

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

**At The Warfield:** Disco Biscuits, 1/24. Celebrity Pickleball Bash, 2/15 & 16. JoJo, 3/5. MXMTOON, 3/7. Connor Price, 3/11. Franz Ferdinand, 3/28. **At The Saloon** (*opened in 1861*): Anthony Arya, 12/20.

Caroline will write you a poem for free at Vesuvio Café, Saturdays after 9:30PM. She's in front of City Lights Books once a week... Another issue with the new electric Caltrain: Some cars have this continual air sucking sound, so it sounds like someone with an enormous nose has the sniffles... Have you seen that Orwellian billboard that reads: "Humans are so 2023. Hire an AI BDR." Which leads Ken Vollmer to ask: "Did robots put that sign up?"... Regarding the mural in Belden Place that has an X on the image of Salvador Dali's forehead. It's graffiti, not surrealism. Fix it.

I stopped by this place called Dork Tec at 1540 Union Street to see if they had a phone charger for my primitive flip-phone. The guy there was nice (didn't catch his name) and told me all about what they do regarding IT service, computer repair, and network installation. He's an ex-cop and told me to give a heads-up to everyone about smash and grabs. Leaving your phone in your glove compartment isn't enough. You have to turn it off because crooks are using a new device that tells them if there's a phone in a car.

Maybe you read mystery novels by Michael Connelly, with his Harry Bosch and Lincoln Lawyer series. Or Lee Child's Jack Reacher line of books. Maybe even Max Allan Collins's Quarry the hitman adventures. You may want to check out a local author named Steve Latner who published a mystery novel titled *This Taxi for Hire* about a San Mateo cab driver in 1979. A good book with lots of local references to places like the Orchid Room bar in San Carlos and the bus bench in front of Heidi's Pies in San Mateo – and it's got a kicker ending. You can get it on Amazon, but buy it at Feldman's Books in Menlo Park instead. There was a reading for Steve and two other local mystery authors there and that's how I found out about it.

There's another book by a local author I'm reading now. It's called *Convenience* by Jack Yaghubian, the guy you see hanging around North Beach with a cigarette in his hand and a pork-pie hat on his head. It takes place in 1979, too. Except it begins in the future, and the main character is thrown back in time to North Beach in 1979, complete with porno theaters and punk clubs. It's also available on Amazon, but buy it at City Lights Books in North Beach instead. Jack used to publish postcards with sayings like "I like my women the way I like my coffee: cold and bitter."

# San Francisco Herald

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## Ghosts of Berkeley Past and Charles Manson and McDonald's

### By Ace Backwords

Being part of the Berkeley street scene all these years, I've met a lot of unusual, bizarre, unique people.... Many of them are more like characters from out of your dreams than normal, mainstream people (though for all I know mainstream people are just as weird as street people, they just cover it up better). . .

Like this morning, I was sitting at McDonald's drinking my dollar large cup of coffee (such a deal!), when this woman suddenly stopped in front of my table and, without saying anything, handed me a wad of rolled up bills.

Money. I wasn't sure how to react to that, so I just said: "Well thank you very much." She stood there looking at me, wordlessly, for a

couple of moments. Then she turned and headed out the front door, pulling a handcart with her possessions in it behind her.

At first I didn't recognize the woman. But then I remembered she was someone I used to know way back in the 1980s. I didn't know her very well — she was a friend of a good friend of mine, that's how I got to know her a bit. She was in her 30s back then, sort of a hippie street chick. The one really distinctive thing about her was that she had been part of the Manson Family back in the '60s. And her waif-like hippie appearance was right out of central casting for the Manson Girls. But she was always quick to point out: "I left the Family before the killings started."

Actually, she almost never talked about the Manson experience. I was dying with curiosity to ask her about all that. But I got the distinct impression that she didn't like to talk about it, so I never brought it up. All she'd say was that it seemed like a pretty cool scene while she was part of it.

