

By Gene Mahoney

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

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The Jessica Silverman Art Gallery has left the Tenderloin after 13 years and moved to Chinatown.

Tenderloin Pop-up Food Pantry every Monday, 9 AM - 1 PM, 300 Ellis Street.

After 47 years Frame-O-Rama has left Polk Street and moved to the Tri-Valley.

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Russian Hill: The “Broken into already - nothing left” sign is still in the window of The Buccaneer on Polk... Near there, a newsletter called *Word on the Street* is taped to a wall and features profiles of local homeless folks and how you can help them... Sumac Istanbul Street Food at Union and Leavenworth opened in December 2019 as a take-out only joint, months before all restaurants were doing that due to the biggest overreaction in the history of mankind. Uh, I mean the lockdown due to the Covid-19 virus. Owner Deniz Mekik was ahead of his time and his place is still standing... Peggy no longer owns Cresta’s 2211 Club on Polk and Brian the guitar strumming bartender isn’t there anymore either.

There are black and white photos taped to lampposts in North Beach, featuring photos of a man and woman in different costumes (gangsters, hippies, etc.). Interesting.

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Maybe you saw those flyers around Nob Hill inviting people to celebrate Mr. John Heiter’s 100th birthday on May 14th at his crib at 980 Bush Street. I didn’t know him, but figured I’d stop by, wish him well, and maybe get a free lunch and a few beers out of it. As it turns out, he was brought outside and we all sang happy birthday to him. His health care workers were there, as were some cops and firefighters (along with the S.F.F.D. chief and two fire trucks). Supervisor Aaron Peskin gave a brief speech and it was just really good vibes all around. Former Secretary of State during the Reagan Administration, George Schultz, passed away in February at age 101, so I guess Mr. Heiter is Nob Hill’s most mature resident.

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To end World War II, the deadliest conflict mankind has ever known, the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Imperial Japan.

SAN FRANCISCO HERALD

June 2021

SanFranciscoHerald.Net

“Serving Nob Hill and Beyond”

Shortly after that, in 1946, *The New Yorker* magazine dedicated an entire issue to an article titled “Hiroshima” by John Hersey, which chronicled the destruction the bomb unleashed on that city.

Over half a century later, in 2002, the San Francisco Herald published “The Roommate from Hell - A True Story” by James Dylan, which chronicled the destruction his roommate unleashed on his apartment.

An updated version of the article ran in serial form over the previous three issues of 2021 and it still attracted attention.

Sophie and her coworkers at Chisme Cantina eagerly awaited each installment. Sophie was only four years old when the story debuted in 2002, so apparently it’s timeless.

Maybe we should start a new version of it - say, “The Roommate from Hell - the Opera” or something like that.

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Walter Mondale was vice president during Jimmy Carter’s presidency. After Ronald Reagan trounced Carter in the 1980 election, Mondale ran as the Democrat presidential nominee against Reagan in 1984. He got his ass whooped worse than Carter did, losing every state except his native Minnesota, and Washington, D.C.

In 2002, Minnesota senator Paul Wellstone died in a plane crash. A special election was called, and Walter Mondale was chosen to be the Democrat senatorial nominee. He lost. This meant that Walter Mondale is the only candidate in U.S. history to lose an election in every state. (The U.S. presidential election isn’t a popular vote. Each state holds an election for the Electoral College. Mondale barely won Minnesota against Reagan in 1984. When he lost his senatorial bid in 2002 that sealed all fifty states.)

Walter Mondale died in April at age 93. His death wasn’t a national tragedy like John Kennedy’s. There was no extended mourning period due to his being a great leader like Ronald Reagan had. He was a

renowned former senator from Minnesota prior to becoming vice president. Yet on the day he died, his death wasn’t the biggest news story to come out of Minnesota. He got overshadowed by the Derek Chauvin trial regarding the death of George Floyd.

So, I’m writing all this to show what a loser the guy was, right? He wasn’t a loser. Believe it or not, back in 1984 I was a 19 year old liberal minded art student who actually volunteered for his doomed presidential campaign against Ronald Reagan. Though I’ve since changed my mind. As former San Francisco state senator Quentin Kopp (who also supported Mondale in ’84) once told me: “Thank God we lost.”

