

The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to another gripping issue of the San Francisco Herald... Russian Hill Upholstery and Décor is still located in Nob Hill, not Russian Hill.

If you read it in the Herald, you probably know it already: Bottle Club Pub at 555 Geary opened in March... Mr. Sushi and Suzy Q perform blues and jazz for free Wednesdays, 11:15 AM to 1:30 PM at Java Beach on Judah next to the Great American Highway... Pittsburgh's Pub at 4207 Judah is now Pitt's Pub... Fleetwood print shop/gallery/curated goods shop left the Tenderloin (oh, excuse me - *Tenderloin Heights*) and is now at 714 Clement... That Mexican cantina at 710 Post closed and Chuy's Fiesta Taqueria II is coming there soon (maybe it has already)... Open Mic Thursdays at The Hyde-Out at California and Hyde... Ephemeral Tattoo is at 962 Valencia, and it lives up to its name. Their tattoos are temporary. So if you get a tattoo that reads "I Love Gertrude" and you break up with Gertrude you're not stuck with it. They have locations in New York (*uh, I mean Brooklyn*), Los Angeles, and will be coming soon to Atlanta.

Sour Cherry Comics opened recently in the "New" Mission at 3187 16th Street. But before you go in, a sign in the front window gives you fair warning:

YOU ARE IN A BODY POSITIVE SPACE

Please Refrain from the Following:

*DIET/WEIGHT TALK

*BODY POLICING (CRITICIZING APPEARANCES)

*FOOD SHAMING (JUDGING FOOD OPTIONS OR EATING HABITS)

*HEALTH OR CONCERN TROLLING (KEEP YOUR HEALTH ADVICE TO YOURSELF)

*GENDER POLICING (REINFORCING MALE/FEMALE ROLES)

*ABLEISM (DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES)

*RACIST BEAUTY STANDARDS

EMBRACE PEOPLE OF ALL SIZES, ABILITIES, AND GENDER EXPRESSIONS

Man, you can't do anything in there. (Whoops! I said "man" - sorry!)



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Anyway, go check it out. Just don't ask for anything with Superman or Wonder Woman (*gender names*) or the Incredible Hulk (*body type issues*).

Last I checked there was a "mask required" sign out front, too. Just like when I walked into Dog Eared Books recently they still required you to wear a mask. Even though the CDC says that indoor masking is no longer necessary.

This "news" from the Babylon Bee:

U.S.—With mask mandates going away around the country, many progressives are feeling lost, confused, and frustrated. According to sources, the nation's progressives will move forward in a maskless world by electing to just wear t-shirts that say "I AM A GOOD PERSON" on the front.

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Baseball season has begun again, and what better way to celebrate it than going online and reading an essay Mark Steyn wrote about the song "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." But if you don't want to read Mark's witty analysis of the song, here's my dull-witted analysis of it...

While the NFL subjects us to ridiculous, over-the-top halftime spectacles featuring explosions, Aerosmith, and Jennifer Lopez and Shakira shaking their middle-aged booties, Major League Baseball sticks with a more dignified seventh inning stretch where the crowd sings "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." "It's a tune that has all the color, all the swing, all the punch and feeling of the game," Frank Sinatra once said of it.

Old Blue Eyes was wrong. Its lyrics are definitely not "inside baseball":

Take me out to the ball game

Take me out to the crowd

Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack

I don't care if I never get back...

Let me root, root, root for the home team

If they don't win it's a shame

For it's one!

Two!

Three strikes you're out

At the oooold

Baaaaalllll

Gaaaaaaame!

That's the shortened version everyone sings today. The original version from 1908 was a lengthier serenade about a gal who would rather have a guy take her out to a ball game than a show. The lyrics were written by a Beau Brummel known as Handsome Jack Norworth, who wrote them after seeing a sign on the subway that read "Baseball today at the Polo Grounds." That was the home of the New York Giants. The other two baseball teams in the Big Apple back then were the Brooklyn Trolley Dodgers and the New York Highlanders (later renamed the Yankees).

Handsome Jack wrote the lyrics for his wife, Nora Bayes, to sing. Jack and Nora were two of the highest paid headliners in New York then, getting \$2,250 per week.



Handsome Jack Norworth and Nora Bayes

Handsome Jack then needed someone to write the music. That assignment fell to Albert Von Tilzer, which sounded a lot more like a great German pianist/composer than his real name of Albert Gumm did.

The song became a number one hit, and twenty years later, in 1928, Nora Bayes died penniless. She had four other husbands besides Handsome Jack, and apparently the divorces weren't amicable. None of the five ex-husbands paid for a grave, so for years her body laid in the receiving vault of Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.

