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“Serving Nob Hill and Beyond”

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The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

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

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It was a sunny day in May, 1998, when I walked by a newspaper stand on Sutter and Polk to pick up a copy of the Examiner – “San Francisco’s Afternoon Paper.”

On the front page was a picture of a smiling Phil Hartman of “Saturday Night Live” fame with the headline: *Comic Hartman Slain*.

The late, great funnyman is examined in “You Might Remember Me, The Life and Times of Phil Hartman” by Mike Thomas, a book published in 2014 that I finally got around to reading.

Phil was from Toronto, the fourth of five children. His family moved to Los Angeles, where Phil took to the outdoor lifestyle there – surfing and boating. He was quiet and serious at home, so his parents were surprised when his high school voted him “Class Clown.”

Graduating high school in 1966, he attended some community college classes, then took jobs in commercial art. He had considered going into show biz, but his brother’s futile attempts to make it as an actor soured him on the idea.

However, performing suited his outgoing personality more than drawing did, so he eventually joined the Groundlings, the revered comedy troupe in Hollywood. His first break came as a recurring character on Paul “Pee Wee Herman” Reuben’s TV show “Pee Wee’s Playhouse.” Phil also helped Reuben write the movie “Pee Wee’s Big Adventure.”

In the summer of 1986, at age 38, he auditioned to be a cast member on “Saturday Night Live” (you can view the audition on YouTube). He got the job – along with Jon Lovitz, Dennis Miller, Kevin Nealon, Dana Carvey, Victoria Jackson, Jan Hooks, and Nora Dunn.



The show had gone from being great or good in its first four seasons to being mediocre or bad in its later seven. This twelfth season cast reinvigorated it as many people, including yours truly, think the late 1980s were the show’s finest years.

Phil was the new Dan Aykroyd – the guy who did impressions of celebrities. His fellow cast members gave him the nickname “glue” as his wide performing range and easygoing personality held the

show together; though it bothered him that he didn’t have a recurring character like Dana Carvey’s Church Lady or Jon Lovitz’s The Liar.

That changed, kind of, when Bill Clinton was elected president. Though Phil was a fan of Clinton’s policies, Clinton wasn’t a fan of Phil’s lampoons of him.

While on “Saturday Night Live,” Phil married his third wife, Brynn Omdahl, who had done some modeling and aspired to become an actress. (During the opening credits of the show’s 1990 – 91 season, Phil is talking to a blonde woman whose back is turned to the camera – that’s her.)

A friend of Phil told him not to marry Brynn. Another urged him not to allow her to have access to his gun. He didn’t follow their advice, and he had a couple of kids with her. Their personalities clashed – he was naturally laid-back and smoked marijuana, she was naturally high-strung and snorted cocaine.

I won’t go into details of the night Brynn shot Phil and then turned the gun on herself.

“Saturday Night Live” has had many talented cast members, but if you had to choose a best one, I’d pick Phil. Though the book points out two of his flaws: he didn’t write many skits, and couldn’t ad-lib if a cue-card was dropped or some other technical difficulty occurred. And his nice guy image apparently was limited to his other cast members, not the backstage crew.

The end of the book is moving, describing the funeral for Phil (and Brynn) and a ceremony for the spreading of his (and her) ashes.

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I was in Walnut Creek last month and picked up a copy of a free magazine there called *Alive*. There was an interesting, pithy article titled “A Socialist Revolution in America?” written by George Kapus. (Read it at aliveeastbay.com.)

Kapus was born in 1942 in Budapest, Hungary and writes: “I am one of those lucky people who managed to survive both National Socialism (Nazism) and Soviet Socialism (communism).” He points out that under both systems, the first thing you lost was your right to own a gun, and the second was the right to voice your opinions.

Kapus mentions that life in the Soviet Eastern Block nation meant that all private property (including your home) was seized by the government. So were all businesses and banks. Public transit stopped running on time. Mail was censored. If you criticized the government you were shipped off to a prison in Siberia.