Walter Mondale was ambassador to Japan during Bill Clinton’s presidency.

A day before he died, Walter “Fritz” Mondale wrote a letter stating that “My time has come,” and that he would soon be joining his late wife, Joan, and his late daughter, Eleanor.



Eleanor Mondale

His daughter Eleanor died of a brain tumor at age 51 in 2011. Eleanor was a pretty gal who tried to make it in Hollywood, with little success. Apparently there are a lot of pretty gals trying to make it in Hollywood. She probably would have made a decent mean girl in some ‘80s teen flick.

Ironically, in the 1986 movie *Pretty in Pink*, the Annie Potts hipster character is angrily yelling on the phone and says something like “Every time you take a shit your I.Q. drops!” Then announces sarcastically that Walter Mondale is on the other end of the line.

Though Tinseltown didn’t work out too well for Eleanor, she soon found a casting couch 3,000 miles away - in Washington, D.C. - belonging to the then biggest star in the world, President Bill Clinton.

As a former secret service agent who protected Clinton remembers it: Monica Lewinsky once showed up to the White House (her affair with Clinton eventually caused his impeachment) and the agent told her, "You'll have to wait. He's with his other piece of ass."

Eleanor never had children and married three times: to a football player, a radio DJ, and a musician. (The latter being Chan Poling of Minnesota rock band The Suburbs.) After the illness was diagnosed in 2005, she gave up on her limelight ambitions and lived on a Minnesota farm with her husband. "I just want to be at home with Chan, with my horses, dogs. Even my goldfish," she said. "I've got a happy, wonderful guy. I've never had anything like it. I'd like to live."###

Herald Archives: 2001

S.J.F.D. By Lee Vilensky

I've been homeless twice in my life, so far. I can't imagine ever being in that situation again, but then I couldn't see it coming the first two times either. The problem is I've always lived close to the edge with little concern for money. These two actions can cause a reaction, factoring out exponentially into the number zero, rather abruptly. Zero puts you outdoors.

The first time wasn't really my fault. I put my trust in someone I didn't know and got burned. I was about 20 years old at the time and moving around quite a bit.

My mother told friends and relatives that I was a young man filled with "Wanderlust", but really I was just searching for a place where people were strange, like me. I didn't want to wander at all. I wanted to find an Art/Sex commune and live there forever. Sell my car, never more to roam. I wound up in northern California. Santa Clara County. I was being pulled in by the San Francisco freak magnet, but didn't know it yet, so I found myself sharing an apartment with my stepsister in Cupertino, 50 miles south of the city.

Before Cupertino, I'd tried settling in Newark, Del., Hilton Head, S.C., and Boulder, Co. I was installing waterbeds in the Boulder/Denver area, when my stepsister, Lou-Ann, called and convinced me to move to "Silicon Valley", and get a job with a future. She sold lawn and garden furniture. So I loaded up my '69 VW Bug and headed west for Californy. I didn't really know Lou-Ann, but she sure sounded nice on the phone.

Well sure enough, there were thousands of jobs in the computer industry. This was 1979, and Santa Clara County had the lowest unemployment rate in the country. I found a job right away, installing waterbeds. Lou-Ann was furious. She called me an idiot and accused me of using all the butter. I was an idiot, but I hadn't used all the butter. She was acting very strangely, so I loaded up the Bug and split. I'd been in Cupertino 3 days,

and was now living in my car, with all my belongings.

My new job started in 3 days. I had 20 bucks and 72 hours to kill. The only thing to do was try and sleep, a lot. I drove into the nearby Santa Cruz Mountains and set up camp. I played both the songs I knew on my guitar and stayed awake for the better part of 3 days, and 3 long, lonely nights. I was homeless. Woodie Guthrie, Boxcar Bill, Jack Kerouac -- they were all full of shit. They forgot to write about the mosquitoes. Those 3 days have marked me for life. I still feel them, like an old football injury on a rainy day. And there were more sleepless nights to come, but those first 3 were the hardest.

