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THE MAGNIFICENT ANDERSONS AND THEIR MENDOCINO NOIR p. 22

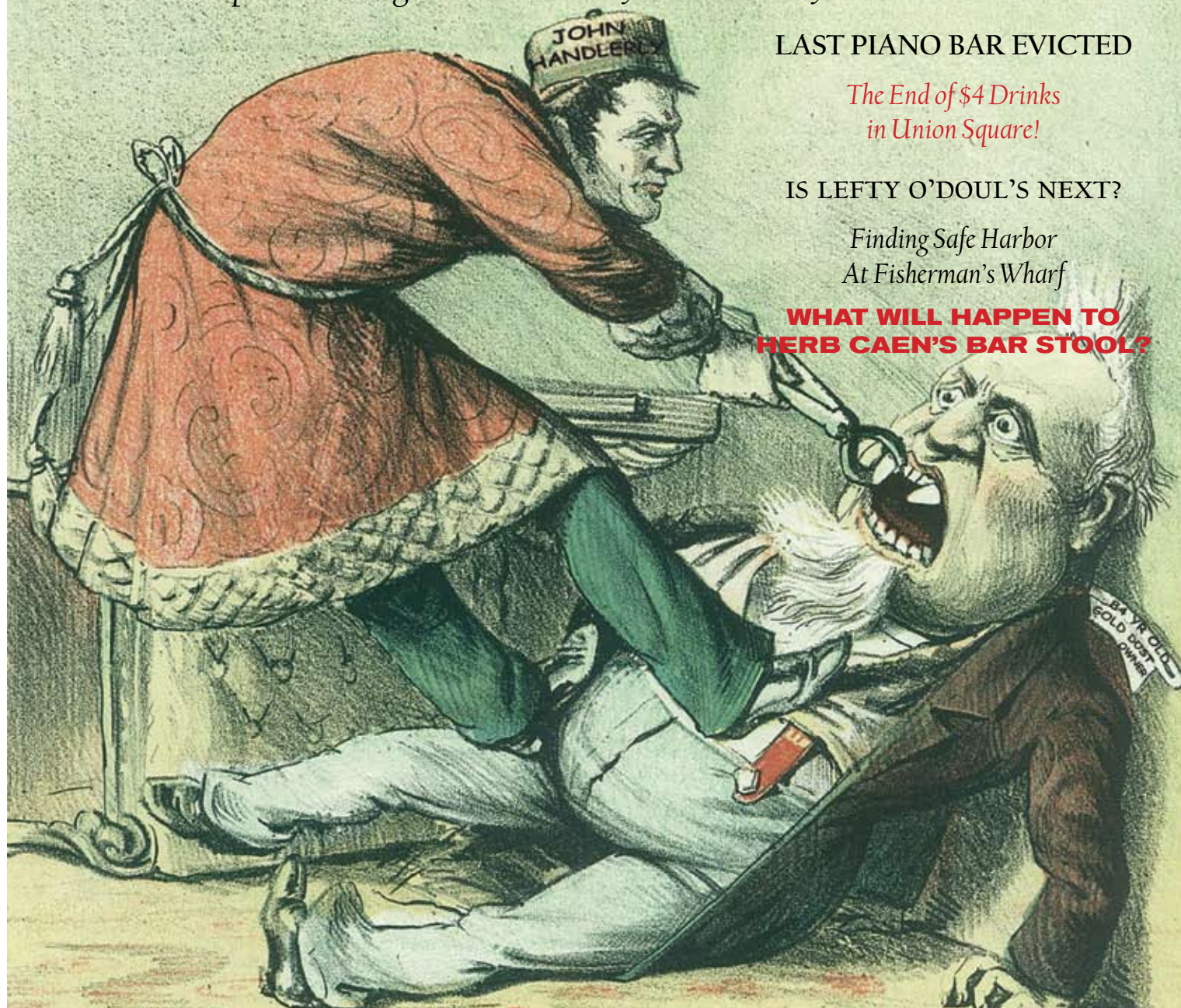
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ARGONAUT

Published in San Francisco Since 1877

The Gold Dust Extraction

Epic Frisco Fight: Real Estate Tycoon v. Elderly Bar Owners



LAST PIANO BAR EVICTED

*The End of \$4 Drinks
in Union Square!*

IS LEFTY O'DOUL'S NEXT?

*Finding Safe Harbor
At Fisherman's Wharf*

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO
HERB CAEN'S BAR STOOL?**

NO ON A: DON'T MESS WITH OUR GARBAGE. YES ON B: PROTECT COIT TOWER.

COMPLETE ARGONAUT SLATE: INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS FOR THE DCCC p.3

PHIL TING

Rebuilding Our Economy with High-Wage Jobs and Better Schools for Our Kids

Phil Ting knows that we need to create family-sustaining jobs, protect homeowners facing foreclosure, and make sure we have better schools so that all of our children have the opportunity to succeed.

Phil has already created high-paying jobs by launching programs that have attracted new companies to the Bay Area, commissioned the state's first audit of mortgage fraud that spurred national action to protect homeowners from wrongful foreclosure, and increased revenue for education and public services by making his office more productive and bringing in nearly \$300 million without raising taxes.

And as the father of two young daughters, Phil Ting understands that we need to ensure a better future for all—and that starts with better schools and a stronger economy.



Endorsed by the California Democratic Party!

Learn why California's teachers, nurses, firefighters, labor unions, the African American Democratic Club, Attorney General Kamala Harris, Supervisor Malia Cohen, and current Assemblymember Fiona Ma all support **Phil Ting for Assembly** at: www.PhilTing.com



SERIOUS VOTER ALERT

Editorial

In 2008, former firebrand Supervisor Chris Daly engineered a takeover of the San Francisco Democratic Party.

Daly, who could not run for re-election due to term limits, teamed up with soon-to-be termed Supervisor Aaron Peskin to capture political control of the San Francisco Democratic County Central Committee, known informally as the DCCC, which for decades was a relatively harmonious group consisting largely of Democratic club officers and 7 neighborhood leaders who worked long hours for no pay to advance the programs of the state and national Democratic Party.

That changed in 2008 when the chair-banging, door-slamming Daly maneuvered to oust moderate Chair Scott Wiener (now a Supervisor representing District Eight) by one vote and declared the DCCC the home port of self-oeoclaimed "Progressives" who aggressively pursued an ideological program that it is fair to describe as anti-business, pro-tax, anti-growth and pro-big city government -- raising Supervisors' salaries almost 300 per cent over the last decade. When was the last time you got a 300% raise?

The formally benign Central Committee has become a cauldron of back-room dealings and intimidation tactics to self-perpetuate the Machine by making certain only their people will receive the powerful Official Endorsement of the Democratic Party for Supervisor and other supposedly nonpartisan municipal offices.

One example of their tactics: DCCC member Arlo Hale Smith Jr., the son of longtime San Francisco District Attorney Arlo Smith, received a threatening-mail from Chris Daly telling Smith that he would in effect never eat political lunch in this town again if he didn't support his man Peskin (whose tenure as president of the Board of Supervisors was defined by his abusive midnight telephone calls to dissenting politicians) for party chairman over the moderate Weiner Smith or any other independent would "never

receive the endorsement of The Guardian, Tenants Union, Harvey Milk Club and in subsequent races." Those well-oiled cogs in the Daly-Peskin political machine are among the organizations overflowing your mail box each election with slanted slate cards pushing their identical candidates brokered by to the Machine. (Q. How could a green organization like the Sierra Club possibly be part of a seedy political machine? A. The large national Sierra Club membership has little a clue what it's local political action committee is mailing in its name here in San Francisco. As The Wasp said in 1899, "Politics Makes Strange Bedfellows.")

While the present Democratic Party machine has presumptuously labeled itself "progressive", the real San Francisco progressives are in the tradition of California's historic Progressive Movement of political reformers like Governor Hiram Johnson and crusading San Francisco journalist Fremont Older who battled the imperial Southern Pacific railroad's ownership of the state in fee simple and ousted the corrupt machine of political boss Abraham Reuf's Republican-Union Labor Labor Party which ran San Francisco into the ground at the time the 1906 Great Earthquake and Fire burnt it down.

Burton focusing on state and national political offices and Brown's on electing and re-electing the Mayor. But the new century has birthed a Democratic machine that at its core has been anti-Democrat-

If you vote them in, they will take out the Machine.

A.D. 17

Scott Wiener
David Chiu
Malia Cohen
Matt Dorsey
Bevan Dufty
Zoe Dunning
Warren Hinckle
Leslie Katz
Hydra Mendoza
Marily Mondejar
Joaquin Torres
Christopher Vasquez

A.D. 19

Mary Jung
Kat Anderson
Bill Fazio
Tom Hsieh
Megan Levitan
Trevor McNeil
John Shanley
Arlo Smith
Jim Weixel
Jason Wong

ic. Bent on increasing the size of city government at ungovernable size and sterring public funds to their non-profit political allies who operate without audit and function as political troops and often enforcers for their benefactors.

The immediate prospects of the Daly-Peskin machine will be decided June 5 low turnout voting. 75% of voters don't bother with the long columns of DCCC candidates in each of the city's two Assembly districts. The machine's future pretty much rests with Daly, the former Supervisor and former trust fund brat who after decamping from his eight drama-speckled years in City Hall bought a bar on Market Street and is double dipping with gainfully employed by none other than no surprise city employees union, where he is to be found husbanding the forthcoming flood of slanted DCCC slate cards from the Sierra Club, Tenants Union, SEIU 1012 and other Usual Suspects hoping to keep intact the remains of the day of the Daly-Peskin machine.

Edmund Burke said "our representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgement."

Beware who you elect to the D-Triple C.

Since 2008, the Daly gang has given it's industry to the dictates of the machine.



The Argonaut is indebted to the art of classic San Francisco publication The Wasp. The 19th century, anti establishment magazine, commissioned the works of California's finest post Gold Rush image makers. Examples of The Wasps fine work can be found on our cover and throughout the paper you hold in your hand. It should be said, we here at The Argonaut are happy puppies to share a history with The Wasp, as their political illustrations are as punchy, and as fun/mean as they were way back in the days gold rolled from the Sierras.

*Best of Luck to
The Gold Dust,
Employees, Customers
& the Bovis Family*

SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS
SAN FRANCISCO



THE DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE IS CAPTURED BY CHRIS DALY, 2008.

ARGONAUT

Published in San Francisco Since 1877

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, VOLUME XXX NO. 4538 JUNE 2012



Since its first issue in 1877, Argonaut has published this symbol. The bear washed out to sea, is floating on the back of a walrus in the Pacific Ocean. He is thinking that if he devours it he will drown; if he remains on the walrus' back, he will die of starvation. What to do?

The Argonaut Recommends:

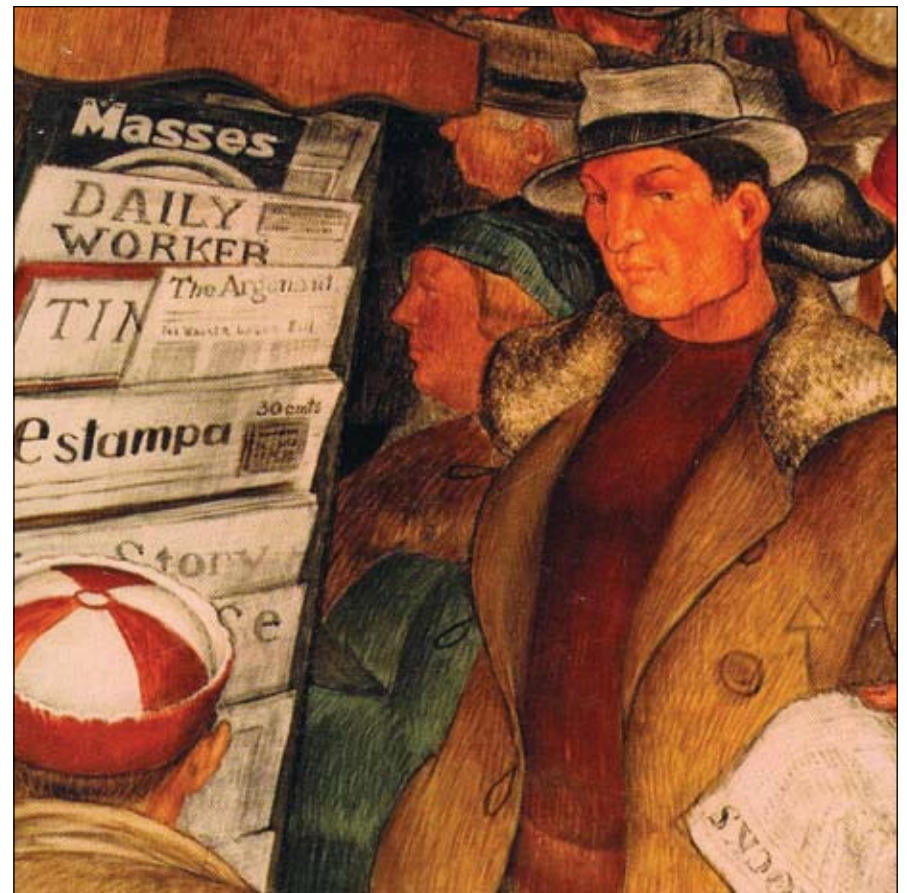
No on A

Seeing trash on the sidewalks can be disheartening sure, but seeing the possibility of another city bureaucracy in the our future is depressing enough to send some here at The Argonaut to the top of the Golden Gate Bridge in a swimsuit, with no plans to swim. Proposition A will replace our already impressive waste management services with a system of competitive bidding for five separate trash and recycling services. Vote no. The money grubbers are already squeezing each penny from our neighborhoods at the price of our culture. Don't let them do it to our garbage too.

Yes on B

Vote yes on B. The timing for this proposition couldn't be more appropriate. As we show in this issues cover story, because a spot on our fair City's map maybe unique, and adored by the community, that doesn't necessarily mean your elected officials will lift their hands to protect it. Even if you ask them to. But with Prop B, we can be sure to protect Coit Tower once and for all. The picture of it atop Telegraph Hill is iconic San Francisco. The murals inside it our priceless pieces of Americana, that exist no place else. A yes vote will ensure commercial activity at Coit Tower is limited, so all can enjoy the landmark, and funds garnered at the Tower go back to the Tower, for things like necessary upkeep of those treasured murals. To preserve our history, two things must happen; the people must care enough about it, and their legislation must reflect that by creating measures to keep the past alive. The *Argonaut* cares. Our cards are on the table. And we know you care too. Vote yes.

California Assembly District 19
Phil Ting, Democrat
Matthew Del Carlo, Republican



IN NEED OF A TOUCH UP: The historic Coit Tower painting of a San Francisco newsstand in the 1930s by Victor Arnautoff, which includes the Argonaut among other titles then popular, is in need of repair and a touch-up due to water, damage. That's fine by us as the fog has faded the Argonaut name over the years. It is part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) famous fresco in Coit Tower.

While Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer was battling on behalf of President Obama's Affordable Care Act earlier this spring, his son Michael Breyer, democrat, was gearing up for a fight to win his first election to public office. The former San Francisco Library Commissioner is running for California State Assembly as a representing district 19. If the dent to his bank account says anything of his determination to win, Breyer is full on fire with determination. Already he has tossed over \$100,000 of his own cash money into the effort. The Argonaut thinks he'll need every penny, as his opponent Phil Ting strikes us as having the type of unwavering fortitude district 19 needs in the state Assembly.

Ting came to public office in 2005 when Gavin Newsom appointed him Assessor-Recorder for the City and County of San Francisco. At the time, Ting was the highest ranking Chinese American official in the City's history. The former real estate financial advisor immediately went to work, providing services like an outreach effort to homeowners and tenants at risk of foreclosure in order to educate them on their possible options.