Kapus recounts how his aunt and uncle lived in a big house with their three children until the town’s mayor kicked them out and moved some party members there. The members sold all the valuables in the house. His mother’s restaurant was taken over by the state, too.

A newspaper reporter his father knew decided not to escape but stay, in the interest of journalism, to report on the rise of communism. His publisher warned him to stop focusing on what wasn’t working and what was. After he wrote a book about what was happening titled “Beyond the Stalin Line,” he was arrested by the Soviets, sentenced to death, and spent fifteen years in a Siberian forced-labor camp.

Kapus briefly describes how thousands of Cubans have tried to escape Fidel Castro’s Marxist prison island and, more recently, Venezuelans have attempted to flee the socialist regime of Nicolas Maduro.

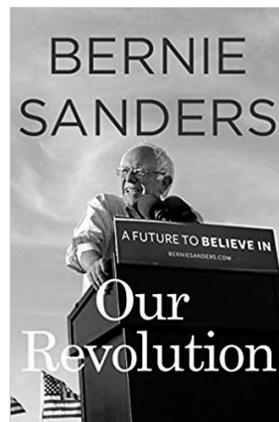
Notes Kapus:

Why do you think that millions of people from all over the world have emigrated to the United States and are still trying to get in? Why do you think that another massive caravan is heading for our southern border? Because until now, The United States has been the land of freedom and opportunity. Our system may not be perfect, but it’s the best in the world today. Don’t let the goo-goo eyed Socialists turn our country into a Socialist nightmare. We don’t need to try Socialism to figure out that it doesn’t work. Millions have already done it for us.

At this point some of you may be protesting, claiming that the Nazis were fascists, not socialists, and socialism is what they have in the Scandinavian countries.

I haven’t got time to go into detail with it this issue, but basically: fascism is a political system, the economic system of the Nationalist Socialist German Workers’ Party was socialism.

(This doesn’t mean that if you’re a Bernie Sanders supporting millennial who wants to play video games - while other people work to support your “free” college education and health insurance - that you’re a Nazi.)



Also, Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez may think that Scandinavia is socialist, but it’s not. As Corey Iacono points out in “The Myth of Scandinavian Socialism” at fee.org:

In the Scandinavian countries, like all other developed nations, the means of production are primarily owned by private individuals, not the community or

the government, and resources are allocated to their respective uses by the market, not government or community planning.

While it is true that the Scandinavian countries provide things like a generous social safety net and universal health care, an extensive welfare state is not the same thing as socialism. What Sanders and his supporters confuse as socialism is actually social democracy, a system in which the government aims to promote the public welfare through heavy taxation and spending, within the framework of a capitalist economy. This is what the Scandinavians practice.

In response to Americans frequently referring to his country as socialist, the prime minister of Denmark recently remarked in a lecture at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, “I know that some people in the US associate the Nordic model with some sort of socialism. Therefore I would like to make one thing clear. Denmark is far from a socialist planned economy. Denmark is a market economy.”

I know this must depress a lot of folk singers and sensitive poets out there, but the Scandinavian countries are... *gasp!*... capitalist. They just spend a lot on social programs. And they can spend a lot on social programs because they don’t spend much on their militaries.

And the reason they don’t spend much on their militaries is because we spend a lot on ours. ###

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"JANE'S CALAMITY ADDICTION"



O.K.... SO THIS WOMAN
YOU KNEW, JANE TRIPP...
FROM LONG ISLAND...



SHE DIVORCED YOUR OLD
FRIEND, CHARLIE TRIPP, JOINED
A LESBIAN TERRORIST
ORGANIZATION, FLEW TO
SAN FRANCISCO, AND TRIED
TO SHOOT YOU.



YEAH. A GUN!
I'M SURPRISED THE
GREEN PARTY DIDN'T
REVOKE HER MEMBERSHIP.



IN A WOMEN'S PRISON, SHE
SHAVES HER HEAD, RE-NAMES
HERSELF "JANE X" AND
MARRIES HER CELLMATE.



