

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

A slacker has plans for his free time

MIRANDA sat outside the gelato shop on Hamilton Avenue, eating her \$4 ice cream. Prices certainly had risen in Palo Alto, since her youth. She could remember nickel popsicles from her early childhood.

Looking around the gelato shop at the hyperactive tech workers taking afternoon breaks, Miranda wondered if there were any slackers left in Palo Alto. When she had grown up here a few decades earlier, there were plenty of slackers in town.

These included musicians, writers, actors, dancers, poets, painters and filmmakers. And a whole bunch of people who considered themselves to be artists, but hadn't figured out what kind of artist they were going to be.

Back in those days, thought Miranda, Palo Alto was something of a slacker's paradise. It was never quite Berkeley, but it tried to give Berkeley a run for its money.

In those days, the town was filled with people sitting in coffee shops, smoking cigarettes, hanging out in

Series extended

This is part 24 of what was originally intended to be a 24-part fictionalized serial by John Angell Grant. Instead of ending it today, the Post has decided to publish another 24 episodes. This decision is in response to the positive reaction we've received from readers. Thank you for your interest in this serial.

If you missed earlier episodes, go to www.johnangell-grant.com.

the afternoons, and solving the problems of the world. There was no pressure. As long as you lived with your parents, and they paid the rent. Although housing was cheap in those days, not like today.

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"Hi Miranda," said a young man holding a chocolate cone. It was Jeremy, a friend's grandson. "I've moved back in with my parents," he said. "I've decided to be a slacker."

"How funny," said Miranda. "I was just thinking about that."

"Cool," said Jeremy. "Yes, we've been driven out of Palo Alto. But slacking is good for the soul, good for the heart, and good for society."

"So what does a slacker in Palo Alto do these days?" asked Miranda.

"I'm working at the movie theater down the street," said Jeremy. "Before it goes under and turns into startup offices."

"And what do you do there?" asked Miranda.

"I sell tickets and popcorn, part-time, for minimum wage," said Jeremy.

"That sounds like a limited life," said Miranda.

"It's giving me the chance to take a filmmaking class at DeAnza, and work on my movie."

"You're making a movie?" asked Miranda, impressed.

"Yes I am," said Jeremy.

"What's it about," Miranda asked.

"It's about being a slacker," said Jeremy, "in present day Palo Alto."

"So it's a fiction film," Miranda joked.

"Science fiction," Jeremy replied. "It's about homeless outcasts with their stolen tech gear; people who are former tech company employees who turned 40 in Palo Alto and got fired; and are now huddled down by San Francisquito Creek, in their homeless encampment, battling the forces of darkness."

"I'm crowdsourcing the funding," he continued. "Can you make a contribution?"

"Sure," said Miranda.

Jeremy handed her a postcard. "Here's the website. Just type in your credit card."

"How much have you raised?" Miranda asked.

"About five grand," said Jeremy.

More tomorrow.