But his real accomplishment, and quite frankly, the reason The Argonaut so enthusiastically supports his campaign for State Assembly, was going for the jugular of the San Francisco Catholic Church, in attempt to get them to cough up \$15 million in unpaid taxes on transferred properties.

Ting felt the fury of unthinking Catholics, who thought their holy Church above City law, and entitled to swindle the community of millions of dollars. Not surprising really, as the Catholic Church, for all its other glories is as much a capitalistic enterprise, as it is an alms grant-

ing house of worship.

If we are lucky, and The Argonaut thinks we will be, Matthew Del Carlo, Republican and President of a public affairs consulting firm, will break ahead of Breyer, and become Ting's main opponent as November nears. A welcome change to tradition, to have a right old race between Democrats and Republicans, in a part of the state dominated by the left.

We feel a new wind blowing, and it's dusted up the smell of something sweet; election season. A chance to tell the bastards how you really feel.

Is Quentin Kopp Playing Games?

By Leonard Steffanali

As retired President of the Sunset Scavenger Company, I'm appalled to read that Senator Kopp has elected to change the existing waste collection system. His suggestion that breaking up a dependable, efficient, and comprehensive solid waste collection service into five components, on the theory that it "might" result in lower rates is ludicrous.

Ignored in Senator Kopp's claim, is the fact that San Francisco generates 1,000,000 tons of waste a year with no physical or legal means of disposing of it within the City limits.

Aside from the fact the Scavengers are dedicated to provide the waste collection service to the City, they have always had the ability to "dispose" of the waste they collect.

Some of San Francisco's unique urban services is waste collection, transportation and disposal. Historical records show that the city has had regular scheduled waste collection services, except on April 18, 1906, for well over 100 years.

The reason for that extraordinary success is the Scavengers, working in conjunction with the City, which regulates the rates for collection and disposal. It has always been a truly equitable and successful working relationship. Because of that, it is difficult to understand the Senator's desire to change it.

Senator Kopp complains the City of San Jose pays less than San Francisco rate payers. The San Francisco program requires a transfer

station to transport their waste 65 miles for disposal. San Jose collection vehicles however, drive directly to a local land fill, saving an estimated \$50,000,000 a year, compared to San Francisco.

In 1969, then Supervisor Kopp, and the Scavengers, in conjunction with Chief Administrative Officer Thomas Mellon and DPW Director Myron Tartarian created this successful program that has continually been improved by Recology Inc. Now he wants to destroy it.

If this outrageous, useless and unnecessary Amendment is somehow adopted by the voters, it will surely destroy a magnificent service that has not been equaled, let alone exceeded anywhere in the world.

The Amendment as written will surely result in higher rates, doubling, if not tripling the garbage trucks that are on our already crowded streets.

Not obvious to the casual observer however, is the real reason it was created; to keep the City's waste stream going to the Alameda County Altamont Landfill, now owned by ONE disposal company, where it has gone since 1983.

Read the proposed Ordinance. If passed, any entity owning the "disposal" contract of the five components in the proposal is disqualified from bidding the other four.

Simply put, the proposed ordinance has no other purpose but to keep the waste stream at the Altamont site, where disposal company stands to lose up to \$200,000,000 in revenue starting in 2016.

The only reason this disposal company lost the contract, is they got greedy. They attempted to double the current disposal rate in their bid, because they erroneously assumed the City had no other site available for disposal when the RFP was issued.

That gave Recology the ability to offer the City an "optional" site for disposal needs. By awarding Recology the "Disposal" contract, the city saves rate payers \$100,000,000 over the term of the contract, compared to the other disposal company's demands confirmed by Harvey Rose, the city's Advisor.

Read the proposal. Anyone with common sense can surely comprehend the sole purpose of this outrageous ballot measure that Senator Kopp is supporting.



Leonard "Lenny" Steffanali, a "Scavenger," on top of a 20 cubic yard "open truck." They had to shoulder an 80 gallon container up seven steps, dump it in the truck and then compact the waste by having an Italian "jumping" on it. Fulton and Steiner Streets, Fillmore District. (1953)



**SOMETHING
HAPPENED
IN SAN FRANCISCO
IN 1969
TO RATTLE
BONES & PSYCHES**

BY DAVID TALBOT

Founder of the San Francisco based pioneering progressive website Salon.com, and author of the New York Times best-selling The Brothers on John F. and Robert Kennedy. Excerpted from his new social history of San Francisco in the 70s and 80s, Season of the Witch.

DRAG QUEEN SHOWS HAD a long, luxurious history in San Francisco, dating back to the 1860s and 1870s, when vaudevillians like Paul Vernon, wearing lacy gowns and Goldilocks wigs, wowed local audiences—made up largely of lonely frontiersmen. At the turn of the century, the city's first openly gay bar, the Dash, featured female impersonators. The club, in the Barbary Coast, managed to stay open until 1908, when city officials shut it down as the “most notorious and disreputable establishment” in San Francisco. In the 1930s drag broke into the city's thriving sex tourism market when an Italian immigrant and former speakeasy owner named Joe Finocchio opened a dazzling female impersonator show on Stockton Street, which he later moved to a bigger venue on Broadway. Finocchio's became a major tourist attraction, drawing suburban thrill seekers as well as Hollywood celebrities such as Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope, Bette Davis, and Tallulah Bankhead. In the 1940s nightspots like Mona's Club 440 in North Beach, the city's first lesbian club, flipped the Finocchio's formula, billing itself as the place “Where Girls Will Be Boys.” Mona's biggest star, in more ways than one, was a 20-pound African-American singer-pianist named Gladys Bentley. Advertised as the “Brown Bomber of Sophisticated Songs,” Bentley packed her voluminous figure into white tails and top hat, flirted with women in the audience, and dedicated songs to her female par amour.

Jose Sarria, a hometown boy who plucked his eyebrows, slipped into a basic black dress and a pair of Capezio stilettos, and began singing torch songs at the bohemian Black Cat in the 1950s, was the first to politicize the drag world. In between songs, he started preaching that gay is good,” and at the end of each performance, he had the audience stand and belt out a parody of “God Save the Queen”—as a kind of anthem,—he later recalled, “to get them realizing that we had to work together, that . . . we could change the laws if we weren't always hiding.” In 1961 Sarria took his campaign public, running for the city's board of supervisors with an early gay pride message. The campaign fell short of victory, but the gay genie was released from San Francisco's bottle.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, San Francisco had a blossoming but largely secret gay life. Indeed, the song that would become the city's anthem, “I Left My Heart in San Francisco,” was written in 1954 by two gay lovers who were pining for “the city by the bay” after moving to Brooklyn Heights. Tony Bennett made the song famous, singing it for the first time at the Fairmont Hotel's Venetian Room in December 1961, with future mayor Joe Alioto in the audience. By then, the songwriters—Douglass Cross and George Cory—had moved back to the Bay Area, where Cross died of a heart attack and a grief-stricken Cory later took his own life. By the midsixties, gay liberation was busting out in San Francisco, with picketers circling the downtown Macy's in 1964 to protest the police entrapment of men in the store's restrooms and demonstrators rallying outside the Federal Building in 1966 against the exclusion of homosexuals from the armed services. That same year, drag queens ignited a violent blowup at a Tenderloin eatery called Compton's Cafeteria three years before the Stonewall riots in New York that are credited with launching the gay rights movement. The Compton's tempest began when a cop tried to arrest one of the queens who frequented the cafeteria, and, sick of the constant harassment, he resisted by throwing a cup of coffee the policeman's face. In the ensuing melee, angry queens flung dishes and trays at the police, smashed the cafeteria's plate glass windows, and burned down a nearby newsstand. Despite this colorful history, San Francisco had never seen anything quite like the Cockettes. Hibiscus and company broke down all the drag queen traditions. They were not clean-shaven men costumed as women, but all sorts of imaginative and often furry-creatures. Hibiscus liked to resurrect Jayne Mansfield, with enormous golden balloon breasts, and a glitter-sparkled beard. Fayette once turned herself into a singing vagina. They were pirates and nuns, Betty Boops and motorcycle greasers dominatrixes and harlequins. “The audience at Cockettes shows couldn't tell if it was a man or a woman” onstage, marveled filmmaker John Waters, who rode the drag troupe's long, sequined train to notoriety in San Francisco. “It was complete sexual anarchy—which is always a wonderful thing.”

“We're not queer,” explained one Cockette to the press. “We're just chicks with cocks.” Which made all the sense in the world once you went through

the looking glass.

AFTER THE COCKETTES' IMPROMPTU debut at the dawn of the 1970s, the troupe plunged into a frenzy of creativity, mounting sixteen different shows in two and a half years. “Hibiscus's charisma is what brought us together,” recalled Rumi Missabu, a Cockette who had grown up on the edges of Hollywood show business. “Every month, he'd come up with a new theme from his jeweled scrapbook of fairy tales and fever dreams. We're going to do this next month on LSD!” he would announce. The Cockettes were like the Little Rascals in drag doing Busby Berkeley on acid.”

Some shows, like Pearls Over Shanghai—the tale of three perky, all-American sisters who fall into debauched white slavery in the Orient—featured well-crafted original scores and the makings of an actual plot. But Hibiscus, who was wedded to his wildly funky theatrical vision, made sure that the shows never could be accused of slick showmanship. He resisted rehearsals, which, in any case, often had a way of deteriorating into hissy fits and huffy walkouts. And when show business stars started to emerge from the Cockette free-for-all—like the future disco queen Sylvester—he had a way of popping their balloons. Once, as Sylvester sang a torrid solo version of “Someone to Watch Over Me,” Hibiscus wandered onstage in a zebra costume. The furious diva slapped Hibiscus across the face as he stalked offstage.

There were no taboos, no politically correct inhibitions. The Cockettes did their version of *Gone With the Wind* in blackface, and *Madame Butterfly* in pidgin Cantonese. One afternoon the troupe performed Pearls Over Shanghai before a stunned audience on the Berkeley campus. The politically earnest young crowd grew increasingly restive as it took in the wild pageant of scheming dragon ladies, horny coolies, and virginal white victims, until one outraged woman suddenly jumped up and yelled, “This is the most sexist, racist piece of shit I've ever seen!”

The Cockettes' “nocturnal dream shows” at the Palace soon became the talk of San Francisco. Crowds whose peacockery rivaled the drag stars' themselves crammed into the 1,200-seat theater. Janis and other local rock stars began showing up. Herb Caen, a longtime fan of the North Beach drag scene, began touting the Cockettes' gender-bending chaos in his column. Denise Hale and other Pacific Heights socialites dropped by with out-of-town friends like author Truman Capote and film critic Rex Reed. “Hibiscus, we love you!” screamed the crowds as the leader of the drag queen pack made his grand entrance each night, buoyed by his shiny balloon boobs.

But as the Cockettes' star soared higher, Hibiscus resisted the siren call of commercial success. He may have dressed like Monroe and Mansfield, but he didn't want their gilded cage lives. Hibiscus had taken a vow of poverty during his days at the Kaliflower commune, and though he finally moved out of its monastic environment, he was still honoring Irving Rosenthal's “everything free” belief system.

No one was getting rich off the Cockettes' success. Sebastian, the late-night impresario at the Palace, charged only \$2 a ticket. Each member of the troupe was lucky to earn a few bucks off the shows—“enough to keep us in false eyelashes,” as one Cockette put it. But Hibiscus thought even this was too big a concession to Mammon. He wanted the shows to be entirely free. When Sebastian resisted, Hibiscus and his cohorts ran around the theater flinging open the exit doors to the swarming crowds.

John Waters, who would find a way to make a good living off his cultural subversion, never understood Hibiscus's “hippie Communism.” As time went by, more of the Cockettes began to share Waters's view, finding their leader's free philosophy and unpredictable antics increasingly tiresome. Their frustration finally erupted in the summer of 1971, as the troupe pondered traveling east for its big New York stage debut. At an emotional meeting in the second-floor flat of the Cockettes' upper Market Street commune, several performers turned on the troupe's founder. Hibiscus was slapped and kicked and pushed down the flight of stairs.

Fayette found him there, at the bottom of the stairwell, in a puddle of tears. He had been violently ejected from his own dream. Fayette thought



Photo : Fayette Hauser

The Cockettes in a field of lavender. (1971)

it was a devastating blow—not only for Hibiscus but also for the entire troupe. “Yes, he had a way-over-the-top personality,” she reflected, “but they didn’t get it. They didn’t want anyone to mess up their makeup. My feeling was, ‘Please, mess it up.’ They were ego driven and uninteresting. Hibiscus wanted to do something more fantastical and revolutionary.”

To make matters worse, Fayette thought, Hibiscus was the only Cockette with any real stage experience. She smelled disaster. Which is exactly what New York turned out to be.

When they landed in Manhattan, the Cockettes were greeted by the city’s glamour crowd as visiting royalty. They were treated to parties with the Warhol circle, fashion magazine editor Diana Vreeland, clothing designer Oscar de la Renta, and artist Robert Rauschenberg. But when the curtains opened on the Cockettes’ *Tinsel Tarts* in a *Hot Coma* at the Anderson Theater, a sad and tatty old barn on the Lower East Side that once featured Yiddish dramas, the celebrity-packed audience didn’t know what to make of the San Francisco queens’ big mess of a show. The Cockettes were accustomed to audiences that were as raucous and psychedelized as they were—with some ardent fans even jumping up on stage and becoming part of the show. But the New York audience members expected to sit back and be entertained, and when they weren’t, a snarky chill settled over the old theater. As *Tinsel Tarts* grinded on, hoots and howls echoed off the walls. By the end of their opening-night performance, the Cockettes were dead in New York. “Having no talent is not enough,” sniffed Gore Vidal as he left the theater. The reviews the next day were equally merciless.

New York just wasn’t the Cockettes’ scene. One gay bar in Brooklyn Heights even barred Sweet Pam at the door when she tried to enter with her pack of boys—because she was a girl—something that never would have hap-

pened in loosey-goosey San Francisco. The troupe hung on in Gotham for another month—long enough for several members to get addicted to the cheap heroin that was all over town. Every bellhop seemed to be pushing the stuff.

By the time they got back to San Francisco, the Cockettes felt like Dorothy: that there was no place like home. “New York was nihilistic and cynical—there’s a sweeter spirit here,” sighed Rumi. “New York was all concrete; San Francisco is lush, plush, velvet, warm, cozy,” gushed troupe member Scrumbly, who by then was expecting his first child with his new bride, Sweet Pam—a development that seemed to catch them both by surprise.

San Francisco clasped the Cockettes to its plush bosom after they returned, and they continued to perform at the Palace for several more months. But they never recovered from New York’s ice-cold reality check. The pre-New York days were a topsy-turvy dream that could never be repeated.

Hibiscus went on to start a rival drag company, the *Angels of Light*. But it never achieved the same giddy level of phantasmagoria. He eventually drifted back to New York, where he became a high-priced rent boy in sleek Armani suits. Nothing was free anymore.

Among all the “end of the sixties” moments that would rain down on people’s souls, the collapse of the Cockettes was as dreary as any. Hibiscus was the Peter Pan of Golden Gate Park. He should never have grown old or turned a trick. But there would be many more such turns of the screw.

At the end of the 1960s, Jerry Garcia was asked by a reporter to look back at everything he and his crowd had been through and to make some kind of sense of it. Garcia said it was too soon. For the rest of his life and longer, he

predicted, America would struggle to absorb the convulsive changes of the previous five years.

No city would go through more convulsions than San Francisco as it processed the 1960s. Like the mystics who eat from strange and sacred plants to let their minds touch God, the people of San Francisco first had to know hell.