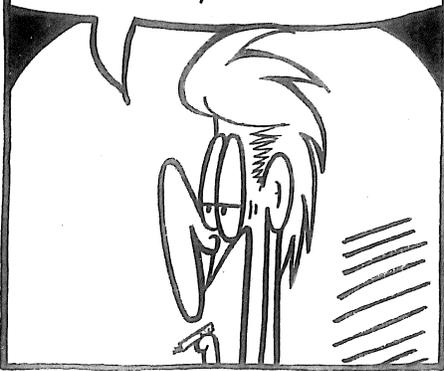
THEY ADOPT YOU AS THEIR SON,
WHEN YOU'RE 37 YEARS OLD,
AND MAKE YOU WEAR A GIANT
DIAPER AS PART OF YOUR
"RE-BIRTHING PROCESS" TO
RID YOU OF ANY MASCULINITY
YOU HAVE.



JANE ALSO GOT
INVOLVED IN THE
"PEACE MOVEMENT"
HERE.

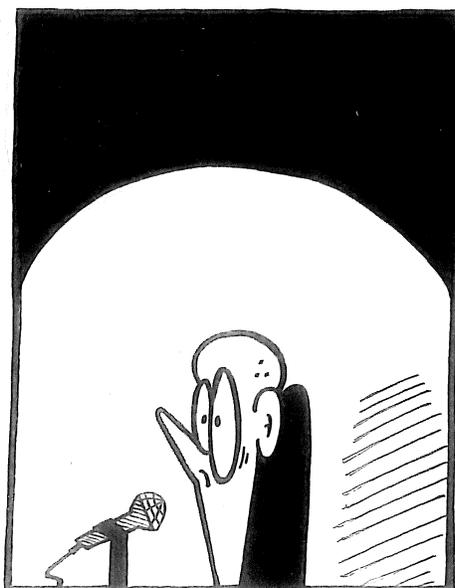
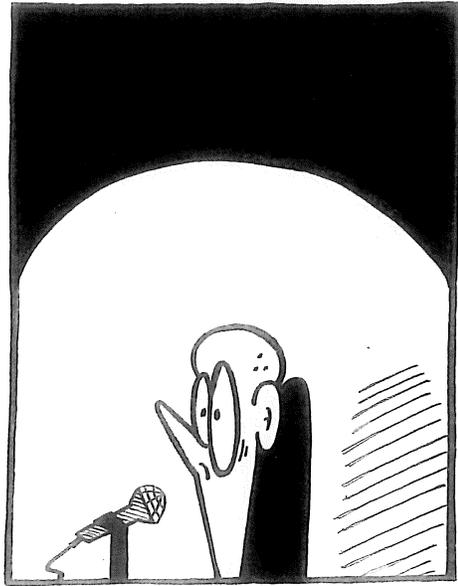


YEAH. HA! IF THERE
WERE MORE PEOPLE IN
THE WORLD LIKE JANE,
THERE WOULD BE A LOT
MORE WAR, NOT LESS.



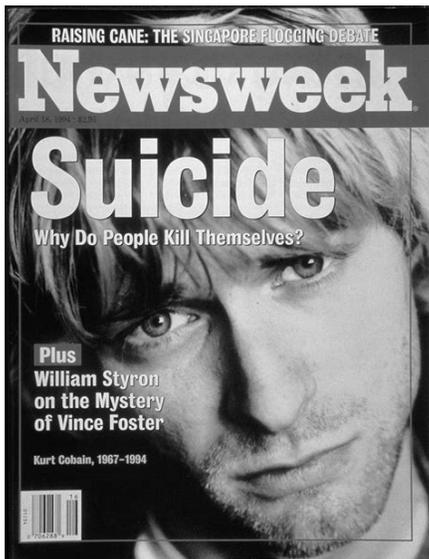
JANE ALSO GOT
INVOLVED IN THOSE
POETRY SLAMS
AROUND TOWN.





No Apologies:

Remembering Kurt Cobain



Nirvana?

