

News From Home 1

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News From The Road

Went to Paradise....not all it's cracked up to be....angels in short supply, even hellish variety. And it's a long long way down to Reno Nevada, but it's a long long way up first, if you take route 70....Richard Farina died the day his first novel was published....World Cup dramas unfold in some happier place, as I stare at fuschia dressing room walls, so bright I've got to wear shades....my mate and old Fairport resident George Galt played Harmonica on "Jackson" by Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazlewood - and here we are in the town named after the song named after Glenda. And there she is on the telly, opposite Walther Matthau, they probably run this one 24 hours a day in Her Honour...

News From Home

Much ado back at The Trellises, our bijou country-style suburban haven - our beloved young nephew Gavin is getting married at our house, and there is much to be done to get the ancient (1937) pile looking good for the event. A repaint is under way, in the capable hands of Akbar and his three sons, and Mr. Hashimoto, our esteemed gardener, has been extra vigilant with the pruning and planting. If you knew Mr. Hashimoto, you might think it impossible for him to be any more vigilant than he already is, such is his fanatical attention to detail, and utter devotion and loyalty. I pride myself on being a 'dirt' gardener-I like to get my hands in the loam, and weed and till and fertilise to my heart's content. But sometimes I do wonder whose garden

it is. Hashimoto (Taga to his friends, apparently,) seems to expend extra energy on the plants he feels are appropriate, i.e. the ones that look "Japanese". How he lovingly pores over the Azalias, Camellias, and the solitary Bonsai, pruning with what looks suspiciously like nail scissors - meanwhile dismissing as "weeds" my cherished xeriscape Mediterraneans (that thrive anyway, nurtured or not). All the plants Hashimoto likes, I cannot claim to have planted - I inherited them when we moved in, and have always regarded them as 50s California landscaping aberrations, that only suit the climate if you fuss over them....but it keeps Taga happy, and I suppose he is a bit of a treasure. Our neighbour Mr.Alphonso called to say that he thought our new house colour was in very bad taste. I pointed out that all the painters had done was to strip it back to the wood , leaving it grey and burn-marked from the blowtorches. He apologised, and said he hadn't been himself since England beat Argentina in the World Cup. He said it was fate - God getting back at them for Maradona's "hand of God" goal....I've mentioned Mr. Alphonso before, on the List - We often spend the evening together playing cards, discussing football/soccer, and he has wonderful tales about his life as a gaucho and wrangler in Hollywood. Alas, he is pretty much wheelchair-bound nowadays, and relies on Anita, his housekeeper, to fetch and carry. They act so much like a married couple, I can't help thinking there used to be a physical relationship there, But whatever it is, they act like people who have been together a very long time. One of the trials of visiting Mr.A is sitting through some screaming match over very little at all - the ground has obviously been gone over so many times that they're just reading from the script. Mr. A likes to feel that he's won, of course, being the proud Latino, but Anita takes advantage of his disability to turn the screws in other ways...a subtle amendment to the soup here, an extra 20 minutes emptying the bed pan there.....More anon.