As the decade expired, the drugs became harder, the sexual freedom more rapacious, the demands on the human psyche more severe. Meanwhile, the outcasts from America—and its domestic and overseas wars grew more damaged. They carried within them a hot and reckless lust for salvation as they showed up on the streets of San Francisco. The city was still known for its enchantments, but it would soon become notorious for its terrors.

Fayette Hauser is a founding member of the Cockette theatre group. She came to San Francisco from New York in the Fall of 1968, about one year before the group came together in 1969. Acid-drenched, the group lived communally before throwing themselves onto the stage, at the behest of their great Shaman Hibiscus. Their lifestyle was too full of joy and fabulous drag to only be seen on the street. The Cockettes played about once a month at the Palace Theatre in North Beach, a Chinese movie house which got wild on the weekends with the Nocturnal Dream Show, the world's first midnight movies.

Cockette shows were themed but rarely scripted. They preferred a more radical theatrical viewpoint as influenced by Antonin Artaud, Jean Cocteau, John Vaccaro and his Theatre of the Ridiculous, the filmmaker Jack Smith and the greatest of them all, The Living Theatre.

The Cockettes brought their fantasies, icons and dreams to the stage and created an unparalleled mix of spontaneous magic. Their shows had titles such as Paste On Paste, Gone With the Showboat to Oklahoma, Hollywood Babylon, Les Ghouls, Tinsel Tarts in a Hot Coma and Journey to the Center of Uranus. The Cockettes had one fully scripted show that was developed over a period of several months, their masterpiece, Pearls Over Shanghai.



Photo : Fayette Hauser



THE
S. CLAY WILSON
E-MAILS

*A Woman's Anguish
Trying to Save Her
Artist Husband From
Medical Peril.*

FORWARD BY RON TURNER

S Clay Wilson, Nebraska raised, Kansas discovered San Francisco infused, arrived here in time to watch the first pages of Zap Comics come off Charles Plymell's press with Don Donahue, the Apex Novelties publisher. They went over to meet R. Crumb who was so impressed with Wilson's strong, taboo breaking art, that he invited him to join in the Zap comics revolution of graphic work. Wilson used every totem of misplaced morality to draw you into his rage against censorship and into the world of Demons, Zombies, Perverts, Pirates, Dykes, Bikers and any other underground denizens of his cerebral but lowbrow world view. Sex was a requirement; blood an afterthought, machines and blades and guns willing seducers of rage. His work contained no mercy for society that tried to hide its members that did not live up to the moral bar that was set too high. He carried out long correspondence with many artists, drawing elaborate envelopes and jam seasons sent back and forth across the world. He was friends with Ken Kesey visiting him on his farm, drank and partied with Janis Joplin, shot at targets with William Burroughs and at least in Europe, was collected by museums. On a personal level, always the life of the party and always approaching the dynamic on different levels. His love life was in the on position, each beauty a composite of his character Star Eyed Stella. He collected odd and powerful guns. A coffin was his coffee table. He worked every nerve you had if you spent the night with him in North Beach or Manhattan. Sometimes blind drunk he would rush out of a bar, down the street to whatever fate would suffice. The next morning at 7am a resolute voice would wake you; has he apologized for any problem he might have caused? He could draw cartoons rapidly or take forever, but always deep and jarring. His work was as much design as anything else. The black and white renderings of Ruby the Dyke and her motorcycle gang having a gang fight with 17th century pirates would take you a half hour to see it all. He drew as he drank, sometimes lapsing into brutal language from culture long missing from our times that only he could understand.

In San Francisco at one of hundreds of cartoon conventions he attended his luck ran out. He got drunk, sold originals at ridiculously cheap prices, was told to leave and went to a friend's house to drink further til' what ever personal demons no longer were apparent to him. On the walk home, he stumbled and hit his head on a car bumper and lay in a pool of rainwater for hours before he was noticed. Months of recovery have become years. He sometimes draws with his friends, fellow Zap Comics regulars Paul Mavrides and Spain Rodriguez. He spent a long time at Laguna Honda Hospital and has been at his home with his wife Lorraine who cares for him 24/7. Recently, a long shadow fell across his recovery. He is supported by donations to his special needs trust (www.sclaywilson.com). The recent hospitalization and care facilities he has had to endure has led to an online journal of sorts that has hundreds of people awe struck by the day to day failure of the over-hyped medical system we are all due to visit in our "lifetime." --**Ron Turner**

March 26, 2012

Wilson was in a dither, lying there barely willing to open his eyes. I asked them if he'd eaten. He'd refused. I asked if they'd taken it out of the warmer, cut it up, opened his milk, taken the lids off everything, sat him up, and put the tray in front of him. Apparently not. This is the case every day, not matter how many times I tell them he is severely impaired. It's not that he needs monogrammed linens. Or heirloom stemware. He does need the tray table cleared off and the table set and put right in front of him. I did it, and he practically licked the plate, eating everything. He was so hungry and thirsty. Then he perked up incredibly. He became more animated and funny than he's been in over a year. It was fantastic. At one point he gave me the finger, mocking me about something I said to the nurse. I couldn't stop laughing. I was so happy he gave me the finger. I will know how long they planned to keep him the next day, after they created a rehabilitation plan. But he had trouble talking, since the aphasia plagued him. His spirits were better, though. Yay oh goody.
Lorraine

March 27, 2012

I am sick with worry. Wilson was sleepy all day yesterday. I shaved him, he slept through it. I asked the doctor's to do a follow up scan, which they should have done automatically, and when I returned, no scan had been done. Until 2:45 p.m. I nagged before they did it. At 4 p.m. his doctor showed up to tell me that he's much worse. There's as much fluid on his brain now as before the surgery. Wilson always minds me, and I begged them to call me half an hour before they see him, so I could be sure to be there to help. They didn't. Originally they thought he'd only be there for a week or two. But if he can't walk, he can't come home, I knew. Geez, it was a nightmare. I was really worried. The care at this place is appalling.
Lorre

March 28, 2012

Wilson's been even worse and I kept going to the bathroom, sobbing. Wilson was in pain. Slept through me washing his face. He didn't eat, but I managed to get him to drink some apple juice through a straw. I nearly raved at the staff, asking for the surgeon to examine him. No luck. Some clowns came in dressed like doctors. The only thing Wilson said all day was thank you to them, except when he yelled at the physical therapist who tried to move his arm. I was going to go to the administrator. He was getting like a zombie, way worse than when I called the ambulance last Wednesday. I was going to go to the fucking police if the surgeon didn't come to see him and adjust the shunt. If Wilson was rich, if he was famous, this wouldn't have happened. And it sure wouldn't have happened if he was a member of congress.
xoxoLorraine

March 29, 2012

Finally the surgeon came and adjusted the shunt, with no explanation why it took three days. Someone will have to answer for the possible harm it caused Wilson.

March 30, 2012

The head nurse eventually tracked me down, after hearing I was unhappy with Wilson's care. I asked who told her to adjust the shunt. The night nurse had told her, she said. Was it in the chart, I asked, not really believing that it was. It wasn't and I asked to speak to Wilson. I was reassured that he came to the phone and was able to

speaking. Then I noticed the surgeon filling a page in what I suspected was Wilson's chart. He was covering his ass. I circled as the head nurse and surgeon talked on the other side of the ward and suddenly, the surgeon scurried to the elevator. I raced over and stuck my cane in the door. Going down, he said. No, you're coming out. This has all been completely unacceptable, I said. He had nothing to tell me accept, that's a very good question, with no answer. I let the rodent slink back into the elevator and leave. Just wanted to tell you that little story.
Hugs,
Lorraine

April 1, 2012

I shaved Wilson's beard and trimmed his nails. Some friends visited for a few minutes and he looked spiffy then. We convinced him to stand. I thought about requesting another physical therapy session, as I could tell one a day wasn't enough. We had to add more activity to get him strong enough for living at home again. I wanted people nearby to visit him but he still refused to mind anybody but me. There was even a phone in his room, but he didn't know how to answer it. But it was a pretty good day, I must say,
Lorraine

April 5, 2012

Everything I said cracked him up. Though he admitted to sometimes laughing at me, it was great. With a walker he managed to get out in the hall and back. During exercises he never got mad or gave up. The day started with the nurse calling me. The nurse couldn't get him to take his morning meds, so I had to talk to him. He's so ornery. Just open your mouth, I told him. He took them. He was more unwilling to cooperate in the mornings, but again, the days were better. When I thought of Wilson coming home, I realized it would be too dangerous for him to step in and out of the claw foot tub. We needed a different chair, or transfer bench, but most were wrong. I couldn't figure out how to design one that would hold the feet in place. Something not too heavy, that could slide out of the way under the tub maybe? But I didn't know anyone handy enough to build it. Maybe you do. Please let me know.
Thanks,
Lorraine

April 9, 2012

I saw Wilson I washed, trimmed and shaved him as usual, and put him in his pj's, then the wheel chair. We went out on the verandah to sit in the sun. I peeled an orange for him. As he ate we listened to the radio. I began to read from a poetry book, found on a bookshelf, but they were all death or cancer or failing organs. We laughed about that. Then I read the worst parts, which made us laugh even more. I walked to him on weekends. I'm only allowed to help with bed exercises. One day, I forgot and by the time he was changed and in bed, he was too tired for them and I felt so guilty. So the next day I brought him a portable DVD player, with earphones. He was so happy, watching The Fifth Element. The nurse promised to let him watch another from the zippered pouch I left there. I remembered when, a month or two after the injury, I brought it to him and he yelled about going home to watch them on the big TV, from bed. Not so now.
Happy Easter,
Lorraine

April 19, 2012.

Wilson was much worse today all of a sudden. His blood pressure plummeted and he passed out while on

the toilet. His face had been slack and sunken, his lips white. He didn't know his last name. When the doctor asked him who I was, he said Nadra. He's never done that before, I said. The doctor ordered a new IV and an immediate CAT scan. I had just gotten there and was sent home. I spent the day weeping on and off; worried he wouldn't be able to come home. At that moment, it hit hard that at some point, caring for Wilson would be too difficult. But I wasn't ready to let him go yet.
Love,
Lorraine

April 22, 2012

While he was sleepy and weak, I massaged his feet and legs- then washed him for lunch. He ate. I had to know if the doctor thought he'd be well enough to come home that Friday. He didn't seem so to me. Maybe that wasn't even the plan. But after talking to the social worker I learned of a thirty day limit with disability and social security. Jesus. Wilson won't get his monies if he's there a whole month, I thought.
Thanks,
Lorraine

April 23, 2012

Wilson's heart stopped beating. For a minute. In the physical therapy room. He had walked a few steps, sat down, and went unresponsive. Turned white, then yellow. Thankfully, the physical therapist got his heart beating again, because the ER people took way too long. He was briefly. I rubbed his back and the therapist beat on his chest, then Wilson said, OK. I walked home sometime after. No visitors until I let you know.
Lorraine

April 25, 2012

After a troubled night, I called the hospital but my call wasn't returned until an hour and half later. I was told yesterday he may never come home again, I said to the doctor, as these episodes may reoccur. The doctor said they were lowering his meds and taking steps to regulate blood pressure. He also said I could bring Wilson home when he stabilized. During all this, I never broke down. But the night after his heart stopped, as I pictured him, non-responsive, I just kept crying. Off and on, until 3:30 in the morning. Finally, I took half a pill to knock myself out. I began to feel optimistic again. I cleared out spots at home for a wheelchair and a walker.
Love,
Lorraine

May 3, 2012

Davies Medical Center discharged Wilson, even though I spent that morning trying to get him to stay there for the weekend. Or sent to a private facility. The case manager made arrangements to send him to this Medicare place. So it was done. In the new place the bed was too short. I asked for another one. Later they told me. But they brought one within half an hour after I said I'd be staying till he was comfortable. The new place was not horrifying. It didn't smell. But it wasn't Davies. It was a rehab place. Filled with people of all ages. Depressing. I hoped he'd be allowed home soon. Until then, I had to speak with new people to find out what I needed there. Should I take his blood pressure regularly? I didn't know. On top of that, I couldn't reach our care giver to tell him to get back to work and was still without proper equipment. He only stopped breathing a few days earlier, after all. At home I had help moving furniture, stringing wires and chords above the wall molding. Things from bookcases needed to be moved. How will Wilson react to this weird place?

I thought, anxiously. I need rest. (Like that will happen).
That's all for now...

Best,
Lorraine

May 4, 2012

The Tunnell Center began changing his meds with disturbing results. He just stared at me, without answering my questions. At the least, I usually got a yes or no. The staff there didn't know him well enough to see that as unusual behavior. Wilson's stubbornness with all but me didn't make things easier. He eventually got much better. Smiling. Answering questions. He even let two therapists get him into the wheel chair without yelling at them. And he was happy to go upstairs to walk with them. I was so pleased with the staff there.

Best,
Lorraine

May 25, 2012

After a much needed break in New York City though, things again became overwhelming. While streamlining the house for Wilson's return, his leg ballooned, all dark pink and discolored. The staff was gone for Memorial Day weekend, which ticked me off, so I had to take a picture of the leg and put it on the wall by Wilson's bed so his doctor could see it. I hope it isn't a blood clot. I asked if he could have an ultrasound, if they had a machine there, and the man said he didn't know. Five days later, I overheard some nurses talking about a planned ultrasound. He lied to me. They wasted time while he was bedridden, risked his life, when it could've been done days before.
Sigh...

May 29, 2012

If I hadn't been in the habit of looking him over every day, he could have died. Thankfully I took photos of the leg and insisted, no, there's no way it was sunburn. Thankfully my sister told me it sounded like a blood clot. I had no idea. All I knew was it looked like an emergency. It took a week, but I was relieved they finally found it. Outraged though, at what it took to get someone to pay attention. They still said it's not red anymore so it's probably not a clot. Though he was bedridden with the leg elevated, I reminded them. Jesus. I need advice, real advice, on how long he should stay in bed. What to expect. I need to know if he should have gone back to the hospital. Or, when he can come home. I am exhausted.

Later,
Lorraine

**Bart
Murphy**

*Attorney
at
Law*

**The Plumbers and Pipefitters
Union of San Francisco, generally
agrees with the *Argonaut's*
recommendations for DCCC,
but on other things we watch them
like a hawk.**

Larry Mazzola Sr., Business Manager, UA38Local

United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States & Canada



SAN FRANCISCO APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

The voice of property owners in San Francisco

■ **SFAA Democratic County Central Committee Slate Card**

No on Proposition A - Requires competitive bidding and regulates garbage rates. Democrats and Republicans, landlords and tenants all oppose A.

No on Proposition B - Non-binding resolution to limit commercial events at Coit Tower

District 17 (Eastern side of San Francisco)

Eleven incumbents, 14 to be elected

David Chiu
Malia Cohen
Bevan Dufty
Zoe Dunning
Warren Hinckle
Joaquin Torres
Scott Wiener
Hydra Mendoza

District 19 (Western side of San Francisco)

Six incumbents, 10 to be elected

Kate Anderson
Bill Fazio
Tom Hsieh
Megan Levitan
Trevor McNeil
John Shanley
Arlo Smith

California State Assembly (no endorsement)

District 19

Michael Breyer - Democrat, Small Businessperson, Entrepreneur
Matthew Del Carlo - Republican, Taxpayer Advocate, Businessman
James Pan - Democrat, Real Property Appraiser
Phil Ting - Democrat, San Francisco Assessor



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PURSUED BY THE BRUGLY OTHERS, THE CHECKERED DEMON HELPS STAR CAPTURE THROUGH THE TAVERN IN THE CAVERN OF LOST SOULS... © S. CLAY WILSON



EYED STELLA ALLUDE
WINTER 1995 FOR RICH LUBINSKAS



The Saga of the Gold Dust Lounge

By CHRIS CARSON

There are giants on Broadway. Monuments really, to the Barbary Coast days of old North Beach. Come night fall, like the rest of San Francisco, they sparkle and burst with the vigor of a good memory.

