

The Ephemeral History of Gelson's Sunset Boulevard

Robin Myrick

Students of anecdotal history know that Gelson's on Sunset Boulevard, commonly understood as a chain supermarket, is in fact a significant cultural site in the artifactory of West LA. Those called to investigate such a vast spiritual repository of inertia, fantasy, and regret should not be challenged with cynicism, or a lack of extrasensory perception. If this describes you, read no further. Turn back now, exit through the trap door, post no bills. This activity will reveal a series of bracing ephemeral moments that can be read and analyzed only by the extraordinary, those willing and able to tune in to the specific harmonic frequencies on which the space operates and who are ready to accept what they may discover there. Beyond the last word of this sentence there is no emotional refund.

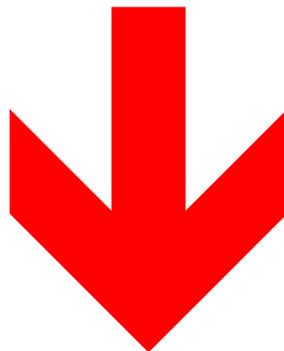
Still reading? Congratulations. Before you is an interpretive assignment that I now consider you qualified to complete.

Instructions: As you approach 15424 Sunset Blvd. during your Road Concert drive, please select 5-10 entries from the list of historic events that follows – culled from messages, utterances, fuzzy memories, questionable reporting, tangential asides, and first-hand accounts – which you will make the focus of your investigation. This assignment requires that you a) visit the site with your psychic antennae fully engaged, b) use your intuitive powers to determine the area of the store where each event took place, and c) commemorate the event in some fashion.

The single most important rule of this activity is to trust yourself – as an official temporary anecdotal historian, your determination of location will be correct, as will your interpretation of meaning and choice of commemorative gesture. You may wish to reenact the events, take notes describing your experience, or snap photos for documentation purposes, as through this process you will also create your own historic moment.

You can post photos, notes, conclusions, and other evidence of your fieldwork to the LA Road Concert live blog by emailing or texting it to lroadconcerts.sunset@blogger.com at any point during the day. You may also email content to me after the fact at damsaltyham@yahoo.com.

Good luck. You're a part of it now.



The Ephemeral History of Gelson's Sunset Boulevard

Attempt to locate and commemorate the spot where:

1. A woman who normally found the market to be kind and classy heard the deli men talking crudely to each other about things a customer doesn't want to hear
2. Sarah Michelle Gellar paused to consider the lavender flatbread
3. A child, first visiting with his aunt, found the store incredible
4. Peter Graves decided he enjoyed pushing his own shopping cart
5. A hungry father and son returning from the villa dined on a gigantic po-boy, fried cod and mac and cheese, reminded of the French grocery store they patronized when heading to Amboise that was full of exceptional produce, the best cuts of meat, exotic cheeses, and the freshest seafood they'd seen that wasn't in the water or on a dock
6. A couple declared the lasagna Bolognese borderline inedible, and wrote it off permanently with regret
7. George Gobel ran into one of his former writers, and broke out some of the old jokes that worked
8. A woman thinking about entering the Gelson's story contest changed her mind due to the fact that entries had to be in good taste and devoid of obscenity
9. Glenn Close rejected a dented can
10. A deli employee helping a woman with the egg salad insisted that she sample other items, filling a large paper plate with all types of salad the customer didn't want (but which she enjoyed despite her annoyance at his forwardness)
11. Sally Field accepted an awkward compliment
12. A man accused his dressed-up mother of searching for Prince Charming there
13. Billy Crystal took a second pass at the sample tray
14. One sister bought a princess cake and an alligator cake to celebrate the other's 88th birthday
15. Upon hearing Leslie Nielsen shopped there, one woman remarked to another that he was sexy
16. A woman dressed in sweats and flip flops, upon noticing her shoes made funny noises, suddenly felt the attention of a hundred eyes and the glow of celebrity
17. A man proclaimed Gelson's to be what every grocery store should aspire to, due to its very respectable sake selection
18. Steve Allen and Chevy Chase each rejected a similarly-shaped vegetable

19. A middle-schooler shopping with her mom late at night smiled at a really hot guy who was shopping with his own mom
20. Tom Brady was given a paper bag too large for the number of items he purchased
21. Despite a great experience, a man decided to do perform his biweekly grocery hunt elsewhere
22. A woman proclaimed the Chinois Salad dressing really great
23. Denise Richards contemplated an escape strategy
24. Two teens picked up a pound of chicken fingers and “inhaled that shit” while watching an old woman with a weird jaw pay for her groceries and making plans to see The Corpse Bride the next day
25. A man declared the moderately-priced bakery cakes ready to be purchased and taken as a gift, if needed
26. Edward Furlong smiled at a middle-schooler who was shopping with her mom late at night, and was subsequently described as “stunning in person”
27. A child who visited everyday after school with his mummy fell deeply in love with supermarkets
28. Cindy Crawford thought about the amount of sugar they put in bread
29. A mom chatted with one of the Lakers while her son realized he didn't know people could be that tall
30. A woman waiting to use the restroom was startled when an older lady in a bedazzled blue jean outfit, an out-of-control grey wig, and haphazardly-applied eye makeup threw open the door and scowled at her, then proceeded to throw her hateful glances again on the cereal aisle, by the carving stand, in the checkout line, and across the parking lot
31. A man opined that if someone really needs a \$64,000 radish, it's a wonderful place to go
32. Heidi Montag sat on the front of a shopping cart while Spencer Pratt pushed it down the aisle
33. The chef was in a good mood, so the food was Spago quality
34. A woman who was “really not a grocery shopping type of person” became irritated when she noticed her complicated and exacting mother had written a crazy long grocery list that extended to the backside of the notepaper
35. Jennifer Garner held the hand of a small child which she herself produced
36. A former three-year-old realized that the many of Gelson's employees had been working there since he was a child
37. A woman remarked upon an older gentleman's tan legs and perfectly coiffed white hair, and suggested he was working the store like he was Cesar Romero
38. Brian Wilson became trapped in the shortest checkout line that actually took the longest
39. Five high schoolers drove over at lunch but failed to eat because the line was too long and one was paranoid the whole time that he would be late for Government
40. Jane Fonda politely nodded hello to someone that thought they knew her but didn't