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- Regional News
- National News
- World News

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- Home
- Archives
- Last 7 Days
- Breaking News
- Business
- Cartoons
- Classified
- Columnists
- Coupons
- Entertainment
- Gossip
- Home Delivery
- Horoscope
- Learning Center
- Lifestyle
- Lottery
- News
- PageSix.com
- Post Opinion
- Post Store
- Puzzles
- Real Estate
- Reviews
- Shopping
- Sports
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- Travel
- TV Listings
- Weather

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REGIONAL NEWS

SNOW FLAKES BARE ALL

By ALY SUJO



BARELY LEGIBLE:
If you aren't distracted by the, um, details, you may be able to flesh out what these polar-bare peaceniks are trying to spell out: "NO BUSH."
 - AP

February 8, 2003 -- It's never too cold for a nude antiwar romp.

Thirty stripped-down activists in Central Park braved yesterday's surprise early-morning snowstorm to show their bare-naked distaste for President Bush's plans to strip Saddam Hussein of his deadly arsenal.

There was only one problem - not enough of them showed up.

Wearing little else but a frown, the pantless peaceniks romped to the landmark Bethesda

Fountain in the falling snow after dumping their clothes nearby.

Braving 20-degree temperatures, members of the group Baring Witness lay stark naked in a head-to-toe formation and came close to spelling out the words "NO BUSH."

But the group, which performed a similar stunt in San Francisco last November, was two nudes shy of spelling "B."

"This was exhilarating," said 29-year-old Heidi Cuppari. "I was thinking about all the people who are going to be in war, in hellish situations, and I thought I could take a little snow."

Yesterday's protest came as a snowstorm walloped the Big Apple, leaving streets covered in a pristine blanket of white as thousands of lucky schoolkids took the day off. More than 5 inches fell on the city, with most of it coming in the morning.

The Sanitation Department said its plow armada was on the job along with some 2,500 workers and 350 salt spreaders. Commuters were urged to use mass transit and the city's airports reported some delays.

Central Park had 5 inches of snow by noon, and up to 8 inches fell in the

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suburbs. So far this winter, the city has had a total accumulation of more than 20 inches, which National Weather Service meteorologist John Koch said was higher than usual.

After last winter's stingy 3.5 inches, many New Yorkers said they welcomed the change. "What a delight to be able to see this," said Brooklyn desktop publisher Dale Fuller.

Bundled up in heavy coats, hats and scarves, building owners, shopkeepers and maintenance workers used shovels and snowblowers to clear buried sidewalks. Most schools were closed in the northern suburbs and Long Island, as were some private schools in the city.

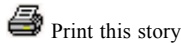
The fast-moving storm surprised much of the Northeast and closed hundreds of schools in at least four states. The storm, which began on Thursday night over Virginia and Maryland, intensified as it swept north.

Eight inches fell in New Jersey, where the snow had many people grumbling after a protracted cold spell.

"I've always hated winter," said Tamra McNamee as she shoveled snow for the third time in as many hours from the front of her flower shop in Newark.

WASTE WATCH

Help save the city budget! If you are aware of waste, fraud or mismanagement anywhere in city government, let The Post know. Send an email with details about the problem to govwaste@nypost.com



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