

The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

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

At the Warfield: Suki Waterhouse, 10/25. Testament & Kreator, 10/27. Dayseeker, 10/30. Opeth with Tribulation, 10/31.

From the gang that brought us San Francisco's finest neighborhood newspaper, the Marina Times, comes a new website for the city – The Voice of San Francisco. (Find it at voicesf.org.)

Go on its archives and check out an article titled “Macy’s Union Square: Loss Prevention Agents Speak Out” by Erica Sandberg. It’s about how the iconic department store, a fixture in SF since 1947, was shutting its doors. Hard to believe, but apparently it’s been overrun with shoplifters, violent criminals, people taking drugs in the restrooms, people using dressing rooms as toilets, and lunatics bringing machetes, guns, and knives into the store. When confronted, these people get aggressive and often threaten taking workers there to court for profiling.

The site also has the city’s best muckraking journalist, Susan Dyer Reynolds. Read an article she wrote titled “From Women Locked in Cages to Members of the Aryan Brotherhood, There’s Nothing Nice About Homeless Encampments.” It’s about how the SF Chronicle and the SF Standard published three stories about how some poor defenseless homeless people were having their encampments destroyed by the police and DPW (Department of Public Works) employees. Reynolds investigated the three “victims” in the three stories and discovered that they had all been offered shelter before their encampments were cleared – and that all three had extensive criminal records for violent crimes.

A few years ago two DPW employees Reynolds knew told her about an encampment near Candlestick Park. The police had been called to the camp due to a report of a dead fetus. When they got there they also found a woman locked in a cage and arrested seven sex offenders. DPW cleared out over a million pounds of trash.

Too dystopian to be true? It was corroborated in a Chronicle article. The then director of the Healthy Street Operations Center told the reporter they had been to “sites of fires, overdoses, sexual assaults, weapon use – and even people trapped inside homemade wooden structures with locks on the outside.”

Reynolds points out that about half the homeless in San Francisco are from outside



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the city -- from other parts of the state, and other parts of the country.

The city wasn't like this ten years ago, was it? What happened? Here's a theory...

In 2014 California voters approved Proposition 47, which downgraded certain crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, including shoplifting when the value is under \$950. Since then crime has exploded in the Golden State, especially San Francisco. Proposition 47 was devised by Tim Silard, who ran alternative sentencing programs for the then Attorney General of California, who sold Proposition 47 to the public as the “Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act.”

The Attorney General of California then was Kamala Harris.

So after reading Reynolds' article, I've got new respect for DPW employees. Except for this one who parked his big white truck at the corner of 22nd Street and Valencia on September 7th, just before 1:30PM. He was a heavyset black guy with glasses and a beard who kept yelling the f-word and told some white people there (including moi) that we had “white privilege.” I was going to call DPW and complain, but in this town he'd probably win employee of the month.

White privilege? Here are the results of a 2019 American Community Survey by the Institute for Family Studies regarding which groups have the most income in the U.S.:

- 1.) Asian Indian
- 2.) Other Asian
- 3.) White
- 4.) Other
- 5.) Hispanic
- 6.) Black

Apparently there's a new definition for the word *privilege*:

privilege /prīv'ə-līj, prīv'līj/ **noun**
Third in place, order, degree, or rank.
synonym: **tertiary**.

Happily, eleven days later, DPW/racial relations improved for me. I was in the Tenderloin and threw something in a trash can. The DPW worker next to it – a black guy – thanked me for actually throwing something in the garbage as opposed to on the street, which he claimed a lot of people there do, and I believe him. Then we bonded by talking about how San Francisco used to be America's most beautiful city, and now it's the biggest toilet in the country. Which reminds me – we talked about how we pay our fares on Muni while all these bums don't. Ending fare evasion will greatly improve this place. Muni has become a free shuttle for scumbags. A letter sent to Muni complaining about fare evasion (sent to 1 S. Van Ness Avenue, SF, CA 94109) is probably worth 200 emails. Do it today, okay?

Hey, to that guy who rode his bicycle up to me and handed me a crumpled copy of the Herald I had just left at either Thee Parkside or Connecticut Yankee in Potrero Hill, and told me “We don't want your garbage rag here” – did you mean Potrero Hill or all of San Francisco? Also, were you appointed by the people or elected? I left two copies at each place, so maybe you kept one garbage rag for yourself to read? If I had to guess which place you came from, I'd probably pick Thee Parkside. When I left copies at Connecticut Yankee I saw some laid-back guys watching the Giants and drinking brewskies. When I left copies at Thee Parkside the bar had the vibe of some “woke” snowflakes on the prowl for new things to be offended, depressed, or angry about.

Hey, whatever. God bless y'all.

On a more serious note, a young woman named Yolanda Villar was killed by a car on the San Mateo/Burlingame border on September 12th. There's a GoFundMe page to help Stephanie, her special needs daughter. If you can do anything, please contribute.



