

THE 4th Annual A2 SHOPPING CART RACE!

Start at top center, follow numbs

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"It's guerilla warfare," Mary urges. To Josh it's a "celebration of resistance". "We're supposed to like stupid sitcoms & watch the same movie over & over. We should be able to do things that are amazingly creative and our own. This is the ability to have fun outside what is normally considered fun. You need the ability to think you can do anything."



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Defying forced consumption & breaking down barriers risks attracting cops. "The cops were pretty confused the 1st year," Jen relates. "Because who would think of racing a shopping cart?", explains Mary. Jen recalls a surreal experience--tailed by a flashing cop car: "Pull your vehicle to the side of the road." "It's a shopping cart, man, what are you talking about?!" In past years, cops threatened to arrest anyone "with their hands on a shopping cart" for possession of stolen property. But Jen says, "I take mine back after it's changed. It's funnier that way."



1

START

Buying groceries these days means paying extra for your privacy, or else toting a "discount" card that tells Big Brother your profile & shopping patterns. No wonder rebel spirits commandeer the tool of the master—the shopping cart—for their own creative & fun aims.



Photos, Interviews, & Story by Cecelia Ober



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This year the cops seem bemused & pleasant: Officer Friendly says, "Never seen anything quite like it. It makes Ann Arbor good." But "they need a permit...we have to have streets blocked so no one gets hurt." The racers take care of themselves, though: many wear helmets, & friends hold signs to pause traffic. Unimpressed, Friendly explains, "I have flashing blue and red lights and no one sees me." Asked to describe the event, Jen smiles & says "dangerous". "Lighten up. Do something where you can break your arm." She's prepared: her machine is a wheelchair attached to a cart.



2

Right around midnight on August 21st, the pokey unsteerable denizens of grocery



aisles became customized crotch rockets for the likes of Bam-Bam, Tigger, Superwoman & zanier A2 alter-egos, one person pushing a teammate in a mad race up North Main.



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Each year the race grows, thanks only to a mysterious nebula of friends & community members. Mark says the organization happens by word of mouth & he thinks if it got formal or got permits, no one would want to do it. "It's certainly part of the thrill that it's illegal. It's meant to be anarchistic and that's part of the fun of it." ☑

