Notes on a Hip History of Santa Cruz

Where I'm Coming From & Getting to Santa Cruz

I was born in San Francisco in 1947. When I was seven my family left the Sunnydale Projects, in Visitacion Valley, which is on the south end of S.F., near the bay, and (at that time) next to the city dump. We moved down the coast to an old, dilapidated ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains, five miles in from Pescadero. That's where my five sisters (3 foster sisters) and I were raised. I was seventeen when I graduated from tiny Pescadero High School, in a class of sixteen students; that's Pescadero and La Honda kids combined.

My parents decision to make the move was always up for agonizing reappraisal, but I came to realize that it was influenced by several things: partly by their idealism; my dad, Joe, a merchant marine who had just quit going to sea - had been in the radical labor movement for a long time, and likewise my mother, Ann, a union organizer and part-time secretary for the painters union, and they and their circle of lefties from the SWP (Socialist Workers Party) were always looking for utopia; also, I was already getting into trouble in the streets, at five and six years old; and, possibly, the fact that my older sister, Irene, and I (at that time I had one younger sister, Laura) had contracted hepatitis and I damn near croaked: I was quarantined to our apartment for five months and missed the whole second grade. Small to begin with, I actually shrunk; by the time we got to Pescadero I weighed in at just over forty pounds.

My folks planned the move with another family from our circle, which included Joan London (Jack London's oldest daughter, a family comrade from the labor movement) and her son Bart and his wife Helen and their six kids - the idea being an experiment in cooperative living. Joe, a city boy from Brooklyn, was skeptical, but Ann, as a young girl, had lived with her family on farms on the east coast and on state farms in the Soviet Union, and she and Bart and others in the circle lobbied hard. So Joe, miraculously, borrowed fifteen hundred dollars from his father – whom he hadn't seen in nearly twenty years - and Joan and Charlie Miller (her second husband) matched it and we had enough for a down payment on the rundown Stone-Bulstead ranch on Pescadero Creek Road.

[A coda to my father's borrowed down payment: One of the characters in the group, Peter Martin, was a good friend of Joan, Bart and my folks and a professor at S.F. State. He was the son of Carlo Tresca - the east-coast anarchist/Wobbly publisher of *Il Martelo* - and Bina Flynn, and the nephew of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (co-founder of the IWW and the American Communist Party). Peter started a poetry magazine in San Francisco in '52 and called it *City Lights* (and he also co-founded the namesake bookstore, with Ferlinghetti, et al), but by '54 he wanted to move back to New York, so he offered the journal to my dad for fifteen hundred bucks. Joe had to decide: the city lights or the country roads. I sometimes wonder how our life might have otherwise turned out, for better or worse.]

The Abbotts moved into the “clubhouse”, a long, box-like redwood structure, with a high ceiling, huge fireplace, and a closed-in sleeping porch. Bart’s father, Park Abbott (Joan’s first husband), was a master carpenter and helped us construct a kitchen off one side of the building. We got hot water hooked up by running the spring water through pipes secured to the back of the fireplace, which, of course, only worked if the fire was going. If the fire was going too well nothing but steam came out of the faucets.

There were several other decrepit wooden cabins, either falling down or molding into the earth under the redwoods, and a long, wooden, barn-like workshop, whose doors were falling off. The spring-fed water system had to be completely restored. All the fences had to be rebuilt to keep in the goats. We had two horses, Dick, a two-year old stallion and Dolly, a twelve-year old mare, who belonged to Joan and Charlie. They would come down on weekends and Joan liked to ride the gentle, rein-trained, Dolly (as did all us kids). But nobody could ride the wild and crazy Dick – even Bart kept getting thrown off until he gave up. Our family settled in the lower farmhouse, a ramshackle, drafty, moldy, 14-room structure - with a colony of bats and a giant hive of bees in the attic - that we rehabilitated as best we could. It was an inauspicious beginning.

****

Concurrent with our move to the country, part of the extended family, the Osbornes, moved from the Candlestick Cove Projects (between Hunters Point and Visitacion Valley) to an old Victorian in the Haight-Ashbury. The Haight was a great place in the ‘50s, a diverse, sleepy neighborhood tucked in between Golden Gate Park and Twin Peaks. But a real cultural sea change had started to build as young artists, students, and blue-collar families, being priced out of North Beach, moved in.

We often stayed in the city with our relatives and friends on holidays, usually at the Osborne’s - when they weren’t coming down to the country. We kids would cruise the Panhandle and Golden Gate Park on bikes, race down Ashbury from Clayton and up Haight St. to Stanyan. We’d go to the Haight Theater (later the “Straight” Theater, a name I detested) in the afternoon, or play basketball at the playground or in the Panhandle until dark. I played little league baseball, with Steve Osborne, for the neighborhood team at Grattan playground, off Stanyan Street – there being no such available recreational activity out in the country.

The adults would hang out up on Clayton St., solving the world’s problems. Steve’s mom, Lily (my Italian mom - my mom was his Jewish mother: they met as socialist youth while in their teens) had been an organizer in the Canneries in Monterey. She was a fabulous artist and early innovator of art programs for special-needs kids, and her oldest sister, Mary Fabilli, was a “minor” Beat poet who had been married to another poet - Bill Everson, whom she introduced to Catholicism. He decided to convert and become a monk (maybe marriage can do that to you) and they got an annulment, but I remember Brother Antoninus, in his robe and collar, at dinner on Sundays. Later, Bill, by then re-secularized, came down to teach at UCSC.

Tonia, Steve’s older sister, took me to my first political action, in 1962, a sit-in on Auto Row on Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco, and also to my first coffeehouse – the Precarious Vision –

which was on Divisadero, I think. Their dad, Selden, one of my father's closest comrades, was a long-time peace activist, longshoreman, and decades long political foe of Harry Bridges in the ILWU (whose hiring hall was used for the first S.F. Acid Test).

The longshoreman and political philosopher Eric Hoffer (author of the True Believer) had become part of the family and would always be at Sunday dinner on Clayton St. Selden had met him during a beef with the Communist Party-leaning ILWU union leadership (like most of our crowd, Selden was a follower of Leon Trotsky and hence in the SWP or one of its splinter groups, and always at war with the CP - supporters of Stalin - over differing visions of the worker's state). Eric became a surrogate grandfather to the Osborne kids and he treated me as a godson. My mom ended up transcribing a couple of his subsequent books directly from his hand-written manuscripts. A self-taught (anti-) intellectual and spellbinding raconteur, he would often come down to the ranch, taking long walks with Steve and me along Pescadero Creek Rd., entertaining us with tales of his younger years as a gold-miner and migrant worker.

****

The grand plan for a communal co-op, a place for all the lefties, as originally conceived, fell through. The summer camp that was supposed to provide income never got off the ground. In '56, a few years after Joe had retired from the merchant marines, he was commuting to a job at the stock yards (slaughterhouse and packing plants) in South San Francisco and Bart was still working as a longshoreman on the waterfront in San Francisco. By '57, three years into the experiment in cooperative living, Joe borrowed some money and bought out Joan and Charlie, and the Abbotts moved back to Tunnel Road in Berkeley. I recall my father saying that everyone who encouraged our family to make a move to the country found it less romantic when faced with the incredible shit load of work required to maintain a place like that. Nevertheless, the ranch became a gathering spot for many of those who had, up to that point, managed to survive the Great Depression, the Stalinist purges, the Spanish Civil War, World War II and the McCarthy years.

So, because I was raised between San Francisco and Santa Cruz, I got to spend time in both towns, especially since we'd begun to use Santa Cruz – ten miles closer than S.F. - as our nearest "go to" spot for supplies and entertainment. I got to see things play out in a kind of "before, during and after" scenario, in the '50s and '60s. And, although we lived in the country, my family remained part of an urban milieu that included unionists, Marxists and anarchists, as well as bohemians and beats - which were all part of an earlier, pre-hippie counter culture.

There were so many in the cast of characters that visited the ranch, were at gatherings in the city, or were part of the extended circle that it's impossible to remember the names, but some I recall include: Kenneth Rexroth; Al and Lil Willis (Al was the first African-American video-cameraman in public television – at KQED in San Francisco, in the early '60s); Norm Jacobson; Ruth Asawa (the "Fountain Lady"); Martin Matell (who created the public sculpture on Cathedral Hill in S.F.); Bill and Ada Farrell (they owned the Marxist/labor oriented Farrell's Bookstore, on Telegraph Ave. in Berkeley); Peter Martin; Slim Slaughter (Huey Newton's father-

in-law); The “Marxist Cadre” of Norman Minni, Bill Gannon, and Jack Copenhaver; Jack and Miriam Wasserman; Blackie Jackson (a follower of Wilhelm Reich, who’d actually undergone Orgone Therapy) and other, assorted members of the Ohler and Schactman factions of the Socialist Workers Party; Stan (who wrote “Single Jack Solidarity”) and Mary Weir; James Baldwin; Jimmy Johnson (C. L. R. James); Tillie Olsen; Helen Van deVeer; Bill and Sarah Turgis (he bounced between socialism and Vedanta and she belonged to a pioneering S.F. Jewish family that settled on top of Diamond Heights and started a goat farm – hence the neighborhood name, still on city maps, of “Goat Hill”); the Larners, Frumkins and Furths (who helped finance the massive Mobilization marches against the Vietnam war) from the L.A. SWP (Dr. Fuzzy Furth co-owned and ran - along with Herb Gold - the biggest barrio clinic in the world, the “First St. Medical Clinic” in East L.A. She provided medical care for the Brown Berets and Black Panthers, and took mobile medical facilities to Delano to care for the striking UFW – and took care of many aging members of the party rank and file and leadership).

