

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

At the Warfield: Killswitch Engage, 6/27. Interpol, 8/11-12. Tomahawk, 8/14.

Gas prices have gotten expensive lately, largely due to the war in Iran. So why is gas more expensive in California than in any other state? About \$2 more per gallon than anywhere else. Here's a few reasons...

The last time gas reached \$6 per gallon, Governor Gavin Newsom blamed it on price gouging by the oil companies. A special legislative investigation looked into it and found no evidence of that.

Californians pay a lot at the pump due to the tax for our "Special Blend" of gas, designed to cut down on emissions. If you've ever seen a picture of Los Angeles in the 1970s buried in smog, you'd understand why it was needed. Though with today's cleaner burning engines it's debatable that it's still necessary.

California has about 40 million people in it, with 8 oil refineries in it. As a point of reference, Oklahoma has about 4 million people in it, with 4 oil refineries in it.

Every time you put gas in your car you're paying a tax for the High Speed Bullet Train. The train that was approved in 2008 and still hasn't gotten one track laid for it. The train that was estimated to cost \$126 billion and is now projected to cost \$231 billion. The train some politicians have admitted is now just a jobs project. The train that was supposed to run from San Francisco to Los Angeles and was changed from Merced to Bakersfield, and now has been changed from a few miles away from Merced to a few miles away from Bakersfield. Hey, maybe it's best to stay away from Bakersfield. The cops are supposed to be gung ho down there. As the old saying goes...

Bakersfield – go on vacation, leave on probation.

Why build it in the first place? Flights are cheap. Don't like to fly? Drive. Don't like to fly and don't drive? Take a bus.

California gets a third of its oil from the Mideast – a nice, stable region of the world.

No drilling is done in California for environmental reasons. The thing is, the countries we get oil from don't have the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Earth's atmosphere doesn't have borders. So globally, we're harming the environment more than if we drilled here.

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By the way, do you think gas prices will go down if Iran develops a nuclear bomb?

There you have it. Another reason why California has gone from being the best run state years ago to the worst one presently. Things are even worse than I thought. Note this headline from the Babylon Bee...



Bear on California Flag Moves to Texas

On June 13th I turn the big 6-1. As the old saying goes – One foot in the grave, one foot on the banana peel. I share the same birthday with the late Paul Lynde, the center square on the old *Hollywood Squares* game show of the 1970s. You can go online and see an *E! True Hollywood Story* video about how Paul was a sad, closeted gay man with a severe drinking problem.

I could have guessed, though. My mother used to work security at JFK Airport back in New York. One day in '79 or '80, she told us about how, the night before, Paul Lynde had to be thrown off an airplane (before it took off) because he was so loaded. As I recall the way the sad tale was told to me, Paul was naked, with only a blanket wrapped around him. Security started to drag him off and he dropped the blanket, mooning everyone in First Class. Then, in the terminal, an extremely effeminate male flight attendant (Imagine that!) told Paul off. Apparently Paul thought the guy's demeanor wasn't real -- that the guy was mocking him. "I ought to slap you!" Paul told the "friendly skies" guy. A brief scuffle ensued.

I'd like to apologize beforehand for the following insensitive essay by Ace Backwords. For his referring to "Mother's Day" instead of "Birthing Person's Day." I know this may be very traumatic for some of you out there, but don't do anything rash like jump off the Golden Gate Bridge, or even the Bay Bridge. Once again – sorry.

I had a . . . I'm trying to think of the right word to describe it . . . a -tumultuous-relationship with my mother. For many years I was so angry at her, I spent two decades where I completely cut her out of my life. I felt it was best for both of us that we didn't have any contact with each other.

Then, in 2013, I needed a break from Berkeley. Or maybe Berkeley needed a break from me. My little sister owned a bunch of houses in this little town in the middle of the Arizona desert and she invited me to live there for a year. My mother also owned a home there. So, over the course of the year, me and my mother rekindled some kind of relationship between us. It would be the only period in my adult life when I had any kind of relationship with my mother.

