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Guy Wright



Big Revolt In the Mission

One day soon we may wake up to realize the redevelopment revolt in the Mission District is an insurrection on a par with our famous freeway revolt.

Both uprisings stem from the same root — Little Joe Citizen's loss of confidence in the way the experts are tinkering with his life.

The Redevelopment Agency, with director M. Justin Herman at the helm, wants to facelift the Mission 860 million worth.

The Mission rebels want veto power over Herman's plans.

The demand for a veto may be unreasonable, but the concern that lies behind it is not.

The redevelopment revolt came about in the very same way as the freeway revolt. These weren't instantaneous temper tantrums. Neither happened overnight.

The freeway revolt came only after Little Joe and his friends got fed up to here with Big Brother insolence and ineptitude. They watched freeways being built where both common sense and the common welfare said they shouldn't go. Finally they screamed for a halt.

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THE SAME THING is now happening with redevelopment. The Mission's apprehensions cannot be dismissed as fear of the unknown. Quite the contrary. The Mission rebels have watched other redevelopment projects take form, and they don't like what they've seen. They don't want the same thing done to them.

These people can't be dismissed as crackpots. Their stand is supported by 57 neighborhood groups and indorsed by the Human Rights Commission.

All thinking San Franciscans should share their concern, for it is possible to make a case that our city would be better off with no Redevelopment Agency at all.

San Francisco suffers from a serious population imbalance. We have more than our share of the elderly and young single adults. We are way below the national average in middle-aged, middle-income couples with school-age children — the group that acts as the balance wheel of civic life.

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THIS POPULATION imbalance is basic to most of San Francisco's problems — several costly studies that tell us so are gathering dust at City Hall.

The Redevelopment Agency, as our main tool for shaping the San Francisco of tomorrow, could be used to correct this population imbalance by building suitable housing for middle income families in good weather zones.

It isn't being used that way. On the contrary, the end result of redevelopment so far has been to aggravate the population imbalance, not to correct it.

A second helping of Western Addition isn't the answer. That can best be described as modernistic tenements. Gateway Center is subsidized housing for the well-to-do.

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IN A SUN-KISSED parcel south of Market, Redevelopment plans to build a convention complex, including an arena for INDOOR sports. Another 41 sun-drenched acres are staked out for a college campus. Thus the good weather zones are being gobbled up.

There is nothing in this record to suggest that Redevelopment gives a hoot where Little Joe and his family are going to live.

Now it proposes to move into the Mission, the historic and sunny preserve of the baby-carriage. And it has met, quite predictably, with a revolt.

The stand of the Mission rebels amounts to a vote of no-confidence, based on past performance. It calls for a searching reappraisal of our redevelopment policy.

BROTHER JUNIPER



"Down, Boy!"

GRIN AND BEAR IT



"On account of our pay always being gone by Wednesday, I hear our representatives are gonna ask for Thursdays and Fridays off!"

Charles Denton



Sex Change at Home

I always wondered what effect it would have on an average, ordinary family if one of the members underwent a sex change, and now I know. As a source of domestic discord, it's worse than having your lost wallet mailed home in a perfumed envelope.

The reason I'm able to report this first-hand is that it's happened to us. Our Juliet suddenly turned out to be Jules.

Now before your eyebrows get lost under your toupee, I should hasten to explain that "J," as we're calling it during truce negotiations, is a Siamese kitten we got Margot for her fifth birthday.

And she didn't actually turn into him, exactly. She was he all along, only we didn't know it. The lady who sold it to us had about six kittens all done up with ribbons — pink for girls and blue for boys. Sort of like the sticker on the window of a new car that lists the standard equipment.

We opted for the pink, inasmuch as my wife is unalterably convinced that male animals are by nature untrustworthy and footloose. And since the transaction transpired on a Saturday morning when I was feeling very blue indeed, I was in no position to argue the point.

ANYWAY, Margot named it Juliet, and in no time at all the kitten was responding to it like a spinster getting whistled at by a Romeo.