Ernestine Hara Kettler, atheist godmother to my sisters and me (both my godparents were atheists) would often come to stay at the ranch. A Romanian-Jew who immigrated to America alone, at the age of fourteen, she was a free-love advocate and an anarchist-suffragette. She was one of the two hundred women arrested on the steps of the White House and jailed in 1917 (which is chronicled in the book “From Parlor to Prison”). She was part of the Provincetown crowd, and a friend of Eugene O’Neill, Emma Goldman, Max Eastman, Louise Bryant and Jack Reed; She partied with Henry Miller at his place in Big Sur and married Archer Emerson (a Wobbly, and president of the Electrical Workers Union, local 310, in Seattle, and a cousin of Ralph Waldo), her first among four husbands, all Wobblies. Ernestine was a mentor to my mom in the radical movement of the ‘30s and ‘40s, and taught me about Bakunin, Proust, how to play “cutthroat” pinochle, and how to properly fit a pillowcase over a pillow.

When my buddies would stop by the ranch and see all the books in our house they knew they weren’t in Kansas anymore. By the time I came to live in Santa Cruz in late ’65, I had grown up in virtually two worlds, one as an average country kid, the other in a parallel universe of political and cultural radicals.

****

Pescadero and La Honda in the late’50s to early ’60s

In addition to chores on our ranch, I began working, like most local boys, on other local farms and ranches and in the woods around Pescadero, (pop. 350), and La Honda (pop. 500). The legal work age was twelve but we used fake work permits, and so began our careers at age eleven, and the farmers looked the other way. Labor was in short supply as the larger economy was buzzing, rolling out a nation of post-war prosperity. Many people, especially those in La Honda, had begun commuting to jobs “over the hill”, something modern-day Santa Cruz locals can relate to. The Bracero Program was in full swing, with Mexican workers getting “green cards” and immigration authorities routinely making raids on local farms, looking for illegal *wetbacks*. The

farmers had a phone-tree network and word would get out right away if the *federales* were in town. Workers would be hustled into barns and out of sight. We kids worked right along side the (mostly) guys, in the artichoke, Brussels sprout, horse bean and strawflower fields, through summers and vacations. As I got older, I bucked hay, built greenhouses, cleared brush, ran a chainsaw, dropped, limbed and skinned trees, set chokers and ran a bull line, all skills I learned on the ranch. Many of my buddies did the same.

The local girls, including my sisters (by age twelve, I had three additional foster sisters, all older), in addition to their chores, worked in the flower-drying sheds or at Duarte's Restaurant. They did "piece-work", becoming skilled at preparing the dried flowers for shipment. We would deliver flowers to families at their homes, where mothers and daughters worked together to make extra money. My mom, an extraordinary typist and skilled at shorthand (as well as a talented classical pianist and artist) worked for many different groups in the region, including the school districts in Pesky and Half Moon Bay. Ann was very enthusiastic about organic farming, using Rodale as her guide, and we kept a large vegetable garden. We had many fruit trees - plums and apples - and raised chickens, rabbits, and for a time, goats. My pals and I hunted for deer and fished for steelhead and salmon in the winter and spring and trout in the summer.

****

There was a root cellar in back of the main farmhouse that had been converted into a "wine cellar" in the '30s by a previous owner named Wiedeman. It actually was used to stash Chinese rice-wine, of which there were still about two hundred bottles left when we moved in. A few of the labels hadn't molded off, and we could read the name "Ingapay", next to the Chinese characters. It turned out that Wiedeman had been a bootlegger and smuggler, like so many on the coastside during prohibition. Several bottles were opened over the years but the stuff was potent and noxious, though that didn't stop my pals and I from trying it on occasion.

My buddies and I roamed the hills like semi-civilized beasts. Even before acquiring the magic driver's license we were out on the county roads in junker trucks and jalopies. Prior to driving we prowled the trails and fire roads any time of the day or night, often getting home way after midnight, walking through the forest on Wurr Rd. in the pitch black. We literally couldn't see our hand in front of our face. We knew almost every inch of Pescadero Creek, from Jones Gulch to the river mouth. There wasn't a sound in the forest that we didn't recognize. Walking from Loma Mar to La Honda and back, over Haskins Hill, about sixteen miles, or from the ranch to Pesky and back (ten miles), often with half a heat-on, was a common pass time. Upon reaching adolescence and courting girls, this became more frequent.

We often hunted and fished at night, illegal, to be sure, but we lived somewhat off the legal grid. The last sheriff to live in Pescadero moved away in the early '50s and the sheriff from Redwood City patrolled (drove through) twice a week. We knew exactly when, had it timed nearly to the minute: usually around 10:15pm on Tuesday and Saturday night. If a car was coming, maybe once every half hour, we could hear it down the canyon for miles, giving us plenty of time to decide if we wished to be seen or not.

When you live in a rural situation like that the work never ends. I worked with my dad and uncles on our place to restore the buildings (redoing the foundations and roofs), and maintain the roads, fences and water and sewage systems. My friends would come by on a weekend day to round me up for fishing, etc., and often would help us finish a project so I could take off early. It was isolated out there, with a nearly non-existent social scene that involved mainly a lot of drinking, fighting and crazy driving on the back roads or racing down the coast highway at midnight at 100 mph: by all rights none of us should have survived, and a few didn't. Virtually all the guys carried hunting rifles, in the trunk or on a gun rack.

The high school district covered 750 square miles and mustered up ninety kids. Everybody knew everybody; we had a twelve-party line on our phone for a couple of years. I stuck to my trio of pals, Johnny Muñoz (who grew up at the Campbell Soup Mushroom Farm by Pigeon Point), Marceleno Contreras (who lived with his eight siblings in the old White House, before it burned down, at White House Canyon near Gazos Creek) and Mike Fluharty (who was raised in Loma Mar, a tiny settlement next to Memorial Park, and whose dad, Oril, was a local legend, a lumberjack and Protestant preacher in Pescadero). Fortunately, through a twist of fate (and biology), Johnny and I had good-looking older sisters who were dating the older roughnecks from Half Moon Bay, so that was one big problem we didn't have to worry about: duking it out with the "Coastriders" car club. It was like having dispensation from the Pope.

****

Starting around age eight, I began to teach myself piano on our old upright by listening to rock and roll stations from S.F and Oakland (virtually no watchable T.V. reception out there until I was in my early teens) on a shortwave/am/fm radio my uncle Milton built. My sisters had acquired a small portable record player from another uncle in L.A., and had a stash of 45s, but the radio was my lifeline to the world of music. I tuned in stations, late at night, from all over the west and mid- and south-west. If the atmospheric gods were with me, on cold, clear nights in the early a.m., I could pick up broadcasts from the USSR, presumably Siberia. Sometimes, if earlier in the evening and reception permitting, my mom, who could still remember some childhood Russian, would pick out words amidst the crackle. My dad, uncles and I also used an old paint-splattered portable to listen to Giants ballgames on weekends while we worked. It made the drudgery almost bearable.

I learned the trumpet on an old military Cohn, and, after reading "Satchmo" when I was in the sixth grade, Louis Armstrong became my hero. Meanwhile, there was a small, cinderblock recreation hall and an old swimming pool in Cuesta (the settlement where a majority of the La Hondans lived - the rest scattered around on ranches) and, on hot summer nights, thirty or so kids would gather, some coming down from Half Moon Bay, and we'd crank up a record player. My sophomore year I borrowed a tenor sax from the high school, and with a couple of buddies formed a combo and played R&R at the rec. hall and at Aladino's bar in San Gregorio.

By the early ‘60s, we started to see more and more offbeat characters around, bearded, longhaired or otherwise, loners living in tents or cabins in the hills. The isolation was attractive. Change was in the air.

****

Ken Kesey and his friends – the Pranksters - moved up to La Honda when I was about fifteen. Things got a lot more interesting. We were all curious, and a few of us started checking out the parties at Kesey’s before we’d take off for Santa Cruz or Redwood City, looking for kids our own age. During the next year, still just a punk kid, I remember stopping in at Kesey’s place a few times with older buddies, sometimes doing a deal or making a score, standing around in the front yard, soaking up the atmosphere.

