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Metro

Stop whining: Super Bowl will make S.F. big winner

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Super Bowl 50 is coming, and with it all the usual nay-saying from the usual sources about city money being used to host a "corporate event." You bet it's a corporate event. It's being put on by the NFL which, when it comes to capturing the American psyche, is probably the most powerful corporation around. Let me be up front. I am a member of the Super Bowl 50 Host Committee, which lobbied to bring the event to the Bay Area, and which has raised \$50 million to help cover the costs of the big game in Santa Clara and the parties here in San Francisco.

I am also a 49ers fan who feels a bit down that we're not in the Super Bowl. But I am also a former mayor who is a bit annoyed at the criticism over San Francisco spending \$4 million or so on police, firefighters and Muni to deal with the festivities, and at the questions about whether the city will make anything on the deal. The people suggesting that the money be spent instead on the homeless or housing or health programs ought to ask themselves, "Where does the city's money come from in the first place?" A good part of it comes from big events like the Super Bowl, the America's Cup, Fleet Week and the Pride Parade. When I was mayor, I made a point of having a big event every 60 days to keep the money rolling in and to keep the world spotlight on San Francisco. Of course the city makes money. Just ask any hotel. They are already jacking up their rates. Every restaurant is going to be booked. All the building and stage craft union members staffing the events are going to be working double overtime. Everyone is going to make a killing, including the private citizens who are smart enough to schedule a vacation paid for by Airbnb'ing their homes. Hey, my place might be available if the price is right.

I love the fact that, thanks to Donald Trump, the "birther" questions that right-wing loons have long asked about President Obama are now being pointed at a Republican candidate. Ted Cruz was born north of the border to a Cuban father and an American mother, which Trump says raises the question of whether the Texas senator is legally "natural born," which you must be under the Constitution to become president. Cruz is also having to account for why, until recently, he maintained dual U.S.-Canadian citizenship. Perhaps he envisioned moving into the prime minister's quarters in Ottawa? Whatever the case, Cruz apparently didn't drop his second citizenship until about 18 months ago when he decided to run for president. You may recall that similar questions were raised about another Republican, Arizona Sen. John McCain, when he ran for president in 2000 and 2008. McCain was born in the Panama Canal Zone, which at the time was a U.S. territory. The McCain issue was pretty much put to rest when his colleagues in the Senate passed a resolution saying he was legit. My sources tell me Cruz won't be so lucky. They tell me the majority of senators, including his fellow Republicans, hate him with a passion and have no plans to bless him as a native son.

Movie time: "The Danish Girl." I'm sure a couple of Oscar nominations will come out of this story about the early days of sex changes. Eddie Redmayne of "The Theory of Everything" fame does a great job as the husband who is on his way to becoming a wife. Alicia Vikander matches the performance as his supportive wife. "Carol": A romance story about a woman caught in a bad marriage and the shop girl she falls in love with. Great acting by Cate Blanchett as the older woman. Truth be told, the best part of seeing both these movies was spending time in the Embarcadero Center Cinema where they were playing. The Embarcadero features big La-Z-Boy-style stuffed seats with plenty of leg room. It's like being in the showroom of the penthouse at the St. Regis. For two hours, you get to feel like a millionaire for under \$20.

While back in New York, I saw "Hamilton." It's the highly touted rap musical about our first secretary of the treasury. One white guy plays King George III and everyone else in the cast is a racial minority. A good production, but it doesn't come cheap. StubHub is getting \$1,700 for a \$200 ticket. For my money, the new version of "The King and I" is better, and it sure is less expensive.

Years ago, as a young lawyer, I represented several of the Tenderloin hookers who worked the trade that circled Sutter, Larkin and Post streets. My, how things have changed. A couple of years ago, my friend Stanlee Gatti bought two buildings on Post near Hyde and painstakingly restored them to their long-lost glory. One is going to be an art gallery, the other a grocery store. But the real attraction is the lighting. Gatti put lights in each square in the sidewalk, so when you're out front at night, you go from one point of light to another. It's fabulous. Just down the street, there is a new restaurant. Then another one. And not a hooker in sight.

A Missouri lawmaker has introduced a bill to require lobbyists who have sex with a legislator or legislative staffer to disclose it to the state ethics commission. Under the proposed law, the sex would be considered a "gift." Thankfully, under the proposal, "the reporting of sexual relations for purposes of this subdivision shall not require a dollar valuation."

Want to sound off? E-mail: wbrown@sfchronicle.com

The National Football League's logo for Super Bowl 50. / NFL

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