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## front yard follies

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*College of DuPage*

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# front yard follies

— Dick Sharpe

Not one neighbor complained  
when my front rectangular lawn  
was dyed red and white stripes,  
with a blue field of white stars,  
to replicate the American flag,  
until I added red painted goats —  
hammer and sickle branded hind-ends —  
to nibble away as a historical reminder,  
not as an underhanded political statement,  
when the police forced me to hire  
illegal Mexican immigrant shepherds  
to herd the goats into the river — then both  
animal activists and Feds got involved  
when the shepherd families opened  
delicious restaurants on my street,  
believing them to be fronts for fine  
baking flour from Columbia — so my  
neighbors had to learn variations of  
Spanish or get out of town after they  
spent thousands for their kids to learn  
German or Japanese phonics — well, of course,

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the neighborhood switched overnight.  
So I re-dyed the front yard — same patriotic colors, same style — until I imported black bulls from Pamplona, not as a symbolic trampling, but more as a global gesture of inferior retribution — well, the neighborhood changed quicker than overnight — folks were last seen, federal agents included, running south down streets they had yet to pronounce, while forest preserve snipers — safely positioned in trees and second floor bedrooms — shot all bulls with tranquilizers after the town board's heated debate on how to dispose of these "non-indigenous, culturally important bovine" — well, the police held a pancake breakfast for me to purchase sod and re-do the entire front yard and promise on a stack of new millennium bibles, in front of a judge who grew up on a farm, never ever proclaim my American freedom of speech in such a way as to incite civic chaos through the use of aggressive outdoor color schemes.  
I promised — fingers crossed behind my back.