I'm glad he did it. When Nirvana was at their peak, I was attending school at the University of Maryland's European Campus. I knew of them and had heard their music, and I thought they were okay, but that was about it. I was sick of people talking about the whole "new" grunge thing, as I had been listening to Neil Young and Crazy Horse religiously for years by then. I even threw away all my flannel shirts because so many idiots were wearing them now because it was the "grunge" thing to do. But I admired Nirvana and the music that came out of Seattle. One of my favorite albums is "Mirror Ball" with Neil Young and Pearl Jam. I listen to the lyrics now and realize how "correct" he was, how he nailed society for what it is. What I didn't like is how the music was being labeled "grunge" or "independent." It was rock, that's all.

I had a chance to go see them at Munich's Flughafen Concert Hall, the old airport which had been converted into a concert hall (how cool is that) with my friends, but I declined. The next day I found out they got to go backstage and hang out with the band. Fuck. Oh well. As I write this, I am actually a bigger Nirvana fan now than I was then. Now that I understand more

about Cobain and his thinking, I respect him more, too. He actually had the brains and balls to do what most of us should have done long ago. He jumped off at the peak, knowing the best was behind him, and refused to become just another rock band participating in corporate sponsored tours, just filling their coffers while adding nothing new to their legend (Hint: Rolling Stones, The Who, dozens of other bands...you know who you are...please, stop. I beg of you, just...stop.)

--- James Dylan, SF Herald

I once had the chance to talk with one of the major figures of the Sixties, one of the main characters profiled in Tom Wolfe's "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test." This fellow had been intimately associated with psychedelia, rock 'n roll, and the Counterculture. We happened to talk about rock music and began to discuss Kurt Cobain. This famed Sixties fellow sneered at Cobain, calling him "insipid" and "an idiot." I told him how strongly I disagreed, at which point he commented that Cobain's music was "garbage." What I found most interesting, though, was that the guy didn't have the slightest idea why Cobain had succeeded. This Sixties figure had his money and his house and his Generation X children, but he had no awareness of single-parent homes, mass divorce, children of alcoholics, stabbings in schools, shootings in schools, all the things that his Sixties generation had wrought. For me, one glance at Cobain, one listen to him speaking to a reporter, and I felt a kinship. I knew he'd been through the same grief as the rest of us. He was pissed-off. That anger is what scared the hell out of the Sixties fellow.

--- Steven Capozzola, SF Herald

"KURT COBAIN AND THE GREAT ROCK'N'ROLL DREAM"

It was 1994 and I remember it as if it was 8 years ago. I had spent the previous 10 years sitting behind a drawing board, hacking out my comic strip here in Berkeley, so I was itching for some action. Plus, I always had this Rock'n'Roll Dream thing in the back of my mind. This John Lennon-wannabe

fantasy that I wanted to play out. Plus, I still had most of my hair back then, so the sky was the limit. But I was 37 years old and time was running out.

So I hooked up with these two young kids with recording equipment and musical know-how, Alex and Gannon. They were both about 20 and they kind of embodied the "perspiration/inspiration" aspect of genius. Gannon was kind of the grunt side of the equation; he had long, well-shampooed hair, parted on the side and flung over his forehead — he looked just like the lead singer of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Black guys on the street of 50th and Telegraph where he lived would stop him and ask, "Ain't you that Red Hot Chili Peppers dude?" Gannon, too, had the Rock Star Dream, and, being a practical sort, he bought an 8-track reel-to-reel tape recorder and a bunch of other equipment and set up a home-recording studio in his apartment. He took recording classes at a local college. And he laboriously laid down sort of generic Heavy Metal tracks on his equipment. It was kind of funny seeing this raucous, wild, "out-of-control" Heavy Metal rock being meticulously created, step-by-step, laying down drum machines, and then power chords, and then vocals, etc. Gannon's trip was sort of: Rock Star as Career Move. And he was methodically laying it down, step-by-step, on his way to the top (wherever that was).

