

The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

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

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Is there such a thing as too many parking places to give a shit how you park? Something tells me they don't.

That's one of the ethical questions the former web designer for the Herald, Craig Clifford, asks on his website about cars, the Road Rage Page. Visit theroadragepage.com.

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The recall Gavin Newsom movement is happening if you want to investigate it. Which reminds me, this two week lockdown over the Wuhan Virus has entered its eighth month. As Mark Steyn recently mused about those "Keep 6 Feet Apart" markings on the floors of businesses: Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini are looking up from their Monday night poker game in Hell and saying to themselves, "Why didn't we think of that?"

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I finally read something by most famous American author/notorious tough guy Ernest Hemingway. On my own, too (made it through high school and college without doing so). It was his first - and widely regarded as his best - novel titled *The Sun Also Rises*.

Published in 1926, it tells the story of some American and British expatriates living in Paris who vacation in Spain to watch the annual Bullfight Fiesta. A year earlier, Hemingway and some fellow American and British expatriates living in Paris vacationed in Spain to watch the annual Bullfight Fiesta.



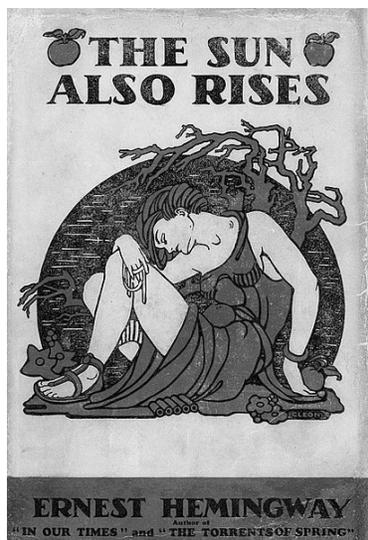
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Nob Hill – Russian Hill – North Beach

Cow Hollow – The Marina



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And the characters in the novel bore uncanny resemblances to him and those he vacationed with.

They were well-to-do, artistic, hard drinking, sexually promiscuous - and felt Paris was the place to live their lifestyle.

The sexually promiscuous part is a challenge for the main character, Jake Barnes. He resembles Hemingway except that Barnes had his penis mutilated in World War I. (Hemingway was wounded in that war, but not there.) Scholars have speculated that Hemingway experienced impotency and thus wrote of his character's ailment symbolically.

It was also speculated that Hemingway hated his mother. And his mother hated Hemingway's novel, sickened by its

debauched tone and use of words like "damn" and "bitch."

Don't know if mom was bothered by the N-word, which Jake Barnes and his friend Bill Gorton use frequently throughout a few pages in a quirky (and offensive) dialogue exchange. Quentin Tarantino two-thirds of a century before Quentin Tarantino. Here's another Tarantinoesque rant from Bill on page 116:

"Listen. You're a hell of a good guy, and I'm fonder of you than anybody on earth. I couldn't tell you that in New York. It'd mean I was a faggot. That was what the Civil War was about. Abraham Lincoln was a faggot. He was in love with General Grant. So was Jefferson Davis. Lincoln just freed the slaves on a bet. The Dred Scott case was framed by the Anti-Saloon League. Sex explains it all. The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are Lesbians under their skin."

Hemingway's youngest son, Gregory, spent much of his life wearing women's clothes and was referred to as "Gloria" before his death in 2001. His oldest son, Jack, was a World War II hero who had two famous daughters, Margaux and Mariel.

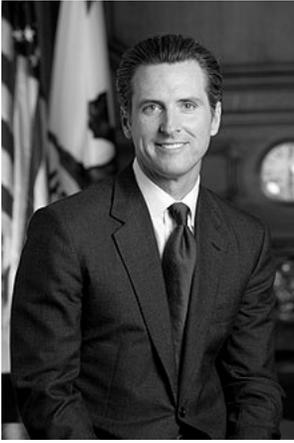
Margaux Hemingway became a supermodel in the 1970s, appearing on covers of fashion magazines. She went on to act in some bad movies before committing suicide by drug overdose in 1996 at the age of 42.

