

The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

Russian Hill Upholstery & Decor is still located in Nob Hill, not Russian Hill.

At the Warfield: Sierra Farrell, with Dinosaur Burps, 3/8. Warren Zeiders, with Austin Williams, 3/10.

Last month marked the 100 year anniversary of that pop ditty celebrating the Golden State, "California Here I Come." Here are some lyrics from it:

*California, here I come
Right back where I started from
Where bowers of flowers bloom in the spring
Each morning at dawning, birdies sing at everything
A sun-kissed miss said, "Don't be late"
That's why I can hardly wait
Open up that golden gate
California, here I come*

Unfortunately, the song has not aged well. Here's an updated version I'm working on:

California, here I go

I'm moving to Orlando

Cali was once the golden kingdom

Not a homeless camp run by Gavin Newsom

The new California I won't miss a bit

'Cause everything "woke" always turns to shit

Start to build that border wall

California that is all

The song's singer, Al Jolson died in 1950 at age 64 while playing cards in San Francisco's St. Francis Hotel – a noteworthy event at the revered St. Francis. Here's another...

In 1921 silent film star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle decided to throw himself a discreet wild party in one of its rooms. Things became rather indiscreet when he was charged with the rape and manslaughter of actress Virginia Rappe, who attended it. His first two trials ended in hung juries, the third one acquitted him, with the jury apologizing to him for having to go through it.

"Fatty" Arbuckle wasn't acquitted in the court of public opinion, however. His movies were banned and he became an alcoholic. In 1933 Warner Brothers offered him a contract.



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The day they did was on his one year wedding anniversary. He invited some friends over, reportedly announcing "This is the best day of my life." Later that night he suffered a heart attack and died in his sleep.



In 1975 Sara Jane Moore got her fifteen minutes of fame by attempting to assassinate President Gerald Ford in front of the St. Francis. A brave U.S. marine/Vietnam vet named Oliver Sipple foiled her plans when he grabbed her hand holding the gun as the second shot went off. It missed the president and hit a taxi driver in the groin – luckily he survived. Sipple's friend, San Francisco's first openly gay supervisor Harvey Milk, decided to publicly announce that Sipple was gay. This led to Sipple's parents disowning him, which led to Sipple's depression and alcoholism. He later claimed his life would have been better if he had never intervened. Oliver Sipple was found dead in his San Francisco apartment in 1989. The coroner figured he had been dead for about ten days. He was 47.

And now, the most amazing event that ever happened at the St. Francis Hotel overlooking Union Square. I may have been born in New York City and raised on Long Island, but I was born nine months after my parents' honeymoon in San Francisco, and they stayed at the St. Francis. That's right -- the editor, publisher, and delivery boy of the San Francisco Herald, me -- Gene Mahoney, was conceived there. (That was probably the only time my parents ever got along.) So, to some people, I'm a native Californian.



The St. Francis in 1904, the year it opened.

Sadly, in a sign of the times, the St. Francis has become yet another San Francisco Hotel to default on its mortgage. Apparently tourists are staying away from the City of St. Francis in droves. That TV commercial showing how wonderful San Francisco is with the ultra politically correct black/Asian gay wedding along with shots of Nancy Pelosi and Willie Brown smiling (*hey, that'll get 'em out here*) just isn't doing the trick.

It's never a good idea to advertise a product that isn't ready yet. Also, no ad campaign can drown out the real-life tales of the bums, drug addicts, and thieves who populate the syringe and feces littered streets of our progressive utopia by the bay.

At Winters Tavern in Pacifica: Lee Vilensky Trio (matinee), 2/24. (That's right – Lee Vilensky, the Herald's cab driving columnist, now retired from that line of work. Which is okay, now that we have driverless taxis.) **At Longboard Margarita Bar, also in Pacifica:** Bob Marley Tribute with Sol Horizon, 2/24. Casual Country, 3/2.

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Telegraph from Berkeley

Peggy Sue

By Ace Backwards

One night in 1982, I was at this "new wave" club, the Berkeley Square, when I met this

cute rock 'n roll chick named Peggy Sue. If I was a rock star wannabe, Peggy Sue was a rock star's girlfriend wannabe. So we were a natural pair. She moved into my ratty Berkeley studio apartment and lived with me for a couple months.

Peggy Sue was crazy and cute – just my type. She was extremely dyslexic, and the words flowed out of her mouth in a non-stop jumble of gobbledygook, kind of like a brilliant avant-garde poet on drugs. Or, at other times, like the worst kind of female prattle.

"I'm being stalked by scary monsters and super freaks from the dark side of the moon," she explained, in a typically breathless monologue. "Dirty Harry and the art pirates from hell have been stealing my poetry and selling it to Ugly Stick so they can sell my soul into white slavery..."