On June 27, 1940, 32 years after they wrote the song, Norworth and Von Tilzer did something they had never done before --- they went out to the ball game. (Dodgers 5, Chicago Cubs 4 at Ebbetts Field, so the home team won, there was no shame.) Von Tilzer wasn't impressed, but Norworth loved it so much that when he retired out to California he founded the Laguna Beach Little League. Major League Baseball gave him a lifetime ballpark pass. To this day, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" is the third most performed song in America, after "Happy Birthday" and the national anthem. It's always popping up in the culture, like that 1990 New York Post front page photo of then New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner crying in court with the headline: TAKE ME OUT TO THE BAWL GAME.

And the team that inspired the song moved to San Francisco, so can it be long before the crowd at Oracle Park (or AT&T Park or SBC Park or Pacific Bell Park or whatever it's called this week) start singing:

I'm coming out at the ball game

I'm coming out to the crowd

Buy me some...

I'll stop there before I get in trouble.

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In 1996 I worked for the San Jose Mercury News as a display advertising representative -- a sacrificial lamb in the Merc's ill-fated attempt to obtain revenue from the Central Coast. So I spent my days getting turned down by the owners of vegetarian restaurants and bead shops in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. One day near the boardwalk some guy mentioned to me that Santa Cruz was the murder capital of the country in the 1970s. Considering it was one of the hippie capitals of the country, I found that hard to believe. As it turns out, in the 1970s Santa Cruz County was such a haven for serial killers that its district attorney at the time referred to it as "the murder capital of the world."

Murder Capital of the World: The Santa Cruz Community Looks Back at the Frazier, Mullin, and Kemper Murder Sprees of the Early 1970s is a new 552 page book by county resident Emerson Murray. I haven't read it, but did read "End of the Innocence" by Geoffrey Dunn, an article that appeared recently in Good Times, the Santa Cruz weekly. (Read it online at GoodTimes.SC). Dunn remembers being a 15 year old sophomore at a high school in Santa Cruz County in 1970, and one day there was smoke in the air. A house was on fire. A prominent local eye doctor, his wife, their two sons, and the doctor's secretary had all been bound, shot in the head, then shoved into the family's swimming pool. The killer then set their

home on fire. A rambling, incoherent note about World War 3, the environment, and materialism was found by firefighters at the scene.

The doctor and his wife had two daughters who were away, so they were spared. One was an 18 year old art student living in New York, the other a 15 year old student at a girls school in Monterey. The killer, a 25 year old auto mechanic, was caught when he was sighted driving the family's station wagon around town.

By the time Dunn graduated high school in 1973, there would be 21 more murders committed in Santa Cruz, perpetrated by two other serial killers. One was a 6'9" guy who had been convicted of killing his grandparents in 1964 when he was 15, who killed women hitchhikers, often sexually abusing their corpses, and maybe even practicing cannibalism. He ended up killing his mother, whom he was living with during his reign of terror, and one of her friends. The other guy heard voices telling him he needed to kill in order to save the Santa Cruz area from earthquakes, so he went on a spree and murdered 13 people.

In the mid-1970s two other killers terrorized the community. One of the victims was the wife of a local journalist. Consider how freaked out Southern Californians were when the Charles Manson cult killed seven people in Los Angeles County, which had a population of about 7 million at the time. Twenty some odd people were murdered by serial killers in 1970s Santa Cruz County, which had a population of about 130,000 back then.

Last month Dunn met someone he hadn't seen in 52 years. Her name is Lark Ohta, and she was a senior at his high school when he was a freshman. She was also the daughter of the eye doctor and his wife whose family, along with the doctor's secretary (and close family friend), had been slaughtered that fateful day in 1970. She was the one living in New York at the time. Her sister, the one who was staying in Monterey, committed suicide in 1977 - a belated casualty of the killer, John Linley Frazier.

"We lived a perfect and happy life in a quiet and very cool town," Ohta told Dunn. "I forgive Frazier as I believe he was a broken human being. No healthy person could kill a child."

There was no apparent anger or bitterness from Lark Ohta. "I miss my family and my home. I grew up in Santa Cruz in a special time, and no one can make that bad for me. It was my home... I will always love Santa Cruz." ###

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Lifestyles of the Barely Famous

By Ace Backwords

As I was walking down the Ave this afternoon I passed this guy who suddenly stopped and stared at my face and said to me:

"Hey! Aren't you that famous cartoonist Ace Backwards??"
"I guess I am," I said.
"I follow your blog on the internet."
"Great," I said.

That kind of thing happens to me every now and then. And I always find it awkward. And a little embarrassing. Like they're putting me on or something. Because I'm not really famous. Or if I am famous, I'm right at the very bottom of that list, right at the cusp that just barely separates all the people who are "famous" from all the people who "aren't famous." I'm right at the cut-off point. . . I used to refer to it as "a minor league kind of fame." . . . I mean, the guy who reads the weather off the teleprompter at the local TV station is probably way more famous than me. He probably gets stopped all the time. "HEY!! Aren't you Joe Biff from the Action 6 News Team?? Can I have your autograph??"

There's also something slightly unsettling about some stranger knowing who you are, knowing SOMETHING about you. While you know nothing about them.

