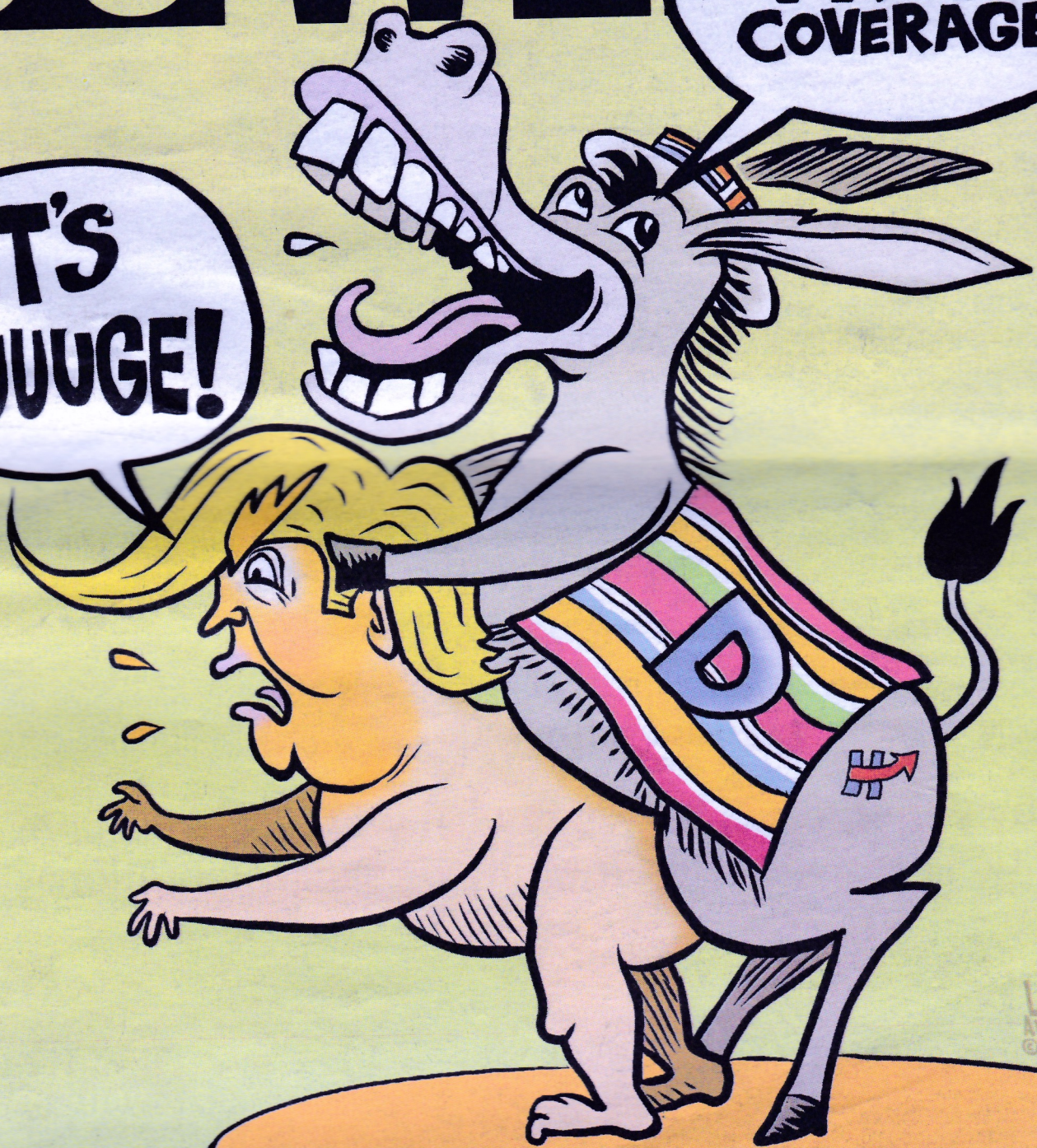



OC WEEKLY

CHECK
OUT OUR
TRUMP
COVERAGE!