Her younger sister Mariel became an actress and is probably best known for her role in Woody Allen's *Manhattan*. She has spoken publicly about her family's struggles with alcoholism, drug addiction, and mental illness.

In 1928 Ernest Hemingway's father committed suicide by shooting himself. "I'll probably go the same way," Ernest remarked. In 1961 Ernest Hemingway followed in his father's footsteps.

Ernest Hemingway was probably racist against blacks, anti-Semitic, and a Soviet spy who used to sip cocktails as he watched Fidel Castro's goons execute innocent men in Cuba. But *The Sun Also Rises* will be 100 years old soon, and this flawed book about flawed people by a flawed man still holds up today.

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politician – like a character on the TV sit-com “Green Acres” or “Hee Haw.”

Then in 1968 it was Richard Nixon. Nixon was the first in the long line of right-wing villains that all the righteous hippies and counterculture types and the liberals in the media hated. A lineage that would perpetuate itself right up to Donald Trump today. I remember this helpless feeling watching Nixon on TV explaining why the carnage in Vietnam had to continue. Even at 12 years old I could tell it was all bullshit – a terrible, pointless waste. And I remember this incredible effort by half the country to stop that war, that went on for years and years, to no avail.

The Nixon/McGovern race in 1972 was the first presidential campaign that I followed a bit in real time. It was pretty easy to understand, even for a kid like me. McGovern would end the Vietnam War. That was it really. And it looked like he might have a chance. Until he named Thomas Eagleton as his Vice President and it came out that Eagleton had had electroshock treatment for depression, so he was painted as a mental case. And McGovern was doomed after that, losing by the biggest landslide of all time.

And then there was Gerald Ford in 1974. I remember Ford as basically being a national joke. This buffoon. Ford was like comic relief, this little epilogue, after the evil one Richard Nixon had finally been vanquished by Watergate.

Jimmy Carter would be the first presidential candidate I ever voted for (and one of the few times I picked the winner). 1976, age 19. When I first saw Jimmy Carter’s photo in the newspaper, the person he most reminded me of was Johnny Carson, with the hair and the suit and the famous “Jimmy Carter smile.” And it occurred to me that the president was basically a national TV talk show host. I remember watching the Carter/Ford debate on TV while tripping on acid. And being impressed by Carter’s sincerity when he stared into the camera with those big blue eyes and spoke of his fervent desire to bring peace to a troubled world. So Carter won over the all-important acid-casualties demographic. The other thing I remember was Hunter Thompson’s big endorsement of Carter on the front page of ROLLING STONE

magazine (Carter quoted Bob Dylan in his speeches, after all, so he was hip). That would pretty much be Thompson’s last gasp of relevancy as a political pundit, before he devolved into a predictable media caricature. But it was a short but interesting run by Thompson while it lasted – 1972 to 1976 – before he burned out.

And then there was Ronald Reagan in 1980. Which seemed particularly depressing at the time to all of us hipster types. Because it seemed like a step backwards. A return to Nixon Lite. And it seems like half the country traces the rot and ruin of the American empire directly to Reagan’s policies in the ’80s. While the other half of the country considers Reagan one of our great American presidents. Who knows (and no, I am not going to debate the relative merits of “Trickle-down Economics”). All I know, personally, is that the Reagan/Bush years – 1980 to 1992 – were probably the most stable and productive years of my life.

Then there was the 20 year stretch from 1988 to 2008 where we had a choice between a Clinton or a Bush. I personally considered both families to be two sides of the same bad coin. And I take a certain perverse pride in never having voted for a Clinton or a Bush (though my overall voting record for president is certainly nothing to write home about – I voted for Ross Perot twice, ha ha). With George Bush Junior being particularly singled out as the worst of the lot for getting us into that war in Iraq.