Alex was the other side of the coin, with the quicksilver inspiration that people associate with genius. He LOOKED a lot like Kurt Cobain; straw blond hair parted in the middle, rock star skinny, with apple cheeks, and torn blue jeans. The classic Cool-Kid-From-High-School look that makes up the classic image of most rock stars. Alex even shared some of Kurt Cobain's self-loathing; nothing Alex did was ever "good enough." He had these impossibly high standards, and he might come up with 20 good ideas, but he'd abandon most of them before they got out of the germination stage because he was embarrassed that he hadn't produced a work of genius yet.

And then there was me: I had my John Lennon-wannabe fantasy from way

back when. Problem was I looked more like a cartoonist than a rock star, plus I had no musical talent (which was the least of my drawbacks considering what they were playing on the radio) so I was hedging my bets by latching on to these two kids who had Rock Star looks as well as musical talent. What I had was media connections; having built up a modicum of so-called fame through my cartooning career. And I knew everybody, and everybody knew me, in the limited world of Punk Rock that had spawned Kurt Cobain (the Big Thing of 1994) to superstardom. I had interviewed Johnny Rotten and Jello Biafra and Henry Rollins and knew all the record labels and rock magazine publishers, had been described as “incendiary” by no less than CREEM magazine. So I was ready to rock, dude. I knew Larry Livermore at Lookout Records – he had published my comics in Lookout Magazine, so I figured if I could get something good on tape he’d put it out on Lookout Records. Livermore had just scored big with Green Day, which sprang out of the same punk milieu as Nirvana (and me). So it wasn’t like a pipe-dream; I was at that point just one small step removed from the so-called Big Time. I remember talking on the phone with Chris Applecore – the acting head of Lookout Records – right as Green Day was preparing to appear on “Saturday Night Live” to promote their number one record. And Applecore gave me good advice on where to get my CD pressed and where to get the cover art printed (the legendary Punx With Presses, which is a whole ‘nother story).

Plus, the Grateful Dead were hitting the peak of their popularity, inexplicably, in 1994 (and what a long, strange trip it had been) with their brand of psychedelic street music, which I liked; as well as the peaking popularity of the Power Pop Punk of Nirvana and Green Day, which I also liked. So it seemed to be all coming together for me at that moment. If I could get something good on tape, all the other pieces were in place to really take off.

I had been publishing the TELEGRAPH STREET CALENDAR at the time, selling about 2,000 copies a year and getting

featured on the Dan Rather CBS News and the front page of the local papers. So I hit on the idea of recording a compilation CD of local street musicians, using the same format as the STREET CALENDAR, publishing a photo magazine of the street freak musicians along with a CD of their music – you could see them and read about them, and also HEAR them. I felt my own music on its own wasn’t strong enough to go over, so I was hedging my bets. Little did I know how many other people shared the Rock’n’Roll Dream; and every wannabe was now auditioning for me and harassing me and seeing me as the Last Desperate Hope for their cherished dreams. Crackheads from East Oakland that wanted to live out their Sly Stone dream. Suburban junkies that wanted to live out their Keith Richards dream. And me, gobbling down LSD by the handful as part of the Rock Star Accessory Kit that would turn me into a John Lennon type genius of my dreams.

Which brings us back to Alex, the cute blonde boy, Kurt Cobain-wannabe with his Rock’n’Roll dream, who was the recording whiz behind the controls of this whole mad enterprise. These Rock Stars they really were Role Models for so many of us. I mean, we aspired to Be Them, or something. There was something fundamental about the whole deal; something very basic, where so many of our most basic premises of what we Wanted To Be, what we Wanted To Do With Our Lives, what we considered a Successful Life, what we were Striving Towards, seemed to stem from these Rock Stars. Or at least who we thought they were.

