

The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

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

At the Warfield: Jidenna, 7/19. Little Feat, 7/29. Jinx Monsoon, 8/10. Nurse Blake, 8/19.

Lydia Lunch, Mitchell Community Park, Palo Alto, 7/15.

And now, a couple of thoughts from a couple of guys who can put it better than I can...

A recent observation by Lee Ohanian of the Hoover Institution:

Spending \$1.1 billion on homelessness is just the latest installment in San Francisco's constant failure to sensibly and humanely deal with an issue that it chronically misdiagnoses and mismanages about as much as is humanly possible. Since fiscal year 2016–17, San Francisco has spent over \$2.8 billion on homelessness, and the city's politicians remain seemingly baffled, year after year, as the number of homeless in the city skyrocket, as opioid overdoses kill more than COVID-19, and as the city has become nearly the most dangerous in the country.

Since 2016, the number of homeless in San Francisco has increased from 12,249 to 19,086, which comes out to about \$57,000 in spending per homeless person per year. With a total population of about 860,000, roughly 2.2 percent of San Francisco residents are homeless, which is over 12 times the national average. There is little doubt that as San Francisco spends more, homelessness and its impact on the city worsens.

An important reason why San Francisco policies continue to fail is that there is little or no accountability within the city's government to evaluate the efficacy of its spending. Some of the city's programs are so poorly managed that some homeless people likely prefer living on the streets to the facilities that are being provided to them at enormously inflated costs to taxpayers.

This from "The Homeless Industrial Complex" by Edward Ring at californiaglobe.com:

Here's how the process works: Developers accept public money to build these projects to house the homeless – either "bridge housing," or "permanent supportive housing." Cities



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and counties collect building fees and hire bureaucrats for oversight. The projects are then handed off to nonprofits with long term contracts to run them.

That doesn't sound so bad, right? The problem is the price tag. Developers don't just build housing projects, they build ridiculously overpriced, overbuilt housing projects. Cities and counties don't just collect building fees, they collect outrageously expensive building fees, at the same time as they create a massive bureaucracy. The nonprofits don't just run these projects – the actual people staffing these shelters aren't overpaid – they operate huge bureaucratic empires with overhead and executive salaries that do nothing for the homeless.

Thank you, Mr. Ohanian and Mr. Ring.



GET THESE BUMS OUTTA HERE!

Hey, not all the homeless are bums. There are a lot of people who live in their cars, shower at gyms, and go to work – especially in Silicon Valley. (Actually, that makes more sense than throwing your money away on ridiculously high-priced rents.) I'm talking

about the ones who are blocking sidewalks with tents, ingesting drugs in public, and littering. San Francisco spends \$61,000 per homeless tent per year.

New (sort of): Taniku Japanese restaurant at 1035 Geary in the Tender-Nob.

Some guy was creating art with a sewing machine on Valencia Street recently. If you want to contact him check out pnosa.com.

There was a flier hanging on a pole in North Beach about a missing parrot that flew away in Petaluma, but if you find it there's a \$1,000 reward, and the owner is a woman who tours and performs with the parrot and a dog and a cat, and they'll be performing (well, at least the dog, cat and she will) at SF War Memorial at 401 Van Ness on 9/9. Go to interspeciesentertainment.org if you want to try to figure it out. I told my friend Laurie Jacobs (San Francisco's hottest new artist, to you readers who used to peruse the Herald newspaper 20 years ago) about this and she was really upset, as she's really attached to her parrot. Maybe you've seen her walking around town with the bird on her shoulder. (laurasaura.com)

Herald Archives: 2005

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

By Howard Hallis

Sometimes I make lists of the things worth living for and keep those things in mind when depression and boredom drive me to thoughts of blowing my head off. This is something a lot of people probably do, and so in light of a good friend of mine deciding to hang himself last week, it seems like as good a time as any to list those things that inspire me to keep breathing.

At the same time, life in the early 2000's kind of sucks. OK, it could be worse. There's no draft (yet), tolerance for weirdos is pretty high (as all of the alternative subcultures have been absorbed by the mainstream) and you can get pills to make you happy or give you a boner if you need them. Still, there is a lot to be depressed about. A whole lot.

