

San Francisco Herald

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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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I recently read a book that was published a couple of years ago titled *We'll Always Have Casablanca*, by Noah Isenberg.

Whenever I've been asked what my favorite movie is, I've always searched for an answer and came up with something other than *Casablanca*. But you know what – it is my favorite movie.

When I was a kid growing up in New York in the 1970s, the independent TV stations used to run movies at 8PM, as sacrificial lambs to network programming. Except for the annual showing of *Casablanca*, which was promoted for weeks in advance.

I guess that was where I saw it first. Then I saw it in my tenth grade English class. I've seen it a few times on channel 9 here in the Bay Area. I saw it a few times at the Stanford Theatre in Palo Alto. I might have seen it at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco. I must have seen it around a dozen times.

Film geeks – I mean scholars – usually look down upon the mere peasants who think *Casablanca* is the greatest movie

ever made. Overall, most claim that distinction belongs to *Citizen Kane*.

Yes, Orson Welles' film definitely was a groundbreaking, epic masterpiece. Its fans like to point out that it was a *sappy sentimental and happy ending* free zone. Unlike *Casablanca*.

Casablanca also offers a dark, brooding, negative outlook on life like *Citizen Kane* does. But life isn't *all* bad. Sometimes in this desert you come across the occasional oasis of happiness. And the happy and sad ending of *Casablanca* is arguably more nuanced than the Freudian “Rosebud” finale of *Citizen Kane*.



Personally, I can't imagine seeing *Citizen Kane* a dozen times.

I originally intended this column to be a fairly detailed review of *We'll Always Have Casablanca*, as well as some more elaborative thoughts of my own. But if you want to know more about an unproduced Broadway play, that was hurriedly made into a movie, that nobody expected would be a hit, and the

impact it made on society – read it yourself.

And besides, nobody cares what I think anyway. ###

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Apparently there's yet another *Godzilla* movie opening at select cinemas as I write this. Fifteen years ago this month, I wrote a column about the fiftieth anniversary of the original film. It wasn't quite *Casablanca*, but I found some appreciation for it:

I never go to the movies anymore, but I managed to force myself over to a Sunday matinee at the Castro Theatre recently, as it was showing the original 1954 classic *Godzilla*. This *Godzilla* was the goods, not like those ridiculous sequels (literally 34 of them!) I used to watch on TV as a kid, like *Godzilla versus the Smog Monster*, *Godzilla versus the Sea Monster*, *Godzilla versus Megalon*, *Godzilla versus the Bionic Monster*, *Godzilla versus King Kong*, *Godzilla versus Mothra*, etc.

Hey, *Mothra* – remember that idea for a monster? A giant moth that gets awakened by two miniature geisha girls who chant, “Moooothra!” At least that was thought up by *Godzilla* director Ishiro Honda. Competing filmmakers had even stranger ideas. Like *Gamera*. Remember him? A giant turtle that would crawl into his shell, fire would come out of its orifices, then it would keep spinning around and around until it flew through the air. He'd land, stick his head and limbs out of his shell again, stand upright on two legs, and shoot radioactive fire out of his mouth, just like *Godzilla* does. Ridiculous.

Actually, I shouldn't have mentioned those *Godzilla* sequels and rip-offs, because the original *Godzilla* was a good

(maybe even great) movie. It's not at the Castro anymore (it was at theaters all over the world recently to commemorate its fiftieth anniversary) but maybe you can find it at a video store. Don't get tricked into renting *Godzilla, King of the Monsters* (from 1956), which cut forty minutes from the original, dubbed the rest of it badly, and added Raymond Burr (in the role as American journalist Steve Martin) to narrate the action. Get the original *Godzilla* (from 1954) in Japanese with English subtitles.

