

# PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

## Palo Alto and the strawberry theory

MIRANDA sipped her morning latte at Cafe Venetia on University Avenue.

Eddie the street person came strolling by. He was about to explain how Palo Alto was like strawberries. Miranda offered to buy Eddie a coffee.

“No thanks,” he said. “Not today. Today is a street planter day.” And Eddie sat down on the street planter a few feet away. Sometimes Eddie made a lot of sense to Miranda, and sometimes he didn’t.

“You have to watch your diet, Miranda,” Eddie continued. “Too much coffee is not good for you.”

“I’m having strawberries also,” said Miranda, pointing to the dish of cut fruit in front of her. “What do you live on, Eddie?” she asked.

This is part 35 of a 48-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant with illustrations by Steve Curl.

“I live on secret oxygen,” said Eddie. “Not that we can do much about the strawberries around here,” he added.

“Strawberries originally were tiny — the size of tiny raspberries — and now you go to Safeway and they are huge — five or six times their natural size, from developments in agricultural engineering.”

He peered at her fruit dish.

“Is this huge strawberry good for us?” he continued. “Maybe it’s okay, but who knows, maybe not.”

Eddie pointed toward the sky and

made some curious cabalistic signs with his hands. “Better to be safe than sorry,” he said.

“The strawberries now have to be four times their original size,” Eddie added. “Because earth’s population is four times what it was a few centuries ago.”



MIRANDA

“In the old days,” he continued, going into his professorial mode, “Animals would be attracted to fruit by its color; and so they would eat the fruit. Then they would walk and excrete the seeds, which Mother Nature designed not to be digestible.”

“And then, voila, the seeds would be excreted with a nice high-fertilizing package, if you know what I mean, and the plant would take root somewhere else. Cool, eh?”

Yes, Miranda had to agree, that was kind of cool.

“So Palo Alto is like strawberries,” Eddie said. “Old Palo Alto was the small natural strawberries. Present-day Palo Alto is the giant genetically engineered strawberries.”

He waved his hand up University Avenue.

“Welcome to giant, oversized, genetically engineered Palo Alto,” said Eddie.

“Maybe you don’t understand it right now, Miranda; but a few years down the road, you’ll see I am right. We are now living the genetically engineered life.”

“But just remember,” he added, “You can’t digest your apple seeds.”

**More on Monday.**