

Rev.  
Hults

# Editorial Now & Then



Now, for the other shoe.....yes, it is true, the Upper Left Edge will, next month, complete our promised five years of publication, and take a deep breath. When we started this project we did it because we could. It was cheap enough and we cared enough to spend the time. After five years of volunteering in the service of a free press and general fun we have found ourselves on the edge of America so busy that it is often days between walks on the beach. This is not why we moved here. Yes, we fear the loss as much, if not more, than you, our faithful readers and supporters. We try to tell ourselves it is like a song, it has a beginning, middle and an end. Still, we wish it could go on. And the possibility does exist. If some person, or bunch of folks who feel about this rag as we do could get it together to run the operation, and write the letters and make the run to the printer, and return the phone calls, and do the billing, and write the checks, and all that stuff,.....we would love to play. But the idea of publishing 'real' books and not looking at the calendar and starting to have trouble sleeping, and spending more time with our books, and our ocean, well, we all know selfishness when we see it, and it seems like it's coming on our last chance to be selfish and enjoying doing what 'we' want to do, on our terms.

This paper actually began in the days of the Gulf War, when America was making the world safe for OPEC. Some of us watched on CNN as a quarter of a million people were killed and the largest man-made environmental disaster in history (and that's saying something!) unfolded before our riveted eyes. We, being older veterans of the anti-war movement, some just war veterans, felt the need to speak, with the written word about what was going on. Images were a constant, we had much more information that we could ever digest. Wolf Blitzer and the Scuds, live from the Baghdad Hilton. No, our little paper was reflections and comments on the reality by folks that as they say have, "been there, done that, burned the tee shirt." We called it, with a humble lack of imagination, "The Peace Paper" It was a bunch of old hippies and activists bitching as usual, but it was kind of interesting to your beloved editor, and he kind of got printers ink under his nails, if not in his veins. The idea of the Edge was based on the idea of the New Yorker magazine under Harold Ross, when Dorothy Parker, James Thurber, E.B.White, and so many wrote the notes of the time. Uncle Mike since he moved to this silly little beach town has even instigated a poker game, that your beloved rev. named the Thanotoplis Literary and Inside Straight Society, Pacific Chapter. With that strange energy that we got from the New Yorker and adding the anti-war sentiment, (remember the New Yorker was started by W.W.II vets who worked on Stars and Strips.) we felt there were enough folks who could write a declarative sentence that was worth reading, that we knew and could bribe, beg, or blackmail into contributing. We were smart enough to leave Portland to be closer to the actual edge, and to find the humble ms sally who added the visual on a level that CNN will never be able to match, and a low tolerance for 'close enough' that made us proud of what we printed. Getting Prof. Lindsey and June Kroft, Margi Curtis, Alex Lafollett, Sandy Rea, Ron Logan, Mr. Baseball, Dr. Karkeys and others to contribute gave a voice to the community, and the region. And of course Uncle Mike and Blame it on the Stars will be missed, though Blame it on the Stars is available in Inkfish. We might continue, we truly don't know, that is the hands of others, maybe you? The point of this rambling dialogue is that next month might be the last Edge. If that is the case, and even if it isn't we would like to invite you all, our advertisers, subscribers, writers, artists, silly friends, to do something special, we will do our best to make the March Issue something you will be proud to be a part of. (ended a sentence with a...)

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UPPER LEFT EDGE



I guess I owe it all to Jill Stafflebach --all these long years of social ineptitude, shyness, loneliness, and stumbling bachelorhood. Jill sat adjacent to me in the first grade at Green Hills School, Millbrae, California, in 1949 -- a precocious, composed, little Peppermint Pattie girl, blond, ink-well dipping pigtails and wire-rimmed glasses. She always had her hand raised because she knew all the answers. Her father, a professor at Stanford, had written the penmanship book we used in class. Naturally, she was despised and villified. Ted, a poor kid with six fingers on each hand, and I, got whatever 6-year old animosity was left over after Jill got her daily helping. Playground jeers, stolen marbles, jabs in the back with pencils, dirt clods in the head, gobs of spit hocked from the top of the jungle gym, that was our lot.

My mother dressed me in a Little Lord Fauntleroy suit for my first week of school: a little camel-hair blazer, a jaunty Eton cap, short pants with a bib and suspenders, saddle shoes and white socks rolled down just so. I was doomed.

Then things got worse.

Our teacher, Miss Bailey, selected Jill and I to dance a little Mexican Hat Dance for a monthly P.T.A. meeting. We had serapes made in class from cheese cloth, with Crayola designs and some huge sombreros. I can still hear that music and the chorus of taunts we got the next day.

"Teacher's pet," "What a farmer!" ("farmer" was a pretty derogatory term in San Francisco in the first grade classes of 1949, "That sissy would rather dance with girls than play football!" "He eats dog doody on Wonder Bread!")

And then, the really terrible thing happened. During a reading lesson, Jill kept raising her hand to answer a question. Miss Bailey apparently avoided calling her to give some other students a chance to respond. I glanced over at Jill waving her hand furiously in the air...and she had wet her pants. An enormous yellow puddle spread from the legs of her desk. She buried her head on the desk and cried.

From that day on I became "the boy who danced with the girl who wet her pants." In the first grade at Green Hills School I was the scum of scum. As I walked home from school through the Emilio Brothers truck farm, fourth-graders shagged rotten tomatoes after me, ("If he comes through here again, we'll pants him"). I shuddered and shrank.

That was the end of my dancing days. By 1957, all my peers had lathered their faces with Clearasil and headed for the high school hop. Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, Little Anthony, and Robin Luke strummed and wailed. I stayed home. No more dancing for me. The music rattled around teasingly in my soul, but the phobic terror, the fear had struck. My family moved to Oregon. At Seaside High School, I spent prom nights with "the greasers" parked up on the 400 Line at Crown Camp, drinking Thunderbird wine in a '49 Ford. The rules were clear: no dancing, no girl friends.

Over the years, my dance phobia has plagued me in bizarre ways. Ladies have approached me in lounges and restaurants where bands perform asking if I'd be inclined to dance. I waffle around and begin my sorry apologies. Once I dissembled and told a young lady that I couldn't escort her to a Sadie Hawkins dance because I was Jewish.

"Jewish," she said, "what kind of Jewish?"

"A very orthodox kind," I said.

On another occasion, a robust lady approached me as a band played, and asked if I cared to dance. I declined.

"You're just embarrassed to dance with me 'cause I'm fat," she blurted out to me. Oh, dear. So, here I am, flotsam cast adrift on the sea of life. I am denied any hope of marriage. The first thing any new groom has to do is dance with the bride!

Perhaps in some lonely condominium in San Francisco, Jill Stafflebach ticks off the gray moments of her passing days. If we could just get together on that ballroom floor, those colored circles where you place your feet, a few swirls around the room...perhaps the damage could be undone.

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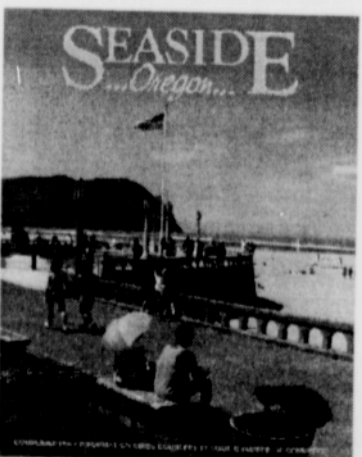
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