As you know by now, *Godzilla* (or *Gojira* as he's known in the Land of the Rising Sun) is a 150 foot tall prehistoric beast who has been awakened from his hibernation by H-bomb testing in the Pacific, and can set cities on fire with his radioactive breath. For every cheesy special effect (*Godzilla* is obviously a guy in a rubber suit stepping on miniature buildings) there is a great one (the smoldering ruins of Tokyo the morning after *Godzilla* destroyed it is so moving I wondered if Honda just spliced in footage of Hiroshima after the bomb).

There's also some great non special effect scenes. Like the one with subway commuters defiantly joking about Japan's latest menace: "I survived Nagasaki, I'll survive this." Or the one where in the midst of *Godzilla*'s carnage, a sobbing mother holds her two children, surrounded by fire, and says to them, "Don't worry! We'll be with daddy soon!" Considering the film came out nine years after THE BOMB got dropped, the actors probably didn't need much motivation to get into character.

The post-World War II anti-nuclear message, the moral dilemma the man who can stop *Godzilla* faces, the symbolism, the love triangle that lingers throughout the movie, the moving finale (there wasn't a dry eye in the house)... if you think about it, *Godzilla* is really a chick flick. Honda probably raised the money to make it by telling investors it would be a rip-off of *King Kong* that would make them a lot of yen, but I'm sure he knew it was a lot more.

When you think of great Japanese films you think of *The Seven Samurai* and *Ran*, both by Honda's much, much more respected colleague Akira Kurosawa.

Maybe the first movie starring this middle-aged dinosaur belongs up there, too.

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Looks like Tacorea, that Mexican/Korean eatery at 809 Bush Street, is still packing 'em in. I walked by recently and saw a House of Nanking-type line out the door.

I remember living in (lower) Nob Hill in the mid-1990s (as you know, this newsletter is a fraud in the sense that I live amongst the sun and plentiful parking spaces on the Palo Alto/Menlo Park border, not amongst the fog, hypodermic needles, and human feces in San Francisco).

Anyway, at night I would often sit outside a café with these other guys who would always hang out there. It was where Tacorea is now. I think it was called Jasmine's Café, because the guy who owned it named it after his daughter. He ran it with his wife. The regulars were this senior citizen gay guy originally from Manhattan, some other guy I can't remember, and this other senior citizen guy who had a thin mustache, a beret, was French, and never said a word. He just smoked and stared into space. One day the French guy died and he was so quiet they knew nothing about him or who to contact, so they threw a funeral for him themselves.

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If you read it in the Herald you probably know it already:

Hank at Foot Worship and Felicity at Felicity's Fetiche, both formerly at Sutter and Polk, have moved to Strippers' Row in North Beach at 406 Broadway.

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Rose (*Rose-ay* – I can't find the accent mark on the keyboard) & BBQ in Huntington Park, June 29, 1:00PM.

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The MS Herald of Free Enterprise, a British ferry, capsized off a Belgian port in 1987, killing 193 passengers and crew. When another ferry sank five years ago in South Korea, I scanned Google News to see if that tragedy sparked any remembrances of Ferry Aid, which raised money for victims of the British disaster in the late 1980s, but apparently there were none. I know that Ferry Aid wasn't as big as Band Aid (for African famine relief), but you'd expect one media outlet on the planet to mention it. The single for Ferry Aid was Kate Bush, Boy George, Mark Knopfler, and a chorus of pop stars who were big for 15 minutes and completely forgotten today singing "Let it Be" by the Beatles. Paul McCartney gets spliced into the video (hamming it up as usual) and it really is a great rendition of a great song. It's on Youtube if you want to check it out.

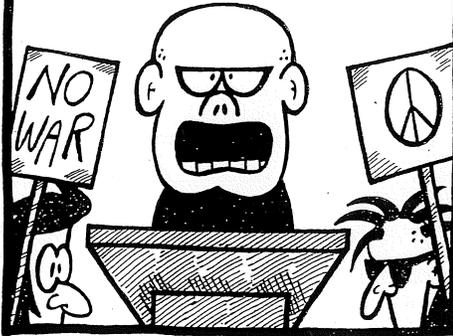
Mike Peters of The Alarm was also in Ferry Aid. I remember meeting Mike backstage at a concert of his years ago and he told me how he was recovering from leukemia. Glad to see Mike's still alive, kicking, and making music. On a local note, Nigel Twist – the original drummer for The Alarm – lives here in the City of St. Francis.

