

IMAGINE RED SHOES

February 19, 2006

Well it's been a quiet week on the Island. Lately everybody has been grumpy and in a bad mood with the weather going nuts, the packs of marauding out-of-control Moslems, bad helicopter accidents at sea, with practically the only bright spot occurring in the form of Vice President Dick Cheney shooting a 78 year old attorney. Well, even though he is a Republican, we are sincerely glad Mr. Whittington is on the mend and will not die of his wounds.

Sorry to say this issue is not very cheerful. Sympathy for a Republican even! Lost and bereft we wander the darkness of the media in this atavistic time of brutality and savage indifference, wailing and gnashing of teeth, wearing sackcloth and pouring ashes upon the head. Oh where is Opus when we need a penguin most?!

All day the trains hooted through Square across the estuary, with their distinctive ululating wail. Now night has fallen and mingled with those sounds comes the steady horn of the distant East Brother Lighthouse up at Point Richmond. And the answering fog horns of the tankers feeding the fourth largest port in the United States. In terms of container freight weight. In terms of acreage

the Port is third largest in the world with the tallest crane overall recently delivered and now operational. No surprise it makes some noise.

Always wanted to be someone like Garrison Keillor. You know. Avuncular, friendly, Lutheran, full of homespun wisdom, with a sonorous voice that people really listened too. He impresses one as the guy you really want to have living on the other side of the hedge. Loan your tools to and, by George, they come back cleaner and freshly oiled. If your daughter really insists on getting married, its his son you want to be the man, for the issue must be as good as the press and the apple falls not far from the tree.

Instead, we turned out older but not wiser, grumpy and not friendly, an uncle but with no urchins paying due respect, and with a voice that causes bats and small animals to flee in terror and to which nobody really listens for our utterances turn out to be mad ramblings of a disconnected brain. Certainly not the daughters, who have hooked up with the worst of Van Halen fans driving pickup trucks. Furthermore we have no radio show. Only this little E-zine.

As for being Lutheran, the Lutherans hereabouts are a bit funny, with the exception of Pastor Svenquist who does his damndest to reign in an unruly and wayward flock. We want to ask him just how he got the most beautiful women into his congregation and what does this have to do with acquiring, um, more converts. Perhaps he gets them from Minnesota. Then there is Rev. Bauer who rides to church on a Harley Davidson.

Incidentally, Svenquist and Father Morales are still good friends following the recent Faith Based Initiative debacle in which the Lutherans, the Catholics,

the Muslims, the Rabbi, and the Baptists (of both types) attempted to missionize the saloons. It all fell apart during an argument over whether it were possible to consecrate a slice of carrot cake and a glass of beer.

The Imam of the mosque here still plays mumblety-peg with the Rabbi on alternate Fridays, for let it be known, left to their own devices, Moslems are the kindest and gentlest people in the world and eager to reach forward in friendship and the Rabbi is quite broadminded. This is the Bay Area after all.

Nevertheless, oh for a Bloom County daisy patch into which to plotz in this time!

Oh dear, just over the wire we have a terrible reminder of age. The news item appears innocuous enough, but its all about a gal named Isabel Zaporah teaching women how to dance with hula hoops. No, its not the hoops. Its the name "Zaporah" Way, way back we had some connections with dance troupes in the Old Babylon and one of those was a contact improv group headed by Ruth Zaporah. Now, some twenty years later her daughter is running these hula-hoop classes as a positive response to the locked-out poi dancer classes directed to Burning Man.

Ruth started this improv thing among dancers and it caught hold in a big way about twenty years ago. She used to hang out wearing this red rust danskin onepiece under a tangle of curls. Lost track of her sometime during the Bush I regime.

The classes are locked out because they are over subscribed. Not everybody can swing the logistics and insurance to teach classes in how to

dance with twirling balls of fire in the manner we have described in this space at Crucible events.

She must be twenty-something nowadays. Her daughter, not Ruth. How time passes. Never did buy those red tennis shoes; always wished I had. Done at least that much with a pretty worthless life. All this time spent in longing, longing for something else.

If a man wore red shoes, he could learn how to dance. Even if he didn't know how, he could still learn how to dance.

There goes the midnight train through the Jack London waterfront. Echoing long across the water. No more foghorns this time of night on a Sunday. Just the long wail of the midnight train down through the ages and the long lous of time. As those trains have done ever since the western terminus of the trans-America rail wound up here for a time until the formal terminus could be completed in Oaktown.

That's the way it is on the Island. Have a great week.