IT'S
YUUUGE!



LALO
ALFARAZ
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PARKING-LOT THEATER OF THE ABSURD

BY JOEL BEERS

*A NOTE ABOUT THE COVER

Yes, that is a Democratic ass on top of Donald Trump on the cover. And it's only fitting: For more than a year, the presumptive GOP presidential nominee has peddled all sorts of nasty myths against Mexicans, from painting undocumented immigrants as rapists and Typhoid Maries to insisting a massive wall on the U.S.-Mexico border will make America great again. His campaign has grown as grotesque as a donkey show, those Tijuana spectacles that exist only in the fevered minds of *gabachos*, and it made a stop in Costa Mesa last week, with Trump the featured star and the *Weekly* documenting every scream, punch and lie. So it's also only fitting legendary *cartoonista* Lalo Alcaraz capture the moment, you know? Besides, Democrats violating Trump from behind is what he can expect when he faces Hillary Clinton come November. Enjoy our package, and don't forget to register to vote!

When you are dealing with such a *yuuge* primordial force as Donald J. Trump, apparently not even an Internet ticket OR a media credential to his rally assures access. I had both. And after checking in and securing my credential, I was inside the OC Fair's Pacific Amphitheatre three hours before Trump's rally.

But I made the mistake of leaving to check out what was going on outside. And when word came down around 6:15 p.m. that the Pac Amp was at its 8,500-seat capacity and my ticket was no longer valid, I knew I'd have to rely on my credential. But after hoofing it back to the media entrance, a trek that took at least 20 minutes (for some unfathomable fucking reason, the media entrance and public entrance were located on opposite sides of

the arena), I encountered a locked door and a dour dude who just shook his head. They locked the media out at 6:30.

So, no entry. No riveting examination of the lights, sound, texture and ritualistic communion between performer and audience in the context of one of the greatest theatrical spectacles of our modern age: a campaign rally.

A total bust.

But here's the thing. Though everyone was there to either support or condemn the person holding that rally, the real show were those people, not the candidate. Because although Trump's quest for the Republican nomination for U.S. President has morphed from impossible to improbable to can-you-fucking-believe-it's-all-but-a-certainty, his

campaign isn't really about him (because, Jesus, if Gertrude Stein was right about Oakland not having a there there, then Trump's utter lack of intellectual and rational presence makes him the Oaktown of American politics). No, it's really about the people who see him as some kind of manifestation of a marginalized and mocked and overlooked and ignored America, a return to American exceptionalism, and fuck you, we're America, damn it, and you better get that straight, and those who see in him all the racism, xenophobia, ignorance and bloviating, swaggering arrogance that makes America less great than very, very small.

So fuck the inside. The spectacle may have been in there, but the story was outside. As

» Continued from page 9

were the seeds of the drama that would ultimately culminate in a wild block party.

There wasn't the impression early on in the day of much impending drama, long before the protesters became more numerous and vocal, and long before the Trump supporters became equally asshole-ish.

Earlier in the day, everyone seemed almost goddamn sensible.

Sure, there were small clusters of protesters with their "Trump is a Nazi" and "Fuck Trump" signs, and one young woman who kept chanting, "Your ancestors brought slavery and genocide to this land," which provoked a couple of Trumpsters to blurt out, "Go back home," to which she deftly one-upped them with "I am home. Why don't you go back to Europe?"

But for the most part, even the older white dudes with their "Send Hillary to Jail" signs were mellow.

As Blaine Fuller of Huntington Beach, a grad student at Cal State Fullerton who's looking to enter medical school, said, "I'm not here to support a wall; I support a pro-business candidate."