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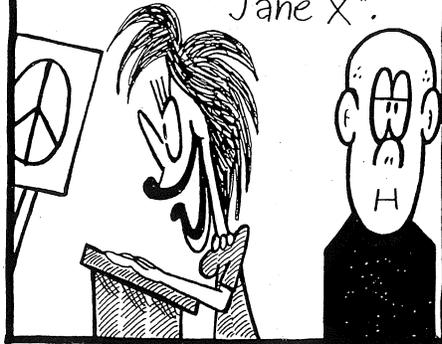
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Hey-this issue's comic has that Jane character in it. She was the wife of Chauncy's high school pal and she really hated Chauncy. No one knew why.



She tried to shoot Chauncy and was sent to prison. She fell in love with her cellmate, came out, shaved her head, and called herself "Jane X".



She became a "social justice" warrior and... looks like she's at a political rally. Wow, I can't wait to read this new comic. Here goes...



**GOOD
CLEAN
FUN**

WRITTEN, DRAWN
AND © 2017 BY
GENE MAHONEY

**ONE
WORLD.**

**ONE
PEOPLE.**

**ONE
IDIOT
NAMED
JANE X.**

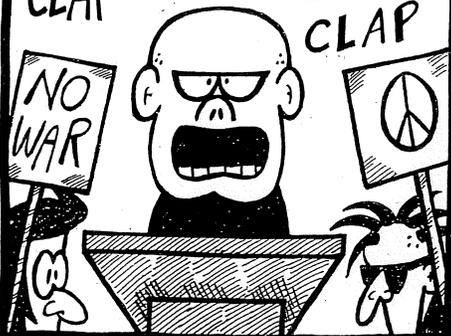
**THE
OCCUPY
PROTESTS.**

**SAN
FRANCISCO.
SEPTEMBER
2012.**

VERY NICE!
WELL SPOKEN,
JOE!

CLAP
CLAP

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP



LET'S HEAR IT FOR
PRIVATE
JOE SMITHERS.

