

# Adverse Verse

Revised March 31, 2003

## With abject apologies to real poets everywhere

A hypothetical look inside city hall with English subtitles.

Similarity to real folks here is purely  
Intentional and often quite surly.

Don't sue me, please  
For this bit of a tease.

Even thin-skinned folk can take a joke, surely.

Humor contains at least a grain of truth.

"Frank, ole buddy," said citizen Tom,  
"We don't nab speeders, but tall plants are calm.  
I'll jog down the street,  
Tag plants over two feet.  
We'll save children from traffic and maybe a mom."  
I'll complain in the newspaper too.

Frank mused, "We'll be heroes, I agree with you.  
This vision thing seems like a good thing to do.  
We'll take some old laws,  
Make them into a cause,  
Then test them out on a neighbor or two."

The city has nothing better to do.

Strict policies are fine with Ms. Grote.  
She follows orders and needs no one's vote.  
She used her resources  
And sent out enforcers.

"Measure! Take photos! Write notes!"

It's policy. Do not fail!

Officer Chris showed up, clipboard in hand.  
He left a form showing the city's demand.  
The whole row of old shrubs  
Must be chopped down to stubs.

"I want to avoid a harsh reprimand."

It's a high-profile case.

Kay pruned the bushes and pruned them again.  
For safety she thought but was unaware then:  
    "Who calls the shots?  
    Prevail at all costs.  
Too bad she has cancer. Get in there and win!"  
    But stall until the new ordinance goes into effect.

Said Ariel's special assistant,  
"Kay's requesting that we be consistent.  
    But don't worry, I bet  
    I can make her regret  
That she dared to be so resistant."  
    Ve have our vays.

"Urge the school folk to take a firm stand.  
Propose it to Council, make it rosy and bland.  
    Avoid talk of consequences.  
    They might come to their senses.  
Ain't motherhood and apple pie grand?"  
    This feels so good.

"She's written to Council, she's written to us.  
She's put up a website, she's making a fuss.  
    She's quoting code sections.  
    And asking hard questions.  
Common sense is her goal, she's asking for fairness."  
    How unreasonable!

One hoped Steve Emslie would use common sense.  
But, new at the job, he sat on the fence.  
    He went with the flow.  
    It was simpler you know.  
He didn't risk coming to Leibbrands' defense.  
    Ariel doesn't like to be criticized.

Ariel told his hatchet man Lance,  
“We must get rid of those tall plants.

Throw the book at her.

Just settle the matter.

And cover the seat of my pants.”

Have her arrested.

Lance got a warrant; police came to Kay’s door.

Lance issued a press release, boy was he sore!

The media came and swarmed about,

They made sure that the news went out.

Frank must be proud. Valued shrubs are no more.

**Who is in charge at City Hall?**

**What about real traffic safety?**

The following is a direct quote from Palo Alto’s **Official** Website

**The City of Palo Alto’s Values:**

Quality – Superior delivery of service.

Courtesy – Providing service with respect and concern.

Efficiency – Productive, effective use of resources.

Integrity – Straight-forward, honest and fair relations.