We did notice that there was something slightly unJulietish about the way it kept stalking the dog, Queenie. But nobody paid attention until my wife took it to the vet for a checkup, and he remarked in passing that Juliet sure was a funny name for a boy cat. Since then we've been torn by indecision worse than a guy who wakes up in a hotel fire and finds out he packed his wife's negligee instead of his own bathrobe.

"You can't argue with nature," I proclaimed when my wife broke the news. "From now on, Juliet is Jules!" My wife said, "Yukkk." Margot said, "Ickkk." Little Chuck voted, "Neato."

I added up the ballots and suggested a compromise. "How about Julie?" My wife said, "Hmmm." Margot said "Ehhhh." Chuck said, "Gaw."

"Then it's settled," I said triumphantly. "The cat's name is now officially Julie. BIG Julie . . . from Chi."

WELL NEEDLESS to say, that went down like watercress sandwiches at a football training table. "It's ridiculous to change her name now," my wife argued. "It'll only confuse her."

"That'll confuse him!" I protested. "What do you think it's going to do to him to go through life thinking he's a she. He'll wind up on some veterinarian's couch. **Besides, I'm not going to have THAT kind of a cat around here!"**

"What does THAT mean?" Chuck wanted to know. **"Go to bed,"** his mother told him sternly.

"The next thing I know, you'll be hanging a jeweled collar on him and putting cologne behind his ears," I went on. "Piffle," my wife retorted. "All cats are essentially female anyway."

"That will come as quite a shock to a lot of mama cats," I reminded her. "And how's it going to look to the neighbors if I go calling 'Here, Juliet' and this big male lummox answers? They're liable to call the SPCA vice squad."

But as things now stand, the females in the house insist on calling him Juliet, and frankly I'm afraid they're winning. I mean, is it right for a cat to jump on a chair and scream when it sees a mouse?

Dick Nolan



A Sour Trip To the Country

At harvest time you go out into the country and buy farm stuff from farmers. It is the law.

It is the law evolved by city dwellers through ages and ages of anxiety about is there enough to eat.

So you go see for yourself that the farms and the farmers are still there, all right.

That's part of it.

Also it is to commune with the land, to get a pumpkin for Halloween, to think about times when your folks WERE farmers, merely to move (restless), and because it is a thing to do before winter comes.

You are kidding yourself quite a lot in California, of course.

"Harvest time" is an ambiguous phrase in these fecund parts. The land never goes decently to sleep under the snow. Jack Frost is an unemployed bum.

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HOWEVER—off buckity-buckity to Sonoma County, where the grapevines, anyway, dress themselves in the right colors for Fall, and even some of the trees remind you of New England blaze. It's nice.

We bought apples and walnuts and fresh home made bread, and would even have bought some wine, only we had to conclude that the wineries are (at last) putting on the tourists so flagrantly that it's not to be encouraged.

It's the tasting room bit. Poor souls from Iowa being given an oilthand swig of the grape, oohing and aahing over the experience, and then being sold fifth rate wines at premium prices. They'd do better in supermarkets.

At one such tasting room the resident churl offered us a vinegary red which was too bad to be believed. Yeeech! We put down the glasses and fled.

Tourism is a disease, friends. I keep telling you that. And the tourist bureau keeps citing me dollar statistics, as sour as the lousy wine.

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IN SONOMA TOWN we bought some books in the art & book store. A lady was saying, "I'm just trying to get oriented, we just moved here." And the bookstore man replied heartily, "You're lucky! My wife and I have lived all over the world, and this is the best place there is!"

Chacun a son gout, alors. Sonoma has just about made it from sleepy Spanish to creepy California conglomerate. Mission bells and neon walk-wait traffic signals; adobe and supermarket modrun.

Well, for ranging the back roads in the ceremonial harvest ride there is but one proper vehicle today, and that is the small sports car. I am a nut for small sports cars. For this occasion I borried the loan of an MGB-GT, a newish model I had not test-driven before. Mark it VERY satisfactory!