My first day of work, I became friendly with a guy working in the warehouse. That night I slept on his couch. The next morning, two of his housemates told me I couldn't stay there, and to amscra. I was back in the Bug, where I was always welcome. Thank God that car never broke down, or I would have been in deeper shit than I already was.

I got fired from the waterbed job for not shaving and smelling bad.

I'd accumulated one week's pay and checked into a youth hostel in the hills, just outside of Saratoga. I was the only hostler, and it turned out to be quite a nice set-up. I wound up exchanging room and some board, for work on their roof, and other smaller projects. I got clean and sane, well fed, and even well oiled a couple of times.

The managers were Christian folks who were very kind and hardly ever there. They'd hired a guy, about my age, to be a live-in super. He was a small black cat, training for the San Jose Fire Department. An intense guy, but very sympathetic to my housing problem. We hit it off right away, and when the work at the hostel ended, I was still living there for free, thanks to him.

I think his name was Matt. He played a little harmonica, so we'd smoke some weed and jam, always in the key of E. He had a girlfriend who'd come by with her retarded daughter. The girl was about 7, and Matt seemed to love her very much. We spent many nights laughing, and talking, maybe smoking a little, and playing our two or three Jimmy Reed songs for the girls. It was like a family. We were alone in the beautiful redwoods and eucalyptus, with no one to bother us, except an occasional European traveler, and the banana slugs.

One night I was alone with the girlfriend and daughter. We'd had some wine and I was reading to the girl. Everything was very mellow until Matt came back from wherever he had been, drunk. I'd never seen him drink before. Not even a swallow of beer, and I was about to find out why.

He was different. His face looked different. The bright eyes dull, the kind smile a leer. It was someone I had never met before. The alcohol had possessed him. Really more of an allergic reaction than an intoxication.

The girlfriend grabbed her daughter, and their coats and toys, and left without a word. Matt watched them go and made no move to

stop them. I decided that she was not a person I wanted in my foxhole. Matt and I were alone. No one to bother 'cept for the banana slugs. He was staring at me.

"What?"

"Did you fuck her?"

"What the hell kind of a question is that?"

"She likes you. I can see that. I'm not stupid."

"You're acting very strange, man. What's wrong?" I asked him, trying to sound concerned, but probably sounding scared.

"What's wrong is I have a whore for a woman. Are you a whore too?"

"Look Matt, I'm going to say this one more time, and then you can think what you want. I have never had sex with your girlfriend, nor have I ever wanted to. We're friends. I thought we were friends, too."

"She sleeps around. God made her daughter retarded."

"Alright. I'm gettin' the fuck out of here."

I went to the back bedroom and gathered up my shit, rolled up my sleeping bag and was out the door.

"Wait a minute."

"I'm leaving Matt. Thanks for everything."

"Did you fuck her?" He was crying now.

"Absolutely not."

"You don't have to leave."

In his lap was a red axe with S.J.F.D. stenciled on it.

"O.K. I'm just gonna go in town and get some beer, and be right back."

"What kind of beer?"

"What do you like?"

"Coors."

"Coors it is. Get your harp out. I'll be back in 7 minutes and 13 seconds."

I walked slowly to the car carrying my sleeping bag and a backpack. I stopped and put the backpack on, figuring the blade would hit dirty laundry first, flesh and bone second.

He didn't move. I could see into the room, and he was sitting cross-legged, staring at the wall. He looked like a 4-year-old watching cartoons on Saturday morning. I got in the car, and let it coast down the hill, away from the hostel, about 150 yards. It started right up and I was outta there.

I slept in the Bug that night, and it wasn't so bad. I remember thinking that people in California seemed much different from the people I had known on the East coast. ###

Editor's Note: Here's the first installment from Chapter 9, slightly condensed, of Ace's book, *Acid Heroes*.

Acid Heroes

By Ace
Backwords

Chapter 9
Chapter 9
Chapter 9

John Lennon

*I am the
Walrus*

(among many other things)

Then I became obsessed with the question:
Who was John Lennon?