They are the fanning can-can dancer above the Hungry I Club, where Woody Allen got his start telling jokes to a smoky room; the cigar chewing, and tommy gun toting gangster who protects Big Al's, an old strip joint, known for bottomless dancers, turned porno superstore; and of course there's Carol Doda.

The legendary stripper is painted above the Condor Club in a black

.....
The "mistress" of the "beau" at the old Bustles & Beaus. This ladies face adorned the woman's bathroom at 247 Powell from 1960 onward. Jim Bovis kept the original bathroom doors, complete with this ladies face, after he transformed the space to the Gold Dust Lounge in 1966. Due partly to the passing of time, partly to vitamin v, this relic of Union Square's old days was, unfortunately, cracked during its long, fabled lifetime in those by gone bars. Courtesy of the Gold Dust Lounge.



bikini, bobbed blonde hair, red lights signaling from her breasts. Near fifty years after her big debut, they still pull in customers.

Doda changed American entertainment in 1964, when she tossed away the brassiere, and became the country's first topless dancer. Few could have guessed the fluttering straps of Doda's dismissed garment, all those years ago, would start a chain of events that came to an end this May, with the closing of The Gold Dust Lounge at 247 Powell Street, after a long public dispute between the owners, Jim and Tasios Bovis, and their wealthy landlord, Jon Handlery.

And the closing of the Gold Dust Lounge is the end of cheap drinks, once and for all, in downtown San Francisco.

Before The Gold Dust Lounge moved onto Powell Street, that space was occupied by a bar called Bustles & Beaus. Regulars at the Gold Dust may have noticed the slab of concrete in the entrance way, with a B and S flanking a gray splotch. It used to say "Bustles & Beaus," but years of boot heels scuffed out the other letters.

Legend is Bustles & Beaus owner Milton Kreis had a silent partner in opening the place named Bing Crosby. When the place was remodeled in 1960, the crooner apparently brought in a Hollywood set designer. It's been said he installed the ruby banquettes and carpet, painted the mural of cherubs and nudes on the ceiling, and bathed the place in a yellow light, from Victorian style electroliers.

The result was a burlesque bar, reminiscent of the gay 1890's, with a healthy dash of sexual nonchalance, characteristic of the 1960's. Waitresses dressed in revealing Victorianesque leotards, with netted black tights to their thighs. Twice an hour, a pair of them would slide down a fire pole onto a stage at the front end of the long bar.

By all accounts, Bustles & Beaus was a wild place. Business boomed for years. But in 1964, at the Condor Club across town, Doda began dancing on a white piano, her breasts perking through a red monokini.

Suddenly, men left Union Square and lined up out the door to see Doda. Bustles & Beaus had to close down.

For one man the timing couldn't have been better. Jim Bovis was working up the street from Bustles & Beaus for a friend of his at the Yankee Doodle, next door to Sear's Fine Foods. While serving 76 cent Irish Coffees one day, to the Irish coppers who ran the city back then, word of vacancy at 247 Powell saddled up to the bar. Bovis decided to take a shot running his own joint.

In 1965, Jim apparently made a gentleman's agreement with Paul Handlery to lease the open space at 247 Powell. Handlery owned the Elkan Gunst Building, and for years, proved to be both an honorable partner in business and trustworthy landlord.

Jim took out the fire pole, shortened the bar a bit, put a bandstand in the back, hired Wally Rose to tickle the ivories, and lathered the ruby walls with gold paint. By 1967, the Gold Dust Lounge was born as a piano bar.

Throughout the bar's long history, it was known by patrons as, if not a piano bar, at least one of the city's last joints to showcase music without a cover charge. Johnny Z and The Camaros were the last on the stage. Long before their closing number, Janis Joplin and even Herb Caen performed there. Caen, the Pulitzer Prize winning columnist, it turns out, was also a talented drummer. By 1970, Jim brought in his brother Tasios to be partner. It was understood among the brothers, after all, that family would help family.

The Bovis brothers grew up in a village outside Delphi, and to survive Greece in the 1930's and 40's the fraternal solidarity they carried to the United States was essential to their survival. By 1941, when Jim was 9 and Tasios was 11, the brothers' homeland was occupied by Hitler's Nazis and Mussolini's Fascists. Until wars end, the Axis presence drained Greece of resources, leaving thousands to die of starvation.

Afterwards, things only got worse. The occupation had forced the Greek government into exile. When it ended, a bloody civil war broke out between the Democratic Army of Greece and the Greek Communist Party

for sole control of the country.

Hundreds of thousands of Greeks died in the decade from 1941 to 1951. Wounds from those years never fully healed. Many survivors fled to Australia, others to the United Kingdom. In 1951, 10,000 came to the United States after President Harry Truman amended the Displaced Persons Act of 1948.

"War orphans" of Greece and other nations, President Truman said, "who will come to our country under the provisions of the present bill will also make a substantial contribution to our national wellbeing."

He didn't know it, but President Truman was talking about the Bovis brothers. After they landed in the United States Jim was drafted into the Army and shipped to Germany to work as a combat engineer. One man he met there would become a good friend. When Jim landed in the Bay Area in 1958, that friend gave Jim a job at the Yankee Doodle on Powell Street, tending bar and serving Irish coffee's to the cops who ran the city back then.

Though the Bovis story is uniquely American, it is by no means unique among American families. Their landlord, Jon Handlery, has an equally triumphant family history.

Jon's grandfather, Harry Handlery immigrated to the United States from Russia, narrowly avoiding what could have been a dismal future under Joseph Stalin. By 1928, Harry was living in Vallejo, selling buttons, pins, and other odds and ends out of a small haberdashery.

After friends asked him to take over as manager of Casa de Vallejo, Harry accepted, but said it would only be temporary. As often happens in life, Harry's original plan was interrupted. His short stay became a career. Eventually he bought out his friends and became sole proprietor of the hotel. An empire, so to speak, was born.

Harry Handlery bought up hotels all over northern California. During the Second World War he bought his first building in San Francisco, the Hotel Stewart, and built his first hotel in San Diego. By the time the Bovis brothers settled in the Bay Area, Harry Handlery had turned his business into the largest family run hotel chain in the world.

Harry's son, Paul, began to operate the business in the 1960's. Immediately, he broadened the families influence on the area, building the Handlery Motor Inn around Union Square in 1964. The following year

he met the Bovis brothers.

Jim and Tasios remember Paul Handlery as a warm and personable land lord. For decades he would hand deliver new leases to them, if any changes were made to it Paul would sit down and explain it to the brothers. If not he would assure them so. It wasn't uncommon for Paul Handlery to stop by to visit, even if there was no business to discuss. After more than thirty years of that professional relationship, the Bovis brothers expected, perhaps naively, things would always be that way.

But in 2001, Paul Handlery's health forced him out of the business. His son Jon took over. He began working with his father in the early 1980's. By the time Jon took the reins he was a well weathered veteran of the hospitality industry.

Jon connected his grandfather's Hotel Stewart to his father's Handlery Motor Inn to create the Handlery Union Square Hotel, which currently stands above Geary Street, like the pin striped guard at Big Al's in North Beach.

That hotel alone, eight stories high, over 400 rooms, was assessed in 2011 at over \$9 million. But that's only one building in Handlery's possession. His companies, Handlery Holding Inc. and Handlery Hotels Inc. own eleven buildings around Union Square. If they were stacked one atop the other they would stand 55 stories high, with 958 rooms. All together his property was assessed at over \$34 million in 2011, according to the San Francisco Association of Realtors.

Along with tightening the families grip on Union Square, Jon Handlery helped catapult the family's brand online with a Facebook page for both the Handlery Union Square Hotel and the Handlery Hotel and Resort in San Diego.

"The Board of Supervisors will not vote to approve the demolition of this place to be replaced by a moving staircase."

Former Mayor Willie Brown



Jim and Tasios Bovis. The owners of the Gold Dust Lounge, Jim, in front wearing brown jacket, opened the bar in 1967 after learning of an open space at 247 Powell Street. He brought his brother Tasios, behind in blue jacket, in as partner in 1970. Last December, the local business owners who landed in San Francisco after leaving Greece during the country's civil war, filed a law suit against their land lord for intentional misrepresentation and elder abuse. Courtesy of SF Examiner.

He's even produced a series of videos about the Handlery Union Square Hotel which can be found on YouTube.

They are silly, tongue in cheek little things, starring hotel staff. One from earlier this year called "At Handlery Hotels, We Treat You like Family," Jon personally sees that his guests are safe, healthy, and respectful. Handlery keeps a family out of the pool after lunch, he forces one man to eat his broccoli before desert, and he even puts one impatient man in the corner for timeout, after he gets uppity at check in.

A few comments show that Jon Handlery's humor isn't lost on everyone. "Brilliant humor!" commented one person. "I wasn't sure whether or not I was going to stay here this weekend, but this finalized my decision. I'm excited," wrote another.

But the comments for a video called "Handlery Hotels: it's Not Just Policy, It's Law," are not as praising.

In it, Jon Handlery, who looks like a Donald Trump in training- a blue suit, charming smile stretching over his face beneath hair that doesn't look cut, as much as it does sculpted- strong arm's guests into strictly following hotel rules.

The video suggests all security at the Handlery Union Square Hotel carries handguns, and the boss himself won't hesitate to force you out of your room, with a team of cronies, if you're unfortunate enough to miss check out.

The video was posted years ago, in 2009, and was no question, meant as a joke. But watching it now, with knowledge that Handlery was sued by the Bovis brothers for various misdeeds including abuse of the elderly and attempts at intimidation, the video's humor is shadowed. Above it hangs the awkward presence of something like a Freudian slip. What was it Freud said about jokes?

The Bovis brothers filed the lawsuit in late February 2012. It would end up being their last attempt to keep the Gold Dust Lounge in its original space at 247 Powell Street.

In December of 2011, "Jon Handlery delivered an eviction, a letter of termination to the Bovis brothers," Gold Dust Lounge spokesman Lee Housekeeper said in a documentary called "Saving The Gold Dust," produced by San Francisco Chronicle photographer Mike Kepka.

Housekeeper said the note arrived on December 7th, the same day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, he added. To equate the delivery of an eviction notice to a massive air strike that left thousands dead or wounded is an exaggeration, no doubt, but by all accounts, the Bovis

brothers were as stunned by what they read, as if the note had actually exploded.

Throughout their forty plus years as tenants for the Handlery family, the Bovis brothers prided themselves on consistently paying rent early and never so much as asking their landlord to replace a lock. As far as they could tell, there was no reason for Handlery to boot them out.

An examination of the leases signed by the Bovis brothers shows that Jon Handlery didn't need a reason. With each renewed lease, causes to terminate dwindled, until March of 2011 when a lease was signed giving Jon Handlery the right to terminate at any time, and required the tenant get just ninety days' notice before having to vacate.

But what the Bovis brothers didn't notice about the March lease was it also contained word that Jon Handlery was in negotiation with a new tenant to occupy 247 Powell. If an agreement was met, the Gold Dust Lounge's lease would be terminated.

An agreement was met, apparently. In early March 2012, the San Francisco Chronicle reported on their website that Express, a billion dollar retail giant, with a store less than a mile from the Gold Dust Lounge in the Westfield shopping mall, was planning on moving into 247 Powell. Word is they need the space for an escalator.

The Bovis brothers, along with Jim's son Nick, who runs Lefty O'Doul's around the corner on Geary, next to the Handlery Union Square Hotel, all thought that some negotiation could be made. Attempts to discuss the eviction with Jon Handlery failed, allegedly. In a letter to Mayor Ed Lee, from January, however, Jon Handlery wrote that he did in fact meet with the Bovis family to talk about early termination of their lease.

The Bovis's maintain that no such meeting ever took place. As a result, Bovis family friend Jim Cotchett offered up his services as attorney. The lawyer, who met Jim Bovis years ago at the Burlingame restaurant, Broadway Grill, is considered one of the finest in California. Cotchett thought a definite case of intentional misrepresentation and elder abuse could be made against Jon Handlery for his dealings with the Gold Dust Lounge.

Meanwhile, patrons of the Gold Dust Lounge in San Francisco were building a campaign to keep the bar in Union Square. Historic preservationist Christopher Ver Plank spearheaded an attempt to have the bar listed as a protected landmark, arguing, "The Gold Dust Lounge remains a bastion of the old San Francisco, the San Francisco of Herb Caen, Willie Brown, and Janis Joplin," and should be protected from the chain stores and malls that have overtaken the city in recent decades.

Lawyers representing Jon Handlery responded that an attempt to name the Gold Dust Lounge a landmark was "at best misguided, at worst, cynical." They urged the city's Historic Commission not to let the owners of the Gold Dust Lounge exploit historic preservation, an important tool in maintaining San Francisco's history, just to gain "economic leverage."



Johnny Z and The Camaros were the last house band at the Gold Dust Lounge. The bar was loved by people the world over for their cheap drinks and also live music seven days a week, with no cover charge. House bands were once common all over San Francisco, but with the Gold Dust Lounge closing in Union Square that tradition is extinct in the city's downtown area.

On a different occasion, Handlery representative Sam Singer coarsely said, "Just because Janis Joplin threw up there, doesn't make it historic."

Still, many remained optimistic.

"I would guess that the Board of Supervisors will not vote, nor the City planning commission, to approve the demolition of this place to be replaced by a moving staircase," former Mayor Willie Brown said in defense of the Gold Dust.

"Handlery," he added, "is going to have a lot of trouble. His trouble has not even commenced."

But it never did. Instead, the City Attorney's office responded to the public's push to landmark with a dense, often times confusing "decision not to initiate" the process. What surprised some about the City Attorney's ruling was their statement that the decision was "unappealable."

This included former District 3 Supervisor, Aaron Peskin, who authored Proposition J in 2008, creating the Historic Preservation Commission. Peskin said the City Attorney's interpretation of that bill was "complete bullshit."

Landmarking the Gold Dust Lounge wouldn't have been a threat to the process, actually, in a city like San Francisco, there should be more historic sights than the 260 currently listed. By not land marking the Gold Dust Lounge, a decision made by the HPC in April with a 5-2 vote, Peskin feels they "missed it."

"It's clear," he said, "that any decision by the historic commission can be administratively appealed." Peskin added that the Board of Supervisors can overrule the HPC if they wish, and landmark a sight themselves.

It all strikes Peskin as an attempt by the City Attorney to deflate public support for the beloved bar.

Though many, like Historic Preservation Commissioner Alan Martinez, adoringly see the Gold Dust as a nest of low brow culture, that's part of the charm. There is a campy allure, reminiscent of musicals like "Hello Dolly" and "The Music Man" that should be saved.

Peskin agreed, saying "things people celebrate, as part of the culture now should be protected. But, he added, there is also the golden rule; "he or she with the gold rules."

And who has the gold here? "The landlord," Peskin grumbled.

Without the landmark status, the Gold Dust Lounge's lease came to an end on March 10 th. But the Bovis brothers didn't budge. Two days later Jim Bovis was served papers informing him of a law suit filed by Jon Handlery, for their deliberate failure to honor the lease.

The bar's future at 247 Powell rested on the results of the lawsuit the Bovis family had filed against Jon Handlery in February.

In the suit, Handlery and the President of Handlery Hotels, John Arthur Pekrul, are accused of deliberately fooling the Bovis brothers into signing a lease. An argument can be made, as Chronicle columnist C.W. Nevius pointed out, that someone at the Gold Dust Lounge should have read the thing.