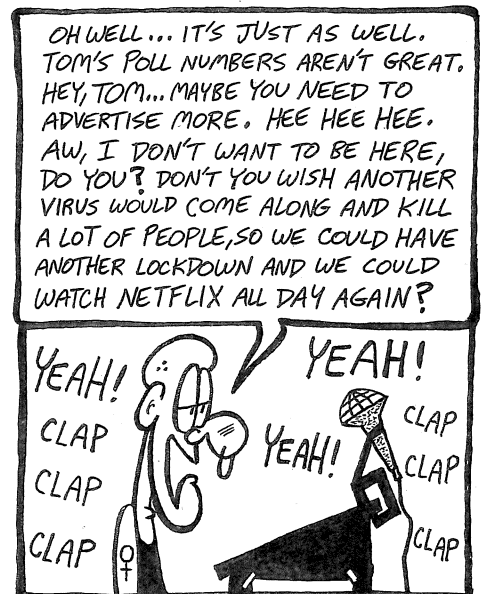
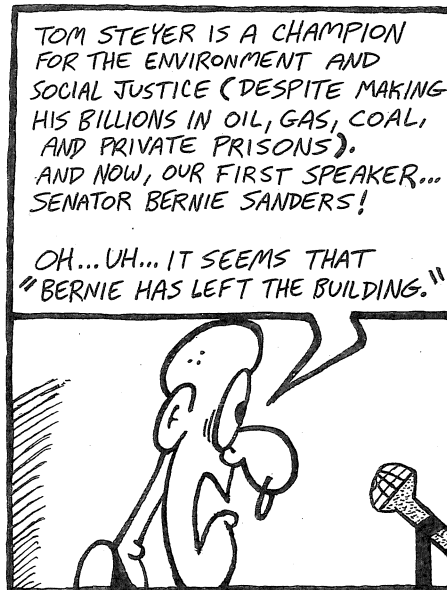
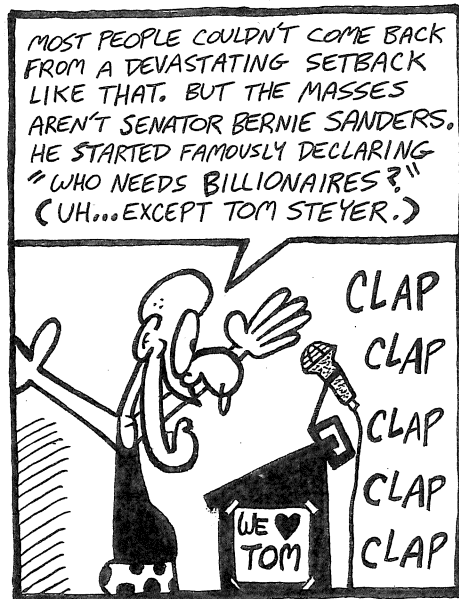
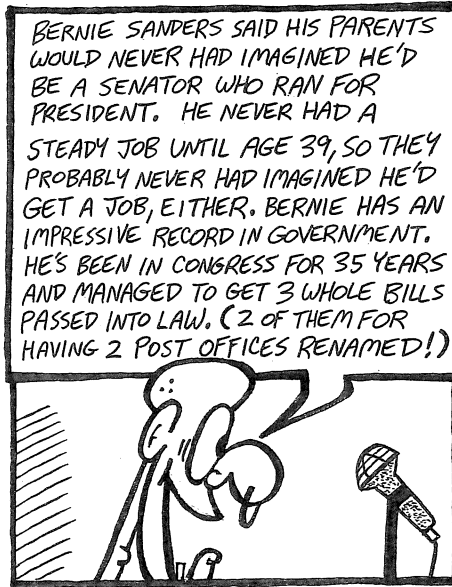
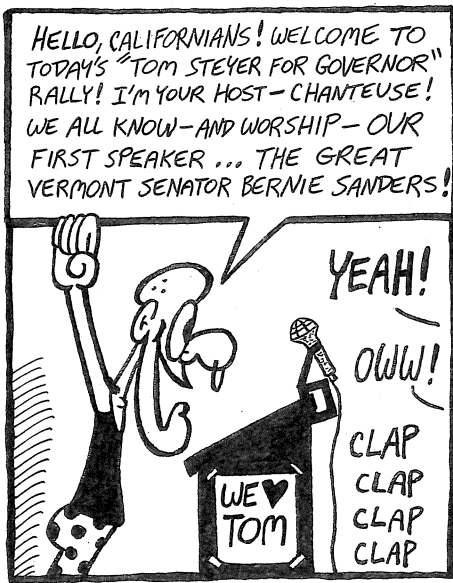
We purposely kept things light. Avoided going over old wounds. Occasionally we'd go out for lunch at the local Wendy's, the three of us — me, my little sister, and my mother. And we'd mostly make light small talk. Sometimes the three of us would get together at my sister's house for dinner. And we'd talk about this or that. I remember one day we had a little birthday party for my mother at my sister's house. Cake and ice cream and all that. I forget how old she was at that point. . . I'm doing the math in my head, 2014, I was 58 . . . so she must have been 82 or 83.

I can't really remember any of the things we talked about when we'd get together. I'm not really good at remembering stuff like that. But I remember my mother would sometimes say: "I try to just remember the good things." Which I guess was her way of saying: Whatever past traumas and grievances we once had, what's done is done, so let's just forget about all that and enjoy the present moment as best we can.

And we were able to reach a state of detente in that way. There was no way we could have any kind of deep relationship, there was simply too much potential for things to get volatile, like this well-spring of weird emotions bubbling just under the surface that might erupt if we poked around down there. So it was best to just keep things light and on the surface. It wasn't love. But at least it wasn't hate. So it was the best we could hope for. Kind of a respectful, weary truce.

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