So because of this, I'm going to make 2 lists. One will be the things that make me want to stick my head in the oven and pull a Sylvia Plath, and the other will be a list of the things that get me out of bed in the morning. Sound fun? Let's go!

REASON TO LIVE #1: My friends and family. Probably the main thing preventing

me from doing something stupid is thinking about how my mom and dad would handle it. In short, they wouldn't. My brother would probably be pretty upset by it as well, and it would bum out most of my friends.

REASON TO DIE #1: No more bills! Forget all about having to go to work to pay the rent or the car lease. Let the power companies and the gas companies raise the prices on everything to a million dollars! I won't care! And there's nothing anyone could do about it!

No more taxes, no more mounting debt, and no more playing the lottery like an idiot!

REASON TO LIVE #2: My girlfriend. She's smart, beautiful, sexy and makes me feel like I'm the luckiest guy alive when I'm with her.

REASON TO DIE #2: My girlfriend. She's more successful than I am, works all the time, won't say she loves me, makes me feel empty inside when I'm not with her, and will probably dump me eventually anyway.

REASON TO LIVE #3: Upcoming movies, CDs and other entertainment. How can I die before seeing the Spider-Man movie, or the next Star Wars movie, or the upcoming Matrix and X-Men sequels? What about the new Tom Waits album? The new Ween? Could I really rush off to the grave without getting to experience all those things?

REASON TO DIE #3: People will finally appreciate MY art! I make karaoke CDs that I give to my friends that they never listen to. How much do you want to bet that if I kill myself they'll bring one out of the dust bin to spin in the CD player? I have artwork up all around town with plaques near the pieces giving out my e-mail and web address. So why is it that the only letters I get are spam or the occasional hello from one of my friends? Why is it only about 20 people a week visit my site? I bet once I die and my art is finally worth something that people will pay it a lot more attention. I bet my box will be filled with e-mail! I won't be able to read any of it, but still...

REASON TO LIVE #4: You never know what will happen next! If anyone told me in high school that I would get to experience all the experiences I've had in the last few years, it would have been hard for me to believe. No matter how bad it may get, a prime motivator is to stick around and see where else it can go. There will always be many good things around the corner.

REASON TO DIE #4: Things could always get worse. Recession looms, the environment

is getting worse, the conservative right controls the country, all the things I want I can't afford, I'm getting older and more jaded to things that used to excite me and chances are it's only the beginning.

REASON TO LIVE #5: The spiritual repercussions of suicide. I'm not a firm believer in any of the after-life mythos of any of the major religions. Not that I think any of them are necessarily wrong, but since we don't know what the next step is, they could ALL be right on the mark. No one knows! There could be a heaven, hell, nirvana, wheel of reincarnation, paradise, purgatory or whatever. Since most of these belief systems look down upon killing yourself, chances are if any of these guys ARE right, I'll be saying "Oh shit!" when it's a little too late.

REASON TO DIE #5: I'll finally find out the truth. If Sartre's right and I enter nothingness, then I will know it by not knowing it. If heaven or hell from the Hillbilly Bible is where we all end up, then I'll be burning and spitting my tobacco with the natives.

Whatever it is, the final answer will be known to me, and it's just a bullet blast away.

REASON TO LIVE #6: All the good stuff I'd be missing out on in life. Getting married, having kids, vacations, traveling, scuba diving, sky diving, celebrations, parties, dancing, concerts, watching your kids grow up, birthdays, museums, laughing at a good joke, seeing an old friend, holding hands with my girlfriend... and all that other cool stuff.

REASON TO DIE #6: All the bad stuff I'll avoid. Divorces, diseases, miscarriages, robberies, funerals, auto accidents, meter maids, open-toed shoes, losing control of my bowels when I get old, radio commercials, stepping in gum, declaring bankruptcy, deadlines, shitty music by mass-marketed boy bands, reality shows that make the army look cool, and all that other crap.