Some people express surprise when they find out that the Clinton family and the Bush family are extremely close friends, despite the differences in their ideologies (Bill sites George Senior as “like a father to me”). Myself? Not the least surprised. Two sides of the same bad coin.

Which brings us to 2008 and the beginning of the Obama/Trump era. Two presidents that will forever be joined at the hip. Two presidents that were completely unprecedented and completely broke the mold. Though in exact opposite ways. The first black president. Followed by the first billionaire, reality TV star, non-politician president. It was as if America felt the old models no longer worked. So

Welcome to the Lockdown California. You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.

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Just a reminder: You’re getting paid more to sit on your ass during this pandemic than go to work? You’ve been here for 20 years and you still don’t know how to speak English? You watch “The Kardashians”? Do your civic duty and DON’T vote. Not everyone should.

Presidents Day

By Ace Backwards

The first president I became aware of was John F. Kennedy. And I first heard about him on the day he got assassinated. So that was my introduction to the concept of the American presidency. The president getting his head blown off. I was in the 2nd grade at the time. And my mother had me taken out of school, because she thought the Russians might be behind it, and they might start launching atom bombs at us, so we might have to go to our “fallout shelter” in the basement of our house (this room with some cans of food and bottles of water and some flashlights).

I vaguely remember the Johnson/Goldwater campaign in 1964. Some people were saying Barry Goldwater was a nut, and if he got elected he’d start blowing up atom bombs and get us into World War III. So we were for Lyndon Johnson. Johnson – good old LBJ – just reminded me of some old corn-pone fast-talking hillbilly

they were desperately flailing around for some new model, some new direction – from one extreme to the other – for something that might right the ship.

I voted for Obama in 2008 (the only time besides Jimmy Carter when the candidate I voted for won – I've been a consistent loser in every other election). Mostly just because I thought it would be an interesting experiment, to see what would happen with a black president. And I voted for Romney in 2012. What the fuck. People that don't vote, I can certainly understand that. When the choice is usually one loser over another loser (pick the lesser of two losers).

And now we've got President Trump. And the country is as divided as it's ever been. Maybe even more divided than during the Richard Nixon era. With the country virtually split in half with two very different visions of America's future. And, as usual, this story will be continued. ###

Herald Archives: 2001

Rope Me and Ride Me!

By Lee Vilensky

It must have been around '94, or '95, and I was third in line at The Stud. Around 1:00 AM a young man stumbled out the front door, and up to the first cab. He was tall and thin, around 22 years old, and a dead ringer for Iggy Pop, circa '73. He was wearing a pink cowboy hat, a cut-off t-shirt with some writing on it, and nothing else, and by nothing else I mean no pants, underwear, shoes, socks, watch.

I remember thinking that cowboy boots would have been a nice touch. The first cab driver waved him away, barely looking up from his newspaper. The second driver shook his head violently (side to side, not up and down), and drove away, in what seemed like indignation. Even his cab looked pissed off. So now it was on me. Seems like I'm always dealing with the nuts. I'll be 6th in line at the Hyatt Regency, the first five cabs get business people, I get the 70-year-old man dressed like Mary Poppins, smelling of urine. Billy the Kid walked up to the passenger window, I

hit the door locks, raised the window to a 2 inch crack, and thought, *No way this guy gets in my cab, but let's see what he's got to say for himself.*

He didn't say anything, just held a piece of paper up to the window. On the paper were a name, a phone number, and an address in Concord, CA., with directions to the address written out, and a little map. I asked him if he needed a ride to Concord. He shook his head up and down. I told him to "move along little doggie." He produced a cell phone, from where I don't even want to think about, dialed a number, and motioned for me to lower the window and take the phone from him, which I did. What the hell, I was now in it for a laugh, and maybe a story at the cab yard. You can never have too many good stories to tell the fellas, and this one had all the earmarks of a beaut. I put the phone to my ear and there was already a woman on the line yelling, "Hello, Hello?"

Me: Hello.

Woman: Hello?

Me: Hello.

Woman: Hello, who is this?