CLAP
CLAP

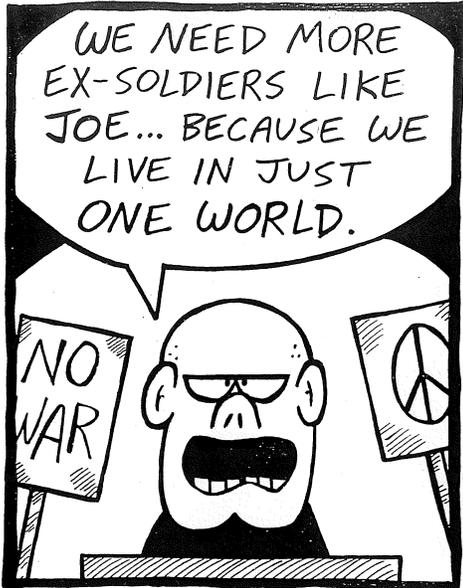
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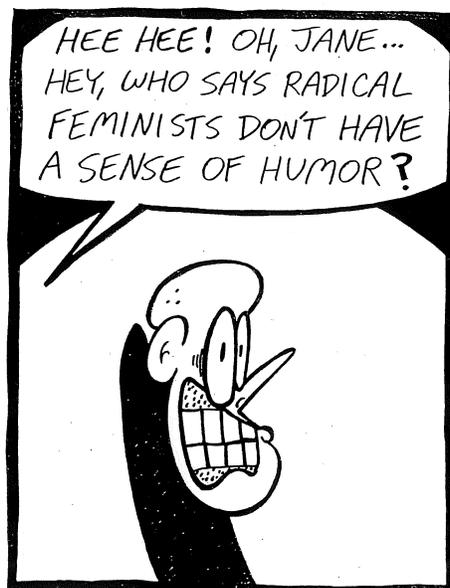
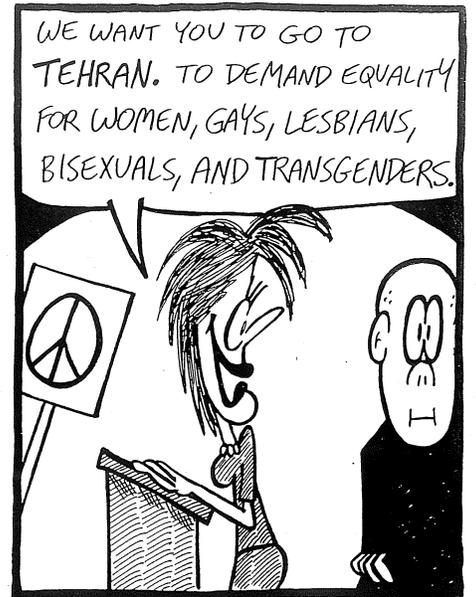
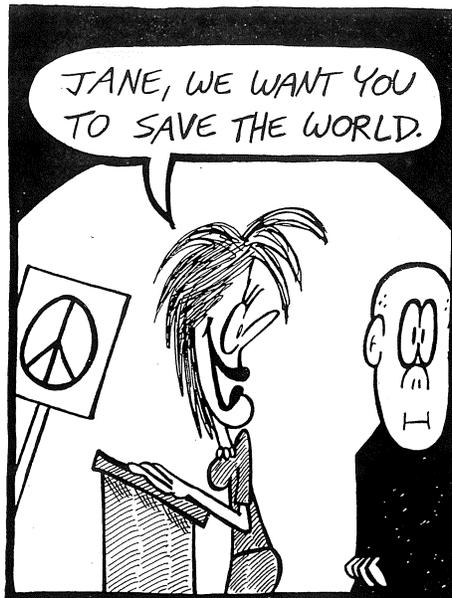


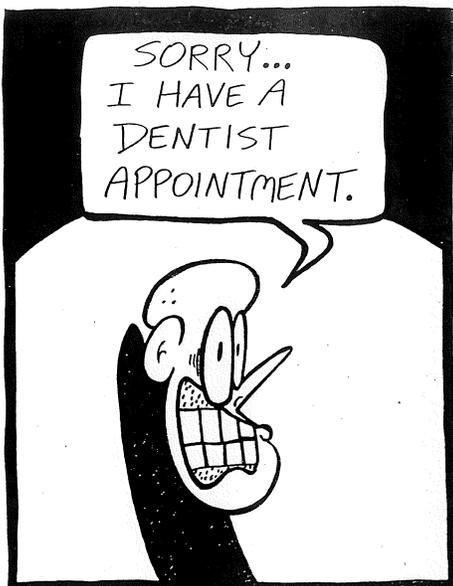
WE'RE SO PROUD OF
JOE - A FORMER
U.S. SOLDIER WHO
REFUSES TO FIGHT
ANYMORE!

NO
WAR









GO TO THE HERALD
WEB SITE AND VISIT
THE "GOOD CLEAN FUN"
ARCHIVES TO SEE SOME
OLD COMICS FEATURING
JANE X
(THE FORMER JANE TRIPP).
HER DEBUT:
"CLASS OF '83"
HER FAREWELL:
"OCCUPY JANE"

The Exciting Adventures of FramptonMan

By Ace Backwords

Whenever a Peter Frampton song happens to pop up on the radio or the internet, it's like I have an acid flashback to 1976. I was 19 and driving cross-country from New Jersey to California to be a hippie (that was the plan). I had this bomb of a '69 Chevy that spewed a thick black cloud of exhaust for 3,000 miles. And an AM-FM radio that played all the hits of the day. And Peter Frampton was one of the guys whose songs regularly popped up on my radio (the other songs I remember were "Dream On" by Aerosmith, "Dream Weaver" by Gary Wright, and the hated "Take It to the Limit" by the Eagles).