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THOSE OF US who were writing about automotive safety years before Ralph Nader got around to it were quick, long ago, to spot the safety factors which are a bonus to the satisfaction you get from driving a well designed personal car. The sound sports car drives fast, straight and true; it maneuvers quickly; it stops without sway; it keeps its wheels on the road.

The MGB-GT does all of these things. Also, on four amazingly efficient cylinders, it gives way to no snorting Belchfire 430-hp you can name. There is even power to spare for smooth cruising overdrive!

Some distance in every dimension from a certain 1922 Dodge Brothers roadster (very sporty) which I remember. On THAT trip to the country I disgraced myself by leaping from the car at curbside and dragging the big fresh cider jug with me — kersmash! Cider and glass all over the place. I bawled.

Sydney J. Harris



A Word Is How You Take It

I was talking with a Russian who is in this country on an exchange program, and he said that one of the things that bothered him was our frequent references to Khrushchev's phrase: "We shall bury you."

This, he said, was a poor translation of the idiom actually used. What the phrase meant in Russian was, "we shall leave you in the dust" in the race between the U.S. and Russia for economic supremacy.

The translation of idioms from one language to another has always posed a tricky problem. Some informed persons inside that a wrong translation was responsible for our dropping the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—the Japanese verb, "mokusatsu," meaning both "no comment" or "to kill with silence."

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AS DR. MARIO PEI points out in his revised edition of "The Story of Language," the Japanese reaction to our demands for unconditional surrender was interpreted as rejecting our ultimatum as "unworthy of notice." What the Japanese premier actually said, according to the story, was that his government had decided to withhold comment until they had time to study the demand further.

The Italians have a phrase, "Traduttore—traditore," which means "A translator is a traitor." Words and phrases take on different nuances and connotations in a different language. Baizar's "Droll Stories" are not what we mean by "droll"; the Spanish "Los Toros Bravos" does not really mean "the brave bulls"; and Dante's "Divine Comedy" is nothing like what we would be inclined to call a "comedy."

Even the same language has its own pitfalls of misunderstanding regional use. I recall a story about an Englishman, an American and a Scotsman telling their experiences in other English-speaking areas.

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THE ENGLISHMAN recounted: "I'll never forget my feelings the first time I had breakfast in America, when the waitress leaned over my shoulder and whispered: 'Are you through with your cereal?' It was some time before I discovered she meant, 'Have you finished your porridge?' "

The American rejoined: "Well, shortly after I landed in England, a waiter came up to me at lunch and said, 'How did you find your chop, sir?' I replied, 'Oh, I looked behind the potato and there it was,' before I realized he was asking me how I liked it."

And the Scotsman weighed in with: "I was once in lodgings in a small town in the west of Ireland. When I'd finished supper, an exceedingly pretty girl came into my room and said, 'Will I strip now, sir?' I fled into my bedroom and locked the door but learned afterwards that Irish girls always talk about 'stripping the table' when they clear dishes."

Kenneth Rexroth



Land of Wine and Poetry

TRIER (West Germany) — Here I am precisely where I have been wanting to get back to for many years. We are stopping for the night at Guesthouse Schenck a little way up the Rewer from the Moselle, about three kilometers beyond Trier.

For awhile in the declining days of Rome, Trier was the capital of the empire. The last of the Roman poets, Ausonius, a sensual and wise — he also thought, falsely, that he was witty — aristocratic landowner from Bordeaux lived in Trier off and on throughout his life.

His vineyard at St. Emilion, near Bordeaux, still produces my favorite wine — Chateau Ausone. It is a wine of great complexity, stouter than most any from Bordeaux, and gives off a different sensation each tiny fraction of a second while you are tasting it.

The vineyard once belonged to Henri IV and the wine greatly resembles that robust, complicated sensualist.

AUSONIUS owned a vineyard on the Rewer too, and he must have been very happy here. Later critics have given him a bad press. Happy poets are never fashionable. They say his poem, "The Moselle," is decadent, and not up to the standards of the Augustan Age.

