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# The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

Russian Hill Upholstery & Décor is still located in Nob Hill, not Russian Hill. Maybe we can all put our heads together and try to levitate it to Russian Hill, the way the hippies tried to levitate the Pentagon during Vietnam.

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Unique Cleaners at 820 Post Street has folded. Get it? Cleaners... folded? They've hung it up. Sorry! I can't stop this crazy sense of humor of mine. If their ad is still in this issue it's because there was space I needed to fill because no one wants to advertise in this thing.

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At the Commonwealth Club: Nob Hill Walking Tour, 1/3. Obamacare architect Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel (I can't believe they booked this schmuck), 1/11. Political roundtable & social hour, 1/12. At the Regency Ballroom: M.O.A.N.Y. (Mother of All New Years), 12/31. The Edwardian World's Faire, 1/20. Edwardian Ball, 1/21. At the Great American Music Hall: The Brothers Comatose, 12/30 & 31. Fleetwood Mask: The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute Band, 1/13. Great Good Fine OK, 1/20. Dead Man's Party: Oingo Boingo & Danny Elfman Tribute, 1/21.

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Ever since I read the writings of Cuban exile Humberto Fontova, I figured that the day Fidel Castro died, I'd go to a local Cuban restaurant and celebrate. But I'm such an old fuddy-duddy I just fell asleep. For all of you who did cheer the old goat checking out of Earth and into Hell, I hope you had a good time. Viva Cuba Libre!

XXXXXXXXXX

I've always had this morbid fascination with people who used to be famous and aren't anymore. Usually that just means former stars

on old sit-coms and musical one-hit wonders.

But it also applies to Lincoln Beachey.

Born in San Francisco in 1887, it's doubtful anyone thought Lincoln, a chubby kid with few, if any, friends would become rich and famous.

Though he was lonely, he was also fearless. By age 10 he was hurtling down the city's steep Fillmore Hill on a bicycle without brakes.

In 1911 at the Los Angeles Air Show, a star pilot got hurt, so Lincoln took his place. Flying 3,000 feet above ground, his motor failed, and the plane began a nosedive no one had survived. He then did the unprecedented. Instead of turning against the direction of the spin, he turned into it, regained control, and landed safely.

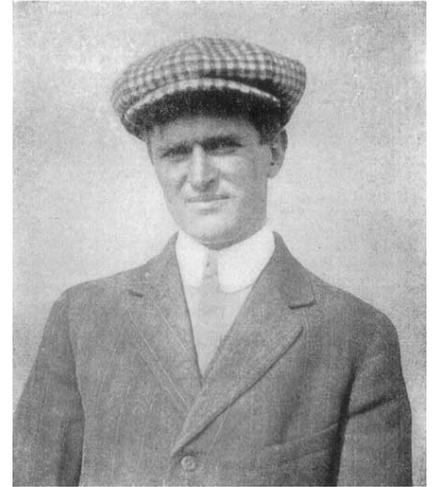
Lincoln Beachey became a national celebrity - a superstar pilot performing aerial stunts, aerobatics, and barnstorming. There were 90 million people in the United States and 17 million people had seen him fly.

He'd always pilot a plane dressed in a suit and tie, his ability was lauded by the aviation world (including Orville Wright), and he had a girl at every airport.

Haunted by the deaths of pilots trying to emulate his daredevil stunts, he retired from flying in 1913.

For 3 months.

On March 14, 1915, a week and a half after his 28<sup>th</sup> birthday, Lincoln Beachey flew at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. His plane descended around Alcatraz and crashed into the bay at about 250 miles per hour. He survived the crash with only a broken leg, but was strapped into his seat so tightly that he couldn't escape. He drowned before Navy sailors could reach him.



Lincoln Beachey died at the foot of Fillmore Hill, the same place he would hurtle down on a bicycle without brakes when he was a boy.