And etc.

It all makes perfect sense, if you were nuts. So we were able to communicate. *She's got the soul of an artist*, I thought. *Just not the talent.*

Peggy Sue had these four little porcelain Beatle dolls that she carried in her purse everywhere she went. The dolls had mop-top hairdos and black ties and jackets. She'd set them up on the table by the window. And when she left the apartment, she'd put them back in her purse and take them with her.

One night I took Peggy Sue to the Johnny Rotten press conference at the swank 181 Club in San Francisco (an exclusive for my publication, *Twisted Image*). Johnny Rotten (wise-ass that he was) kept us journalists waiting. Eventually we became more and more agitated. Finally Johnny Rotten and his band came on stage and sat at a table.

"What's the point of this farce?!" shouted one of the outraged rock journalists. "Why did you call this press conference in the first place?"

"So I wouldn't have to talk with you individually," sneered Johnny Rotten.

Then Peggy Sue stood up and said, "God and Dog are three-letter words. Can you think of any others?"

"Huh?" said Johnny Rotten (which now that I think of it, was the correct answer).

One afternoon, Peggy Sue was slamming speedballs, a combination of heroin and cocaine (or God knows what that shit is that

they sell you on the street). Peggy Sue fell down practically right in front of me. She had a stroke. We rushed her to the hospital in an ambulance, but it was too late. Half of Peggy Sue's body would be paralyzed for the rest of her life. Overnight she went from being this hot young chick to being a crippled, little old lady. Peggy Sue took to calling herself "Quasimodo" because of the way she looked, dragging her half-dead body all around town.

Peggy Sue was the first in a *lo-o-ong* line of drug casualties in my circle of friends over the years.###

Herald Archives: 2001

Strange and Weird People I Have Known

By James Dylan

First of all, who the hell am I to judge who is strange or weird anyway? I guess being strange or weird is relative, but anyway, one day I sat here thinking about all the freaks I have come across in life, and thought you might like to read about them.

The first real "weird" guy I ever knew was Dave Barboney. I grew up in a small town in Upper Michigan, so far north we related more with the Canadians than with our fellow Americans. As is the custom in small towns, everybody knew (or had their nose in) everybody else's business. My grandmother and her friends would sit on the front porch looking out onto East "A" Street, and some guy would come walking down the street; within minutes you would know his entire life story; where he lives, who he dated in high school, where he works, where he goes to church, who he married, etc.

When my grandparents fell on hard times, I was once sent to my room for recommending that grandma offer her services to J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI, as she could save the agency millions in surveillance costs for our town! Anyway, I knew more about Dave Barboney (pronounced "Bar-Boney") as he was the town "weird guy". Every time he walked by our house, he would stop by the porch and spread a little town news, and take off for the next house. After he left, my grandma would start up "Poor boy, doesn't have the sense God gave a worm..." and then run down his whole life history.

He wasn't really handicapped or retarded or anything like that, he was just like Forrest Gump; a little slow upstairs. He spent most of the day walking around town with his hands in his pockets. He was about 35, really tall (6'5), lanky, had a huge chin that put Jay Leno to shame, and a big goofy stride that delighted all us kids to no end. He was like a cartoon character come to life.

He was a gentle guy, and everybody in town knew and liked him. He was always in good humor, and whenever we drove past him in the family station wagon, we would honk and he would always turn around and start waving like a nut, even if he didn't know who was honking or whom he was waving at. His favorite thing to say was "Yup!"

Here is a short conversation in traditional Upper Michigan, or "Yooper" style. Think "Fargo".

"Hey Dave, how ya' doing dere?"

"Yup!"

"Yeah? Well, dat's good, eh! Eh, ya' goin' ice fishin' dis weekend?"

"Oh yep, yep!"

"Well, see ya' dere den!"

"Yup!"

Even today, when my siblings and me get together, we always have a laugh at Dave Barboney and reenact his walk, his talk, and bring out old stories about him. I was back up in Michigan last year, and my brother had a new "Classic Barboney" story...

"So me and my buddy were sitting in the ice-fishing shack out on Lake Antoine, and Barboney came in and had a seat. We joked around for a while, asked what was going on in town, etc. Anyway, Bill, my buddy, looks out the window and sees the Park Ranger heading our way on a snow mobile, probably just on his rounds, checking fishing permits, sizes, etc. Well Bill jumps up excitedly and says to Dave: 'Dave! The ranger! He's headed this way! Oh Shit! We gotta' get out of here! Run!' and runs out the door! Even though we are all doing nothing illegal, Dave jumps up and takes off with his rod, hauling ass in his big goofy run across the frozen lake, leaving a cloud of snow in his wake. The ranger, seeing the guy running, takes off after him on the snowmobile. Bill and me are sitting back in the shack, eating jerky, and watching all this, laughing. Finally, the ranger closes the distance and leaps off the snowmobile and gets Dave in a flying tackle! The ranger starts questioning him: 'Dave, what are you doing? What are you running from?' and poor, dumb Dave doesn't know what the hell is going on, he just says 'I dunno!'. Poor guy."

