to do something which is not good traffic engineering practice. By following the warrants, you will decrease your agency's liability in the event of an accident and make your board members think twice before changing your recommendation.

Continued on Next Page

## Traffic engineering (continued)

3. If you are finding that politics dictate traffic engineering decisions in your agency, you may want to consider recommending that your board form a traffic safety committee comprised of professionals (the majority) and lay people (a minority) who would be responsible for making recommendations on traffic engineering matters to your board. The professionals could be a combination of a county traffic engineer, a city traffic engineer, a member of the highway patrol, a member of the auto club, the police chief, or a Caltrans traffic engineer.

4. Often a large group of people will try to convince a board to modify your traffic engineering recommendation in a way that doesn't conform to professional guidelines. In that case, you may want to seek the assistance of your legal counsel to convince the board that deviating from good traffic engineering practice could increase the liability of your agency. When a board is considering actions that don't conform with constituents' wishes, it is more inclined to go along with the recommendations of its legal staff than with a straightforward engineering recommendation. In such cases, the board can cite a need to protect the agency from liability.

## NEW NORTH BAY REGION

The newly formed North Bay Region, consisting of the counties of Marin, San Francisco, Sonoma, Solano and Napa, held its inaugural meeting on August 31, 2007. Mr. Fred Abadi, San Francisco's Director of Public Works, was unanimously voted in as the North Bay's first Regional Director. **Congratulations** to all who spearheaded the effort to bring together this new and active group to deal with the common public works issues of the five counties. Also, **congratulations** to Fred and **welcome** to the Board of Directors.



### TRAFFIC ENGINEERING 101

I live in a semi rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local County Public Works office to request the removal of the "DEER CROSSING" sign on a nearby road. The reason: *Too many deer are being hit by cars out here! I don't think this is a good place for them to be crossing anymore.*"

### TRAFFIC ENGINEERING 102

The traffic signal on the corner buzzes when its safe to cross the street. I was crossing with an intellectually challenged coworker of mine. She asked if I knew what the buzzer was for. I explained that it signals blind people when the light is red. Appalled, she responded, *"What on earth are blind people doing driving?"* (Note: She was a probation officer.)

## ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE



*CEAC Members, CLODS, Affiliates, and Guests.*

Make your plans now to attend another well planned and exciting event to be held at the Oakland Convention Center and the adjacent Oakland Marriott City Center Hotel.

For CEAC registration forms and conference schedule visit  
[www.csac.counties.org](http://www.csac.counties.org).



## 2007 BEDROLL CONFERENCE PHOTOS



Dining at Lake Almanor



Comments from the Peanut Gallery



A Callaway Bedroll???



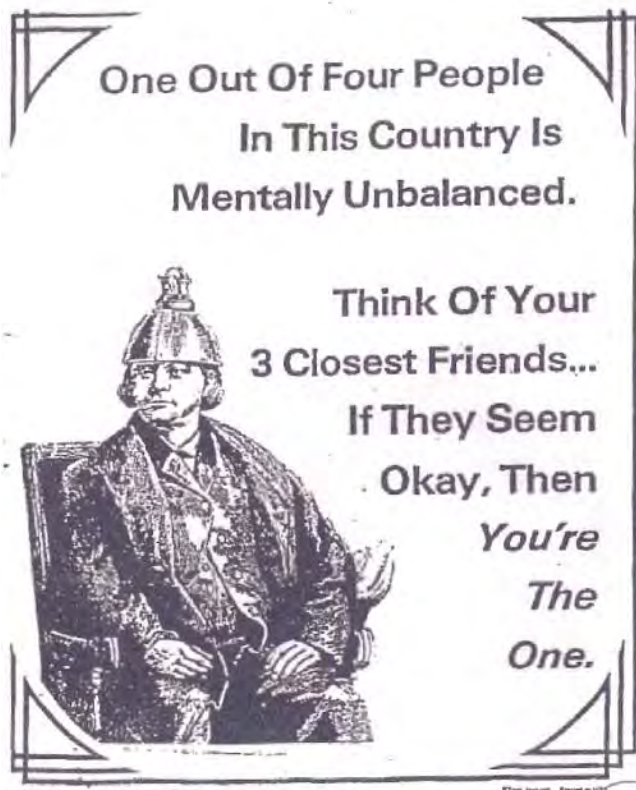
An Intense Committee Meeting



## BEDROLL PHOTOS (Cont)



They went to great lengths to keep the mosquitoes away.



### ***Editorial Correction:***

*It has been brought to the Editor's attention that in the June Newsletter the name of the previous and esteemed Newsletter Editor was miss-spelled. Mr. Davis did not mind being seen with the "hogs", but was quite disturbed that he had been forgotten so soon. He further indicated that he wanted his "e" back. Accordingly, with sincerest apology, your missing "e" is being returned to you Vernee.*

# CONDOR NEWS

*The following article was printed in the Ventura County Star on September 4, 2007.*

**The latest battleground in the effort to save the California condor from extinction is taking place in the California Legislature. Lawmakers are considering a bill to ban the use of lead ammunition in deer-hunting zones in the areas where free flying condors forage.**

During the past month, two record-setting California condors were dispatched to the Los Angeles Zoo, one from the coastal mountains near Big Sur, the other from the oak-studded wildlands near the Ventura-Kern county line.