She had a young daughter with her during the time I knew her, maybe 5 or 6 years old. After a while she started getting a little nutty. She had this crazy boyfriend and she started getting into hard drugs. They were living at this crazy Berkeley flophouse, the Stark Hotel — affectionately known as the Stark Raving Mad Hotel, because it was a notorious junkie scene with people flopped out shooting drugs right in the hallways. And then there was a big fire at the Stark Hotel and the place was gutted and everybody got thrown out (the building is an upscale apartment building for mostly college students nowadays). And that was the last I heard of her for a long time.

Then, decades later, she showed up again on the scene. I would occasionally spot her on Shattuck Avenue, always alone, usually pushing a handcart with her stuff in it. Every now and then we would pass each other on the street. We never said anything to each other as we passed; I'm not even sure she recognized me, so I'd quickly avert my eyes and just keep walking. She was an elderly woman now, but she didn't look much different than she looked back then, except her hair was gray now. And she still had the same haunted eyes.

Anyways, I sat there at McDonald's this morning drinking my coffee. And I looked at the wad of bills she had given me. It was a ten dollar bill and a bunch of ones. I have no idea why she decided to give it to me out of the blue. I have no idea what she was thinking, why she decided to do that on the spur of the moment.

To tell you the truth, I often have no idea why people do the things they do. Especially the people on the street scene. ###

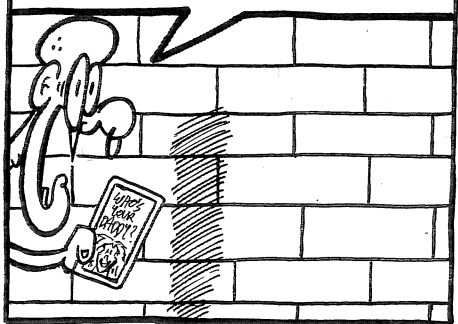
HI-IT'S ME-CHANTEUSE, FORMER SPOKESPERSON FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF KAMALA HARRIS! I'M BACK IN SAN FRANCISCO, AT THE 16TH STREET BART STATION, WITH THE, UH, MERCHANTS HERE. COME ON DOWN FOR CAR RADIOS, JEWELRY, AND ANYTHING YOU CAN FIND AT WALGREENS!



TEN YEARS AGO, KAMALA WAS THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CALIFORNIA AND HELPED PASS PROPOSITION 47, WHICH DOWNGRADED SHOPLIFTING UNDER \$950 OF STUFF FROM A FELONY TO A MISDEMEANOR. AND MERCHANTS HERE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO HER THAT TODAY THEY'RE DONATING 10% OF SALES TOWARD HER CAMPAIGN DEBT.

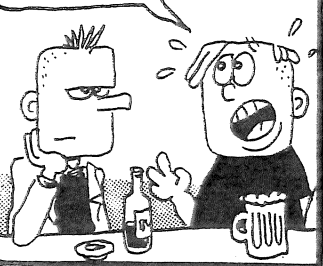


IT'S THE COPS! BEAT IT! COME ON DOWN TO THE 16TH STREET BART STATION (IN ABOUT 10 MINUTES WHEN THE COPS ARE GONE.) SORRY, KAMALA, YOU MAY HAVE TO SELL THAT \$62,000 NECKLACE YOU WORE IN THAT VIDEO ASKING FOR DONATIONS TO PAY OFF YOUR DEBT. SEE YOU SOON!

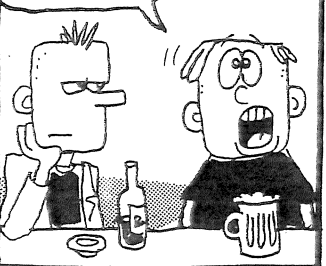


**TWISTED IMAGE** by Ace Backwords ©1989

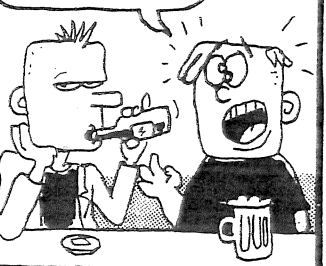
ON VALENTINE'S DAY WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE CELEBRATING LOVE, BUT IT JUST BUMS ME OUT 'CUZ I DON'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND!!