But after forty plus years of doing business with Paul and then Jon Handlery, the Bovis's thought the two families had well established procedures for renewing leases.

That being, if something had changed, the Handlery's would tell the Bovis's so. Neither Handlery nor Pekrul did, the suit claims. In essence, it says, Jon Handlery knowingly took advantage of the Bovis brothers trust in him.

The fact that Jim and Tasios Bovis are both in their 80's allowed Jon Handlery to take advantage of them, the suit claims. The lawsuit then also states that the Bovis brothers were victims of elderly abuse. Jon Handlery, they alleged, knew how old they were and took their advanced age as an opportunity to turn a profit by renting out their space to Express.

On both accounts, Jon Handlery and his representatives maintain that the Bovis's were well informed about the plans to terminate their lease. The events of recent months, Handlery argues, are the Bovis brother's greedy attempts to interrupt his business and bleed as much money from the place as possible.

As such, Handlery representatives said that if the Gold Dust Lounge didn't pack up, the Bovis family would face severe legal and financial

When news broke of landlord Jon Handlery's plan to evict the Gold Dust Lounge, like in this cover story from the San Francisco Examiner, loyal customers rallied behind their favorite watering hole. The result was a push by city luminaries like Willie Brown and everyday citizens alike to have the Gold Dust Lounge designated as a city landmark.



penalties. According to the suit filed against Handlery, that wasn't the hotel owner's only line of intimidation.

The Bovis family claims that repeated threats were made to the future of Lefty O' Doul's, a bar operated by Jim's son Nick, in a building owned by Jon Handlery. One instance in particular, an unknown caller supposedly warned Nick that he spoke with Jon Handlery, and it would be best for Lefty O' Doul's if the Bovis family didn't make such a fuss.

By late May the Bovis family decided to move the Gold Dust Lounge to Fisherman's Wharf. It would enable them to keep the business in operation, and they hope it will keep Lefty O' Doul's safe. The night of May 23 was last call for the Gold Dust Lounge at 247 Powell.

On May 25th Jim Bovis was clearing the place out with bar manager Michael Bowens. The ruby banquettes were all pulled out. Leaning against the wall where they used to be was the cable car bell that rung when somebody left a kind tip. On the wall above it were dark squares, left behind by the oil paintings of cocktail waitresses done by Jim's wife Gracia, which hung for decades.

A man poked his head through the entrance and looked from side to side. He turned to his wife and threw his hands in the air, "It's gone!" he shouted. But suddenly, it started to come back.

A girl in a frilly leotard slid down the old fire poll. All the bottles that were boxed up on the bar went back on the shelf behind it. People appeared, drinking vitamin v and champagne. At the end of the bar, Herb Caen was tapping his feet in time with the band, which was starting to cook. The ruby banquettes were back. Laughing people manifested on them, filling the old bar with that mumbled roar of music and voices that, for years, beckoned the city in through its hallowed walk way.

A bell rang, and for the final time, somebody left another kind tip for another drink poured well. But it was just a passing cable car. It rolled past the open doorway on its way up Powell Street.

The place was empty again. Jim Bovis stood behind the bar and asked Bowens to start moving the boxes of liquor downstairs.

MENDOCINO NOIR

WESTERN journalism once had a distinct voice—more a siren call—that was at once off key and melodious, cerebral and hokey, adventitious, short on nouns and full of adjectives, crusading, partial to the personal insult, admiring of excess, ruggedly individualistic, both militant and sentimental, shrewd, gay and courageous, which took exaggeration as a discipline of rhetoric and a fact of life and was resonant with the laughter of genius. The revolver was as common in the composing room as the printer's California Case, and the only governor on what an editor would say or do in the pursuit of his muse or mission was the law of the code duello. This siren call of western journalism drew Ambrose Bierce and Mark Twain to San Francisco from the stuffier East, Bierce to the Argonaut and other periodicals, Twain to cub it at the Frisco dailies and then to the Territorial Enterprise in the bonanza days of the Comstock Lode where he invented the tradition of the science fiction hoax as news.

In the 19th-century the unleavened West nurtured such Colossus of print as the young William Randolph Hearst who birthed the sob sister and the comic strip and reinvented the wheel of newspaper journalism in his San Francisco Examiner, and the civic-minded rascality and circus makeup of the Denver Post of Fred Roads and Harry Tamm, who ruled the Rockies from a flaming red partner's room decorated with a globe of the world and a loaded shotgun and kept their rapacious reporters on standby in saloons and whorehouses, unleashing them to create the news. The incumbent century has less to brag on, but in the dispiriting face of the eastern press becoming one with the establishment the West managed to keep burning the torch of editorial eccentricity and individualism. There was Fremont Older's muckraking editorship of the San Francisco Butictin, Upton Sinclair's phenomenal weekly EPIC (End Poverty In California) News during the Depression, and all too briefly during the fifties Lucius Beebe's forsaking Manhattan Cafe society for a mountain top in Nevada to restore the Territorial Enterprise as the weekly voice, oenophilic and unrepentant, of the howling personal journalism that made the West.

Alas the oppressive homogenization and corporatization of newspapers, which has hushed the saloon wallow of competitive journalism, and turned the newshounds and -hens of legend into a smug journo class of climbing shits specializing in the conventional wisdom, has shrivelled the mighty oak of western journalism. The last lively

newspaper in the West was the San Francisco Chronicle under the rambunctious editorships of boy wonder Paul Smith and the wooden-legged, buccaneering Scott Newhall, but the Chronicle has chosen to change its spots and go grey like the Los Angeles Times, long the portly running dog of California agribiz fascists and undistinguished filthy rich Lotus Land mercantilists.

Even the small country weekly, the last refuge of free voices in newspapers, has gone sideways into the numbing sameness of American journalism. In the East, country weeklies in upscale areas like Martha's Vineyard have been purchased by the kkes of retired New York Times pundits and Wall Street Journal executives who have made them politically correct and as perfect-appearing as spoiled children. In the West, they have been gobbled up by newspaper chains which condescend to the values of small minds in small towns. The exceptions to the rule of numbness are kvv, and Bruce Anderson's Anderson Valley Advertiser (AVA) stands alone as a living relic—cojones and hairballs, wit and wisdom—of the rumpled glories of western journalism. The paper even violates the Stepford Wives rules of makeup of modern American cold-type newspapers (which all look depressingly alike) by appearing in public wearing the loose overcoat of an oversized broadsheet with tiny, eye-squinting, squeeze-it-all-in body-type and a tombstone front page layout that Anderson copied from a paper once published by that well-known typographer Vladimir Illich Lenin. In Alexander Cockburn the AVA has foreign and national commentary far superior to the pseudo-sophisticates of the San Francisco papers. In its extensive, acerbic, unrelenting local coverage the AVA takes no prisoners, skewering both corporate plunderers (Big Timber, Big Wineries), the wastrel habits and lack of common sense of county bureaucrats, and the hypocrisy and conceits of Northern California's New Age liberals. Anderson stands up to the pc all-volunteer police state and lets everyone, even the droolers, have their say in the letters column (which in the AVA goes on for pages) which he answers in bold face in the and-thehorse-you-came-in-on tradition of the informed insult. As an editor Anderson is in time-warp sync with the genius of 19th-century France; his paper has the keen eye for the foibles of the local bourgeois of a Balzac and the battle readiness to fight injustice and tyranny of every stripe of a Zola. Simply put, the AVA is the best country weekly in the world. --Warren Hinckle.

TALES FROM THE DEEP WOODS

By Bruce Anderson

I.

SURO

She called in April, just as the days were warming up.

"My name is Suro."

Syrup?

"No, Suro. Sir-O. S-u-r-o. One word. My friend Leonard gave me your number. You're the newspaper guy, right?"

I knew Leonard. He'd chopped his 12-year-old daughter's head off with a machete then gouged his left eye out. After a stay at Napa State Hospital, Leonard had inevitably, some people would say, made his way to Mendocino County where he wrote poetry all night and slept all day. He lived in Albion, a community known for its elastic tolerance for aberrant behavior. Leonard had been in the local news because his nomination by local liberals to serve on the county's Mental Health Advisory Board was publicly regarded by a conservative supervisor as "just a little too goddam much."

A referral from Leonard meant, at a minimum, that the referent was an unusual person.

"Are you the newspaper guy or aren't you?"

I conceded I was the newspaper guy.

"I'm a clairvoyant, holistic bodyworker," Suro said. "My friend told me Anderson Valley is a counterculture kind of place where I could trade bodywork for a place to stay. I'm in Lake County but I have to move. I want to put an ad in your paper, and I want to come over there and look for a place to live. Do you have a place where I could sleep for a couple of days?"

I said that we weren't set up for overnight guests.

"I have a sleeping bag," Suro said.

Sorry, I said, not here.

"I heard Anderson Valley is a counterculture kind of place," she said, repeating the slur.

Not any more, I said. Albion is the place you want.

"Is there some place over there I could stay?"

There are some nice campgrounds, I said, but they aren't free.

"Will you run a free ad for me?"

No, but tell me what you want to say, and I'll tell you how much it will cost you to say it, and you send me the money.

"Money?" Suro was unfamiliar with the concept.

Money, I repeated.

Suro mailed in her neatly printed ad and four one dollar bills.

"Will exchange body work for a place to stay," the ad read.

A week later an aggrieved Suro called.

"Nobody responded," she said. "I don't have a place to live over there and I have to leave where I am."

I said I was sorry.

"Will you run it again without charging me?"

No.

I didn't want to be hardhearted about it, but in a county teeming with deadbeats I had to be firm.

On the last day of April, a newish sedan with Lake County's logo emblazoned on its doors pulled up in front of Boont Berry Farm. A plump, fifty-ish woman wrapped in retro tie-dyed disembarked. A woman at

Boont Berry said it "looked like a box of fat rainbows was spilling out of the car."

As Suro stared regally around at her new surroundings, the Lake County driver off-loaded several neatly assembled laundry-like bundles, a couple of cardboard boxes and an apparatus resembling an ironing board. Suro had arrived in Anderson Valley, and Lake County had committed an act of what is called "patient dumping."

Boont Berry Farm is all that's left in Anderson Valley of what might be called hippie retail establishments. It sells incense, *The New Settler Interview*, and organic food, but there's a cash register on the counter and clairvoyant bodyworkers, like everyone else, are expected to pay for purchases.

Suro sat down to eat after being assured that the rice dish she'd ordered was free of corporate taint. After a bite or two, she looked up from her food to warn Kevin Jones, Boont Berry's friendly counterman, "Quit smirking at me."

Lake County authorities denied driving Suro to Boonville, but the woman who answered the telephone at Lake County's Mental Health office had groaned at the mention of her name, before launching into her rote denials.

"I'm sorry, sir. We're not allowed to comment on patients. Just like everyone else they are entitled to privacy."

Despairing moans at the mention of a patient's name, while perhaps understandable in this particular case, would still have to be marked down in the "unprofessional response" column.

"Lake County would never drive a client to another county and just drop her off," the Lake County lady said.

Yet here she was, fully arrived in Mendocino County, and she'd been transported to Boonville in a Lake County car.

Suro, it seems, had moved in with a 90-year-old Lake County woman and wouldn't leave. The authorities had eventually become aware that some sort of hippie relic had fastened on to the old lady and overstayed her welcome.

"I'm a Christian," the old woman said, "but even Christians have their limits. I thought Suro was a Christian too, but when I heard her praying in the morning I wondered what God she was talking to. I couldn't understand any of it."

After her inaugural meal at Boont Berry, Suro landed at the Ziemer Brothers Soccer Camp about six miles south of town on the Mathias Ranch where she massaged sore soccer muscles in exchange for food and shelter. It wasn't long, however, before she was redeposited in downtown Boonville.

Suro hung around Boont Berry, hitting on people for a place to stay.

David "King Fix-it" Severn, a man with an infinitely elastic tolerance for aberrant behavior, stepped forward. Severn operates a satellite television sales and maintenance business out of an old fruit stand on the south edge of Boonville. The structure is not designed for living but it works just fine as a place to store tools and fix satellite equipment. Severn told Suro she could sleep in his shop for "a couple of nights" until she secured permanent housing.

The next morning, Severn arrived at his shop to find himself locked out. He could hear Suro moving around inside. Severn called to her through the door. "Suro, my stuff is in there. It's my office. I've got to get in."

Suro responded by turning up the volume on a recording of what Severn said sounded like a Native American religious ceremony.

"I was being very polite," Severn said later, as if he were apologizing for trying to get into his own work place.

"Please, Suro, open the door."

Suro screamed as if someone had plunged a knife in her back.

"I don't know what that means, Suro," Severn, already reconciled to negotiations, intoned in the calm voice of a therapist.

Another primeval shriek pierced the morning stillness.

Severn persisted. "I'm not going away, Suro. We need to talk. If you need some time to get it together, I'll give you time. But we need to talk."

Most people would have gone directly for battering rams and tear gas, but it took Severn a week and a changed lock before he could get Suro out of his work shed. Her belongings were still there. Whenever Severn encountered Suro in Boonville, which was often because Boonville is a very small place, and tried to talk to her about what she wanted him to do with her things, she'd waddle furiously off in the other direction.

Severn spent many more hours in futile calls to Mendocino County's helping professionals to get Suro shelter and maybe even some help with her obvious mental confusion. She wasn't well, and it can be very dangerous for unwell persons on the streets, even in Boonville.

The helping pros weren't helpful.

Suro quickly became a roving nuisance. From Boonville to Navarro, came the complaints about her aggressive panhandling, her verbal abuse when she didn't get her way. She was sleeping outside; people would see her at daybreak emerging from the brush alongside 128.

Suro stopped in to see me several times, always in the middle of the day. She asked me if I could help her out with a "loan."

I gave her \$20.

"I need \$70!" she snapped.

The next day she was back.

"Can I take a shower?"

No.

Once she was in the house I'd never get her out.

"Why not?" Suro asked.

Because we're a newspaper, not a bath house.

"Can I borrow a towel?" she asked.

No.

"Do you have \$60?"

No.

"Can I have what you *do* have?" she asked.

I handed her five bucks, which is all I *did* have.

"You don't have more?"

No, I don't have more. That's it.

"Is your wife here?" Suro asked. "Will she give me some money?"

If she won't give *me* any money, I said, *your* chances of getting money from her wouldn't seem to be too good.

At that moment my wife, a person whose tolerance for the counterculture ended the day she arrived in America in 1967 and saw her first hippie, walked into the office. In all the world there never was a foreign born Chinese hippie. A few American-born Chinese took the plunge, but not many.

"You're not French!" Suro greeted my wife. "Your husband won't let me take a shower."

"Get out of here right now or I'll call Keith," my wife said.

"Who's Keith?" Suro asked.

"The policeman," my wife said.

"I know him," Suro said, unperturbed at the prospect of another interview with Deputy Squires.

"You're going to know him a lot better if you don't leave right now," my wife said.

Suro got up and headed towards the door, pausing to say over her shoulder, "I'm going to sue you."

She wandered around The Valley all summer, up and down 128 from Yorkville to Navarro. I'd see her on hundred degree days, a kaleidoscopic bundle of psychedelic colors, trudging purposefully towards Philo then, later in the day, shuffling back towards Boonville. Twice I saw her standing stock still on blind curves, perplexed, as if all her attention was focused on trying to figure out where she was and how she'd gotten there. If the driver of the next careening vehicle didn't see her in time, Suro would have been a dead bodyworker.

Locals might give her a lift. Once. An elderly Boonville woman who'd given Suro a lift had to call for help when Suro announced she was moving in with her and refused to leave the Samaritan's vehicle.