My schoolmate Ray’s parents, Mac and Gracie, owned Boots and Saddle Lodge, a restaurant and bar famed for its summer jazz jams and abalone steak dinners. Mac had been a long-time bass player in the S.F. Bay Area, before opening up Boots. Dozens of his old band mates would show up on summer weekends to blow all day and into the evening. Hundreds of people would pour in from the City and the whole town would be jumping.

Boots was literally two hundred feet from Kesey’s place, on San Gregorio Road. It was the local bar for the Pranksters. We’d walk around the corner to Ken’s pad, past the “no left turn unstoned” sign, across the little bridge into the yard to see if a party was planned for the evening. Furthur, the bus, was parked off to the side. (I think there is a common misconception that Ken Kesey lived on a “farm”, or “ranch” in La Honda. It was actually a fair-sized country type cabin that sat tucked under some redwoods at the base of a forested hillside, next to the two-lane Highway 84, with a large yard/driveway in front).

The parties at Kesey’s were a whole different ballgame, unlike anything anybody had ever seen. They would often get big and loud, with lots of people, bikers, freaks, wine, beer, weed, acid. Eventually the parties got too frequent, too big and too loud. Everybody knew it would come to a head (no pun intended). There would be scores of parked choppers and cars stretched along the shoulder of HW84 for a quarter of a mile. The parents of my schoolmates were freaked out, frantically concerned about the virtue of their kids. It was certainly an overreaction, but predictable. The cops were called multiple times. The sheriff hated having to make the 70-mile roundtrip over from Redwood City. The Sheriff’s Department and the Highway Patrol started impounding bikes, hauling people to jail on various charges, etc., enough harassment to eventually force the Pranksters to move, some of them to Santa Cruz. But not before I took my first acid trip, with a schoolmate and his sister at their parent’s house, a half-mile down the road.

Another strange connection: In ’63, my dad, Joe was working over in Palo Alto. His boss, Ray Hennell, was married to Emma, the actual V.A. nurse on whom the character “Big Nurse” Ratched, in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, was based. They came to visit us at the ranch a few times, and my dad told me they were pretty frosted about the portrayal of Emma in the book and movie, and Ray had confided in him: the hospital was going to sue Kesey for dereliction of duty because he supposedly hid in the closet during his shift as an orderly, working on his story.

When I read the novel a couple of years later it felt strange to recall her, standing in the driveway, tight-lipped, in high heels and beehive hairdo, chain-smoking.

Meanwhile, over in Pescadero, in the Butaño (or "Butte-no", as the locals say) off of Cloverdale Road, there was a communal nudist colony, founded by Eric Clough, called Eden West. They were there for several years – I'm not sure how long. I remember a general, uneasy co-existence with the townsfolk, who were civil to Eric and his group and thought of them as slightly lascivious at worst, and best left alone; but, judging from the level of gossip around Williamson's gas station, where I worked for a while, I figured they were more than a little intrigued. Eventually, I'm guessing, due to a combination of increasing chilly vibes from some Native Sons and Daughters, plus the generally cool summer weather in that part of the canyon, the colony moved to Santa Cruz County in 1963 and settled at 1000 Alba Road, in Ben Lomond.

****

Sometime before Kesey moved to La Honda, he was working at the V.A. Hospital in Menlo Park and according to legend, had access to LSD. I don't know if that's true or not, but one of the directors at the V.A. at that time was Gregory Bateson, and he was interested in the use of LSD for therapeutic purposes, as similar research was being done elsewhere, in Canada and Europe. So, who knows exactly how that all came down, but there was some kind of a connection. Gregory and his wife Lois, who were friends of our family, eventually came out to live on the ranch for a couple years.

During the big flood in the winter of '55 (the same one that wiped out downtown Santa Cruz and the old Chinatown – where the Galleria, Garage, CVS and Trader Joe's are now), our bridge (a seventy-five foot long, Pratt-style wooden structure) washed out, cutting us off from the county road, and it took us two years to rebuild it (which we did ourselves). In '58, our friends, Jay and Betty Haley and their three young children, rented the clubhouse. Betty, an old political comrade of my parents, was a world-class musician, a concert violinist and pianist. Jay worked with Bateson, who recruited him to join the staff at Mental Research Institute in Menlo Park, doing some kind of cutting-edge work in psychotherapy along with Milton Erickson, Virginia Satir and others. They were using hypnosis and developing "family therapy" and something called "results therapy", among other things. They started the journal Family Process, which Betty edited in the clubhouse. Jay went on to become quite well known in the field of psychology and when the Haleys moved back to Palo Alto to get their kids into better schools, Gregory and Lois moved in.

Greg, formerly married to Margaret Mead, was friendly and right at home in the country, and though a child of the British upper crust, very informal and down to earth. He would amble down from the clubhouse to our kitchen on Saturday morning, an unfiltered smoke dangling from his lips, shirt half-tucked in, shoes untied and fly open. My mom would laugh and tell him to zip up, pour him a cup of coffee and he would schmooze for a while. I always appreciated it when Greg came in because Joe would get into a conversation with him on some esoteric subject or other, and that would delay going out to start work, which meant I had a reprieve. Plus, I was

fascinated by whatever they talked about, including his research with octopi and dolphins. Bateson seemed to enjoy bantering with my dad, who was a very erudite, working-class intellectual. Greg drolly remarked "it's difficult arguing with Marxists and Catholics; they have a system". He had a wealth of knowledge about the flora and fauna, and always invited us to look through his homemade telescope when he set it up on those dark country nights. At his request, I would look in on Lois, who was recovering from a miscarriage, when I would get home from school. Gregory introduced my folks to the cybernetician Heinz von Foerster and his wife Mira when they bought a place on Pescadero Creek Rd. after Heinz retired, and Ann and Joe remained friends with the von Foersters thereafter, having dinner with them once a month.

A polymath without a PhD, Gregory moved in and out of a succession of fields and disciplines. He said, "You always have to sing for your supper". My mom ended up working for him, preparing transcribed accounts of audiotape therapy sessions. Greg and Lois moved away before their daughter Nora was born, and later he was hired to teach at UCSC, in the late '60s. They ended up moving in at 1000 Alba Rd., where Eric Clough and the nudist colony had been earlier. And Ralph Abraham tells me that he moved into that same place when the Batesons moved out in the '70s!

****

Santa Cruz: The Early Years

Living in Pescadero in the late '50s, Santa Cruz was the nearest "big city" (pop. 25,000), forty miles south. We'd go to the boardwalk with visiting relatives and friends, shop for supplies (anything you couldn't get at Williamson's Country Store in Pescadero, Peterson's General Store in San Gregorio, or the hardware store on Main St. in Half Moon Bay). Fishing off the wharf with my uncle Lee on occasional Sundays was a special treat. We went to the movies at the Del Mar (I remember seeing "Psycho" there in 1960), or the Rio, and I think there was a theatre on Walnut Street, though it might have been closed by then.

My childhood compadre, John Muñoz, was living in town. His family had moved to Santa Cruz in '61. As young teen-agers, in '61 - '62, we used to sneak into the Skyview Drive-In in the trunk of a car or under a blanket on the backseat floor, or we would just hop the fence. Later, when the city morality squad was giving Boise and Peter Demma such a hard time about the statues, I'd shake my head, thinking about the Skyview, because we saw movies there that would soon be considered r- or x-rated: not hardcore sex but soft porn, with lots of nudes. We pubes couldn't believe our good fortune, that this was right here in our backyard! We were amazed that the owners weren't busted, but we didn't complain.

Mike F. and I would come to Santa Cruz pretty often to hang out with John, and I remember going to the Sticky Wicket (after it had moved from Santa Cruz to the edge of Aptos), a pretty cool coffeehouse. On Saturday night we would cruise up and down Pacific and Beach St. hoping to meet some girls. We shot pool in the Town Clock Billiards Parlor, located on the first or

second block of Front St. on the north end. It was spacious, with low ceilings and lots of atmosphere, a shaded lamp over every table, with an entrance off both Front and Pacific. It was definitely a cool place to hang out and smoke cigarettes, which we could buy at United Cigar, across the street on Pacific. We'd go bowling at the Surf Bowl, or the Santa Cruz Bowl on Pacific Avenue. In the '70s Randall Kane bought Santa Cruz Bowl, remodeled it, pushed the lanes together to create a dance floor and opened the "New" Catalyst.

Mike and I played ball for Pescadero High against the Catholic Schools around the Monterey Bay. We were, by far, the smallest, as well as the only public school in the league. We played basketball against Holy Cross at the Civic Auditorium and baseball on the big diamond at Harvey West Park, a real treat for us bumpkins. One night, at a basketball game against Palma of Salinas, somebody told the Palma cheerleaders that I was an atheist (I wasn't – I've always been sort of agnostic). After the game they came running over and told me "we're going to pray for your soul". I was flattered, of course, but definitely more interested in the messengers than the message.