Me: I'm a San Francisco cab driver. Who's this?

Woman: Oh, hello. I'm Billy's mother, Mrs. _____. Is Billy there with you?

Me: I don't know. Was Billy wearing a t-shirt that read, "If you can rope me, you can ride me" the last time you saw him?

Mrs. _____: Yes, yes. That's him. Can you drive him home, to Concord?

Me: Ma'am, we're in San Francisco. That's a long, expensive ride, approximately \$95, plus bridge tolls.

Mrs. _____: That's fine. Just bring him home and I'll pay you.

Me: He's not wearing any pants. ANY pants, and he's high on what seems to be a volatile combination of drugs, alcohol, life.

Mrs. _____: Oh, he won't give you any problems, I promise. Billy is just..... a free spirit.

Me: Ma'am, if he soils the cab, in any way, you will be held responsible, which means you will clean up the mess, plus pay a \$50 cleaning charge on top of the \$95 fare, plus all bridge tolls.

Mrs. _____: I understand completely. Let me talk to Billy.

I handed Billy the phone and he talked to Mom for about 2 minutes. Actually he didn't utter a word. He just nodded his head up and down, up and down. I wondered why this guy couldn't, or wouldn't, speak. Was he an honest to goodness mute; too high for vocalization; involved in some sort of protest, or religious ritual? I didn't care anymore that he was naked and his balls and ass were going to be rubbing against my nice clean interior (rear seat). Why the hell didn't he say something? It's always the little shit that'll drive you mad.

I unlocked the doors, and Billy started to get in the front with me, but I immediately, and emphatically, pointed to the back. He handed me the well-worn Xerox with instructions to his house, and got in back. The ride was completely uneventful. Billy behaved himself, although I kept my rear view mirror aimed at him the whole way. I was waiting for the meat cleaver, although I noticed that he didn't seem to have one when he got in. But I'm not one to let my guard down. He stayed awake the whole time, never spoke, and barley moved.

The directions were impeccable, and I pulled up to the address within 45 minutes after leaving The Stud. Mom was out the door and handing me cash before I could turn off the meter. She gave me \$105, thanked me, grabbed Billy, and went inside their house. I drove 2 blocks, pulled over, turned on my dome light and inspected the rear seat. It was clean. I remember it was a warm night in Concord, much warmer than in the city, and I took a moment to enjoy the balmy air. I thought about a couple of things that I no longer recall at this time, then leaned over and smelled the approximate location where Billy had been sitting.

I shouldn't have done that.###

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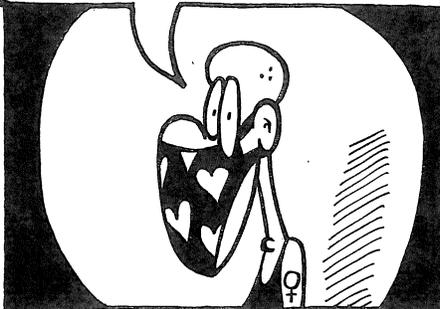
GOOD CLEAN FUN

WRITTEN, DRAWN, & ©2020
BY GENE MAHONEY

"LAND
OF THE
FREE?
HOME
OF THE
BRAVE?"

HELLO, DARLINGS! I'M CHANTEUSE
AND WELCOME TO MY YOUTUBE SHOW!

SOON WE WILL RID OURSELVES OF A
"TOXIC MASCULINE" PRESIDENT, WHO
CATCHES COVID-19 ON A FRIDAY AND
RETURNS TO WORK ON A MONDAY,
AND WELCOME A TRULY ENLIGHTENED
ONE, LOCKED IN HIS BASEMENT.



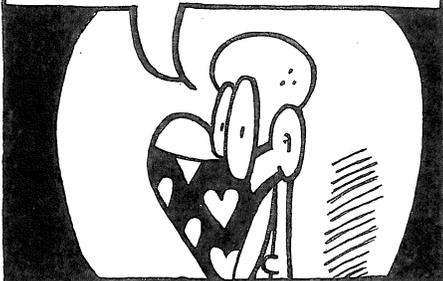
AND NOW...