One morning, Suro burst in on Don and Marianne Pardini's home next door to Severn's satellite television shack that she'd attempted to commandeer, demanding that they do something about David Severn. As Don Pardini called Severn's number for a clarification of the Suro situation, Suro accused Pardini of faking the call.

Later that day, Suro caged a meal from the Boonville Brewery, but sent it back to the kitchen because it wasn't organic.

The incidence of unhappy encounters was increasing.

Deputy Squires was bombarded with calls demanding that he do something about Suro.

"She was a 5150, all right," the deputy says in the numerical cop shorthand for nutso, "but they wouldn't take her at Mental Health because she didn't meet their guidelines. There was nothing I could do about her."

Suro wasn't crazy enough to be confined. You have to be dangerously crazy to get locked up in America.

Suro appeared at the Horn of Zeese for breakfast. She ordered oatmeal. Informed that the restaurant was out of oatmeal, Suro shouted at her startled fellow diners, "These people are being very unfair to me. They have oatmeal but they won't give me any!"

"She's getting really weird," Severn sighed, as if he were somehow responsible for the roaming nuisance. Severn put it in Big Picture perspective. "Take this as a lesson that we're woefully unprepared to deal with these kinds of people in our community. The system doesn't take care of them." Severn speculated that Suro had "once had it together" but had snapped.

Probably, but now what?

Severn pointed out that Suro did have training as a bodyworker, that she owned a massage table and the few pieces of equipment she needed to work at her profession, that he was even aware that she had a few clients who'd come all the way to Boonville from Lake County for massages. But her business was shrinking in direct proportion to her accelerating distance from reality.

Severn spent a lot of time trying to get Suro some help. Everyone agreed she shouldn't be wandering around in a bellicose fog — rude, aggressive, threatening random passersby — but Severn took direct responsibility for her.

Suro appeared several times a week at Glad's Bakery where she'd sequester herself for hours of noisy restroom ablutions.

Cathy Paula, a longtime Bruce Bread employee, finally confronted Suro and told her to get out of the restroom "so the rest of us can use it." Ms. Paula, like most of us boomers who've settled in the Anderson Valley, is at least half-hippie. Suro denounced her as an "uptight redneck."

Meanwhile Severn, the only person who'd consistently tried to help Suro, had become Suro's primary hate object. Whenever she spotted him in Boonville she headed straight for him and denounced him in this very odd way: "You David Severn you. You David So-Called Severn."

Severn's friends began greeting him as "So-Called Severn" or simply "So-Called."

Suro wrote Severn a long letter declaring that she had every right to his shop because she was a "holistic clairvoyant healer." She said she was going to sic her "Native American attorney" on "So-Called Severn," so he'd better haul his so-called self out of subpoena range.

"You know," Severn says, "I agree with her in a way. We all should be guaranteed a roof over our heads."

Suro finally abandoned So-Called's shed; So-Called had carefully boxed her belongings and stacked them where Suro could retrieve them at her leisure, but the bundles remained outside the shed under a tarp for nearly six months.

Meanwhile, Suro continued to wander up and down The Valley. She panhandled for meal money and people continued to give her rides when they spotted her red-faced and puffing along 128. She was often seen in Ukiah where, it seems, she was at last getting assistance of some kind. She told people "a big check" was waiting for her at the Philo Post Office.

"Frankly," Sheila Hibbs, a clerk at the Philo Post Office says, "I felt menaced by her. She called me a liar and kept going on about her Constitutional rights. I told her, 'Your life problems are not my fault.' And she'd say, 'Yes, they are. You're holding my money.'"

Suro told Sheila she'd gotten a divine message that Sheila was going to help her find a place to live. Sheila explained that as a postal clerk she was not allowed to process divine messages unless they had postage on them. Suro threatened to unleash the entire National Security apparatus on the two-person Philo Post Office if she didn't get her money.

"She ran a couple of our customers right out of here," Sheila sighed.

She was still sleeping beside the road. Give her this: Suro was a survivor. She'd make her home wherever night found her. If it found her near Philo, Suro would help herself to whatever cash was in the honor system can at the Bates' Apple Farm, dive into the bushes and call it a day.

Many people gave her money and food just so she'd go away.

She left the following phone message, with So-Called Severn's home telephone number for call-backs: "I am an Holistic Healer and Clairvoyant who is also a Holistic Massage Therapist and Polarity Therapist, and I am calling the people — all eleven of them — who want to give me Fair Housing and an adjoining place to do my Body Work for which I will give my unequivocal Healing Services. I am also in favor of reaching out to the first three of the eleven, particularly the second by whom I was specifically guided to come here for. So help me, grandfather."

As the summer drew on, a week or two would pass without a Suro sighting, and people would say, "She's finally moved on." But then she'd reappear and another round of brusque encounters with random locals would commence.

Diane Jones, a beautician with a salon in Boonville, and another unwitting Samaritan, cut and washed Suro's hair, perhaps resisting an impulse to take an ear with one of Suro's locks when Suro demanded that Mrs. Jones take the extra time to tint her free coif in the prevailing fashion.

Then, some time in August, Suro really did disappear, at least from the Anderson Valley. There were rumors that she was in Point Arena, and there were confirmed Suro sightings in Fort Bragg and Ukiah. But she wasn't in Boonville or Philo or anywhere else in the Valley, although her belongings remained neatly stacked outside So-Called Severn's shop near the Boonville Fairgrounds.

Severn had received a handwritten inventory from Suro warning him that he risked big trouble with the federal government and Suro's "Native American attorney" if the following items were not among her belongings when she finally appeared to retrieve them: "My Indian flute tape; my maroon cardigan sweater; my Native American print pants; my mustard and vinaigrette salad dressings; and my neck and eye pillows."

Finally, nearly six months after So-Called Severn's charity had blown up in his face, Suro appeared at Severn's shop with a new Samaritan, an Albion man named Howie Seidel. Suro and Howie told So-Called they were there to pick up her eye pillows and vinaigrette. Suro apologized to Severn for all the trouble she'd caused him, thanked him for taking care of her belongings, and drove off down 128 for the sanctuary of Albion.

Suro seemed to have regained possession of herself.

So-Called Severn speculated she'd finally been corralled by the helping professionals, and had had her meds readjusted to where she could function more or less normally in the tolerant embrace of Mendocino society.

The day Suro and her new benefactor, Howie Seidell, arrived at Severn's shop to fetch her things, Severn's landlady, alarmed that "hippies" seemed to be

assembling at Severn's shop, raised his rent from \$100 a month to \$300 a month.

David Severn isn't looking for a so-called shop. He needs a real one.

Postscript

A woman called to say she and a friend were vacationing in Albion when they read the Suro story. She had her own Suro story ...

"We saw this older, hippie-looking woman hitchhiking up Albion Ridge Road so we stopped to give her a ride. She said her name was Suro and she was very hungry and could we 'lend' her \$20. We did. She explained that she was an out-of-work bodyworker. A couple of days later, somehow having learned the phone number of the place where we were staying, Suro called us to say, in quite a belligerent tone of voice, that she had absolutely no intention of giving us our money back. It was as if we had committed a petty crime against *her*. My friend grabbed the phone and demanded his \$20. Suro then offered to exchange a foot massage in lieu of cash repay. My friend said fine. Suro soon appeared at our place and proceeded to give my friend a foot massage, which he said was quite professionally performed. But Suro said we owed her another five bucks because she charges \$25 for a foot massage, not \$20. We gave her the five. Debt repaid, case closed. We thought. Suro asked to use the bathroom. Sure, we said, forgetting that we'd read she tends to spend hours in bathrooms. We could hear her rummaging around. She finally emerged and tottered off down the road. Curious about the badger-like commotion I'd heard in the bathroom while Suro was in it, I took a look inside. Right away I noticed that some small items were missing, including an expensive bottle of shampoo. We drove after Suro, soon spotting a waddling mound of tie-dye headed west. 'Go ahead and search me!' Suro screamed. 'I don't have your stuff!' Searching Suro meant an expedition through layers and layers of swaddling as Suro shrieked odd insults at us. 'Carrot!' was one of them. Most of us have been called worse things than carrots along life's trail, but to have a whole verbal vegetable garden rained down on you at top volume as you unwrap a mummified hippie soon has you rethinking the relative value of shampoo and a body search of a rhetorical porcupine. We gave up."

I

II

A MAN, A PONTIAC AND THREE NAKED GIRLS

On a cool March afternoon in 1995, Mark Sprinkle, 35, gave three girls a ride in his meticulously restored black Pontiac.

Sprinkle knew his young passengers. One, Natasha, had become a kind of stepdaughter when Sprinkle had lived with her mother — had, in fact, nearly married her mother. Sprinkle and mom had driven from Ukiah to Lake Tahoe to be joined in holy matrimony in Tahoe's secular circumstances, but Sprinkle had had a sudden premonition that marriage to this woman was not in his best interests. With the paperwork almost complete, the groom said, "No. I can't do it."

Sprinkle's would-be bride never forgave him.

A few months later, as the unlikely quartet drove out the old Masonite Road west of Ukiah in Sprinkle's pristine Pontiac, 13-year-old Natasha, daughter of the woman Sprinkle had stood up at the altar, suddenly shouted, "Let's race!"

The three girls were instantly nude, and Mr. Mark Sprinkle was westbound on a deserted logging road with three naked felonies.

Sprinkle would have saved himself a world of hurt if he'd jumped out of his Pontiac and run as fast and as far from his nude cargo as his asthmatic body could carry him.

But he didn't run, and he will be in prison for the rest of his life because the girls said when they were naked Sprinkle touched them.

Touched them.

Sprinkle didn't rape them, didn't beat them, didn't murder them. Sprinkle merely touched them on their "privates," as the girls described Sprinkle's alleged fleeting explorations of their reproductive organs when it got to court.

Sprinkle said he hadn't touched them, but the girls cried in court and the jury believed them and Mark Sprinkle was packed off to state prison for 45 years.

The disputed facts are many, but they tend overwhelmingly to back Sprinkle's version of events.

The voluptuous 13-year-old Natasha had a crush on Sprinkle. She'd known him as her mother's live-in boyfriend. He was nicer than her mother, she often said, so when her mother and Sprinkle parted ways, this child in a woman's body would often flee her mother's tumultuous home to the more tranquil shelter of Sprinkle's place.

When the girl appeared at his door, Sprinkle, rightly fearing his ex's vengeance if he so much as invited the girl inside, shunted her off to a married couple next door.

"Oh yeah. My ex," as Sprinkle refers to Chris, Natasha's mother and Sprinkle's former live-in girlfriend, "would have loved to catch me with Natasha."

When the unmaidenly maidens had shed their clothes in Sprinkle's car, the 13-year-old would later claim that Sprinkle had fondled her breasts and, in the romance of cop talk, "digitally penetrated" her.

"He rubbed my clit and played with my boobs," Natasha told the police three weeks after her Masonite Road adventure. These violations of her "privates," she said, had lasted a few seconds.

The nude ten year old, and the nude thirteen year old, said they'd merely looked on from the back seat at the front seat hijinks between Natasha and Sprinkle before Sprinkle had gotten around to cursory explorations of their clits and boobs. The ten year old was pre-boob but she said Sprinkle had nevertheless had given her pubes a hurried hands-on.

These alleged 90 seconds of gyno-explorations cost Sprinkle 45 years in prison, the sentences to run sequentially for each girl, fifteen years at a time. If he doesn't tell the parole board that he touched the girls — and say he is sorry he touched them — Mark Sprinkle will die in prison.

"Even if I did it — and I didn't — is life in prison a fair sentence for this?" Sprinkle asks.

Most people would say that given the circumstances of three girls, two of them prenatally nubile at the early age of 13, who voluntarily take their clothes off in front of a young man as one of them rubs her womanly breasts against him while simultaneously sex-talking him, well, shouldn't these provocations have modified the sentence several decades?

There was so much doubt about the reliability of the testimony of the three girls and the mother of the primary molestee that even the jury, or at least part of it, had doubts about the conviction.

Who is Mark Sprinkle?

"Me?" Sprinkle asks, surprised at the question.

"As you probably know," he begins, "I have spent time in the county jail for stupid shit — driving under the influence, suspended licenses, and I got three years and eight months for transportation of dope. When I got out, I worked driving truck and logging. I've always worked, always had a job.

"I was born in Marion, Indiana, October 8th, 1959 to Bruce and Rejean Sprinkle. My father was a self-employed plumber, she was a cheating drunk. I was the eighth child she had.

“There was Tonya, the oldest, then Bruce Jr., David, Mike, Jodi, Brent, Bethann, and me. Bruce Sr. got tired of sharing his wife with others, so he divorced Rejean and loaded up his 1954 Dodge pickup with a homemade camper on top and took us six youngest ones to California. He had enough tools to keep us fed and off we went. I am told I was 18 months old. I can’t say I remember that.

“We ended up in Redwood Valley in about 1962 at the doorstep of Richard and Doris Spencer, my great aunt and uncle on my mom’s side. Aunt Doris and Uncle Rick helped my dad buy a home on Condey Drive where we started to make a better life.

“My dad went to work for what was then the Mendocino County Hospital on Bush Street in Ukiah as a maintenance man. We never had much but we made it. My sister Jodi took care of all the things a mother would take care of if we had a mother, and all it took was a threat from her to tell Dad and I straightened right up.

“The first real trauma of my life that I remember is the family who lived behind us were the Webbs; they owned the whole mountain behind our little ranch in Redwood Valley where we had chickens, pigs, a cow — the basics of life in addition to whatever my dad made at his job in town at the old hospital.

“The Webbs were putting up a TV antenna and the father, son and daughter all got electrocuted. The daughter and father died, the son made it. They were nice people. This was the first real bad thing I can remember happening. A part of life is death, I learned.

“A few years later we moved to a house on Road I, still in Redwood Valley, and a lot closer to my aunt and uncle. It seemed to be better for me and my sister Beth. We were the only two who would stay a lot at my aunt and uncle’s; they seemed to want to do more for my sister Beth and me than the others.

“We had a lot more friends and neighbors on Road I than at our other place in the Valley. I remember one time I was at a friend’s up the road and refused to come home when my brother told me it was time. Well, needless to say, I got the beating of my life when I did go home. And I knew that day no father should beat his or any other child like I got beat that day.

“I went all through Redwood Valley School and had a few good friends I met there. I knew so many kids who belonged to Jim Jones’ congregation that some people asked me if I belonged too! Everyone wanted to know about them, or so I thought. It wasn’t until after the massacre in Guyana that I realized what an impact some of those who lost their lives had had on my life. I always missed some of the people who died there at Jonestown.

“Going to Redwood Valley School, a friend and I got into a little trouble at the school after hours. I was surprised my dad didn’t just peel the skin off my ass, but my aunt and uncle saved me and made me an offer I could not refuse. The offer my aunt and uncle made was if I went to church on Sunday they would pay my tuition to Mariposa School.

“It worked. I went to Mariposa School, where I not only learned but I enjoyed school for the first time. The classes were small and the teachers were cool, especially Dan and Carrie Hamburg. Buzz, as he was then called. We had to carpool to school and uncle Rick used to take me everyday from Redwood Valley to Low Gap Road where we could catch the old Mariposa school bus out Low Gap to where the school was. Everyday, my uncle and I stopped at the Redwood Valley Store to get coffee and a lunch for me. The man who owned the store then took his own life because two girls — I was told this by Jim Jones himself — had said he had molested them. This was a

real blow to many people.

“My uncle warned me to always be careful around girls who liked to lie. I should have listened to my uncle.