Although very conservative and demographically "older" (third oldest, per capita, in the U.S. in the 1950s), Santa Cruz always had an active sub-culture and youth culture - surfers for one –and assorted writers and artists around the county, in the hills and by the beaches, and this is probably not unusual for beach towns and resort/tourist areas, as creation and recreation share common ground. Capitola was an artist's colony. The Greenwood Lodge, in the hills behind Soquel, owned by the folks of our dear friend, Nan B., was a vacation/summer retreat for families who were associated with the Communist Party. Don McCaslin, from San Jose, and Santa Cruz High alum, Corny Bumpus, played music locally in the '50s and '60s. Heinlein and Hitchcock lived in the area.

With such a spectacular, beautiful, physical setting, accessible to both bay areas, Santa Cruz was a natural destination and gathering spot. But was it necessarily the kind of place where cultural, if maybe not political revolution might take root?

****

After high school I had gone to UC Berkeley to study physics. That was 1964, the year of the Free Speech Movement. I had a room at a family friend's place, two miles up Euclid, in exchange for house and yard work, walking to and from campus every day. Before classes had even started I volunteered to work a table at Bancroft and Telegraph three days a week for SNCC, collecting donations and distributing literature. When the student strike started, unsurprisingly, I supported the cause. After all, the administration wanted to ban all the tables, representing a spectrum of (mostly radical) political persuasions and issues. But, in fact, the first table they banned was The Young Republicans. It was a matter of constitutional rights, a basic freedom of speech issue; so we dug in our heels. Turmoil swept the campus. I tried to attend classes, or at least get and keep up with my assignments but wouldn't cross picket lines, many of which I walked. A couple of my Profs were on strike. It was tricky. I was still seventeen in the fall and the older students strongly recommended that I avoid getting arrested. If I withdrew from

school, by ’65 I’d be eighteen and exposed to the draft and possibly off to Vietnam. Also, of all things, I had a side activity, playing centerfield for the frosh baseball team, as a walk-on. I had a great time arguing politics with my frat-boy teammates, a few of who took me seriously while others were indifferent, and some I drove to apoplexy. Coach didn’t know what to think. It was all too distracting, I couldn’t sustain my studies and I dropped out my sophomore year.

I worked for nine months for a paving company and then hooked up with my pal Mike on a crew that built state parks. We built two parks in the Santa Cruz area, Sunset Beach State Park on San Andreas Road, and Henry Cowell Park Campground on Graham Hill Road. I decided to stay in town, maybe go back to school. It was a strategy: get a II-S deferment and keep out of Vietnam. I had known, via my parents, about Vietnam since Dien Bien Phu in the middle ‘50s, and it made me sick and furious that my two best friends were getting sucked into the vortex of war in Southeast Asia. Mike got drafted a year later. John, in the navy reserves, was waiting for his deployment orders. I got my induction notice, refused to go, and began four years of sparring with the draft board in San Mateo.

Our crew had one more park to build, down in Big Sur - Julia Pfeifer Burns State Park - and our work would be finished, as the State had run out of funds for new park construction. While building JPB and living in Big Sur, my crewmates and I heard about a “live-music concert” up in Pescadero, at the I.D.E.S. Hall. We were flabbergasted, as nobody ever came to Pescadero, let alone to the I.D.E.S. Hall, unless it was in May for the *Chamarita,* the Portuguese Holy Ghost Festival. Some group was promoting a big bicycle race and they tried to attract more bodies with a rock concert. So we jammed up to Santa Cruz, stopping to pick up my girlfriend Pat and some other friends, and on up to Pesky. We walked into the half-empty hall and I asked someone next to me, “Who are these guys?” “The Warlocks”, he shouted as the longhaired, mustachioed keyboardist, Pig Pen, banged down on the first chord. They proceeded to rock the joint like it’d never been rocked before, or since, probably.

****

I came back up to Santa Cruz from Big Sur and hooked up with John and other old high school friends who had a communal pad over on Avalon Street, off Emeline. This was in late ’65, early ’66, and so I started living like a Santa Cruz “hippie”. We never called ourselves, or thought of ourselves as hippies. But we were sort of culturally transmuting into what others started calling “hippies”. I was pretty skeptical about that kind of labeling.

There were communal pads sprouting up around Santa Cruz. Our place on Avalon St. was a multi-colored, rambling farmhouse. It had high ceilings, large windows and lots of light. A lifeguard friend of ours, Bob Beede, who later taught electronic music and recording at Cabrillo, hooked up a boffo sound system out of parts. We were awash in the great LP’s being produced, the S.F. Sound, the British Invasion, FM rock coming on line, Masekela, Handy, Lloyd. Music, as well as any consumables, including food, was always shared. The rent was cheap: for example, I think we were initially paying about $65/mo. for Avalon House, shared by 6-8 people.

But that changed over the next couple of years as the expanding university put upward pressure on housing costs.

We had a fluid core of housemates at Avalon St., as did the 7th Ave House, and most of us knew each other from high school. The 7th Ave. house was a big, old, mid-19th century sea captain's estate, where our good friend Ernie Keller – one of Santa Cruz's Ur-Hipsters- lived, along with some of his former Santa Cruz High classmates. It had lots of exotic trees planted around the grounds, of which only the stately cork-oak tree remains, standing gallantly in front of the gas mart on the corner of 7th and Soquel Ave. Local artist Jimmy Phillips – who created one of the iconic posters of the '60s – "The Next Supper' - had painted a giant portrait of Bruanstein, the Zig-Zag man, on the fireplace, and Ernie had hooked up speakers and muted colored lights in all the rooms, put rugs and pillows on the floors, and there was amazing music always playing – a great place to trip. Other communal places I remember include Stone Hill, and, a bit later, Camp Joy up in SLV.

****

Some real interesting things occurred at Avalon St. Ed Leslie, a local real estate mogul, came by the house one day in a big, red Cadillac convertible, looking for our housemate Eddie Lawrence, who did odd-jobs for him. Short-haired, wearing shades and dressed in informal business attire, Ed stood out like a sore thumb and looked like a narc, but was friendly enough. Eddie had invited him to come over for dinner. After we ate, he said he wanted to try smoking some grass, so a joint was rolled; he took a few puffs and settled back to listen to some Beatles on the turntable. He must have had a good time because he started coming around quite often, his hair started growing down over his collar, and he traded his leather shoes for sandals, and switched to groovier threads. Subsequently he began to promote rock concerts and started managing a local band named Snail, and for the next several years they had a heck of a run.

Howard Dumble used to come by fairly often and have dinner with us. He was one of the earliest in a line of very talented musicians, DJs and music makers from Bakersfield that migrated to Santa Cruz in the '60s and '70s, including Cindy Odum and Michael Tanner. Howard was a fine guitar player but an even better electronics engineer and his custom amps are legendary in the halls of Rock 'n Roll. He'd plug in his latest creation and proceed to tear it up for a couple of hours.

Our pad was a popular spot and we had lots of jams and parties, and we always had food to share. It was a gathering place for many local friends (the sons and daughters of City Fathers and Mothers and local Chamber of Commerce types) whose names I'll withhold as a personal courtesy, with one exception: our dear friend, Mike Fox, who succumbed to an incurable disease at the age of twenty-three. His father, who owned Fox Medical Supply on Ocean St., donated money to the city to create a park, next to the Riverside Bridge, in Mike's memory, which still serves the public well to this day.

Here, like everywhere, I suppose, people were in motion, looking for roots, coming and going, crashing for a while, moving on, jamming up to the Haight or Golden Gate Park to catch the free

concerts, traveling to New Mexico, Northern California, Europe, the far east, Latin America, wherever. It was a time when some folks were digging in and others were letting go, some taking off, some landing, some looking for *place* and some looking for *space*. A stream of European hipsters, traveling around, flowed through Avalon House, kids from Spain, France, Denmark, Sweden, England.

****

We were experimenting. Everyone started eating lots of brown rice and cooking in the style of George Oshawa's macrobiotic diet, trying to avoid becoming *sanpaku.* We started our own ad-hoc collectivization of the food scene: one of our family, Jean Claude, discovered all the "bruised" but usable vegetables that were being tossed out at Albertson's Market (where Trader Joe's on Front St. is now (?); and one on the west side, I believe), so we started "dumpster diving" and bringing home boxes of carrots and celery, onions, beets, etc. and cooking them up in big pots on our stove. We called it "Albertson's Stew", and distributed it around to several pads – did this a couple of times a week. We learned that Maddox's Bakery in Soquel tossed their day-old loaves out before they went to bake, at four in the morning, so we'd swing by after two a.m. or so, in the back parking lot and would just ask if we could take it, a win-win situation. They were pleased and we'd drive off with two or three gunnysacks full of wheat, rye, sourdough loaves, rolls, and breadsticks. As with the stew, we distributed. We identified a couple of restaurants, like Luther's on Seabright, who would give us their "remainder" soup if we came by around midnight. We would end up with two or three gallons worth, and we'd make the rounds of hip pads.