I had patterned my life after the guy. But the guy who I *thought* he was turned out to be completely different from who he *really* was. Whoever *that* was. And it occurred to me that all my acid heroes had merely been different sides of the multi-faceted John Lennon persona. Ram Dass was his spiritual-seeker side. Alan Watts was his spiritual-know-it-all side. Hunter S. Thompson was his drug-swilling madman side. R. Crumb was his artistic genius side. Jerry Garcia was his hippie Rock Star shaman side. And Timothy Leary was his media bullshit-artist side.

In the mid-60s John Lennon made a remarkable transformation from "teen idol" to "counterculture hero." It was precisely this that gave John Lennon a deeper dimension than mere Pop Star. It made him the subject of great analysis as well as great controversy. For, as Lennon's reputation went, so went the 60s.

Lennon projected onto the media screen an endless series of *different* John Lennon images, each one often contradicting the previous John Lennon image.

The "innocent Fab Four" myth . . . was followed by "the LSD Mystic" myth. . . was followed by "the Maharishi as perfect master" myth . . . was followed by the "John Lennon as peace guru" myth. . . was followed by "the Dream is Over and now I'm *really* getting down to reality" myth . . . was followed by the "Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin-type radical political leader" myth . . . was followed by "the John-and-Yoko as the greatest love story since Romeo and Juliet" myth. And so on.

Each new myth was originally presented by Lennon as Finally The Truth. Only to be debunked by Lennon next year as bullshit. It was the debunking side of Lennon that gave his words the aura of truth-teller, for that was the one side of Lennon that was really and truly real. He truly was full of bullshit, and there was no debunkin' that.



Probably the most insightful looks inside the Lennon character were books written by three people who lived intimately alongside Lennon behind the media screen:

- 1.) Pete Shotton, his childhood pal and lifelong friend
- 2.) May Pang, his mistress during the Lost Weekend Period.
- 3.) and Fred Seaman, his personal assistant and gofer during his last years.

All three people deeply loved John Lennon -- for Lennon was a man who, for whatever reasons, inspired great love and passion in millions of people. And the three books were not written as mud-slinging exposes designed to knock an idol off his pedestal and drag his face in the dirt. But were written by three people who deeply loved John Lennon and fervently wished to understand the peculiarities and the madness of a man they loved but couldn't *begin* to understand. Which only makes their portraits of Lennon's character all the more devastating. (And, to his credit, Lennon urged all three to write their memoirs).

Pete Shotton described Lennon as "someone who was amusing and entertaining virtually all the time. You never knew what he would be up to next. That was the magic of the man."

May Pang described Lennon as "basically a very frightened man."

And Fred Seaman described Lennon as "an isolated, lonely, and tortured man."

The term Lennon most often used to describe himself was "cracked" or "crackers." Lennon primarily saw himself as a "mad genius." Though it was never clear which part of his act was the genius or the madness.

Lennon's eternal position was: He always realized in retrospect that he had been Utterly and Completely Wrong About *Everything*. But in the present moment he always felt he was Utterly and Brilliantly *Correct* About *Everything*.

A big part of Fred Seaman's job as Lennon's personal gofer was to function as "a captive audience for John's opinionated monologues" (which Seaman invariably found fascinating, and I believe him). Seaman pointed out the root-cause of Lennon's incredible stupidity: "Arguing with John, I had learned in my first few weeks with him, was an exercise in futility. Even when he was in a good mood, John Lennon was not someone to disagree with. He rarely tolerated a dissenting opinion and always insisted on having the last word."

In other words: John Lennon *talked*, but he never *listened*.

Nothing thrilled Lennon more than to declare with absolute assurance: "This is IT!" The famous John Lennon cockiness. It was

precisely this sense of assurance that roped in the rubes. It attracted the lost, the confused, those lacking in self-assurance, and, most of all, the kids. For kids by their very nature were looking for an older man who had *been there*, and who could show them how to get there, too. And millions of kids just like me admired and idolized John Lennon as that Man.

Lennon was eager to claim this hero role. While at the same time (enigma that he was) endlessly claiming that he never intended to be "put" in this role. But the endless series of Hero roles that Lennon adopted suggested otherwise. Typically, John Lennon wanted it have it both ways: to be the hero, but not be expected to do anything heroic. It was the kids from my generation, one step behind The Beatles, who were most poised to step right into the trap that Lennon had (inadvertently?) set. For, as a role model for youth, John Lennon was a very, very dangerous role model.

