

## The Society Page By Gene Mahoney

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

**At the Warfield:** Punk band Gogol Bordello with Ukrainian frontman Eugene Hutz. 3/6.

**At The Ritz in San Jose:** Metalachi: The World's First and Only Heavy Metal Mariachi Band. 3/21.

Muni is going to increase their fares in July to \$3. Basically, people who pay their fares are subsidizing the fare-evading bums who don't pay. In 2024 it was claimed that 30% of Muni riders don't pay. What? More like 30% do pay. Ending fare evasion will work wonders getting rid of the people who come to this city and get free rent for doing nothing all day. When Willie Brown ran for mayor 30 years ago he mused about having gang members patrol the buses. Maybe that wasn't such a bad idea. Some black eyes and fat lips may convince fare evaders to part with 3 bucks. Tell Muni how you feel. A letter is probably worth 200 emails. Muni is at 1 S. Van Ness Avenue, SF, CA 94103. (Maybe you should leave out the part about the black eyes and fat lips.)

A couple of issues ago, Ace wrote about this guy in Berkeley who used to walk around naked in public, back in the 1990s. By that time, it seemed that streaking had faded from society's memory. Streaking wasn't as big as disco, bellbottoms, or platform shoes in the 1970s, but there were reports of streaker sightings here and there that made the news. What was streaking?

Streaking was the act of running naked in public. Probably the most famous streaking incident was at the 1974 Academy Awards. Back then everyone watched it – it was just as big as the Superbowl. Winners picked up their awards and thanked people. They didn't bore and nauseate the television audience by rambling on about social justice, etc.

Anyway, just before the show's host, esteemed British thespian David Niven announced *The Sting* as best picture, a streaker made it from one side of the stage to the other. Niven quipped, "Well, ladies and gentlemen, that was almost bound to happen... But isn't it fascinating to think that probably the only laugh that man will ever get in his life is by stripping off and showing his shortcomings?"

The streaker went on talk shows afterwards and claimed it wasn't planned by the Academy Award producers (though there's debate about that). His name was Robert Opel. Opel taught English as a second language for the Los Angeles Unified School District – until he was fired for the streaking incident. In 1976 he ran for U.S. president with the slogans "Nothing to Hide" and – since this was right after Watergate – "Not Just Another Crooked Dick."

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Robert Opel



David Niven (Photo by Allan Warren)

In 1978 he moved to San Francisco, apparently under the impression the city would be more accepting of his bisexuality. He opened Fey-Way Studios, a gallery of gay male art at 1287 Howard Street. Everything seemed to be going well for him. Until in 1979 when he was murdered. Apparently a couple of guys claimed he sold them some bad drugs the night before, demanded drugs and money, and when he claimed he didn't have any drugs, they shot him. He was 39. The assailants were caught and sentenced to life in prison.

There's a more in-depth article about this titled "What Became of the Oscar Streaker?" by Michael Schulman that appeared in *The New Yorker* and is available online.

Besides disco, bellbottoms, platform shoes, and streaking, do you know what else was prevalent in the 1970s? Dog-doo. There weren't these clean-up-after-your-dog laws then, so it was all over the place. Which reminds me of this classic Herald archive that I don't have room to reprint here. So go to

SanFranciscoHerald.Net, click on archives for 1998-2005 at the top of the screen, then click on the archives for Lee Vilensky, and you'll find the best free verse poem you'll ever read titled "Dog Shit in Left Field."

## Father's Day By Ace Backwards

My relationship with my father was pretty . . . unsatisfying. I guess that's one way I could put it. Most of my relationship with him over the years could be characterized as a.) long periods of anger, followed by b.) long periods of indifference (where I mostly just tried to block him out of my life). Followed by c.) brief periods of respect, admiration and even gratitude.

The last time I saw my father was in the summer of 1999 (man, THAT went by fast!). He came to the Bay Area for a couple weeks on a vacation, mostly in the hopes of rekindling some kind of relationship with my older sister (who also lives in Berkeley), who had pretty much completely disowned him, and refused to see him during the visit. At the time I felt I was on reasonably good terms with my Dad, and had resolved most of the issues that I had had with him in the past. So I ended up going out for coffee or lunch with him on multiple occasions during the course of his visit. But a weird thing happened: The more I saw of him, the more I disliked him. It's like it kept reminding me of all the reasons why I had disliked him in the first place (many of which I had forgotten about at that point).

So after that, I didn't have much to do with him over the next 20 years. Aside from occasionally writing him a letter.

Until in 2018 when I suddenly got the news that he only had weeks to live. So I made a frantic effort to reach out to him before the clock expired and managed to talk to him once on the phone.

And then shortly after that, he died. The end.

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**That's it for this issue, folks! Hey, let's try to quit being so angry all the time and try to get along with each other more. Give it a shot. You may feel better. Take care.**