Later, when our pad scene moved to Blain St., we installed a large vegetable garden and traded avocados (collected mostly from the giant tree in our backyard) at Pacific Grain and Grocery on Pacific Avenue for bulk grain, rice and oil; we located owners of vacant lots and got permission to grow corn. At one time we had three or four lots, at least a quarter-acre or more, in production, and we routinely culled mussels from beaches north of town.

Another food related note: Right after the landlord booted us out of Avalon House in '67, Eddie Lawrence saw a classified ad in the Sentinel about a bakery going out of business in Boulder Creek. Eddie was compulsive and right away he wanted to go buy the equipment they were selling for dimes on the dollar. I couldn't talk him out of it because he "always dreamed of being a baker", so, with the understanding that I'd only help move and set up the stuff, we drove our bus up to Boulder Creek, bought some big mixers, an oven and some smaller baking tools, and installed it in a little storefront Eddie had located, in the little alley facing the back of what's now the Seabright Brewery. We named it the Trinity Bakery and Eddie immediately set to baking crunchy wheat bread; but, predictably, in six months he grew bored with the project and decided to sell. Two fellows, Gary and Richard, who were starting an organic bakery named Staff of Life showed up with cash to buy Eddie out and I was happy that the equipment found a good home. And a few years after that, Ed Leslie and Eddie teamed up again and opened Recycled Lumber on 38th Ave.

****

People and Places

I first met Peter Demma at the Hip Pocket, in, I think, ’65. Peter was hosting a discussion group one night a week in the back room of the bookstore. I remember that you could get to the back room without going through the book store by coming in from Front St., through the Carriage Room of the St. George (before the Old Catalyst was there), down a narrow hallway that later became part of the bar (not sure about that). I thought it was pretty cool of Pete to offer a gathering place, and was encouraged by the possibilities of the local “scene”. I got to know Peter a lot better some years later when we were next-door neighbors in the River Flats, on Campbell Street. He was a pretty intense guy, funny, with a sharp gleam in his eye, real radical and into some pretty wild stuff

For about a year, in 1966, myself, John M., Bob Anderson and a couple of others in our circle hung out and drank beer at Van’s Village in Capitola, owned by a very hip guy named Sonny. It had, hands down, the best jazz juke box in the Monterey Bay Area. It was later purchased by Tom Louagie and rechristened The Local, in a “name that pub” contest.

We went up to Boulder Creek to outdoor jams at Max Hartstein’s, in the summertime, and played flutes and drums. I went a couple of times but Bob was a regular.

My girlfriend Pat and I started going up to the Barn when word got around that you could party up there, though we all thought – “seriously, in Scotts Valley?” We went to an open house where people were invited to help paint the inside of the Barn. I think that was the first time I remember seeing Leon Tabory and Joe Lysowski. We went to hear music quite often: New Delhi River Band, Country Joe and others I’m forgetting. I didn’t meet Lysowski until a few months later at Peter Demma’s house in Santa Cruz - though I might be getting my dates mixed up. I was with Bob A., who was doing a little business deal with Peter, and Joe was there. Peter was getting ready to go on a road trip to the Deep South and Joe had painted Peter’s VW Bug all colorful and psychedelic. I remember Bob, incredulous, asking – “you’re gonna go through the south in that?” but Peter assured us it was cool and pointed out the “Support Your Local Police” sticker he’d slapped on the bumper (or back hood). When he got back he told me he never once got stopped. As for Leon Tabory, I remember meeting him a couple of times, briefly, once at his place (I think) out in the La Selva Beach area (a vague and possibly false memory).

About that S.V. thing: In ’66 I helped my pal, D.J. Carlisle, with a production of Michael McClure’s “The Beard”, which he directed. I had met Carlisle, a Watsonville High grad, in the Cabrillo College Theatre department, a nationally regarded program run by Dolores Abrams, whose family owned Abrams Department Store on Pacific Avenue. Dolores was Broadway trained and dedicated, and D.J. was one of her protégés, a talented actor, writer and artist, but for some reason the venue he lined up for the premier was the community center in Scotts Valley. If you have never seen “The Beard”, it’s a real powerful comment on American Culture, etc., but

there are only two characters - Billy The Kid and Jean Harlow. There's a lot of sexual tension and raw emotion, and they engage in oral sex at the front of the stage. At the dress rehearsal on Thursday we got booted out of town and ended up at the Unitarian Church on Freedom Blvd.

****

One day, sometime in '66, Eddie Lawrence and our friend Cage drove down to Brownsville Texas and came back with about 5000 peyote buttons. The town practically levitated for the next few weeks. I took the opportunity to engage in some serious questing and piano playing on the funky upright in the living room at Avalon, and to take in a Giants night game at Candlestick Park. I was stupefied by the intense green of the outfield. To this day I swear I saw Willie Mays flap his arms, swoop into the air and catch a ball in his mouth.

People were starting to home-grow reef so the quality of the available supply improved, if you could afford it. But, with a big government push to criminalize the good drugs, the bad shit took over. In the next couple of years, the drug scene changed, not as quickly or dramatically as in the Haight, which by the fall of '67 was already ugly and mean. I had moved up to S.F. in late '67 and it was dangerous to be on Haight Street. The real "Summer of Love" was '66, not '67 as the media would have it. We weren't immune in Santa Cruz though and it got mean and ugly in it's own way right here in River City. People started shooting at hippies up in the San Lorenzo Valley.

One night, on my twenty-first birthday, I was living in S.F. and visiting friends in Santa Cruz, down in the little cottage apartments facing the bay at the end of Seabright Ave. After a swell evening of food, drink, and smoke, I came out the front door feeling mellow and got into my old Falcon pick-up, and decided to head down to the Catalyst for a birthday nightcap. As I started the engine a vehicle behind me turned on its lights. I took off to turn up Seabright and the car rushed up and cut me off, forcing me to the curb. There were literally six young guys, in tee shirts and short hair (mine was not short). I stared at them, stunned, as the front passenger window rolled down, and the nearest dude started screaming at me "you motherfuckin' hippy, we're gonna kill you if you don't get outta town", and then they all started yelling at once. They looked like a pack of mad dogs, snarling and frothing at the mouth. I wasn't sure if I was hallucinating but I could tell I was starting to hyperventilate. I tried to clear my head and process the events. I kept my window rolled up but when the guy in the drivers-side back seat opened his door to get out I gunned my engine, rode up on the curb and slid in front of their car and raced up the street. They took off in hot pursuit and I hit the light on Murray, making a hard left, continuing towards the trestle and down past Riverside to Laurel. They stayed right behind me as I accelerated up Laurel, miraculously hitting green lights, barreled right on to Center, and, still unable to shake them, sped up towards City Hall, careened around the corner on Locust and screeched to a halt in front of the City Police Department. My pursuers came up slowly and stopped a short distance behind, sat there for a moment, then wheeled around me and sped away. There were a couple of police cars parked in front but no cops in sight. My adrenaline rush slowly started to subside and I sat there, dazed, trying to reflect on what had just happened, my thoughts in a jumble.

"Right here in Santa Cruz?" I thought. "Are you kidding me?"

Another couple of minutes later I drove over to the Catalyst and parked in the County Bank parking lot across Front St., got out and walked into the bar just before last call, and feeling only marginally calmer, ordered my first legal beer.

It all seemed to culminate a couple of years later, at the end of the decade, with the media triumphantly anointing us as the "Murder Capital of the World". I was publishing the local "underground" newspaper at the time, and calls were pouring into the Sentinel from all over, everyone wanting the grisly, juicy details, and the city editor at the Sentinel was merrily giving everybody our phone number. His attitude seemed to be, "ask the hippies, it's their deal". If nothing else, it sure as hell was the end of innocence.

A (non) apocryphal tale – something I recall but can't document (partly because I refuse to subscribe to the on-line Sentinel in order to gain access to the archives): Through the late '50s and early '60s, during spring break, the local beaches and Boardwalk were drawing bigger and bigger crowds of partying high school and college kids, with lots of alcohol being consumed. Year by year it got rowdier and rowdier until a riot broke out on the boardwalk beach during spring break in "66. Law enforcement from all over the area was summoned and something like 450 arrests was made for assault, battery, drunkenness, resisting arrest and general mayhem. The city council was aghast, consternation all around. What to do? They decided to outlaw alcohol on the beach, a ban enforced to this day. But I happened to notice an editorial in the Sentinel at the end of spring break in '67, complaining bitterly about "clouds of smoke and the smell of marijuana wafting above the boardwalk". Which goes to show you can't please everybody: the number of arrests that year? 1.