Their record distinctions were that they had the highest and second-highest levels of lead poisoning ever measured among members of their fragile species.

Condor 245 had lead concentrations in its blood 56 times higher than the level that would trigger emergency intervention in a human.

Condor 242 registered at 61 times that threshold.

The latter is expected to survive. Condor 245 died a week ago.

Results of a necropsy are pending, but biologists suspect what happened to 245 is the same thing one of them witnessed befall 242: Scavenging for food, it ingested lead bullet fragments imbedded in the carcass of a wild animal.

The events have discouraged Jess Grantham, coordinator of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's California Condor program.

Grantham has spent much of his career trying to bring back the species from the brink of extinction, and he's beginning to wonder how much longer the birds can survive under the intensive, unnatural baby-sitting of man.

"We caught 15 birds and tested them for lead in the past week," he said recently. "We used to do that once a year; now we're doing it all the time."

Biologists have resumed leaving animal carcasses at designated sites to ensure the safety of the condors' food supply.

"That's about as unnatural as you can get," Grantham said. "At some point, you have to either say this is not working, or you have to do something about it."

The march toward "doing something" -- namely, outlawing the use of lead ammunition in areas where wild condors forage -- has been a stop-and-go affair since at least 2003, when the California Fish and Game Commission first began considering a possible ban.

If a ban were implemented, hunters could still shoot deer in the affected areas, but they would have to use copper bullets, a type of ammunition, hunters argue, that is somewhat more expensive and far less available than traditional lead bullets.

The commission's deliberate pace led to the filing of a lawsuit by the Natural Resources Defense Council in 2006, alleging the agency's inaction violated the requirements of the federal Endangered Species Act.

Legislation to implement a ban foundered in the Legislature in 2005 and 2006, shot down by opposition from hunting groups, the National Rifle Association and the firearms industry.

In 2007, however, the weight of evidence has become so great that action appears imminent unless jurisdictional distrust,

## CONDOR NEWS (continued)

exploited by interest groups on both sides, gets in the way.

The question now is if something is going to be done, who's going to do it? Regulators on the Fish and Game Commission, or lawmakers in the Capitol? Environmentalists, frustrated by the commission's inaction to date, are pushing for a law to implement the ban.

"Condors have been dying for decades. The commission hasn't done anything," said Kelly Sorenson, executive director of the Ventana Wildlife Society, the nonprofit group that manages the wild condor population in Northern California. "Deer hunting is linked to elevated levels of lead. We published that study, and they all concur our evidence is strong."

An alliance of gun and hunting groups continues to dispute the evidence, however.

In a strongly worded letter to the commission last month, the alliance said it opposes "the draconian and unwarranted step of banning traditional hunting ammunition based on inconclusive science."

The letter said the proposal "reflects a hidden agenda by some to ban all hunting in California."

The letter was signed by, among others, representatives of the National Rifle Association, the California Rifle and Pistol Association and the National Association of Firearms Retailers.

Not all in the hunting community, however, are so dismissive of the evidence.

"It's not 100 percent conclusive, but the best available science is pretty strong," said Bill Gaines, president of the California Outdoor Heritage Alliance.

## Sincerity is the Best Policy

*By George Protopapas*

Over time, dealing successfully with complaints from the public can be very helpful in creating a positive image of your department. Here are some suggestions:

1. Be a good listener when a member of the public "unloads" on you. Often that is sufficient, even if you are unable to solve the problem.

2. Know your department and its policies so that you will be consistent in reacting to complaints.

3. Be honest. If you are unable to help, explain why.

4. If you receive the initial complaint but you are not the right person to handle it, find out who can help. You should then contact the appropriate person yourself and tell them of the complaint, rather than leaving it up to the customer to return or call back. If the person who should handle the complaint is not immediately available, take the responsibility for having that person contact the customer later. Never give people the run-around by passing them on to someone else who in turn may pass them on to someone else, leaving the customer feeling trapped in bureaucracy.

5. Always remain cool with a hostile member of the public. A detailed explanation

of why you are unable to assist them generally calms them down.

6. Follow through with the promised response. When I ran a public works department, we set up a simple system to assure follow-through on complaints. If the department was unable to immediately respond to a complaint, a service request form would be filled out and forwarded to whoever would be acting on the request. One copy of the form was to be returned when the action was completed. Another copy went into a complaint "tickler" file to make certain that service requests were acted on promptly and were not forgotten. The "tickler" file was reviewed periodically to assure that we were responding in a timely manner.

*George Protopapas is a columnist for the Tech Transfer newsletter.*

***"The man who has a right to boast doesn't have to."***





Sponsored by the Arizona Association of County Engineers

For Information call : (623) 581-3597 or e-mail: [admin@azace.org](mailto:admin@azace.org)

Full Conference Registration including meals is \$150; Meetings only is \$100.