When I got to San Francisco, Peter Frampton was on the cover of ROLLING STONE that month. He was like the mega-star of the moment. And his live album was selling zillions of copies and setting records. So it was like Peter Frampton was "it" in 1976 (though not for long).

Anyways, one of my big dreams at the time was to become an underground cartoonist. So I rented out this little room in this flophouse, the Empress Hotel (I think the rent was \$15 a week) deep in the heart of San Francisco's Tenderloin district. And there was a little desk and a chair and I had my art tablet and my pens and pencils. And I worked on various comic strips that I hoped would bring me fame and fortune.

And one of the comics I was working on was this parody character FramptonMan – Peter Frampton as this do-gooder, crime-fightin' superhero (I was hoping to cash in on the latest trends – pretty smart, huh?). And FramptonMan's arch-enemy was the Stones Gang. Mick and Keith and the rest of the Rolling Stones as this underworld crime gang. In the first episode of my FramptonMan comic, Donny and Marie Osmond are doing their TV show and the Stones Gang bursts onto the stage with their electric guitars and

executes Donny and Marie with heavy metal power chords on live TV. And that's as far as I got with my FramptonMan cartoon. Thank God.

So anyways, one night I'm heading back to my room on the 3rd floor of the Empress Hotel. And as I'm walking down the hallway I passed these black guys who had been loitering around, and suddenly they all turned and ran after me. So I put it in high gear and went sprinting down the hallway towards my hotel room as fast as I could. I rushed into my room, and slammed the door shut. Only one of the guys managed to stick his foot in the doorway and wedge it in there before I could get the damn door shut. So now I'm pushing on the door to try and shut it. And they're pushing on the door to try and open it. Like this crazy tug-of-war.

Finally they managed to overpower me and flood into my room. So now I'm suddenly dealing with that.

One of the guys stationed himself by the window as a lookout. One of the guys stationed himself by the door. And one of the guys grabbed my knife that was lying on my desk and put it up to my throat (it was obvious they had done this sort of thing many times before because they were well rehearsed). The knife, by the way, was razor-sharp. I used it to sharpen my pencils. And now it was pressed up against my Adam's apple.

The guy with the knife had a crazed, wide-eyed expression on his face and he's sweating like crazy and he keeps ranting about how "MY GIRLFRIEND HAD JUST BEEN KILLED BY A MOTHERFUCKING WHITE GUY!!" I think that was his justification for killing me. So I was realizing that I could be killed at any moment.

The weird thing was – I don't know if you've ever been in a situation like that but – I wasn't feeling any fear. It wasn't that I was so brave. But that the scene was so bizarre and sudden and unexpected that my brain couldn't even process what was happening. Like being in a state of shock. Meanwhile the other guys are

rifling through my meager possessions for anything they could steal. While the other guy is contemplating whether or not he should slice my fool head off (and I could tell that part of him very much wanted to do that).

I remember at one point I actually had an out-of-body experience. It was like I rose to the ceiling of my room and I was looking down, dispassionately, at the whole crazy scene from that perspective. And then, for lack of anything better to do, I said to the guy with the knife: "Listen, can I show you something?"

"WHAT??" he said.

I pointed to my desk. "That," I said. I cautiously walked over to my desk and picked up the piece of paper with the cartoon I was working on at the time. The FramptonMan cartoon. And I picked it up and held it in front of me sort of like a shield and said: "I just want to draw cartoons." I guess it was my way of trying to appeal to our common humanity. He looked at the FramptonMan cartoon with anger and perplexion. And so we were all frozen in time and space for several moments like that. Until one of the other guys said:

"We got the stuff. Let's go."