Maybe he doesn't deserve a statue, but how about a plaque for him here in San Francisco? Say, on Fillmore Hill?

He was brave beyond words, he helped revolutionize air travel, and he got a lot of chicks.

Though he may be forgotten, his name isn't, as it lives on in this jump rope rhyme:

*Lincoln Beachey thought it was a dream,*

*To go up to Heaven in a flying machine,*

*The machine broke down and down he fell,*

*Instead of going to Heaven he went to...*

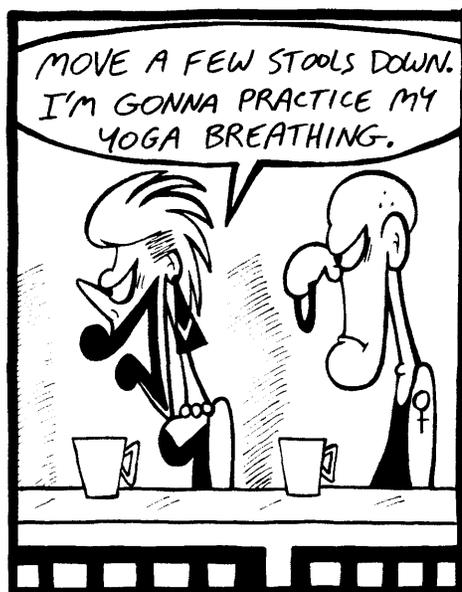
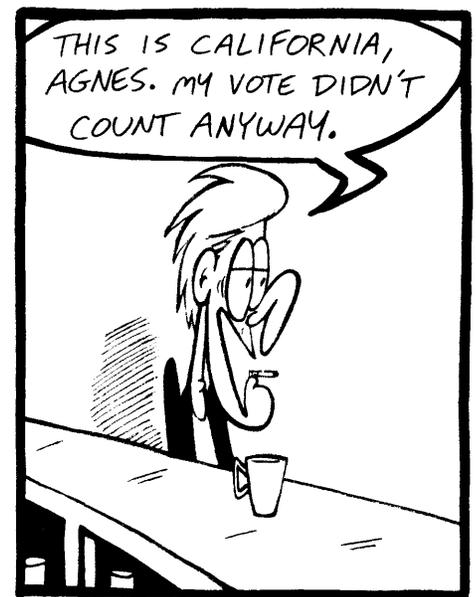
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# GOOD CLEAN FUN

WRITTEN, DRAWN &  
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GENE MAHONEY

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CHAUNCY DILLINGER,  
AGNES DEVONSHIRE,  
AND  
CHANTEUSE  
IN  
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BIG LEAGUE"



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TO A MORE INNOCENT TIME...



... BUT WE SEE IT AS A  
THROWBACK TO AN ERA  
OF RACISM, SEXISM,  
AND HOMOPHOBIA!



TOTAL FASCISM!  
NOT "HAPPY DAYS"!



FINE! I'M OVER  
HERE NOW!  
ARE YOU HAPPY?!



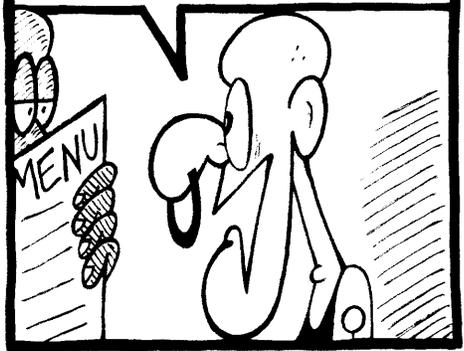
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MUTTER...  
GRUMBLE...)