****

The Catalyst

The Catalyst opened in April of '66, in the back of the St. George Hotel. It was a originally a co-op, backed by some local professors and liberal professionals: philosophy professor, Sam Bloom; Norm Lezin (owner of the Tannery); Ann Reed; Stan Stevens (Stan was a founder of the local chapter of the A.C.L.U., in 1961), and others I can't remember. And its mission, roughly, was to be a gathering place, in the spirit of community togetherness, and, perhaps, to forge and foster lines of communication between the town and the university

Al and Patti Di Ludivico managed the Catalyst in the spirit of its name; a community gathering place, and it quickly became a de facto public living room and hiring hall for the local hip scene. My buddy, Lex van Zyl, was the first bouncer, and worked the deli counter. (Technically, the first bouncer, as Lex reminds me, was our pal Jesse, a sturdy, but sweet tempered black guy from East St. Louis, who lasted about one day and quit, deciding shoe repair and drinking beer was more his speed.) From a good cup of coffee for a reasonable price to a decent deli sandwich and a no

“minimum purchase” policy, one could spend the better part of a day hanging out, reading, shooting the breeze with Bob Hall or his brother Charlie, playing chess, or lining up work, all in the aged splendor of the old Carriage Room. Most of the construction work and odd jobs that kept me alive in those years were secured there, and later, in the early ‘70s, I played many gigs at the Catalyst - perhaps as many as forty - with the band Jango.

The colorful, neo-Byzantine paint job on the brick façade facing Front St., was the creation of our good friend Steve Desmond, in the late ‘60s. As I recall, he worked for mainly free food and drink. Acoustic acts performed during the week. I remember wandering in one Wednesday night and catching a longhaired guy strumming an acoustic guitar and singing real smooth. Between sets I asked him his name and where he was from. He said “I’m Pat Simmons. I hitchhiked over from San Jose”. I came back to hear him a couple of more times before he disappeared and resurfaced playing with the Doobie Brothers.

When Randall Kane bought the place, in the late ‘60s, it definitely changed. It was still mellow in the daytime but soon became a full-on nightclub in the evening. Randall built a bar, where he and his cohort could hang out and drink beer. He commissioned the great local portrait artist, Kitty Wallis, to do a huge oil painting, fit for a boys club, and paid my dear friend Danni Long to pose for it, nude, on a white bear rug, and he hung it over the bar. The same painting still hangs, I believe, over the bar in the “new” Catalyst. [Danni’s husband at the time, Richard Long, did horoscopes and charts and told me mine indicated I would have a tough life. Maybe he was right, but I guess it depends on what you mean by “tough”.]

Our extended circle had a tradition of going to the Catalyst on Saturday morning for breakfast, one that started in the old Cat and continued on in the new. Families grew over time as babies were born and finally, unable to bear the commotion, Randall 86’d the lot of us, thereby punching our ticket into a pretty cool club.

The “back-bar” in the old Cat was built by a buddy, Stan Fullerton, a part Native-American, larger-than-life, pipe-puffing, beer chugging, pastrami-chompin’ character. An artist and sculptor, he told me he had been an orphan and grew up on a reservation in Oregon, and that he had lived in North Beach in the late ‘50s and knew a lot of the Beats. He built the back-bar for free, with the understanding from Randall that he could tend bar. I bring this up because, though this occurred just outside the pre-’68 scope of these recollections, there’s an interesting connection: Several of my mates and I worked for Stan, in the late ’60s, during the “coast barn-wood” craze, when the weathered, silver, redwood-siding of deteriorating coastside barns was being bought up for ridiculous sums of money by interior decorators to satiate a torrid fad. Every lawyer, mortgage broker, and tax accountant had to have their office paneled with coast barn wood. We would buy these dilapidated structures - the ones you see when you’re driving up the coast and say “oh, look at that quaint old barn, ready to fall over” - from local farmers, carefully disassemble the structures, and haul it away on Stan’s beautifully restored ’36 Diamond T flatbed. We extended this work to any old buildings being removed or torn down around town and scratched out an existence in the recycled wood business. So, finally, here’s the connection: Stan eventually married the slender, intellectual, Professor Gail Jackson Putney, sometime in the

late ‘60s, an unlikely pairing that endured, and, as Gail Fullerton, she became the first female president of San Jose State University (she recently passed away). Before that she had been married to a noted sociology professor and environmentalist, Snell Putney. When she divorced Snell, in the mid-‘60s, he took to living on his boat in the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor, and he parked his restored ‘30s Packard in the harbor parking lot. When Tom Scribner and a few others and myself started the Redwood Ripsaw in ’67 we took a staff photo, and used Snell’s car for the photo shoot.

****

Tom Scribner and the Redwood Ripsaw

The earliest photo of me in the family archives – at four months old - shows me lying naked on a blanket, in the backyard of a little farm house on El Dorado Ave., out in rural Live Oak. There were still a lot of farms and orchards, etc., out there between sleepy Santa Cruz and sleepier Capitola, right up into the sixties. The property belonged to an old friend of my parents from the radical labor movement, Herman Bollman. Recently retired from house painting and union organizing in San Francisco, he remarried and bought this little farm, and my folks, when they could persuade someone with a car to make the 160-mile round trip all the way down bumpy, windy Highway 1, (2-lane all the way) would come to visit Herman. Years later, in ’66, I would run into Herman (by then in his ‘80s) from time to time in the Old Catalyst, as his wife had kicked him out and he was living in the St. George Hotel.

Meanwhile, I spent many an afternoon in the early “old” Catalyst, a good deal of it drinking coffee, kibitzing and hatching revolutionary scenarios with Tom, so these encounters with Herman would occasionally occur while Tom and I were schmoozing, and would invariably reinforce my general antipathy towards the endless, Byzantine disputes of leftist sectarianism: Tom, as most locals know, was an ex-“Wobbly”, and later a member of the CP – the Communist Party of the U.S.A., founded by supporters of Joe Stalin and the Soviet Union. My family’s background was with the C.P.’s bitter rival, the S.W.P. - the Socialist Workers Party - who supported Leon Trotsky and his version of the worker’s state. I never bugged Tom about his C.P. past and he never hassled me about Trotsky, but whenever Bollman, an old S.W.P./Socialist Party member, would walk by, Tom, who was usually quite garrulous, would clam up. Herman would stop at our table, say hello to me and look at Tom: “ Herman”, Tom would grunt and Herman, stone-faced, would nod and mutter “Tom”, and walk away.

Tom had retired from 50+ years of working in the woods and mills in Louisiana and the Northwest (and probably Minnesota, where he was born), most recently as a *pond monkey* in Humbolt County, and was living in Davenport with his second wife, Mary, in 1964. He continued to write and self-publish, typing hunt-and-peck - he had only 2 ½ fingers on his left hand, not uncommon for a woodsman. He started losing digits as a teenager, in sawmills;

consequently, being a self-taught musician, he switched from the fiddle to the saw. He suffered some other gruesome injuries over the years, the details of which you can find in his collection of writings, “Lumberjack”, and newspaper, “Lumberjack News”.

His life and political views are pretty well documented so you can look it up if you’re interested, but a couple of basics: Wherever he had lived and worked he agitated for socialism and industrial unionism. He joined the IWW in 1914, when he was 16, and hung with them until 1925, when, as he used to say, “I no longer could find anyone to pay my dues to”. He then joined the fledgling American Communist Party and remained loyal until he couldn’t stand it anymore and quit the Party in the mid-fifties, though he continued to write and speak out against the capitalist system. He loved being a gadfly and had the Maoist *People’s Daily*, English edition, delivered to his post office box in Davenport. He giggled and assured me, “that sure got that nosey postmaster’s lips ta flappin’”. Then he and Mary moved to Santa Cruz in ’65 or early ’66. I met Tom when I first came to town and we remained close friends for the rest of his life.

In 1967 Tom wanted to crank up the mimeograph one more time and we hatched a plot, over coffee in the Catalyst, to do a newspaper - more of a political broadside - to rail against the Vietnam war, and generally raise some hell. As hip as the Catalyst was, Tom would say, “this place is a hotbed of middle-of-the-road extremism”. Tom called a meeting at his and Mary’s house on Kaye St. in the Beach Flats, and John Sanchez, John Tuck, Carol Staudacher, Al Johnson, Dr. Paul Lee and myself (there might have been one or two others) showed up and we hammered out the basics. Once we got going we decided to use the photo-offset process so it would look like a real tabloid style newspaper. Of course, that was more costly and our ad base in those years was pretty slim: Manuel’s, Al Johnson’s Pottery Studio and Ellen’s Custom Earrings. Tom, John S., John T. and myself did most of the work and writing. Paul Lee also wrote a couple of pieces. The whole enterprise lasted about eight issues.

****

The Experience of Politics

I had learned pretty quickly that I always seemed a little too political for my “hippie” mates and a little to “hip” for the politicos, which suited me perfectly. The availability of pretty good acid, peyote, mescaline – and a lot of crappy weed – was not lost on me, but I was looking for political action.