“As life went on, my brothers went into the service. My sister Jodi had met the man of her life and my sister Beth was in a boarding school at the blessing of my aunt and uncle. My dad had met a lady he had worked with and I really became more in the way than a tax deduction. Pat was her name, and she didn’t care much for me, and she knew something I did not know (yet).

“I spent a lot of time alone at home on Road I or at my aunt and uncle’s house. I was beyond parental control, with no real parents. I ended up in juvenile hall for being beyond parental control. My dad didn’t have time for Pat and me both, so he decided the Department of Social Services would be the best way to deal with me. Needless to say, I just became the toy of those in that system; for those who the county not only paid to take care of me but also protected when they didn’t do what they were supposed to do. I could expose some people, but I have forgiven them, and no one believed me then, so who would see the truth 30 years later?

“Living off and on the streets as a kid, I met a real friend, and Gordon Hansen is still a friend today. I could always count on a good meal at his mother’s house and a warm place to stay. The county feared my telling on those who ran their little ring of bad people so I was moved to Sonoma County and bounced around from foster home to foster home and all over the place. I left when things got tough and hitchhiked to Indiana looking for family but couldn’t find them. I got back to California by way of my thumb, and I was put back into the Sonoma County Dependent Unit.

“At 16, I was told that my dad, Bruce Sprinkle, was not my or my sister Beth’s real dad. It was a blow to me, but it sure did explain a hell of a lot in my past. I was told that Bruce Sprinkle had had a vasectomy before my sister and I were conceived. I’ve tried to talk to him about my life, but he shines me on. In fact, he — I’m sure at his wife Pat’s demand — has refused even to talk to me. But between my aunt and uncle, my brother, now out of the service, and the Hansen family, I had places to sleep and eat.

“When I was finally old enough to get out of the social service system, I got a job pumping gas for a while then drove a forklift until I had enough money to buy an old bread truck that was converted into a home on wheels. I worked the rest of the summer, saved a little money for a trip to Idaho with a gal I met named Fay.

“We ended up in Counsel, Idaho, working on a home remodel. Fay soon left and within a year I ended up back in Ukiah where I got married and busted for burning dumpsters and divorced shortly thereafter. I was the only one who went to jail for burning the dumpsters out of the four of us who did it. After a year in county jail and paying for all dumpsters to be repaired, I decided to go back to Idaho until it got so cold beer wouldn’t come out of the can.

“I bought a red, white and blue school bus. I now knew I was a hippie all the way. I lived, traveled and partied in the ol’ bus all over the West.”

Enter Ms. Christine Bailey-Fulmer and her daughter, Natasha.

Ms. Bailey-Fulmer was a longtime acquaintance of Sprinkle’s. She’d been a hippie of sorts, too. But there were hippies and there were hippies in Mendocino County. Working class hippies tended to sink into hard drug use, middle class hippies cut their hair and dove back into the swim as the system’s enforcers and middlemen — judges, lawyers, therapists (of course), teachers, school administrators,

and public bureaucrats. You still can’t throw a bong in the Mendocino County Courthouse without it hitting a reentry hippie. Middle-aged officials who once romped with teen runaways back in the longhair days now swell up in faux indignation at a man accused of fondling the breasts of a 38 B cup thirteen-year-old who’d gleefully shed her clothes in the front seat of his car.

But Ms. Christine Multi-Hyphen Fulmer, wielding her alluring female child Natasha like a weapon, had used the girl before she met Sprinkle to go after the men who’d done her wrong.

And there were lots of them.

George Hoffman was almost snagged by the Christine trap just before she hooked Mark Sprinkle. Hoffman was one of mom’s ex-husbands. He’d been legally married to her. Christine, apparently tiring of her husband, had accused him of molesting Natasha, who was the daughter of a Washington man also accused of molestation by Christine. Hoffman, after a long court battle, had fended off the charges.

Mommy Chris would often accuse men of molesting Natasha.

“I first met Chris,” Sprinkle remembers, “when she was living in her car with two little kids. I knew who she was. She’d left her kids’ dad because he was a drunk who abused all of them. I gave her and the kids a place to stay until Chris found a permanent place to live. Some time later I ran into Chris in Ukiah and she tells me the child she is expecting is mine. This was not true. She just needed a place to live. I never saw her again until ten years down the road. And when I did see her again in 1994, she told me I needed to help her get her child Amanda from her ex, George Hoffman. George had had custody of Amanda all of Amanda’s life. Chris said George had molested Natasha a few years back, and just as soon as she received this lump sum of money from a lawsuit she had going in the state of Washington — a sex case, of course — she was going to the cops to tell them that George had also molested Natasha.”

Mark Sprinkle was the next ex to get the molesto jacket from Natasha’s mom, and he got it bad, so bad he’s still in the state prison at Ione where, in February of 2012, he was again turned down for parole.

III

FOOL FOR LOVE

Why was Billy Mayfield still in prison? Because Jerry Brown, State Attorney General, was keeping him there.

Billy Mayfield should have been out in 2002 when he’d completed his 17-year sentence for second degree murder, not only completed it but completed it with a literally perfect disciplinary record and a college degree from U.C. Davis.

Mayfield was again up for parole. The one fact about his case contained in the usual garbled press release from the DA’s office announcing his hearing was a ludicrous one, but it was out there and we’ll get to it.

The DA passes these careless press releases along, and the Mendocino County media just as carelessly print them and they’re carelessly read out on KZYY as if they’re true, and people who know nothing about what they read or hear from the press releases write indignant letters to the Parole Board demanding that the prisoner never, ever be released.

Consider the known facts of the Billy Mayfield case, the facts testified to in 1985 when Mayfield shot and killed a man named Mark Snyder.

Billy Mayfield met Bridgett Lincoln in 1978 when Bridgett came into the Mayfield family's Willits Tire Center to pick up some tires for a boyfriend. Along with the tires, Bridgett picked up Billy, and Billy and Bridgett were, Billy says, "off and on for several years before we got married at Lake Tahoe on October 23rd, 1983. We both thought it was time to settle down and start a family."

The marriage lasted, or at least endured, for a turbulent year, until October of 1984 when Bridgett began seeing a young Willits man named Mark Snyder more than she was seeing her husband. Mrs. Mayfield had started staying out all night and lying nonstop about where she'd been, what she'd been doing, and who she'd been doing it with.

Willits is a small town, a very small town. Billy soon heard that his wife and Mark Snyder were being seen together a little too often, and that Bridgett seemed a little too publicly affectionate towards Snyder, seeing as how she was a married woman.

Bridgett was also seeing a lot of Mr. Crank, flying on Mr. C's methamphetamine, a chemical accelerant not known for encouraging rational behavior, especially rational sexual behavior. Meth, or crank, was all over Mendocino County at the time. Still is, and it's a killer.

All the while Bridgett was seeing Mark Snyder, she kept on telling Billy that she loved him, that she and Mark Snyder were "just friends." And Billy went on loving Bridgett and going off to work every day until the horizontal nature of Bridgett's "friendship" with Mark Snyder became so obvious that even Bridgett's love-numbed husband could no longer pretend that Bridgett was faithful to him or had any intention of being faithful to him.

Billy Mayfield said later that he knew Snyder casually "from the local party scene."

The "local party scene," then and now, certainly has its celebratory moments, but it's not likely to be confused with a debutante's ball. Drugs and drop-fall drinking tend to fuel the merriment, which is much more grim, finally, than any temporary jubilation the party-ers might enjoy.

The Snyders and the Mayfields couldn't help knowing each other. Like the Mayfields, the Snyders had been in Willits forever. Mark Snyder and his father were members of the Brotherhood of Operating Engineers. Mark, 29, was working mostly out of Santa Rosa but lived with his parents in Willits, just down the street from the Mayfield family's tire business.

Bridgett's adventure with Mark Snyder began to make both families very nervous, not that Billy's parents had ever cared much for Bridgett to begin with, pegging her early on as unstable and mercenary. It seems likely that the Snyders felt the same way about their son's new love interest.

When Billy could no longer ignore the reality of his wife's infatuation with Mark Snyder, Billy called the Snyder home. He asked Mark to clarify Mark's relationship with Bridgett, who was also known as Mrs. Billy Mayfield.

"I wanted to know what he was doing with my wife. I called his house and left a message that if Mark had anything to speak with me about, to please get hold of me at the shop or at my house east of Willits out toward Pine Mountain. I never did hear from him directly."

But it was Billy's father, not Billy, who heard back from Mark Snyder. Mark returned Billy's call by telephoning the Mayfield's tire shop. Thinking that he was talking to Billy when he was actually talking to Billy's dad, a belligerent Snyder threatened to harm Billy if Billy didn't leave him alone.

Mark Snyder might have benefited from a crash course in first causes with a follow-up course in the

ethics of adultery. First lesson: Yo! Mark! You're sleeping with another man's wife. You're outtaline, and she's outtaline. You are not the victim here. Get it?

Snyder didn't get it. He seemed to think he was the injured party. He seemed to think he could sleep with another man's wife without that man asking so much as *que pasa, cabrone?*

One night in February of 1985, Billy discovered one of his cars parked in Snyder's garage. It was the car Bridgett drove. It was one thing for his wife to be flagrantly in the arms of another man, but it was doubly brazen of Bridgett to expect her husband to subsidize the relationship with free transportation.

That was it for Billy.

Kind of.

The couple filed for divorce in February of 1985, but Billy still had a bad case for Bridgett and wanted her back. And Bridgett told Billy she wanted to be back. In fact, she did come back to Billy from time to time, often spending the night with him in their old house east of Willits, loving him while she was with him, and promising they "could work things out."

Then she'd run straight back to Mark Snyder and tell him that he was the true love of her life. And in between her estranged husband and Mark Snyder, Bridgett managed to fit in at least two other men in hot sheet encounters. She loved them, too, when she was with them.

"We discussed our marriage constantly," Billy recalls. "Bridgett slept with me when she was at our house every week during our separation, and we talked on the phone almost every day. We even went on a weekend to San Francisco two weeks before the shooting, and right after that she told me she was pregnant, and that it was my baby because she hadn't slept with anyone else. She wasn't pregnant, and she'd had more sexual partners than just Mark and me as it turned out."

All day on March 11, 1985, Bridgett called Billy to tell him she loved him. Bridgett made these calls from, of all places, Billy's brother's house in Redwood Valley where she lay with Mark Snyder in Billy's brother's master bedroom that Billy's brother shared with his wife when Billy's brother and his wife were at home.

Jezebel herself would have trouble trumping this one.

Billy was haunted by her persistent calls promising Billy that he was the only man she ever loved. Billy got drunk, smoked some pot, and then got drunker with his friend Dave Telemchuck. Billy couldn't stop thinking about Bridgett. She was his wife, she'd said she loved him eight times that day. But, Billy thought, I'll bet right now she's in bed with Mark Snyder.

Which, of course, she was. And only three days before, Billy had driven over to his brother Brent's house where he'd found Bridgett in bed with a man named Ted Davis.

"I fought Davis and ran him off. Bridgett came out of the bathroom, picked up a dinner fork and stabbed me in the hand. I pulled the fork out of my knuckle and out of her hand, slapped her and left. Bridgett filed a complaint with the police then dropped it."

Three days later, it was already well after midnight when Billy asked his buddy Dave Telemchuck if Dave wanted to go for a ride.

"Sure," a wary Telemchuck said. "I'll go so long as we don't go to your brother's house in Redwood Valley."

Billy drove straight to his brother's house in Redwood Valley, Telemchuck protesting the whole way. "Mark always carries a gun, Billy. Please don't go to your brother's house."

Telemchuck knew something bad was about to happen. Two men with guns, one of the men in bed with the other man's wife.

How could something bad not happen?

Sure enough there was Mark Snyder's truck parked right in front of Billy's brother's house, and there was Bridgett's Plymouth Reliant, the car that Billy funded, both vehicles sitting out front of Billy's brother's house like they belonged there.

The people who did belong there, Billy's brother Brent and his wife, were in Ukiah. Bridgett and Mark were in the master bedroom, asleep in the marital bed of Mrs. and Mrs. Brent Mayfield.

When Billy and Telemchuck got to Redwood Valley and saw that Bridgett and Mark were in the house it was two in the morning. Telemchuck again pleaded with Billy not to do anything.

"Snyder's got a gun, Billy," Telemchuck reminded Billy. "He always carries a gun."

Billy, by way of an answer, backed into Snyder's truck, the first time accidentally as he turned around to leave, the second time on purpose, and Billy and Telemchuck drove home to Willits.

"When I got back to Willits," Billy remembers, "I called the house, my brother Brent's house, because I knew Bridgett and Snyder were there. Nobody answered. I got my gun and went back to Redwood Valley. I climbed through a window and there they were in one of the bedrooms. Snyder had a pistol on the bedstand. He went for it and I shot him."

Billy, not quite believing what he'd done, yelled, "Oh, my god!" and ran down the hall and right on through a glass door to his truck, "which I wrecked at the turn into my driveway in Willits. I turned myself in about an hour later."

Bail was set at \$125,000. Billy's folks raised the money by putting up their property, and Billy was released to their custody on the condition that he live with them in Ukiah while he awaited trial.

Now right about here you can be excused for assuming that Bridgett would stay far, far away from anyone named Mayfield, but ...

"Bridgett would come and stay with me in Ukiah while I was out on bail, not every week but a few times. Then one day after I'd left the house to run an errand or something, Bridgett took several items, one was a dress belonging to my mother. My sister-in-law drove to where Bridgett stayed in Santa Rosa and got all the things back from Bridgett the same day. Bridgett never came back after that, and I didn't see her again, but she would call off and on, and she'd drive by our house in Ukiah without stopping. She mailed me a couple of cards telling me that she still loved me. But it was over."

Billy pleaded self-defense.

Which it clearly was, what with Mark Snyder armed and in bed with Billy's wife in Billy's brother's house, what with Mark Snyder going for his gun but Billy pulling the trigger of his gun first.

The Ukiah jury found Billy Mayfield guilty of second degree murder, although Billy's attorney, Richard Petersen, made a strong case for lawful self-defense. Snyder would have shot Billy if Billy hadn't shot him first.

Billy got 17-years-to-life. He's been locked up for 27 years now.

Most adult Americans recognize that the story of Bridgett and Billy is what used to be known as "a crime of passion." In 1955 you got ten years at San Quentin. In 1855 you weren't even prosecuted and the community wondered out loud why you didn't shoot both of them.

A crime of passion could happen to any person driven temporarily crazy by jealousy, especially the kind of jealousy inspired by one-way love. A crime of passion is not committed by a criminal in the daily routine of a career in random mayhem; a crime of passion is committed by an otherwise law-abiding

person who suddenly snaps. Or, as in this case, a person driven to snap.

Billy Mayfield did not have a criminal history when he shot Mark Snyder because he wasn't a criminal then, and he's not a criminal now.

Seventeen-to-life was supposed to mean if Billy got with the program he'd be free after 17 years, maybe sooner, maybe the minimum of ten-and-a-half years that would ordinarily apply in his case like his.

Billy got with the program better than any prisoner you can name in the history of California State Prison system. The late Mendocino County District Attorney, Norm Vroman, described Billy "as a Department of Corrections poster child for what a prisoner can do." Billy Mayfield's not only been a model prisoner, he's been a perfect prisoner.

Among his many other achievements, Billy, as mentioned, has completed his college degree through UC Davis, and he's compiled the nearly miraculous prison record of not a single disciplinary write-up in all the years he's been confined. The past few years, Billy has been appointed a lead man of the prison's optical lab, a prison-run business generating upwards of \$3 million a year. "Lead man" in this booming enterprise is a crucial responsibility based both on solid technical skills and, of course, trustworthiness.