Maybe, but critics notwithstanding, poets have always thought it one of the finest in all Latin literature.

Today the Moselle is flooded and controlled, more a canal than a river. The clear bright water with the fish swimming amongst the reflections of the wine leaves is gone. Ausonius would have trouble recognizing it.

But he would recognize the Roman mind at work. He was a great one for admiring feats of engineering as well as wine, women and nature.

IN THIS STEEP canyon, overhung with vineyards, the brook is still clear and bright and twists down its gorge as the road, roaring with traffic, twists up beside it.

Tonight as the sun sets, there is the same grape green quarter moon in the rose haze, the same smell of grapes first touched by the late night cold that have been making sugar all day, the same golden autumn weather with the roses blooming amongst the falling leaves and the same trout cooked in the same juice of unripe grapes.

Erubris has changed to Rewer and carts and chariots have changed to automobiles, but something stays, at least for a while. Something is more permanent even than the great stout pink brick Roman basilica that even the cannons of the last war could not destroy.

Coffin's Needle

By Harold Coffin

These days teen-agers get more than their share of everything, including criticism.

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One of our oldest problems is youth.

•

The only thing wrong with the younger generation, according to the psychologists, is the older generation.

•

Teen-agers learn not to be ashamed of their parents just in time to start feeling sorry for them.

•

A grandparent enjoys the youngsters at all their ages, because he knows they'll outgrow them.

•

The adorable age for children is before they become old enough to get wise to you.

ANDY CAPP

By REG SMYTHE



Bob Considine



Bob Hope Tries The Off-Beat

NEW YORK—People . . . places . . .

Bob Hope, on the phone from Apple Valley, where he was finishing a film named "Eight on the Lam," said there was nothing very mysterious about his NBC-TV show tomorrow. It co-stars 15 other comedians.

"I've been doing the same kind of show for so long I just thought I'd try something off-beat." The familiar bray sounded across the country. "It's going to be called Murder at NBC."

"I play a mad scientist who wants to shrink everybody and eventually so that he can become the most powerful fellow alive. He takes something like those pills de Gaulle must swallow each morning.

"Well, a lot of guys try to stop me, one way or another. Guys like Don Adams, Milton Berle, Red Buttons, Johnny Carson, Jack Carter, Bill Cosby, Wally Cox, Jimmy Durante, Don Rickles, Rowan and Martin, Soupy Sales, Bill Dana, Jonathan Winters and Dick Shawn.

"We taped 2½ hours, and now we've got it in a dock press trying to fit it into one hour," Bob said.

"Looks like we'll have to bring back Ben Casey to cut it."

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SWEET KEROSENE smell of success:

Just 21 years ago a fighter pilot named Bob Prescott sat in a hotel reoom in Washington, D. C., and composed a telegram to some other fly-boys who had run out of wars to fight.

It read, "Put that drink in your other hand and tell me what you're doing. I'm starting an airline to fly cargo across the United States. If you can't come, at least send your money."

Twelve buddies showed up, ready to fly or fix planes. They brought a total of $10,000. Prescott took the 10 grand to Sam Mosher, president of Signal Oil and Gas Co. Mosher and several associates matched it. There wasn't any question about what Prescott would name the new line. He called it the Flying Tiger Line.

It was one of 2700 such ventures undertaken by out-of-work veterans of the great air war which was begun, for Prescott and several of his partners, with Gen. Claire Chennault's legendary Flying Tigers.

What chiefly distinguished the freight line was that it survived a thousand birthpangs when everything pointed to an early demise.

Lumbering C-46s have long since given way to jets that gulp more kerosene in an hour than the original fleet's annual fuel supply.

The only static elements of Flying Tiger are Prescott and Mosher. They've never been able to advance beyond their original jobs with the company: president and chairman of the board.

Hear Bob Considine on KGO Radio (810) Monday through Friday at 3:30 p.m.

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