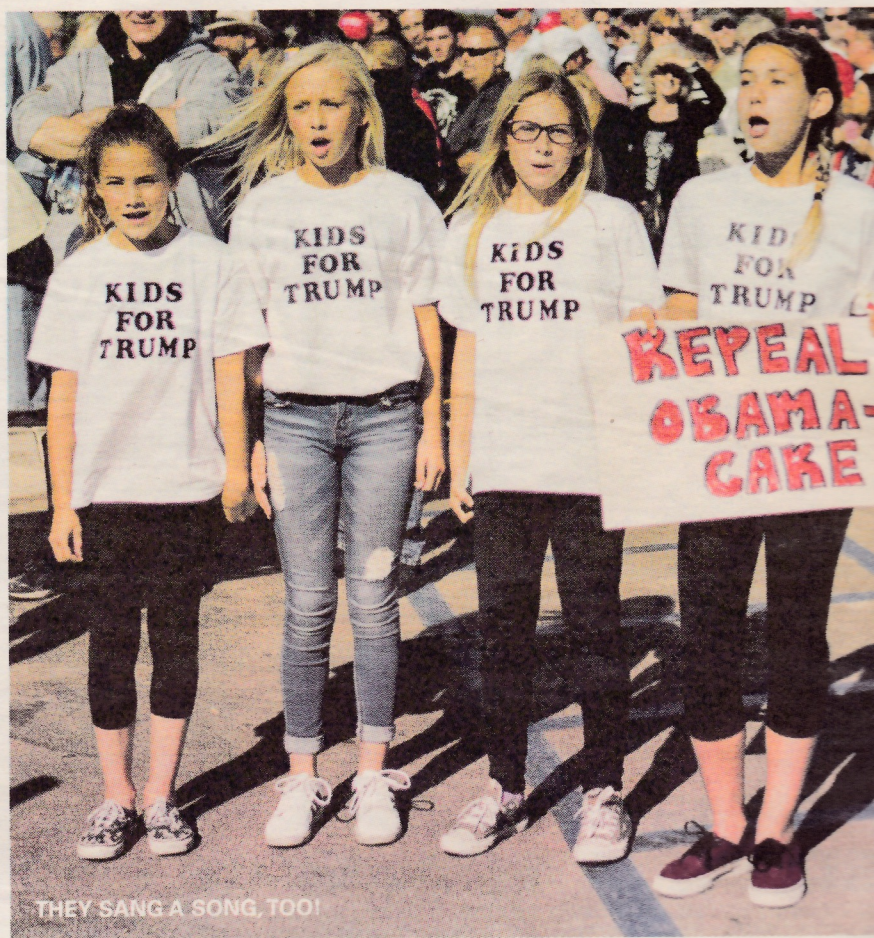
Jason Poch, of Huntington Beach, who brought his 11-year-old daughter, Ashley, with him, had no problem with a wall. "I'm an electrical contractor, and the wall is a simple plumbing problem," he said. "When you have a leak in your kitchen, you stop the leak before you mop it up. I've got employees who work for me, and they need a path to be here legally, and the way to do it is after we stop the leak; we can come up with some kind of plan that if they've been here x amount of time, committed no crime and been a productive member of society, then let them stay."

Ashley, meanwhile, said she liked seeing Trump on *The Apprentice*.

While the pro-Trump crowd was mostly white, I was surprised to see a decent-sized contingent of other races, particularly Latinos, as well as a lot of teenagers and young adults. But I was really surprised to see Jonathan Moore, an African-American Trump supporter (chew on that), who lives in Yorba Linda (WHAT???). "Even though there are some things he has said I don't necessarily agree with as a black man, when it comes to issues, I'd rather have someone in office who believes in the American people instead of someone giving up on America," he said.

That doesn't mean every Trump supporter was reasonable and rational. "I'm tired of the political correctness," one guy said to no one in particular. "I like Colombian, Panamanian, Costa Rican women. Make America straight!" No more nonsense!