In 1966 I had enrolled at Cabrillo and was an “unaffiliated” member of the SDS Northern California Regional Steering Committee and wanted to stir up some activity. A year before, in ’64-’65, some local kids, Sandy I. and Doug R., had attempted to start a chapter of SDS but had dropped out of school. Myself, and a couple of others, including Lex van Zyl, Pat Dooling and Kevin Callahan began to distribute anti-war, draft resistance and civil rights literature. It was not easy dealing with the administration. One time we got Manny Chavez, Caesar’s brother, to come speak on campus about La Huelga and the UFW. When Manny arrived, around five pm, we all

went to the room we'd secured and found we were locked out. We couldn't get anyone to open it for us. So we went over to Manuel's in Seacliff Beach and Manny Santana let us have our meeting in the restaurant, with free beer and chips, and then he fed Manny C. and a couple of us student organizers, "on the house".

On the other hand, I landed a part-time job as administrative assistant to Bill Grant, head of the English Department at Cabrillo. I continued to agitate on campus, trying to generate some political dialogue, a real grind at a commuter campus. Bill wasn't very political but didn't mind as long as I got my work done. We had some limited success, promoting debates on the war, setting up draft counseling, collecting food and clothing for the U.F.W., which Lex van Zyl, John M. and I took down to Delano. There were some very hip teachers at Cabrillo, including Fred Levy, Pat Mahoney, Dolores Abrams, Pete Varcados, Peter Fahrquar and others who had just joined the faculty, like Sandy Lydon and Kirby Wilkens. Before I left, in '67, I recall Bill reviewing resumes on some cool folks that he subsequently hired, including T. Mike Walker and Mort Marcus (though on that point I'm not sure).

[My younger sister, Laura, started at Cabrillo in 1966, and eventually transferred to S.F. State, where she became heavily involved in the student strike and in new-left politics. Being smarter then me, as well as a talented organizer, she ended up on the national steering committee of SDS – though I think my general *M.O.* was to gravitate away from leadership. I didn't mind helping get things started, but I preferred to just work, and let others take the reins].

In the summer and fall of '66 I worked on Richard Miller's congressional campaign. Dick was running for the Democratic nomination against Fred Farr, Sam's father, and was part of an anti-Vietnam war slate that included independently wealthy Phil Drath in Marin County, Ed Keating of Palo Alto (publisher of Ramparts Magazine) and Robert Scheer (editor of Ramparts) in Berkeley. Ours was the only campaign without any money, as Dick was a three-days a-week professor of history at the San Francisco Art Institute, commuting from Pacific Grove and running a shoestring operation. Politically independent, wild haired and bearded, he was a witty, fiery orator ("The only –ism I believe in is metabolism"), at times difficult to understand because he had a split lip, but he always got his point across. Drath had fund-raisers with the likes of Joan Baez and the Dead, so somebody who knew somebody helped us contact the Jefferson Airplane and they came down to do a benefit for us at the Civic Auditorium. It was a great, swirling night of music, that attracted about five hundred folks and we came out ahead after expenses.

Our strategy was to make sure we held a lead in liberal leaning Watsonville, broke even in evenly divided Monterey, and focus on Republican Santa Cruz, which didn't yet have the liberal bloc-vote of UCSC that later would come to dominate local politics. What few bucks we had went into canvassing on the north end of Monterey Bay, and it almost worked: we split in Monterey, won Watsonville by a couple of hundred, but lost Santa Cruz by four hundred. Even so, despite the odds, Richard ended up garnering the greatest percentage of the democratic vote of all the anti-war candidates - a hollow if not moral victory.

Through political activity in the Peace and Freedom Party and the California for a New Politics campaign I met many political activists in town, including: Alice and Manny Santana, John and Sherry Tuck, Paul Dragavon; Flo and John Sanchez; Burt and Lois Muhly; Dan and Pat Miller; Carol Staudacher; Bill and Edith Weintraub; Al and Clarice Johnson; Jim and Jeanne Houston; Sam and Ethel Bloom; Carlie and Stan Stevens; Paul Lee; Tom Scribner; the King sisters; Jim and Katy Heth; Sandy and Alan Lowe; Lou Harrison, and many others I'm forgetting.

By mid '67 I was going up to the Bay Area more frequently, to demonstrations and rallies. I took a carload of friends up to Stop the Draft Week, a massive street action that lasted several days. Things were starting to escalate. And the establishment was beginning to push back, real hard.

****

The City on the Hill in the Town

The University was definitely influencing the cultural and political landscape of Santa Cruz, and would do so to a greater extent over the ensuing decades. World-class scholars and whip-smart students were flowing into town. Though the campus, cast in Ivory Tower terms, was thought of as a "City on the Hill", its influence was spilling over into the community in many ways. For one thing, it provided employment opportunities and jobs for the local citizens, which, besides the tourist industry, had been sorely lacking. Campus voters reshaped the community's political profile. Tug-of-war battles began to wax and wane between the university and the community over land use, infrastructure costs, housing pressure, tax base and institutional hegemony.

Many students and faculty brought to the table a sharp critique of the capitalist system and the war, and the University's role in supporting imperialism. Pioneering work was ramping up in many disciplines and barriers were being breached. Political activism was the new normal. Use of mind expanding, if not altering, substances put UCSC near the top of the class nationally. In fact, according to my daughter, who attended tiny Hampshire College in Massachusetts (also started in the mid-sixties, and part of the Amherst five-college consortium), UCSC, to this day, is the second choice of more students at her school than any other college, precisely because of its interdisciplinary slant and the availability of good reef. And all this, on balance, contributed to the general expansion of local "consciousness". I mean, heck, up there they even study its history.

I used the campus facilities shamelessly, mainly the east field house for basketball (after the first year that is; during the year of the trailers, I seem to remember, it was used as a dining hall). I also frequented McHenry Library four or five times a week, as a sanctuary: a quiet place to read; access to all the journals; use the listening rooms. I figured, "Why not, I'm a taxpayer". The cultural events were a huge addition to the local scene and I attended many lectures, concerts,

dance and art shows over the years. I once sat five feet away from Chet Baker, in a pretty small room, at, I think, Merrill College, as he jammed with some local cats. Chet kept snapping at one of the players for missing the “one” every time the head came around.

[There is a kind of interesting story concerning McHenry - not the library but the chancellor. Selden Osborne, our old comrade, who had retired from the waterfront and would soon be walking across the United States with a group of peace activists, periodically hitchhiked down to Santa Cruz (his jalopies were always in various states of disrepair) and I would meet him at the Catalyst. He had a cousin living here, whom I only slightly knew, but his real motivation was to go up to the UCSC campus and visit with Dean McHenry, who, as it turned out, had been a classmate of his at Stanford. Selden had a BA from Stanford in the ‘30s and an MA in political philosophy from UC Berkeley, but had chosen the life of a blue-collar worker in order to organize unions and further the revolution. They made an odd duo, Selden and Dean Dean, but there’s an even stranger twist: They were not only classmates, but also housemates at the rooming house that Selden’s mom ran, as a single parent, in Palo Alto. And for four years, Selden and Dean had only two other housemates: Clark Kerr, future president of the UC system and Frank Murphy, future chancellor of UCLA. So, while Selden spent his life trying to enlighten and lead the working class, the other three were busy educating the bourgeoisie.]

****

The Experience of Politics, redux

While at Cabrillo, I tried to coordinate activities with activist students at UCSC, and met some pretty dedicated politicos. In ’66 I went to a meeting up on the hill with Bobby Seale and David Hilliard of the Black Panther Party, who had come down from Oakland, at the invitation of some campus activists (and, probably, Professor Herman Blake), to explain how white student radicals could and should support the Black Panther Party. Both were well spoken, and Seale, a former stand-up comic, was real funny and charismatic. A year later, I was living in the City, in a roach infested apartment near the corner of Fillmore and Oak St. in the lower Haight, going to UC Berkeley Extension, while waiting to get back into Cal. The Haight Ashbury had descended into a festering hole of despair, busses of tourists still rolling up and down the blocks between Masonic and Stanyan, gaping at junkies leaning against doorways instead of hippies, sitting curbside, waving flowers. Gunshots were heard daily. I stayed away and hustled to and from my apartment when trying to go to class (at that time the office and classrooms of UCBX were about eight blocks away, down Oak, near Market St).

I got mugged (at knife point) and burgled in about a month’s time, and decided to high tail it over to a friends place in the Inner Sunset, by UCSF. I started going out to S.F. State, walking over Moraga Hill and down 19th Ave. The campus was a cauldron of radical activity. I went to a meeting at which the Black Student Union and other campus radicals were trying to hammer out an alliance, and it was looking hopeless. At one point someone proposed a united front. The BSU students rejected the idea and I stood up and, being impressed by the most recent writings of the

late Malcolm X, suggested we all had to show some solidarity in the face of imperialist oppression or we were toast. The BSU spokesman looked at me for a long moment and I thought we were going to start a dialogue.

“Well, that’s just too bad”, he said.