ON CHRISTMAS WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE CELEBRATING OUR FAMILY-LIFE, BUT IT JUST BUMS ME OUT 'CUZ I HATE MY PARENTS!!



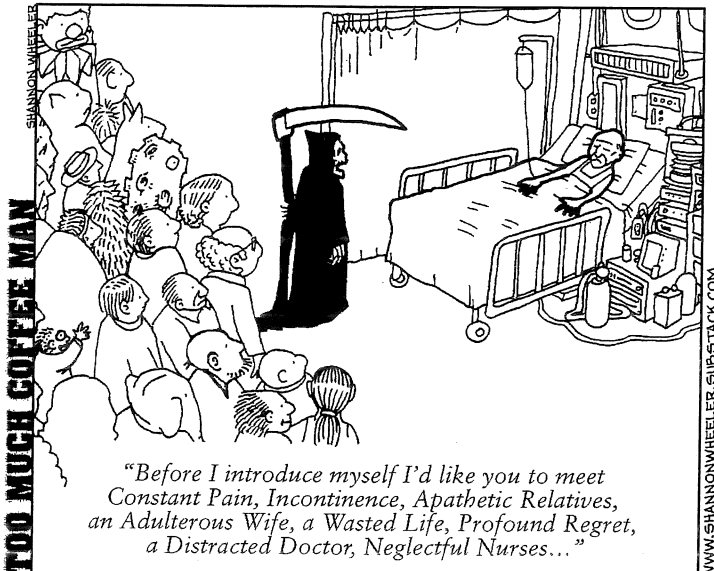
ON NEW YEAR'S WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HAVING FUN PARTYING, BUT IT JUST BUMS ME OUT 'CUZ I NEVER GET INVITED TO THE PARTY!!



MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE A NATIONAL MISERY DAY. AT LEAST THEN YOU'D HAVE SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE.



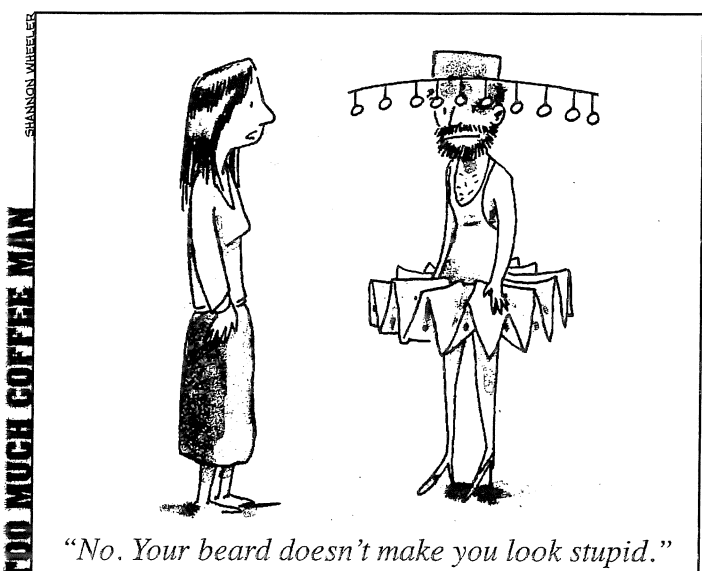
YEA, WITH MY LUCK THAT'D BE THE ONE DAY OF THE YEAR WHEN I FEEL HAPPY.



“Before I introduce myself I'd like you to meet Constant Pain, Incontinence, Apathetic Relatives, an Adulterous Wife, a Wasted Life, Profound Regret, a Distracted Doctor, Neglectful Nurses...”

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

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“No. Your beard doesn't make you look stupid.”

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