As the two lines to get in through the main entrance began to swell (at one point, they must have stretched four football fields), the number of protesters did as well. Deputies on horseback started creating a barrier between the two sides, but the numbers were too unwieldy, and little holes in the dike regularly popped up. By



this time, being on the Trump side, near the sidewalk, was a little bit like Cersei Lannister's walk of shame in the final episode of last season's *Game of Thrones*. The chants and taunts started to get more personal. One Trump supporter, who identified herself as Mexican-American, squared off with a small group of protesters, and slaps were exchanged. When asked later what triggered it, she said, "Someone called me white. They were just disgusting. We don't need that in America."

Seth Gaoma, who identified himself as a Hispanic, held his ground, posting up to about a dozen protesters, matching them scream for scream. "Originally, I didn't support him, being Hispanic, but after listening to what he said, I do," said Gaoma, a grad student in physical therapy at Loma Linda University. "I don't think he's anti-Mexican, he's anti-illegal immigration. He's said he's loved Mexicans a thousand times, so I don't think he's anti-Mexican at all."

As a white dude walking near the Trump side, I wasn't spared the taunts. At one point, a young Latina got in my face and screamed at me for wearing a Los Angeles Galaxy hat. "Do you know their leading scorer is Mexican?" she asked. I would have delivered a zinging rejoinder, had I not then stepped in a big pile of horseshit.

One positive in all this: People really value the importance of books. I must have heard a dozen protesters and a dozen Trump supporters yell at someone else, "Just open a book! Read it!"

A small reprieve came when a gaggle of young women sporting female-equality

signs and topless except for tape covering their nipples made a run for the entrance. A little comic relief is always appreciated.

Things really turned when the announcement was made that there were no tickets left. As the *Weekly's* Mary Carreon reported, many Trump supporters, adults and children, burst into tears (that's when I made my ill-fated odyssey to try to get in). When I got back, around 6:45, the tenor had absolutely changed. Now, instead of excitement, the scores of Trump fans who had made it in had nothing to do but either leave or stand around. Accordingly, the rhetoric from both sides escalated.

One guy got in the face of a bandanna-clad protester, screaming at him about how he saw him taking pictures of pro-Trump license plates in the parking lot. When asked how he thought the supposed-picture takers knew which cars were driven by Trumpsters, he started talking a lot about Alex Jones.

More horse barriers were created, and that's when the musical score of this particular piece of theater really got interesting. It went something like this: "FUCK TRUMP! USA! FUCK TRUMP! USA! EAST LA! BUILD THE WALL! EAST LA! BUILD THE WALL!"

Even the kids got into the festive occasion. After a young Latina, no older than 12, yelled at a white girl of about the same age that she was going to lose her voice if she kept screaming, the young little lady, replied, "Well, you're going to wake up fat some morning."

Eventually, the protesters were pushed out into the street. Things went haywire.



THEY SANG A SONG, TOO!

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You've heard all about them. But to me, it seemed more like a block party of mostly Mexican teenagers and young adults with a shitload of cops. There was a white dude dressed as a banana who kept repeating, "Your local GMO is good for you. I'm a banana; I know what I'm talking about." And there were some Trumpsters out there, watching the commotion on the fairgrounds side of Fair Drive.

"None of them came in the rally," one older white male said. "Good thing because we would have stomped their asses."

At this point, nothing too dramatic seemed to be happening except a small group of protesters doing the Macarena. So I split. As I was walking down Fairview, I talked to Andy Garcia, an Orange Coast College student who came just to observe. "They were all ignorant," he said. "Both sides were being bullies. And that's the sad thing about it. We don't want to stoop to that level. They all became like Trump."

By the time I got to Arlington Drive, a young white guy on a skateboard rolled by and asked where everything was going down. I pointed to where copters were still circling. "Kind of everywhere over there," I said. "But nowhere, really."

My car was parked near TeWinkle Park. Ducks live there. I stopped and asked one what it thought of the whole circus. It quacked. Next to the guy dressed as the banana and the show-your-nipple contingent, on a day and night when theater of the absurd took on multiple human dimensions, it was one of the few things anyone said that really seemed to make sense. ☐