Anyway, it was April and I had managed to scrounge up a \$5,000 grant to fund this whole mad enterprise. So I set up a big recording session in this boarded-up old bank on Shattuck Avenue. I gathered together all the recording equipment, and Alex and Gannon – the two recording geniuses – and all the street-freak musicians who wanted their Moment In The Spotlight, and me, with my beat-up old guitar and supply of LSD, together in this building to record our great and future masterpiece of a CD. Christ, at that point I had never even BOUGHT a CD, let alone a CD player, and now I’m

going to RECORD a CD. But I was Captain Trips Revisited, and if you take enough drugs, ANYTHING can make a certain sense. And don’t forget: I was a mere one step removed from Superstardom. I remember when those punk fucks in Green Day were just high school kids happy to get a gig at Gilman and play before 30 people. And now there they were appearing on “Saturday Night Live” in front of the Whole World. So anything was possible.

Anyway, the night before the first big recording session, April 1994, I’m listening to the radio and I hear the news that Kurt Cobain – our role model, our guiding light, the Successful Rock Star, the man we aspired to be – had blown his fucking brains out.

The next day, I walk into the recording session that I had spent months setting up. Our big dream. There was cute blonde boy Alex, with his torn blue jeans, who looks just like Kurt Cobain. 20 years old. Kurt Cobain is our Barometer Of Success. He’s who we’re aspiring to be. Now, he, Kurt Cobain, is lying on a slab in a mortuary with half his brains blown out. I look at Alex, cute blonde boy Kurt Cobain-wannabe, and he looks at me, 37-year-old acid head, John Lennon-wannabe, and it was a moment, as they say, that gave me pause. Cobain Himself had described his work, bitterly, as “nothing but recycled Lennon.” And now we were in the process of recycling Cobain recycling Lennon.

Anyway, I guess we all have a tendency to chase after false gods. And we all have those moments when we realize we were duped, that we’d been suckered, swindled, by some con-man, or maybe just betrayed by our own greed, weakness, vanity, ego, and/or foolishness. But let’s just say The Great Rock’n’Roll Dream didn’t look particularly great at that moment.

--- **Ace Backwards, SF Herald**

I do think he was responsible for starting a whole new genre of music, which is quite an achievement, whether you’re a fan of it or not. But I don’t care what kind of contribution he made - violently offing yourself when you have a kid who will be scarred forever by your fucked up legacy

negates the whole deal. It was a chicken shit, cruel, selfish thing to do.

---- **Kimberlye Gold, SF Herald**

“What grunge didn’t mean to me”

Just coincidentally, during the onset of grunge and the prevalence of Seattle-based bands such as Nirvana, Mudhoney and Alice in Chains, I was living in Manchester, England. Now Manchester and the grunge mecca have one major similarity RAIN.

Foul weather that forces one to stay indoors, green and gray. However, sometimes through this internment a great creativity can be born, as it was in Seattle in the early 90's manifesting itself as grunge music. I should have easily identified with the renaissance of this rock style, as anti-pop, anti-fashion, and anti-commercialism were a welcome relief after the 80's scenes. I should have identified with the Kurt Cobain, only a few months older than me, vocalizing the torment of displaced generation X. At the time I even had a musician boyfriend and he too was releasing his frustrations and emotional anguish through his guitar, just like Kurt. Don't get me wrong, I had respect for grunge as a musical style, “Smells Like Teen Spirit” became my Sunday morning wake up music! But unlike others around me, I couldn't make it a life style. Maybe it was all those flannel shirts, ripped denim or layers of cheap black t-shirts turned gray. Maybe it was that I liked to wash my hair. Maybe my heart was still in the 80's with New Order and Cabaret Voltaire, who knows! However, grunge music certainly did unite a generation. Having been there and amongst the scene I can say one thing for sure. The myth that grunge musicians and followers alike didn't care about anything or anybody was ironically dispelled by the fact that they did care. They cared about music.