Group Rate for Lodging is \$28 / night Sun-Thurs and \$78 / night Fri-Sat

***Topics Include:***

***Wildlife Crossings; ADOT Statewide Access Management Project;  
Communicating in the Field;  
Sharing Best Practices and Lessons Learned;  
Corps of Engineers Engineering Technical Letter on Levees;  
GIS the next Generation; 2D Modeling;  
Lake Havasu Sewer Improvement District;  
Flood Damage and the FEMA Process; Railroad Crossings.***

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

Last month's Quiz was a two part question with the first being "In which California Counties would you most likely encounter a *woodchuck*?" and second being "How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?"

In accordance with the official reference source for the first question, *Hinterland Who's Who*, the woodchuck, *marmota monax*, is the major hole digging mammal over much of the eastern United States. A close relative, the rockchuck or yellow-bellied marmot, is found in California. Accordingly, there were no correct answers submitted for the first question.

Two good answers were received on the second question.

Bill McIntosh, the *Old Crow*, answered as follows: "He'd chuck all the wood a woodchuck could if a woodchuck could chuck wood."

Dave Gravenkamp, the *Roadrunner*, responded as follows: "I guess very little wood could be chucked by a woodchuck – at least a surviving one. As you may know there's a large Basque population in the N.E. portion of the State. In order to survive, the wood chuck must dodge Basques rather than chuck wood."

Bill was declared the winner of the quiz on the basis that his woodchuck would chuck more wood than Dave's. Congratulations to Bill.

### **Quiz No. 5 - September 2007**

Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what?

Tie Breaker: How many people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776?

Send your responses to the Newsletter Editor before October 20, 2007.

"I saw that there was an opportunity to enter a field which could be made as broad as the world, something that everybody could use if given it cheap enough; so I became interested in oil."

~ John D. Rockefeller

## THIS AND THAT....

**In Richardson, Texas,** A State Trooper was running radar. He had a perfect spot to watch for speeders, but wasn't getting any. Then he discovered the problem.

A 12 year old boy was standing up the road with a hand painted sign which read "RADAR TRAP AHEAD."

The officer later found a young accomplice down the road with a sign reading, "TIPS" and a bucket full of money.

*(And we used to just sell lemonade).*

### Did You Know?

That in the 1400s a law was set forth in England that a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick not thicker than his thumb. Hence we have "the rule of thumb".

The first couple to be shown in bed on prime time TV were Fred and Wilma Flintstone.

In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts...So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them "Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down."

Therefore we get the phrase, "mind your P's and Q's."

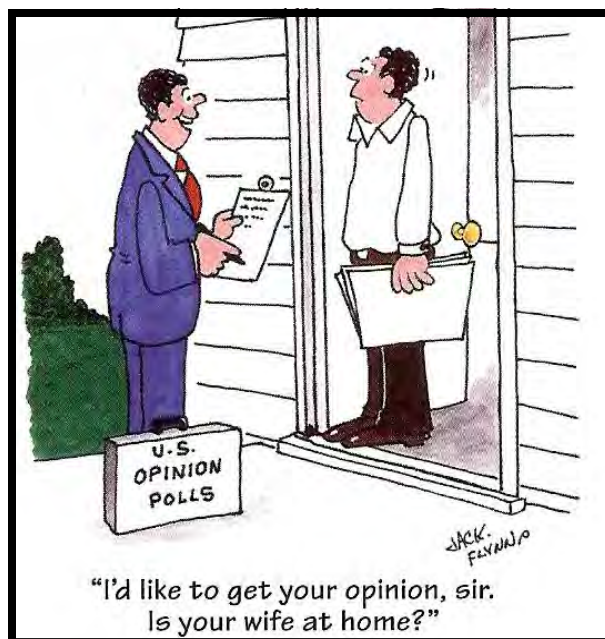
**At a cocktail party,** one woman said to another, "Aren't you wearing your wedding ring on the wrong hand?" The other women replied, "Yes, because I married the wrong man."

**Informational E-Mail:** This came across the e-mail the other day and is being passed on to you as something to think about while you are watching the evening news.

Many of you will recall that on July 8, 1947, witnesses claimed that an unidentified flying object with five aliens aboard crashed onto a sheep and cattle ranch just out Roswell, New Mexico. This is a well known incident that many say has long been covered up by the U.S. Air Force and the federal government,

However, you may not know that in the month of March, 1948, exactly nine months after that historic day, the following people were born: Albert Arnold Gore, Jr.; Hillary Rodham; John F. Kerry; William Jefferson Clinton; Howard Dean; Nancy Pelosi; Charles E. Schumer; and Barbara Boxer.

See what happens when aliens breed with sheep. This piece of information may clear up a lot of things.



**A man** approached a very beautiful woman in the supermarket and said, "Excuse me, I've lost my wife in the supermarket. Can you talk to me for a couple of minutes?"

"Why" she asked.

"Because every time I talk to a beautiful woman, my wife shows up."

**The older** you get, the tougher it is to lose weight. By then your body and your fat are really good friends.