But Mendocino County, undoubtedly eager to pass the case to the State to avoid being in the middle of bad feelings between the Mayfield and Snyder families, asked the State to step in to prosecute the case. Mendocino County said it had a conflict of interest. The State agreed that Mendocino County somehow couldn't be trusted to honestly try Billy Mayfield.

When Mendocino County stepped aside, the State Attorney General stepped in to prosecute Billy Mayfield. They're still prosecuting him, sending out inflammatory press releases designed to stir up public feeling against the guy just before he goes before the parole board and showing up at every parole hearing to argue against Billy's release.

Michael D. O'Reilley, an unusually virulent state deputy attorney general who has appeared at Mayfield's last two parole hearings, told *The Willits News* just days before Mayfield's annual parole hearing in July of 2007, "On the face of it, I'll admit his prison record these last many years [sic] has been impressive, but there are many inmates who perform well within the structured prison setting."

O'Reilley also commented that he thought Billy Mayfield's presentation to the parole board was "polished, but I noticed he reverted back [sic] to blaming the victim, blaming the ex-wife. It was clear to me he hasn't learned a thing, he has no remorse," adding an entirely irrelevant mention of two low-intensity domestic violence episodes prior to Billy's incarceration 21 years ago, neither of which were sustained, but which, to O'Reilley, indicated that Billy "continues to be a threat to women."

Most gratuitously of all, however, was O'Reilley's remark to *The Willits News* that the state prosecutor thought the letters to the parole board on Billy's behalf were insincere.

"I will assume," O'Reilley said, "some of the letters have been sent in good faith by people who honestly believe what they were writing, but I think a number are sent at the behest of the Mayfield family, and I think those meaningless."

Billy has lamented every night of his life since the single shot that killed Mark Snyder that he should have listened to his friend Dave Telemchuck and stayed home instead of driving to Redwood Valley where his wife was in bed with another man in his brother's house.

Now in his mid-fifties, Billy Mayfield is not the

same man he was at age 28. He readily concedes that he's benefited from the many hours of counseling he's completed in prison.

Billy has sued the State to get himself out of prison. His most recent suit is supported by Mendocino County Superior Court Judge David Nelson. Nelson agrees the State is now holding Billy Mayfield illegally.

Bridgett?

Last anybody heard, she'd been married and divorced two more times.

So here came Billy Mayfield's 2009 parole hearing, and here came the State with a ridiculous press release that appeared in the local papers, a press release that reduced the entire matter to this preposterous paragraph funneled through the Mendocino County District Attorney's Office: "The AG's [sic] Office announced this week that it opposes the parole of William Mayfield, who was convicted of killing a Willits man and was sentenced to life in prison in 1985. Mayfield has been in prison for the killing of 29-year-old Mark Snyder. The AG's Office states that Mayfield abused his wife who filed for divorce and was living with Snyder. Before shooting Snyder in bed, Mayfield let the air out of Snyder's truck tires."

A man intent upon murder lets the air out of his victim's tires so the victim's ghost can leave the premises?


Every time the DA sends one of these offhand death notices out for local media to faithfully regurgitate, about fifty Mendocino County law-and-order cadres write to the Parole Board to keep the man locked up. They know nothing about these cases beyond these press releases and, of course, the local media don't bother to fill in the blanks.

And the Snyder family, right down to children unborn in 1985, show up at Billy Mayfield's parole hearing to say, "Mr. Mayfield took our loved one's life."


Since 2002, Billy Mayfield himself has been a crime victim, a victim first of the State Parole Board which, in 2008, finally agreed to parole him after keeping him in prison six years beyond his legally adjudicated release date. Even the Parole Board and the State Attorney General's Office couldn't think up more reasons to keep Mayfield locked up.

















Then Governor Schwarzenegger himself, for no stated reason whatsoever, personally vetoed Mayfield's release. It's not right. In fact, it's a crime.

Bruce Anderson is Robert Mailer Anderson's Uncle.



San Francisco Firefighters endorse the following candidates



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 CA State Senator MARK LENO *	No on Prop A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 KAT * ANDERSON
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BOONT FISH IN A BARREL

By Robert Mailer Anderson Art by Sandow Birk

Billy Lee didn't leave his gun in the truck. The time it takes to walk out of the bar, go back to the vehicle? Fuck that. That's why they call it a sidearm, you carry it with you like your second third leg. He didn't lock his door either. It was the country. He'd lived here his whole life. Fifth generation Californian. Who's town was it, anyway? He stomped across the bar's gravel parking lot in his work boots, feeling his Iraq issued M9 Beretta bite into the small of his back, hidden easily by his hunting jacket. It was dark out. A sliver moon and a million stars. The Lodge was the only place open, aside from the Pic 'n Pay right next to it, unless you wanted to drive half an hour out of the valley. He strode past the other dusty and dented trucks, stopping in front of the lone black Cadillac Escalade with tinted windows. He spit on the chrome bumper. "Hola!" he said, eyes narrowing into a threat, using up one of the twenty Spanish words he knew that wasn't some kind of food. He stared through the sallow light bleeding from the bar window's beer sign, trying to see if anybody was in the driver's seat. How many Michoacan dope farmers fit into an SUV? Used to be jokes like that about grape pickers and lowriders. No punch line here. The situation got even less humorous as Billy Lee asked himself,

[Continued on page 30]



"The Riddle of the Sphinx", Sandow Birk, 2007. Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 20" x 30". Courtesy of the Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco.

how many of these illegals had been huddled down on his back acreage growing Mendo Purps, abusing his property and then throwing down on him while he was checking his fence line.

I can't walk where? 30K for my gate code, huh? Rat poison near the creek? All the time in the world to set out beef heart fertilizer to tighten up your nugs? Bear traps?

Not in my back yard.

Billy Lee kicked a nice impression with his heel just to the left of his spit.

They'd be out of that gangstamobile by now if there was anybody inside. He looked to the entrance of the Lodge, seeing if anybody was coming out in a rush.

Nada.

He was burning through his bilingual abilities in a direct relationship to his patience.

Well, there's two thousand plants and a dead asshole with an AK47 up at my ranch, Billy Lee thought. Let's see who's drinking inside.

Billy Lee flung open the door. The Lodge's new owners had installed new fixtures and a fresh coat of paint, replacing the old trophy heads with locally killed long-tusked hogs and buck racks, but the bar had again begun acquiring dust and unidentifiable stains, reverting back to the same old watering hole it had always been, a spot for locals to spend long nights getting liquored up and settling scores. Tourists stopped coming in after the third month. A year after the remodel, it was fast becoming as rank as an alcoholic's pancreas. To Billy Lee, who had recently come back home honorably discharged and just wanted to drink and bullshit in peace, it was a sanctuary.

Ricky was talking to Terry at the bar. Ricky had done a tour too. They had all gone to high school together, but Terry was a grade younger. Still they played sports together since elementary school, even put on the pads for alumni football last Homecoming against an all-res Pomo team out of Covello and Laytonville. Fucking 6-6 tie. Happy Thanksgiving.

"So what'd you chew over there?" Terry was asking.

"Anything," Ricky answered. "And I mean anything. Guys got some weird tobacco brands I aint never seen. *Predator. Dukes. Revved up.* Sometimes guys just broke cigarettes and stuffed 'em into their mouths, if that's all there was. And after some shit goes down, brothers would share a chaw straight from their mouths."

Terry's eyes widened, and he let out a sharp laugh.

"I know," Ricky continued. "But you don't even care. You're sitting there after some fire fight, trying to get a dip, wonderin', 'Did that all really just happen?'"

Ricky's hand shook in pantomime and sense memory.

Out of habit more than anything else, Billy Lee took a stool next to Ricky and signaled to Shooter behind the bar that he wanted his usual, a shot of Jack and a can of Coors Lite to chase it. His friends said hello and Billy Lee glared back toward the bar's bathroom where two Mexican

men sat on stools, guarding the shitter as if it were Fort Knox. One had tattoos on his face that made him look like a crying clown.

Spooky, Billy Lee thought. If you gave a shit what some jailhouse spic did trying to cover up the fact that he was a faggot.

"Keep staring, wetback..."

Billy Lee almost rolled up his sleeve to show them his tattooed bicep: *Siemper Fi. Three tours, bitch. And I pay taxes...*

"Speaking of wetbacks," Terry said. "Deputy said harvest is early this year. They just found another dead one dumped by the bridge near Hendy Woods. Shot in the face."

Billy Lee nodded.

"Deputy said of course nobody knows him. Not now. And he didn't have any ID. Probably not even a birth certificate back where he came from."

"Half of the Mexicans around here never existed," Ricky said, and took a look back at the two near the bathroom himself. "But boy they sure are ugly."

"Deputy said they just write 'em up as suicides to get 'em off the books. Nobody gives a fuck."

Billy Lee shot back his bourbon.

"I certainly don't."

"Self-cleanin' oven," Ricky added, agreeing with his friend.

"Man, that's a long way to go and a lot of shit to go through just to come here to get shot in the face," Terry said.

"Yep," Bill Lee said, taking a long swig of his beer.

"They're cutting off heads and hands now too," Terry added.

Billy Lee was unimpressed. He'd seen the dead. Your body was just a bunch of meat once you stopped breathing. Go ahead, hack it up.

"Desert shitholes," Ricky stated. "That's where the crawl from."

"We're lucky," Terry said. "They got a kind of poor we aint got in America."

Billy Lee watched Ronnie Holcombe leave his spot down the bar and make his way back to the restroom. He said something to Clown Face, and then the other Mexican followed him into the bathroom.

That's some sad shit. Billy Lee thought, knowing that not more than two years ago Ronnie's wife Sue had smothered their little girl, accidentally, falling asleep on her while breast feeding after going on a three-day meth binge. And Ronnie still wanted more.

Terry saw Billy Lee and Ricky were watching the transaction.

"Remember when your cousins used to sit on them stools?" Terry asked Ricky.

"Oh well," Ricky replied.

Clown Face stared at the men watching him.

"You got a problem, amigo?" Billy Lee said, looking straight ahead at his own sneering reflection in the bar mirror. He wanted his question to hang out there in the room like a stale fart. Unclaimed. Sniff that.

He thought he heard Bozo grumble. But it

could have been Mike missing another shot at the pool table. Always half-drunk with a jaw full of chew you couldn't tell curses from promises out of that guy's mouth. Another logger now selling garden hose at Wal-Mart in Ukiah. It wasn't only the trees that had fallen. Wearing an apron. Peddling concrete bird baths. Plastic toys from China that broke the first time your kids tried to play with them.

Terry bumped his elbow, looking at him with the face of a confused bird dog, asking Billy Lee if he had missed something in these woods. Or was he somewhere else back in an Iraq desert just then?

Billy Lee took a swig of his beer.

Terry had no idea what it had been like for him over there. He acted like it was some video game he hadn't played yet. And Billy Lee couldn't even describe the sun. So much light. A constant squinting. Dehydration. So where do you begin? Terry's first question to him after he came back from Baghdad – marching into that hell hole past civilians squashed flat like frogs, burnt out cars with passengers still in them, all charred to shit, tanks pushing everything aside or rolling right over the top, fires burning, so much spent artillery it was awesome, like God wanted to blow that city and Haji all the way back to Bible times – what Terry was dying to know was "Do they got fishin' over there?"

"On the Tigris or Euphrates?"

"Aint it the Nile?"

Billy Lee stood up. He was ready to shoot some fish in a barrel.

Robert Mailer Anderson is Bruce Anderson's nephew.

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Summer Berries

Courtesy of Delilah's Farm Report



Summer is finally here and the farmer's markets are full of summer fruit; peaches, nectarines and berries of all kinds. I can't decide whether to make shortcakes, ice cream, or one of my simple favorites, a berryful summer pudding. Here are some of my favorite recipes for desserts this time of year.

Strawberry Shortcake – *My grandmother made this many times every summer. She would serve huge portions to all of our friends and neighbors at picnics and dinners.*

Shortcake

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 teaspoons baking powder (aluminum free is preferable)
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¾ cup milk

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 400 fahrenheit.

Using a Food Processor:

Place all dry ingredient in a food processor and pulse for 5 seconds. Add butter and quickly pulse 5 times. Add milk and egg and pulse until just mixed, about 30 seconds.

Using a Mixer:

Place all dry ingredients in bowl of mixer. Mix until well blended. Add butter and mix for 20 seconds. Add milk and egg and mix until just blended, about 30 seconds.

Grease and flour 12 muffin tins or line with cupcake liners.

Fill about 2/3 full.

Bake for about 15 minutes, or until just lightly browned on top.

Berries

Ingredients:

- 4 pints of strawberries; hulls removed & quartered
- ½ cup sugar

Preparation

- Mix together and set aside.

Split muffins in half crosswise. Place bottom in a bowl and top with about 2 tablespoons of berries and juice. Place muffin top over this and top with about ¼ cup of berries and juice. Top with sweetened whipped cream.

Be sure to freeze some of the wonderful berries to enjoy this winter. Rinse and dry the berries and place in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Place in freezer until frozen solid. Place berries in a freezer bag.

Summer Pudding – *This is a very simple dessert that always impresses. Be sure to start the day before you want to serve it.*

Ingredients

- 8 cups assorted berries, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup sugar
- 12 slices of white or egg bread with crusts removed
- ice cream, whipped cream or sweetened crème fraiche for serving

Preparation

Add sugar to fruit, stir well and set aside while fruit releases juices, about an hour. Line a 6-cup bowl with plastic wrap leaving about 6 inches of overhang. Line with bread slices, cutting to fit tightly. Put about ½ of the berries in the bowl. Top with bread, then the rest of the berries, reserving about ½ cup of the juice.. Top with the rest of the bread. Cover with the plastic wrap and place a plate on top. Put a heavy can or skillet on top to weigh it down. Place in refrigerator for at least 8 hours or overnight.

When ready to serve, remove the weight and uncover the pudding. Invert onto a serving plate. Pour over the reserved juice. Serve with ice cream, whipped cream or crème fraiche.

Summer Berry or Peach Ice Cream – *You can make this ice cream with any type of berries or peaches. Or leave out the fruit and make vanilla ice cream to serve with the shortcake, summer pudding or simply topped with berries.*

Ingredients

- 2 cups berries (if using strawberries, remove hull and cut into quarters), or peaches peeled and cut into bite size chunks.
- Juice of ½ lemon
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup sugar
- pinch of salt
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preparation

Mix fruit with lemon juice and ½ cup sugar and set aside to release their juices, about one hour. Strain fruit and place juice in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and reduce to syrup. Set aside.

In a heavy saucepan mix egg yolks, 1 cup of sugar, salt, cream and vanilla. Cook over medium low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens to coat the back of a spoon. Remove from heat and pour into a bowl. Stir in the reserved fruit syrup and vanilla. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled. Pour custard into the bowl of an ice cream maker. When mixture begins to thicken, add fruit and continue processing per the instructions of your ice cream maker. Place in a covered bowl in the freezer until ready to serve. Let sit at room temperature for a few minutes before serving to soften slightly.



What You Need to Know about Prop A

Vote NO on Prop A Means

We keep our recycling and composting system that has made San Francisco "America's Greenest City"*

Keep 900 good-paying San Francisco jobs

Preserving our historic and successful relationship with Recology, our waste and recycling company that's employee-owned and based here in San Francisco

*International Green City Index

Prop A Means

5 separate contracts with multiple companies to handle recycling and waste in San Francisco

Over 900 jobs could be lost

Up to 5 out-of-state companies handling your waste and recycling service...who will you call if you have a problem?

On Tuesday, June 5th

**The San Francisco Democratic Party,
San Francisco Labor Council,
San Francisco League of Conservation Voters,
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce,
and the San Francisco Republican Party**

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Vote NO on Prop A!