--- **Sandy Dunn, Road Rage Bicycles**

You can use these brief thoughts if you wish, but I don't really have much to say about grunge. I like a few of Nirvana's songs, but to me they were never more than another “hard” punk-influenced guitar band among more similar-sounding bands than I could

shake a stick at. Torn, scuffed jeans and flannel shirts were around and popular before there ever was a phenomenon dubbed “grunge.” What was the big deal? John Lennon was before my time, but he was a musical pioneer and thoughtful visionary ahead of his time. Cobain simply reflected a lot of the confusion, angst, misery and unfocused rage of his time and is remembered chiefly for selling a lot of records and committing suicide. Groups popular in the eighties like Dead or Alive, the Pet Shop Boys, and Book of Love were never given the same “cultural phenomenon” status that music reviewers lavished on Nirvana and grunge, but they sang intelligible lyrics, knew how to balance the guitar with other instruments, and were much better to dance to. “Weird Al” Yankovic and Tori Amos did more interesting versions of “Smells Like Teen Spirit” than Nirvana themselves.

--- **Starchild, famous libertarian**

The biggest change in my life, resulting from the grunge movement is that I stopped wearing plaid shirts. In high school I loved the plaid shirt. It helped me survive. I wore one almost every day.

Before I discovered the joys of the plaid shirt I suffered. School was boring and I would get an erection during every single one of my classes, usually toward the end of the period, right before the bell.

I limped between classes. A binder, near my zipper, helped me hide myself. Around my junior year I found that if I tied a long sleeve shirt around my waist, the sleeves would sort of cover my bulge. When it got cold I could untie my shirt and wear it and that would hide me too.

Sometime in the late 80's or 90's or something, grunge got popular. Everyone started wearing plaid over shirts. They were being sold in expensive catalogs for expensive prices. Suddenly a wave of fashion overtook me, and I looked like I was trying to be trendy.

Sometime later, the lead singer, for the musical leader of the grunge movement, killed himself. His wife,

now a widow, got popular with her own CD. Now, on the anniversary of a suicide, the media celebrates the repackaging of a marketing campaign that forced me to stop wearing plaid. Every time I hear grunge music I think about my erections.

--- **Shannon Wheeler, cartoonist**

Ok, I was really hoping that the first story printed by Mr. Mahoney, written by me, here in the Herald regarding any suicide/murder of an infamous musician, would be remembering GG Allin, maybe that one will come later on... but for now he has asked what my opinion was of the death of Kurt Cobain and how this personally affected me. This probably due to my age (mid 30's), which makes sense, but as far as his musical career goes; I never really followed it and never found much interest in the man himself. Aside from a few habits of his I had compassion for, like his addictive need and struggle for self-medication, my musical preferences are inclined to the early 70's glam rock and old school punk. So nothing anyone like Kurt “dead men don't pull triggers” Cobain did, interested me.

No one could compare to the Stooges, ever. That is how I felt on a musical level. But on a more personal level, I had to empathize with him. At one point or another floating around the music scene here in SF way back when, I believe to had come in contact with Courtney Love herself and had no idea at the time she would rise above the predestined gutters of junkie-dom and make such a profound impact on the music-conspiracy scene, let alone have her own remarkable career. I have really had enough, though, of the injustice of accusations of her having anything to do with her husband's (and let's not forget the father of her child) murder theories.

So aside from the Hole Lotta Love mail I've read and others, I really wish she would be left alone. I didn't think much of the suicide the day it was announced on the news and through friends, the only thing that went through my head at the time was, “Finally that poor boy is out of his misery.” I have had too many junkie

friends die the slow death and he made his quick and less painful... rather than a typical junkie's endless, agony-filled demise. I thought, Well he made his choice; he had the courage to make a choice. Most of my junkie friends didn't make a choice... you don't when you O.D. But still he was a genius, something the music world was devoid of, say in the 1990's.

It's strange though, the only reason I remember his suicide was because I was working in the porn industry at the time and just a few months after Kurt had presumably done himself in, Savannah (the top Porn queen at the time), had done the same. The two stories were inevitably juxtaposed. She was at the height of her career, as was Kurt.

Supposedly she was the "new," yet irreplaceable, Traci Lords. It was apparent in her despondent and shaky videos that she was both a heroin and cocaine addict, making it far less sensual than the movie producers had hoped. She couldn't articulate anymore and was completely catatonic, (like that mattered in porn), but it was obvious the pain she was in and the severity of her addictions. In interviews, she didn't seem to deny this. Kurt, on the other hand, went back and forth changing his story, especially once in rehab, which is completely understandable... he wanted out!