The guy with the knife paused for a beat, like he was still debating the merits of to kill or not to kill. And then they all went rushing out the door and down the hall. And I breathed the biggest sigh of relief I had ever breathed, like, WHOOSH!!!

The weird thing is, of the stuff of mine they stole – a couple of bucks, my knife, a cheap radio – the only real thing of value I had was this really nice \$100 down sleeping bag. And they didn't bother to steal that.

And the other takeaway was, from then on I NEVER used a knife to sharpen my pencils. I always used a little pencil-sharpener after that. And whenever I happen to hear a Frampton song on the radio or the internet I'll remember that whole scene in the back of my mind.###

CHISME

➤ CANTINA ◀

TACOS *2 OF THE SAME TACO PER ORDER, NO MIX & MATCH*

SKIRT STEAK GLUTEN FREE.....\$12
Chipotle steak, caramelized onion, peanut mole, guacamole, queso fresco.

QUESADILLA.....
Monterey Jack, Mozzarella, caramelized onion, cilantro. Served with sour cream, grilled pineapple habanero and roasted tomato salsa.

Plantain \$11 | Chicken \$12 | Steak \$13

PULLED CHICKEN GLUTEN FREE.....\$11
Chipotle chicken, caramelized onion, peanut mole, sour cream, queso fresco.

JACKFRUIT VEGAN.....\$9
Fried jackfruit, seasonal greens, nori, sweet cabbage, mint verde.

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Sauteed mahi mahi, fried spinach, grilled pineapple habanero salsa, red onion, coconut ranch.

SHRIMP GLUTEN FREE.....\$12
Sauteed chipotle shrimp, sweet cabbage, peanut mole, mango salsa, queso fresco.

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Fried plantain, seasonal greens, black bean, mango salsa, coconut ranch.

EGGPLANT VEGAN.....\$9
Fried eggplant, seasonal greens, red onion, peanut mole. Add guac \$1

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DESSERTS

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Caramel filled topped with Ghirardelli dark chocolate, vanilla whip cream.

SWEET PLANTAINS GLUTEN FREE.....\$8
Plantains, powdered sugar, chocolate, french vanilla ice cream.

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➤ CANTINA ◀

SALAD BOWLS

QUINOA BOWL 32oz\$12
Quinoa, seasonal greens, red pepper, tomatoes, parsley, red onion, roasted garlic, heart of palm, cucumber, sweet cabbage, avocado, queso fresco & house lemon vinaigrette.

Add : chicken \$5, steak \$6, shrimp \$6, mahi \$6

SIDES

GUAC & CHIPS VEGAN+GLUTEN FREE.....\$8
House chips. Avocado, onion, jalapeño, lime, cilantro.

CAULIFLOWER CEVICHE VEGAN+GLUTEN FREE...\$8
Cauliflower, lime juice, jalapeño, bell pepper, garlic, salt and pepper. House chips.
Add avocado \$1.50

PAPAS ROJAS VEGAN+GLUTEN FREE.....\$6
Seasoned fried potatoes topped with coconut ranch. Add peanut mole \$.75

PINCHELOTE GLUTEN FREE.....\$8
Sweet corn, mayo, cotija, chili, lime.

CHIPS & SALSA VEGAN+GLUTEN FREE.....\$5
House Chips. Roasted tomato salsa.

BLACK BEAN & MANGO VEGAN+GLUTEN FREE.. \$6
Rice with black beans and mango salsa.

POBLANO POTATO BOWL GLUTEN FREE.....\$7

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COCONUT HORCHATA.....\$5.50
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MEXICAN SODA.....\$3.50
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TECATE MAKE IT A MICHELADA +2.....\$4
MODELO MAKE IT A MICHELADA +2.....\$5.50
CORONA MAKE IT A MICHELADA +2.....\$5
WATERMELON AQUA FRESCA.....\$5
JARRITOS.....\$3.50
PELLEGRINO WATER.....\$3.50
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