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Candidate not just another pretty face

Nobody opens longshot campaign for presidency with a Union Square rally

By Dave Farrell
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Nobody started running for president yesterday, kicking off the campaign before 150 die-hard supporters who danced their way through a cold and soggy noon rally in Union Square.

Wavy Gravy, Nobody's fool, introduced the candidate — a set of chattering plastic teeth — to the crowd. A group of supporters behind him on the stage shared a hash pipe.

Afterward, Nobody granted *The Examiner* an exclusive interview.

Nobody was asked about foreign policy. Gravy held the teeth close to his ear and listened intently. "Nobody says, 'If you don't have a sense of humor, it just isn't funny anymore.'" Gravy pronounced after his candidate stopped flapping.

Gravy was dressed in his campaign finery yesterday: clown makeup and a baggy blue jumpsuit adorned with big white stars. While a steady rain fell, he led the crowd through some of Nobody's famous campaign cheers.

"Who understands the economy?" he yelled.

"Nobody!" the crowd replied.

"Who makes better apple pie than your mother?"

"Nobody!"

The political rhetoric was interspaced with entertainment. Robert Hunter, songwriter for the Grateful Dead, sang several songs. Back-up vocals were provided by an all-star crew of Bay Area Flower Power-era musicians: Barry Melton of Country Joe and the Fish; John Cipollina of Quicksilver Messenger Service; Peter Albin of Big Brother and the Holding Company, and Spencer Dryden of the New Riders of the Purple Sage.

"This may not be a big crowd, but they're having a good time," Gravy observed from backstage. "For some of these people, seeing Robert Hunter sing 'Ripple' is as good as it gets."

Gravy, aka Hugh Romney, comedian and card-carrying hippie from the Haight-Ashbury era, steered Nobody through the 1976 and 1980 presidential campaigns. Nobody won both elections, Gravy said.

"When you count up all the people who didn't vote, it is clear that more people voted for Nobody than any of the other candidates," he said.

The idea behind Nobody's campaign is to generate a little "positive creative anarchism" and to promote the idea that the country may not even need a president.

"What we need is a 'greeter,' someone who looks good, like Robert Redford or maybe Bo Derek, to hang around and greet people when they come into the country and maybe flick the switch to turn on the official Christmas tree every year," Gravy said.

"Actually, the president should be required to take a Civil Service exam to make sure he is qualified."

Nobody's supporters went on to urge onlookers to register to vote and become politically active. The cold rain dampened the voter registration drive yesterday, although other political messages were delivered from the stage.

Michael Moran of GRASS-Roots, a group advocating the legalization of marijuana, said his members will be here for the Democratic Convention and will slip joints into the palms of all the delegates they can find.

Nobody plans to work the convention too, Gravy said, but first it's on to the campaign trail. The next stop will be New Hampshire, where Nobody's hat will be tossed into the ring for the presidential primaries.



Carol Scott

NOBODY FOR PRESIDENT CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF
A candidate who makes Sen. Crans' on look fat