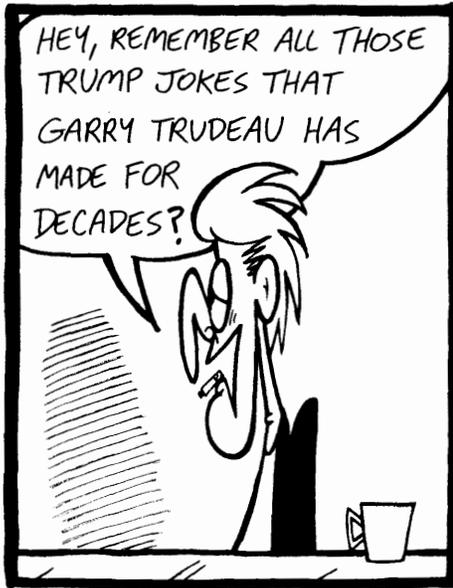
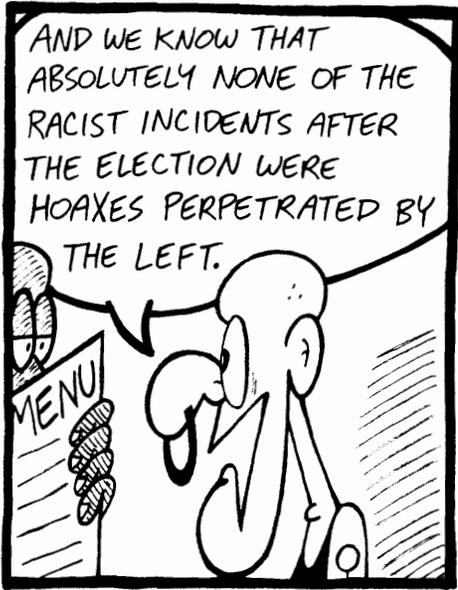


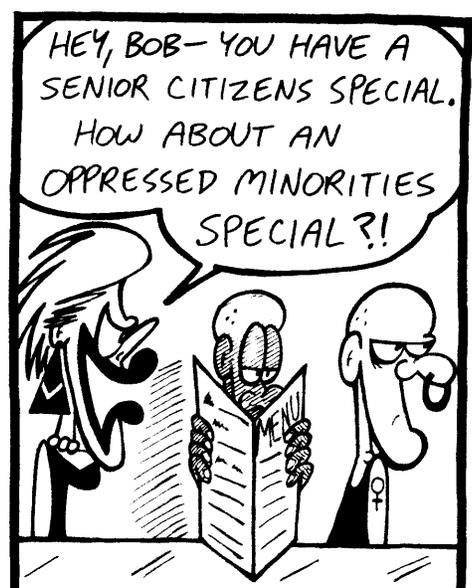
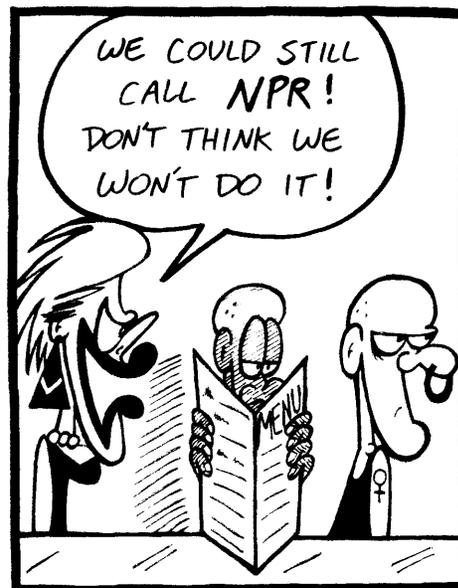
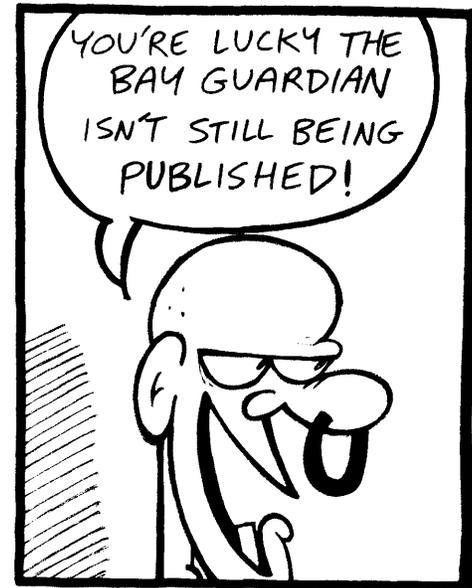
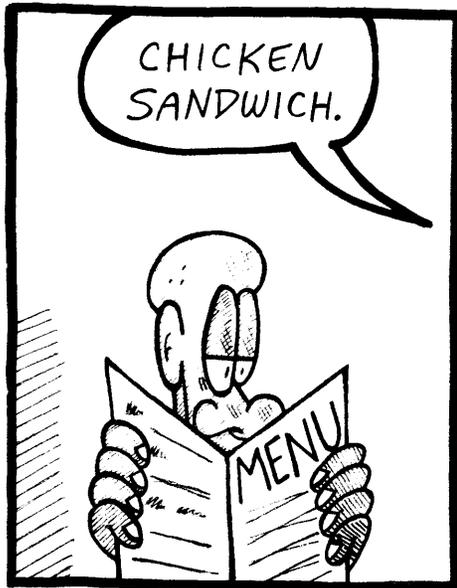
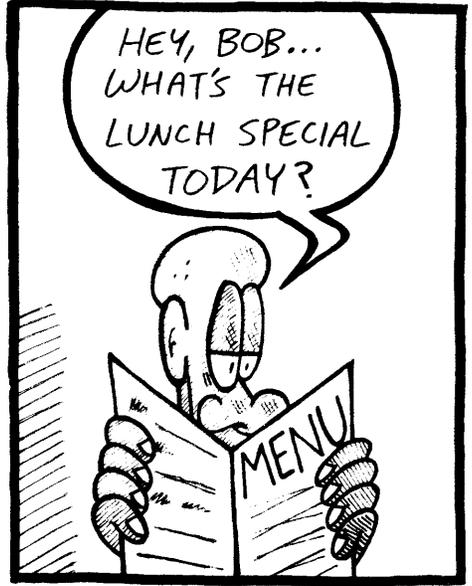
DON'T WORRY,  
BROTHER!  
WE'VE GOT YOU  
COVERED!