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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.

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

A good mechanic isn't expensive. **Dale's Auto Service**, 200 Toland Street (off Evans). (415) 861-DALE.

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Four Artists

By Ace Backwards

Just stumbled across an odd photo from 1999. Standing in front of Cody's Books in Berkeley. I was 43 at the time, and just starting to lose my youthful good looks (what little I had) and looking a bit like a nebbish in an odd blue paisley shirt.

To my left is Sparrky — also known as Picasso Mike — he was a little nuts (like I'm one to talk) — a Telegraph Avenue street person back in the day and also an artist. A good guy but a little unusual in his thinking.

One time Sparrky came up to me and said:

"I want to get a job and get off the streets. So I printed up a rezoom."

"What's a rezoom?" I asked.

"That's where you list all the jobs you've had," he said.

"Oh. You mean a resumé?"

"No. Resumé is the French pronunciation. In English it's called a rezoom."

Sparrky died in 2010.

Next to Sparrky is B.N. Duncan — I always considered him a great artist and a genius though he never got the recognition he deserved. Duncan was another one like the great artist Van Gough, who famously never sold a painting in his lifetime. Duncan never made much dough off of his artwork either. And he never had a good gimmick like chopping his ear off. Duncan died in 2009.

I dream about Duncan all the time. I wish I could go back in time and do it all over again.

Next to Duncan is my friend Linda Aton. She was a great painter. When she was a young woman she was tripping on LSD on the third floor of this house and she thought this window was actually a door (one of those gosh darned LSD hallucinations) and she walked out the window and fell to the ground and her body was permanently deformed by the injury. She was a sweet person but also tormented (she constantly heard "voices" in her head). I still have one of her paintings in my storage locker. I don't know what happened to all her other paintings. Linda died in 2006.###

Herald Archives: 2014

A Swift Kick...

By Mr. Fabulous

I had just boarded my flight to New York, and sat down in first class, when a stewardess told me I was in the wrong seat. I had taken the aisle seat, 3B, and the stewardess said that I should be sitting in the window seat.

I stood up and pulled my ticket out of my pocket. I showed it to her. "There, it says '3B,' right?"

The stewardess squinted at my ticket. "Well, that is just the darnedest thing." She turned to a tall blonde girl who was standing behind her. "I'm sorry, miss, but somehow you both got assigned the same seat."

The girl looked at my ticket, then at me, then at the stewardess. Her eyes started to fill with tears.

I smiled at them both. "No problem. I'll just take the window seat."

The stewardess shook her head. "I'm sorry, this is a full flight. That seat is already taken."

The blonde girl blinked at the stewardess. A tear rolled down her cheek.

I turned to the stewardess. "I could take a seat in the back. Maybe you could comp me or something...?"

"I'll check. But I believe this flight is sold out."

A man stepped around the stewardess.

"Excuse me. I'm traveling with her." He gestured to the blonde girl. "I can give her my seat."

The stewardess shook her head. "Sir, if you disembark, your seat will get turned over to our waiting list."

He shook his head. "Please. Can't she just take my seat?"

"I'm sorry, sir. If you've checked baggage and you get off now, I have to call the air marshal. And your seat will automatically go to the waiting list."

The blonde girl started to whimper. A silent tear swelled in her right eye, then slid down her shiny cheek. She wiped her hand across her face.

The man tried once again with the stewardess. "Please, you don't understand..." He leaned close to her. "—This is Taylor Swift. We need to get her to New York. She's playing Madison Square Garden tonight."

"I'm sorry, sir. Just give me a minute, please." The stewardess turned and rushed up to the cockpit.

I turned to Taylor and her friend. "Listen guys, I'm so sorry about this. I totally know what it's like. I have to get to New York, too. I'm doing an AT&T audition tomorrow. I usually do movies, but my agent thought—"

"Please—" The man cut me off. "Just give us a moment, okay?"

The man started to pet Taylor's head. Gradually, she leaned her ear against his shoulder. After a moment, the tears stopped. She stared off into the distance.

The stewardess returned and grabbed my arm. "Sir, let me see your ticket."

I handed her my ticket. She put on her reading glasses and held the ticket up in front of her face. "Sir, you're not sitting in first class. You're back there, 3B."

I looked at my ticket. "Oh, I assumed I was in first class. I'm auditioning for an AT&T commercial tomorrow—"

"You'll need to get your stuff and move."

"Oh, okay." I reached up and grabbed my laptop bag from the overhead. I turned to Taylor and her friend. "Sorry about that. Good luck."

I nodded to the stewardess and shouldered my bag. I walked into the economy cabin, and found row 3. I stuffed my laptop into the overhead, then climbed over a passenger and squeezed into my middle seat.###

TWISTED IMAGE

by
Ace Backwords
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