CONCLUSION: Well, I guess I'm going to stick around for a little while at least. No sense throwing in the towel too early. The bad stuff is still at a level where I can deal with it. The quality of my life hasn't turned to complete shit. I still have all my limbs and my mental faculties are intact. Not only that, but my dick still gets hard and I'm not in prison. I don't have any incurable disease that keeps me in a constant state of pain and my white-boy angst is really kind of pathetic when you think about it. When I ponder all the people who have the REAL shit end of the stick to deal with day in and day out, it seems moronic to cut out on what ain't such a

bad gig after all. It's not like I need a nurse to change my diaper after eating my gruel in some county hospital. I'm not completely alone in the world living in a rat infested closet getting beat up every day by a pimp that makes me chug man chowder for Big Macs. I don't have a terrible job and no matter what may happen in the future with my girlfriend, at least I have one now and I might as well enjoy that as long as it lasts. I could be living in Afghanistan or Iraq or even have ended up as a retarded eunuch begging for scraps on the streets of India. Guess thinking like that kind of puts it all in perspective. Too bad my friend didn't think so. Oh well.

So it goes, as Kurt Vonnegut says. So it goes.###

Dedicated to Bruce Elliot



Eat Drink

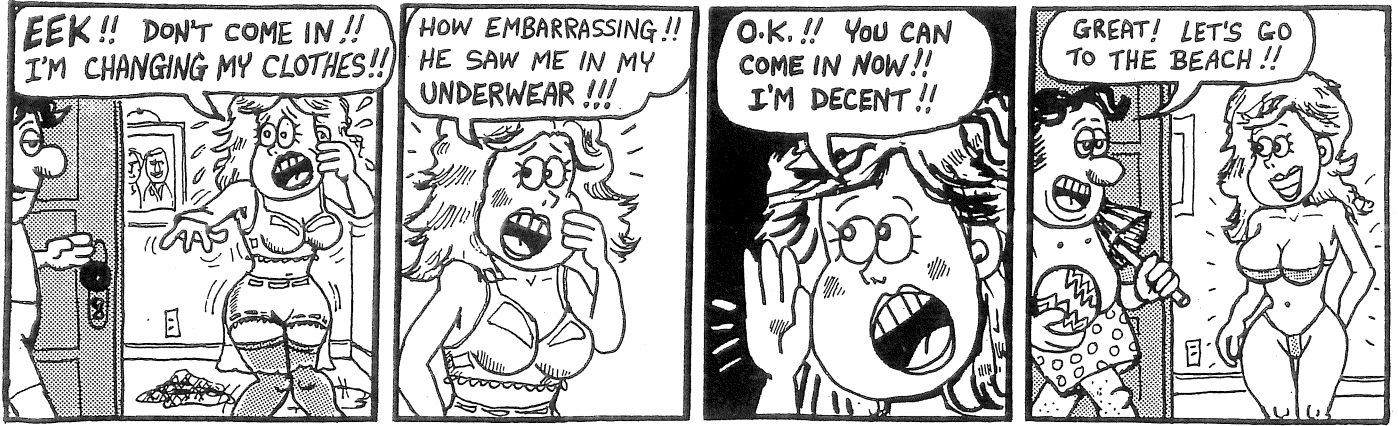
Happy Hour Special, 3PM - 6PM: Tecate \$3, Corona \$4, Modelo \$5, Bare Bottle \$6, Sangria \$8. **Chisme Cantina**, 882 Sutter. (415) 370-7070. Catering available.

Good Old Fashioned Values. Wide selection of beer and wine. Groceries and general merchandise. **Discount Grocers**, 1203 Polk (at Sutter). (415) 929-7385.

Gastroboteats, 1096 Union (at Leavenworth), www.gastroboteats.com, (415) 307-6141. Modern street food, new-style green salads, soups and stews. Delivery or take-out.

Pat's Café, 2330 Taylor (off Columbus). (415) 776-8735. Breakfast, lunch, & weekend brunch. Indoor & outdoor dining. 7:30 AM – 2 PM daily. Takeout, call directly or order online. PatsCafeSF.com

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