Anyway, in 1976 we moved from Michigan to Arkansas, where I was introduced to a new breed of American, the "Po' White Trash". I made friends with the usual freaks and outcasts, as I was one myself. One guy I hung around with was Jeff; he was a scrawny kid

with some kind of nervous twitches, if you could call them that. He had the usual eye twitches and lip twitches, but the killer was his arm twitch. You would be standing there talking to him when suddenly his left arm would suddenly fling up over his head. If you were standing too close to him you would get whacked in the head.

It was a kind of on and off thing. Sometimes an hour would go by with nothing, and then he would have 4 or 5 wild arm jerks in a row. Unfortunately for Jeff, he was left-handed. It was really bad when he sat at the table in the cafeteria with you. Usually, right when he would scoop up a spoonful of peas, his arm would jerk and they would shower the table behind him. (It was usually safer to sit in front of him.) One day after school Jeff invited me over to his house; he wanted to show me his new Star Wars "Millennium Falcon" toy or something. We walked over to his house from the bus stop. Upon entering, I couldn't believe it. They had a picnic table in their dining room, with "Property of Arkansas Highway Department" welded onto one leg. A whole table, too, with benches welded on and all. His dad was too cheap to buy a real table, so he stole a table from a rest stop down on I-41. His mom invited me to dinner, and the only thing I remember about the dinner was that his father asked me why I kept wiping my mouth with a paper napkin.

"Why you keep doin' that?"

"Doing what, sir?"

"You keep puttin' dat paper on your mouth!"

"I'm just wiping my mouth."

"Why ya' doin' dat?"

"I dunno, I have milk on my mouth and it bothers me."

"Huh. Weird"

I, James Dylan, hereby swear that the above conversation actually happened. The old man was freaked because I was wiping my mouth with a napkin. I didn't know what to say to the guy. What was I supposed to do, let it dribble down my face onto my clothes? I then looked around the picnic table and saw that, well, if I wanted to fit in, I suppose I was. I wondered why Jeff's clothes were always so dirty, I had assumed it was because of his twitch thing, but now I knew. The faces of the entire family were covered with barbeque sauce and milk and Jell-O pudding. Man. After dinner Jeff's dad showed me his extensive Avon bottle collection. It was composed mainly of hot-rod cars, but there was a bust or two of Elvis thrown in. I feigned appreciation and left for home.

So the years flew by, and I joined the Army.

You get many chances to meet interesting people in the Army because you are quite often roommates with them. The one I want to talk about is Brian Finton. Finton was a tall, blond, white bread, good-looking guy from Ohio or somewhere, and why he joined the Army I'll never know. He was quiet, wore glasses, and was very studious, but he had some thing going with religion. And not any old religion, but that backwoods, snake-handlin', shakin'-all-over, "I feel the powah of the Lawd cruisin' througha me!" kind of religion.

Other guys in the barracks would play rock music really loud, or country music, or whatever, but Finton would play sermons from his church back home that his mother sent him in the mail. Loud, too. You would be walking down the hallway and hear this backwoods preacher through Finton's door, the congregation hollerin' and stompin' and gettin' saved and all that. We could never get the guy to go out with us either. He always preferred to stay in his room and read the Bible. I remember one New Year's Eve he tried to get me to go with him to a church to "Pray in the New Year." Needless to say I declined. When we were in the field on maneuvers, one of our ways to pass the time was to get him to talk about his beliefs.

He would talk about how any person not baptized would burn in hell for eternity, whether they be a man of 85 or a 1 week old baby, about how there was only one God and only one religion (his) and that all other people in the world would burn in hell too. Also, since his church was small, and the only one of its kind, there would be a lot of free space up in heaven because they would be the only ones there.

Basically, the guy had been brainwashed his entire life by this church and his mother. He also had some weird habits. Normally, in Army life, you would be released at 5 PM, clean up your room, go out or do whatever, then crash for the night. Finton would go straight to his room, fall on his bed and go to sleep in his uniform. We would all ignore him and do whatever, then go to bed ourselves around 11 pm. Then, around 3 or 4 AM, he would jerk awake all excited, look at the clock, turn the lights on and start running around, cleaning his boots, buffing the floor, pissing us all off. We would have to yell at him to turn the damn lights off and start throwing stuff at him. In the end we forced our higher-ups to give the nut his own room so we could get some sleep.###

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