When Albert Goldman published his scurrilous expose of John Lennon's character, it set off an EXPLOSION of anger and rage at the blaspheming of The Great Man. Why, it tarnished the great hero, John Lennon. And while Goldman no doubt added a few unnecessary cheap shots and groin kicks, his basic characterization of Lennon's character has largely been confirmed by subsequent Lennon biographies. Though Goldman blew it, of course. When he was under intense attack from all the Beatlemaniacs, he should have called a press conference and tearfully apologized for claiming to be "greater than John Lennon Christ!"

All the little Beatles' fans got wildly outraged at Goldman's mud-slinging bio. But nobody seemed to ask the question of what John Lennon himself -- a man who spent half of his life debunking himself -- would have thought of Goldman's book. I can guarantee you Lennon would have read it from cover-to-cover, and then he probably would've complained that it "didn't go far enough."

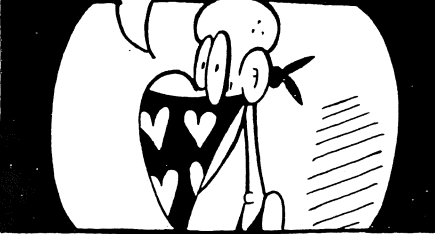
In the immediate wake of his assassination, Lennon was elevated to the level of secular saint. Yoko Ono would spend the next 25 years releasing an endless series of Lennon Product designed to promote the air-brushed myth of Lennon as Great Man. But there were simply too many obvious and sickening aspects to the Lennon character for the Lennon-as-Great-Man act to be taken seriously by anyone but the most slavish of Beatles fans.

Lennon spent the last four years of his life in virtual isolation, a recluse, "haunted by his past and frightened by his future," mindlessly smoking his marijuana (tai-stick, nothing but the best for our boy John) and endlessly turning the channels of his big-screen color TV which he kept on 24 hours a day, often jammed between the channels emitting a zoned-out static. What *happened* to John Lennon? How did the man who seemed to have it all end up with so little? What precisely was wrong with John Lennon?###

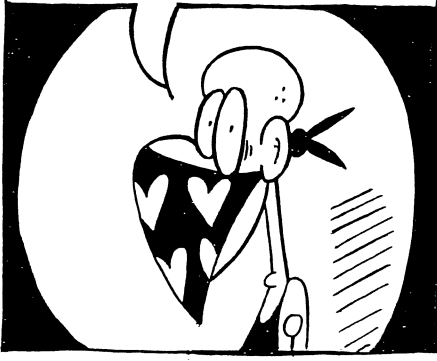
-To be continued-

GOOD CLEAN FUN
WRITTEN, DRAWN & ©2021 BY
GENE MAHONEY
"CODEPENDENT ON COVID"

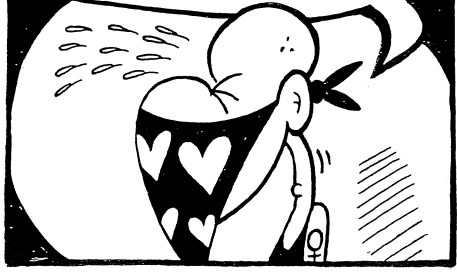
I'VE BEEN VACCINATED 20 TIMES
AND HAD THIS MASK
SURGICALLY ATTACHED TO MY FACE
TO SHOW EVERYONE THAT I HATE
DONALD TRUMP MORE THAN THEY DO!



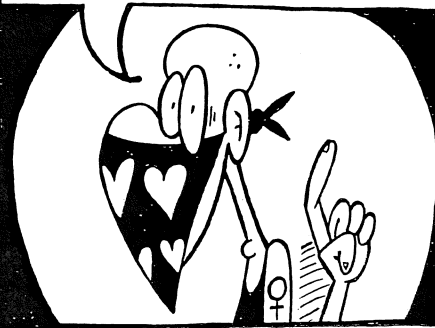
HELLO, DARLINGS! I'M CHANTEUSE
AND WELCOME TO MY YOUTUBE SHOW!
FORGIVE MY SOMBER TONE,
BUT I'M DEALING WITH THE
5 STAGES OF GRIEF OVER THE
DEATH OF THE COVID LOCKDOWN.