Fast forward six months and I’m in Berkeley, back in school, working two jobs. The anarchist “affinity group” I was involved with was trying to do the same thing, coordinate white radical and student activities, in a manner that would support the goals of the Panthers. A member of our group was working for Charles Garry’s office, developing defense strategies for high profile Panther cases. The Panthers were literally under siege. Communication between activist groups went through street-wise back channels. Eldridge Cleaver called up one of our “houses” one early morning, at four a.m., to demand an immediate meeting. Alan H., a dear friend, who was part of a no-bullshit New York anarchist collective known as Up Against the Wall Motherfucker (formerly The Black Mask; Abbie Hoffman called them “a street gang with an analysis”) was staying with us during a west-coast visit and he answered the phone and told Eldridge to shove it. Things did not look good for the class struggle.

The problem, as I saw it, was that the stakes were so high nobody could trust anybody. It reminded me of stories I heard from the old radicals (and had read about) where, by the late ‘40s and early ‘50s, any given cell meeting or radical gathering was composed of at least thirty percent FBI or undercover cops. Anyone, even if well known, proposing really radical action had to be looked upon with suspicion. Strangers would show up out of the blue, talking a good line and then start suggesting all kinds of wild action. All of a sudden we’d be looking at each other –“how well do you know this guy/gal?” etc. The vetting process got unmanageable. This was now a common experience everywhere the “system” was being challenged and confronted

Berkeley was either incubating a “revolutionary situation” or become unglued, depending on where you were standing. I felt like things were getting out of hand. People were running around engaging in all sorts of crazy activities. One night, at a huge rally at Bancroft and Telegraph, after fiery speeches by several local radical celebrities, the last of which, by a well-regarded young Marxist luminary (he later morphed into a notable financial advisor), really fired up the crowd, and somebody suggested that the Coca Cola delivery truck, parked right at the corner on Bancroft, should be overturned and set on fire. Lots of people felt this was a reasonable suggestion, a demonstration of the people’s displeasure, given Coke’s reputation as a symbol of imperialism. Soon after the blaze was set, the cops and fire trucks moved in. Rocks were thrown and tear gas was fired off, blanketing several square blocks with a choking mist. People were running in all directions, and I decided to vacate the area, convinced not much good was going to come of this. As I walked down Durant, a handkerchief over my nose, I spotted a familiar looking couple, holding each other up and leaning against the metal street-sign pole on the corner of Durant and Dana. It was our old family friends Bill and Ada Farrell (owners of Farrell’s books - the radical bookstore on Telegraph Ave.) with tears streaming down their cheeks. Bill was waving a stick with a big red flag flapping back and forth.

“Jesus; Bill, Ada, are you all right?” I inquired.

“Hell yeah!” he yelled. “Whoooeee! What a night…it smells like revolution!”

“Take care”, I waved, and headed home. I realized that those tears were probably tears of joy as much as gas-induced.

The National Guard occupied the city for two weeks, and curfew was imposed. John M., on shore leave from the Navy, was visiting me and we almost ended up in the tank when we were stopped, out after six o’clock, trying to get to a meeting at another pad a few blocks away. Johnny’s navy status saved our ass, and we decided to keep inside after that. The rest of the year I tried to focus on the coalition-building angle, but it wasn’t happening. Too many separate agendas, too much paranoia, state repression, etc. In February of ’69 I decided to head back to Santa Cruz.

****

Postscript, 1969: The Free Spaghetti Dinner

I came back to town from a year and a half in S.F. and Berkeley. Things were pretty hot in Berserkland, metaphorically speaking, in the early spring of ’69. Some members of our affinity group went to chill up at communes in Mendocino. One couple, Steve and Pat, followed me down here and were hanging out briefly at John M.’s cabin off Branciforte. Another couple, close friends of mine and part of the UATWMF collective back east, stayed with us a few days and then jammed up to Black Bear. After a month, Steve, Pat, another buddy, Chuck Garner (a genuine sage-brush philosopher, born in Muskogee, Oklahoma) and I went looking for a house and located a vacant Victorian on Blaine Street, right behind where the “new” county jail now stands. A spacious farm house, it was perfect for a communal set-up, so we went to the County Building right across Water St., found out the county had taken it over, and we rented it for 150/ mo. - a great deal. Several folks moved in, including some of the old Avalon gang. John M. moved into one half of an old wooden garage on the edge of the property, and he and Jean Claude built a dark room in the other half. We de-weeded about forty-by-forty foot patch and installed a big garden, hooked up with our local pals The Barn Brothers – Don Tabor and Paul Kohlman - boat builders and cabinet makers who had grown up in Ben Lomond and had one of the large barns at the Sash Mill as their workshop - and combined both locations into one real functional, productive “family.”

I was itching to do another paper, in line with the other “Alternative Press” journals that were cropping up all over the country (from the pioneering days of the Berkeley Barb, The Oracle, The East Village Other, The White Panther from Detroit, etc. Steve, who was trying to get into grad school at UCSC, and Pat were game, so we called a meeting at Blaine St., attended by several housemates (I’m not sure about this list) including: John M., Chuck G., Souxie C., Steve (Said) and Pat D. and some other interested folks like T. Waldo Buck and Diane G., and others I

unfortunately can't remember. We cooked up a big pot of spaghetti and that inspired the paper's name. We wanted to use the motto, "all the news that's fit to eat" and print it on rice paper with vegetable-dye ink, but that proved to be financially unrealistic. Steve and I secured a business license, we built a layout table in the basement and we were off and running. The first issue came out in November (I think) of 1969, with a cover-photo montage created by John M. that showed Supervisor Henry Mello of Watsonville, on the steps of the brand new County Courthouse, addressing a huge crowd at an anti Vietnam war rally.

The paper had a political/environmental/community slant, with great graphics by T. Waldo and other talented artists who joined our staff over the next several months. Everyone worked volunteer and it was a real dedicated crew. We tried selling it for thirteen cents a copy – trying to stay editorially independent of advertisers, but gave up real quick. Giving it away free and developing a display-ad base to pay the bills worked out ok as, by then, there was a pretty large group of hip merchants and craftspeople around, enough to support the basic overhead/costs of putting out the paper. After a couple of issues we moved to a two-office suite on Pacific Ave., on the second floor of the wooden building (whose name I've forgotten) across from the old County Courthouse (later to become the Cooperhouse). We were in between the Musicians Union office and the Monterey Bay Regional office of the San Jose Mercury. We could look out on to Pacific Avenue and we worked all day and night. Soon, we took on a business manager, Cash Sales, who hustled display ads for a percentage. His partner, Carole, an RN, joined the staff, and eventually became one of the first Santa Cruz midwives and founders of the Birth Center.

The FSD ramped up to a thirty-two + page bi-weekly and evolved into a uniquely Santa Cruzy periodical, and, though it took a little while, we got mostly positive feedback from the community, from advertisers and at "Underground Press" conferences. I wrote an editorial, in the form of a poem, for the second issue, attempting to state our "mission". I worried that it was a bit over-the-top but Steve, who was still trying to line up his graduate studies (and in contact with some of his former professors at UCB - Sheldon Wolin, Norm Jacobson and John Schaar (who would soon be coming to UCSC to teach) ran into Norman O. Brown, who told him he liked the poem. I felt relieved. Ralph Abraham, whom I knew from rapping over coffee in the Catalyst, wrote a column. We did some real good stuff, both new-agey and politically radical, but not everybody was convinced. A certain dour, local bookstore owner assured us we were "juvenile" and the paper was "fish wrap".

We emphasized an ecological perspective with an anarchist slant, when most folks were wondering, "what's ecology?" We offered community groups two pages of space to create copy and lay out their ideas and programs – which led to issues with full two-page spreads by: a local Fullerian collective, on constructing geodesic domes; a spread by Max Hartstein on the 25th-Century Ensemble; a description of programs at the Community School; a heads-up on P.G.&E.'s plans for a local nuclear power plant - pretty much what a hipster would expect or want from a Santa Cruz periodical – sort of the anti-Sentinel. In fact, sometime in the first few months we did a big smack-down of the Sentinel. Dylanologist Steve Pickering joined the staff and did his thing. We created and published the program and guide to - and commentary on - the first Earth Day in Santa Cruz – April, 1970. The paper was available around the Monterey Bay and had a

distribution of over 15,000, and spawned - in the words of our dear friend and staff member, Mischa Adams - “a whole chain of begats “, which has been chronicled in a retrospective done by the Metro (before it was swallowed up by the Good Times). After two years I sold the “business” to our graphics staff: Anders Paul; Kentus Americus (creator of the great ‘60s poster “The World”); and Bill Buritta, for thirty-two dollars and fifty cents, what the original license cost me. They changed the name to Sundaz – and I contributed articles for a couple more issues. I never made a dime but had a helluva good time.

I definitely should also acknowledge the Black Mountain Press, a literary and local community journal that was part of the scene here in the early to mid-sixties; and also, the Balloon Newspaper, a cartoon/art format publication that was around from the late 60’s on. Stellar artists like Futzy Nutzel, Henry Humble and Spinny Walker turned out some great stuff, and we included their work as an insert in some issues of the FSD.

Regards,

Rick Alan Gladstone