YOU WON'T BE THE  
VICTIM OF A RACIST  
HATE CRIME IN  
TRUMP'S AMERIKKA  
AS LONG AS WE'RE HERE!







# Perry Mason

By Ace Backwards

I have this weird “Perry Mason” nostalgia. Back in 1989 and 1990 it was a ritual every night with my roommate Vince and me. We’d watch the “Perry Mason” re-run every night at 11 o’clock, right before we went to bed. And it was perfect late-night fodder. Because we’re half burned out by that time of night. But you can follow “Perry Mason” in your sleep because every episode is the same:

Right off the bat, Lieutenant Tragg comes up with some disturbing information. And the other lawyer, Hamburger, says: “We’ve got you this time, Mason!” And all looks grim. Until the very end when Mason relentlessly grills the witness, with his laser-like eyes boring into the helpless sap like the Avenging Angel of Death. Until O.J. finally breaks down and starts blubbing and confessing: “I admit the glove really does fit! I did it! Yes, I DID it! I’m guilty as fuck!” And Mason finally backs off, gives that little look of compassion to the poor, guilty slob. And then the judge says: “Fry the bastard.” And then at the end, they’re hanging out at Mason’s office — Perry, Paul and Della — and Mason makes that little amusing quip at the end of the show, and they all chuckle, and we can all go out on a high note.

And then we’d go to bed. It was a nightly ritual for a couple of years with me and my pal Vince. . . . God, that show was dull.