HANG ON, I'M TRYING NOT
TO BURST INTO TEARS...
AND NOW, A SALUTE TO THE
ANTI-TRUMP "RESIST" WARRIORS
OF THE COVID-19 ERA...



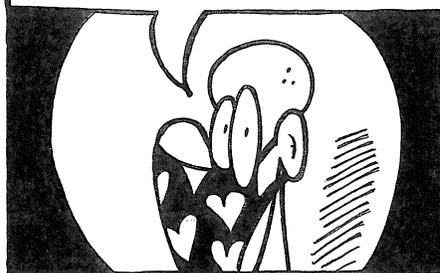
LIKE THE OVER 1,200 MEDICAL
PROFESSIONALS WHO SIGNED A
LETTER DECLARING IT WAS O.K.
TO ATTEND A BLACK LIVES MATTER
PROTEST, BUT NOT AN
ANTI-LOCKDOWN PROTEST.

(HEY, THEY KNOW A "WOKE"
VIRUS WHEN THEY SEE ONE.)



LIKE THE GOVERNMENT WORKERS
WHO STILL HAVEN'T GONE BACK
TO WORK. (LET'S KEEP THOSE
SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES CLOSED.
SORRY, GRANDMA.)

AND THE TEACHERS WHO WON'T
GO BACK TO SCHOOL. (YOU'VE GOT
CLASS. ACTUALLY, YOU DON'T.)



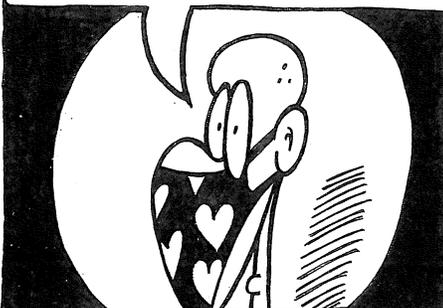
AND LET'S NOT FORGET THE
PEOPLE WHO CALL THEIR SALONS
AND ASK THEIR HAIRDRESSERS TO
COME TO THEIR HOMES BECAUSE
THEY'RE TOO AFRAID TO GO OUTSIDE.

JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE HIBERNATING
IN YOUR HOME AND NOBODY WILL SEE YOU
DOESN'T MEAN YOUR HAIR SHOULD LOOK BAD.

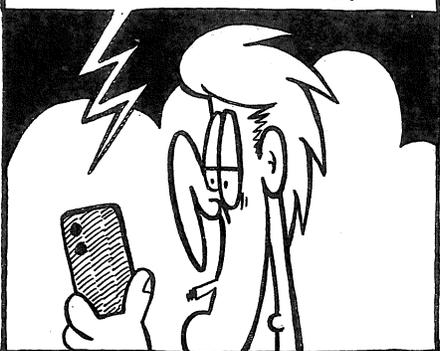


AND MY PERSONAL FAVORITES...
THE PEOPLE WHO DRIVE ALONE,
WITH THE CAR WINDOWS ROLLED UP,
WHO STILL WEAR MASKS!

WHO SAYS WE NEVER WOULD HAVE
MADE IT TO CALIFORNIA IF EVERYONE
WAS LIKE YOU 200 YEARS AGO?



OH, AND CHAUNCY, IF YOU'RE
WATCHING THIS... I DON'T
CARE, THAT YOU THINK, THAT
GEORGE WASHINGTON IS LOOKING
DOWN AT US, SHAKING HIS HEAD,
AND SAYING TO HIMSELF,
"WHAT A BUNCH OF PUSSIES!"



YOU'RE A WHITE NATIONALIST,
YOU KNOW THAT, CHAUNCY?!

O.K., I'M TOO UPSET NOW TO
CONTINUE THE SHOW!

SO LONG, AND REMEMBER:
COVID-19 LOCKDOWN FEVER
... CATCH IT!