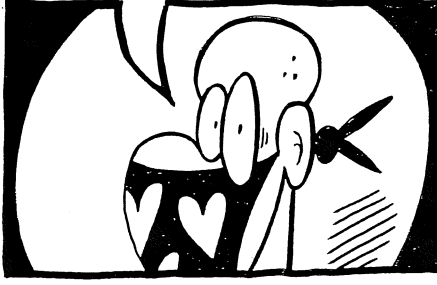
IT'S INEVITABLE...
WE'RE ACTUALLY GOING
TO HAVE TO GO
BACK TO WORK!
BUT THIS LOCKDOWN HAS
MADE ME SO PROUD TO BE
A CALIFORNIAN!



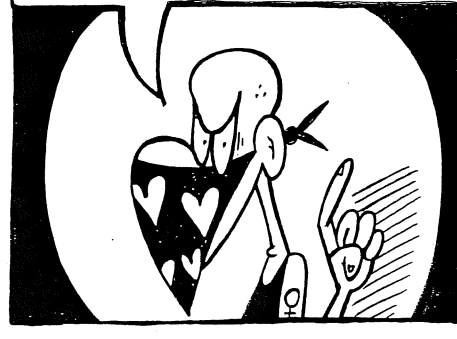
IN 1849, SETTLERS RODE
THEIR COVERED WAGONS
ACROSS THE WINDSWEEP PRAIRIE,
FENDING OFF OUTLAWS AND
HOSTILE NATIVE AMERICANS,
RISKING DEATH TO START NEW
LIVES IN THE GOLDEN STATE.



AND NOW, 172 YEARS LATER,
ALL THAT TOXIC MASCULINITY
IS A THING OF THE PAST.
3 GENERATIONS OF BOYS
RAISED BY SINGLE MOMS HAS
GIVEN US A STATE WHERE WE'RE
ALL AFRAID TO LEAVE OUR HOMES.
≡ SNIFF ≡ I'M SO PROUD.



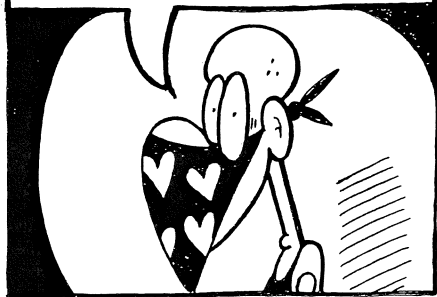
AND FOR ALL YOU MOUTH-BREATHING
TRUMP SUPPORTERS WHO POINT TO
FLORIDA HAVING SIMILAR COVID
RESULTS AS WE HAD DESPITE NOT
LOCKING DOWN, WELL, LET ME TELL
YOU SOMETHING, YOU ANITA BRYANT
LOVING GATOR-HEAD PLEBIANS...



YOU MAY LOOK AT US AND SEE A
LOCKDOWN THAT CAUSED MASSIVE
BUSINESS CLOSINGS, UNEMPLOYMENT,
POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS, ALCOHOLISM,
DRUG ADDICTION, MENTAL ILLNESS,
DEPRESSION, AND SUICIDE...
BUT WE SEE IT AS
SOPHISTICATION.



YES, THE LOCKDOWN IS OVER.
IRONICALLY, IT ENDED JUNE 15TH,
JUST AS THE SCHOOL YEAR ENDED.
THOUGH I'M SURE THERE WAS A
SOUND SCIENTIFIC REASON FOR
THAT DATE TO BE CHOSEN AND THE
TEACHERS UNIONS HAD ABSOLUTELY
NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.



AND REMEMBER, GET YOUR COVID
VACCINE SHOT SO YOU CAN...
UH... STILL WEAR A MASK.

THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY, BUT KEEP
HOPE ALIVE. WE'LL HAVE ANOTHER
LOCKDOWN. LET'S HOPE AND PRAY!