But it was a soothing and relaxing ritual. Kind of the TV equivalent of listening to Easy Listening Muzak on the radio. And me and Vince had a series of running gags about the show. It always amused me that Tragg and Hamburger were always completely convinced that they were right and that they had solved the crime. In spite of the fact that they had been proven to be dead wrong the last 100 times in a row, and would have mindlessly sent 100 innocent people to their deaths via the electric chair if Perry Mason hadn’t interceded with his superior wisdom and intellect. And yet

Tragg and Hamburger remained ever convinced as to the certainty of their view of reality. There was a message there that I took a perverse delight in. I guess because it was such an absurd but true aspect of human nature. We rarely, if ever, learn from our mistakes.

My friend Vince took a very different message from “Perry Mason.” It wasn’t corn-ball fare to him. In fact, he deeply cherished the basic message at the heart of the show. That truth and justice always win out in the end. That the falsely-accused but innocent man is exonerated in the end. And the evil-doers are found guilty and duly punished for their deeds. With Perry Mason as the heroic and relentless pursuer of truth and justice and fairness and decency and good hygiene.

My friend Vince truly believed that stuff. Vince was the kind of guy who got an incredibly up-lifting message from Captain Kirk and “Star Trek” and all that. Vince was one of the most unusual people I have ever met in this life. And I often marveled that the universe had created someone like him. Wondering how it actually happened. Vince himself had a goodness, an idealism, a purity, a naiveté, a lack of bile, that I’ve never seen in another person. He was almost freakish in his basic goodness and sweetness. And no logical reason to explain how he had turned out like that. He had been raised in a very harsh ghetto environment in Los Angeles, by a mother who hated him, and a father he never knew. Skinny, frail and epileptic (plus a bad stutter as if nature hadn’t messed with him enough already) he was bullied by most of his classmates, and ignored as a nerd by the rest.

And how the two of us bonded defied logic, also. I was high-strung, agitated, cynical, sharp-minded, distrustful, and full of anger. While Vince was placid, accepting, tolerant, well-meaning and basically simple-minded. I guess it was a classic case of “opposites attracting.” We were drawn to the other, precisely because we each acted out a side that the

other lacked but could experience vicariously through the other.

Of course, while we watched “Perry Mason” we would be making dull, pleasant small-talk between us. Reviewing the events of the day. Plotting the mischief we’d get into tomorrow. Or talking about our lives. Our loves. Our hopes and dreams. All that. Just two guys, in the middle of their respective lives. In my memory, it was a relaxed and cozy period. And I wouldn’t have too many of those in my life. Me and Vince and Perry Mason. Sheesh.

But now that I think of it, there were a couple things I always found odd about Perry Mason. For such a righteous person he sure seemed pretty dour and brooding. He had the demeanor of an undertaker, really. One person suggested it was because he had a certain gravitas. The burden and heaviness that comes from continually struggling to uphold the forces of goodness against the relentless forces of evil that surround us in this world. But the dude sure didn’t seem like he would be much fun at parties. And for a guy that had won 100 cases in a row, he wasn’t exactly kicking his heels in triumph. The “humble” routine seemed a little much at times. Almost verging on self-loathing.

And I may be wrong, but I can’t remember there being any mention of Perry Mason’s private life. Did he have a home? A wife? Any hobbies? Love interests? There was loyal Della Street, ever by his side. Ever ready to serve. And she was cute as hell and very bright and totally dedicated to Mason. You could tell she was secretly and massively in love with Perry. But Perry was married to his job. I guess his duty to uphold truth and justice was even more powerful than his repressed need to have unprotected sex with Paul Drake in some sordid bathhouse off of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine. I always figured there must be something going on with that Drake guy with his peroxidized blonde hair and swanky cigarette lighters. Or maybe I was just smoking too much pot back then and reading subliminal meanings into fairly mundane and innocuous plot-lines.###

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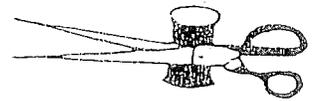
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