I remember reading about how Savannah had, soon after making a fairly decent amount of films, shot herself in the head. She had done so many drugs the night of her suicide. She got in a car accident, somehow drove herself home, and upon arriving, cried to the 'blitzed hair band members' she was staying with at the time to help her, and how she was 'scarred for life and her career was over.' She was no longer marketable. Yet they did nothing to help her. I even heard they laughed at her whining, and told her to drive herself to the E.R. with bloody face and concussion (these may be rumors, though). She was too high to consider going for help and took the only remedy she could think of... suicide; a gunshot to the head.

There was shock and horror in the porn world when news came that she was dead. My lord, these Porn execs must have been terrified that their number one moneymaker was dead. The money! The lost revenue from this commodity! Everyone in the business was hysterical. Not for her really, but for the business. How would they ever find yet another Tracy Lords again? This wasn't going to be easy. Think of the plastic surgery costs. How would they find another? I think it was the same for poor Kurt. How would they find a new leader with the same disposition, for the X, Y and Z generations growing in record herd numbers? He knew he was becoming what he hated -- a media puppet -- though he put up more of a fight. I wondered was this a trend; were celebrities finally waking up to the reality of their reluctant, deniable stardom? Was every entertainer joining the NRA? What if Kurt and Savannah had hooked up? What would that have been like? She was quoted as saying, "I love sex and I love sex with rockers more than anything else." It could have happened. Duels at high noon.

Of all the outrageous stories I have heard for reasons to pardon their addiction, never have I heard of someone doing heroin for 'stomach' problems. That seemed a ridiculous excuse... yet I understand because technically, it's harder to get aid with a Federally Controlled Substance than it is street drugs like black tar junk. I can think of all the times in my life I have walked down the streets here growing up in SF, literally having heroin forced upon me, sometimes up to five offers for me to buy on a single block -- and I wasn't even looking to buy. But if you need pain medication for a simple injury you find yourself sitting for hours, say a good 12 to 14, in an emergency room for a bottle of pain pills that might last for a week, at the longest.

And this is after a nice long grueling interrogation of you, your personal habits and then finally... medical history. The guilt and shame some doctors will place upon a person without knowing the legitimacy of your complaint was unbearable when leaving the E.R. This makes no sense to

me, yet does back up the excuse of Kurt's as to why he started heroin. My heart goes out to him. After hearing about a difficult time in a friend's life that left them in need of serious medication, with no one to count on for support, sadly these pills that eased their pain became their only friends, the only thing they could truly rely on. I remember hearing Kurt had kept bottles of his pain relievers in a shoebox and talked to them. Said they were his friends. "Welcome home, I missed you, I love you, old friend," he was reported to say as he kissed the bottles.

At one point, after finding myself in the same situation as my friend, I found myself bonding with the medication too. I was relieved to find I wasn't alone in that. It was common practice to keep the bottles that accumulated throughout time hidden, in a box as well, afraid of the 'need' being discovered. This shame doesn't belong to you, yet it's there... society and the government placed the stigma a century ago. So all I can say is, I felt for him, I understood why he did it, if in fact it was suicide.

--- Anonymous

The day Kurt died, I thought I would have killed myself too... if I had been with Courtney Love!

Of course, you can't blame Courtney alone. She was simply the flame that lured the moth into the fire. Kurt got exactly what he thought he wanted: a bitchy-strong femme who could torment him and make him beg for validation. His obvious need for a "just like Mom used to make" love affair (read: "Mommy issues") gave him the drama anyone seeking such dependency/dysfunction would crave. Just look at his pre-Courtney ex-grrlfriend, Tracey Marander. His loyalty to her feminine "causes" got him twisted up tighter than panties stuck inside the washing machine. Then she dumped him. Ouch.

To feel about their life as though it wouldn't be right if it weren't so wrong. Woe!

--- Craig Clifford, baylist.com