There's also a weird, and slightly dangerous, ego kick that can go along with it. This feeling that you're somehow special -- or maybe just strange -- that makes you stand out from the pack.

Part of it, I guess, is just an inevitable by-product of the kind of artwork that I do, which is largely autobiographical. I like writing about my life, and I enjoy people reading it, and reacting to it in different ways, and getting feedback about it. And people often think they "know" me from reading my work. And I guess on some level, they do.

I always figured, to ACTUALLY become famous would be a horrible experience, at least for someone like me. I mean, I find normal, every-day human relationships difficult enough. To have that aspect of life magnified and multiplied by the overload of fame would only exacerbate all those difficulties. Plus, I already have enough insecurities and confusion about my self-image as it is. Having masses of strangers creating their own image of my self would only add to the confusion. I mean, it must be really confusing for the famous people, to have millions of people walking around with all these different images in their heads of who they think you are. . . Life is enough of a hall of mirrors as it is.###

GOOD CLEAN FUN
WRITTEN, DRAWN, & © 2022
BY GENE MAHONEY

IT'S
AGNES DEVONSHIRE
IN
"THROWING
A FIT
TO PRINT"

WELL, HERE I AM... MIDDLE-AGED
AND WRITING A COLUMN FOR
THE SAN FRANCISCO HERALD...
A PIDDLY LITTLE NEWSLETTER
THAT NOBODY READS.
WHAT A MISERABLE FAILURE OF
A CAREER IT'S BEEN.



WHAT SHOULD I WRITE ABOUT?
HOW I SUSPECT THAT THE F.B.I.
IS SPYING ON ME BECAUSE I'M
SUCH A THREAT TO THE SYSTEM?

NO, THAT'S WHAT MY LAST TEN
COLUMNS HAVE BEEN ABOUT.



I KNOW. WE'RE APPROACHING THE
28 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE
DEATH OF KRISTEN PFAFF.
SHE WAS THE BASS PLAYER FOR
HOLE, COURTNEY LOVE'S GRUNGE BAND.
ANOTHER 27 YEAR OLD ROCK STAR
DYING OF A DRUG OVERDOSE.



I'LL WRITE ABOUT HOW
SHE WALKED INTO THAT
ART SHOW I HAD IN 1992.
NO, TOO PERSONAL.
I'D BETTER DO SOME
RESEARCH ON HER.



Hmmm...
THE
VILLAGE
VOICE.



Smells like
Kristen's Spirit

By Judy Neusser

I first met Kristen Pfaff in
1992 in San Francisco's
Haight District. It was at
an art show by some
obscure artist.

HEY, THE PICTURE AND BYLINE...
THAT'S JUDY NEUSSER...
THAT PRETTY GAL I KNEW FROM
SAN FRANCISCO WOMENS ARTISTS
GALLERY... THE ONE WHO WANTED TO
BE A WRITER. THAT'S HER.
"SOME OBSCURE ARTIST"?

THAT WAS
MY SHOW!

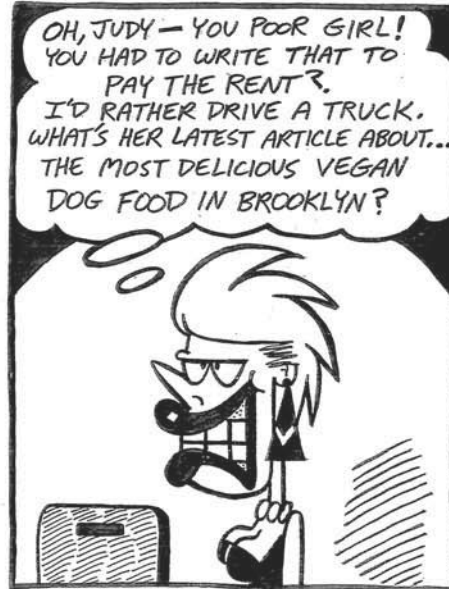


AND SOMEDAY YOU WILL
ACHE LIKE I ACHE...
AND SOMEDAY YOU WILL
ACHE LIKE I ACHE...



Which Southeastern Asian Restaurant Offers New Yorkers the Freshest Breadsticks?

By Judy Neusser



Times Bio: Judy Neusser

Judy Neusser went from covering breadsticks in the Village Voice to covering the Cannes Film Festival, the Academy Awards, the Emmy Awards, the Grammy Awards, the Tony Awards, and the Silicon Valley scene for the Times within two years. Her talent and work ethic amaze us here at the Old Gray Lady.



A Message from the Editor

Due to the newspaper industry's bleak economic picture, the Times will eliminate five newsroom positions this week.

These layoffs are never easy decisions, and the five members of the newsroom staff whom are being let go purely for budgetary reasons are top caliber writers, and we will miss them dearly.

They are Scott Hamilton, Ken Siverman, Steve Higgins, James Mulligan

and Judy Neusser.



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BoozeLand, 510 Larkin**
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shuffleboard, Pliny on
draft. Open every day at
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