

OPINION

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COMMENTARY

Hanks: As the Stones say, you can make it if you try

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It's a cliché of the interconnectedness of the world that when a butterfly flaps its wings in Wales, it affects the weather in Waco. Yet sometimes global forces really do have very local consequences.

When the multinational celebrities the Rolling Stones visited Austin on Sunday, I ended up at the concert because some folks in the Clarksville/Old West Austin neighborhood knew each other well enough to have gotten together to buy tickets.

My veterinarian, Michael Mullen, 50, and his wife, Katy O'Neill, 55, live in that Clarksville/Old West Austin area. O'Neill thinks the reason people in her neighborhood know each other well enough to buy concert tickets together began because their houses have front porches and the neighborhood has sidewalks, allowing people to interact.

When I ran into Mullen and O'Neill at Waterloo Records on Thursday, they were giving me a hard time about my not having a ticket to the Rolling Stones concert. I'm only a casual fan of the group. I wasn't inclined to spend 95 bucks for a lawn ticket, plus the \$16.80 convenience charge. Unfortunately, the Rolling Stones weren't inclined to give me a ticket.

Yet, I remained convinced that one would somehow fall out of the sky. This is akin to the magical thinking of people who believe sucking down a chocolate cheesecake with a Diet Coke chaser results in negative calories.

O'Neill told me about many people trying to unload Stones tickets cheaply online, so I agreed to walk from Clarksville to the concert with them, and see what turned up ticketwise.

The morning of the concert, Mullen called, telling me that because of a mix-up with the Clarksville group ticket buy, his neighbors had an extra ticket. They agreed to sell it to me at the lowest scalper rate.

Arriving at Zilker Park at 2:30 p.m., our group was first in line at the Town Lake entrance. We were there before the scalpers.

After a crowd gathered, I went looking for ticket prices. Before the gates opened, lawn tickets were 50 bucks at the Barton Springs entrance, 40 bucks at the Town Lake entrance.

That's when I found it, the Holy Grail of the unticketed. A lost ticket, nestled on the grassy edge of Barton Springs Road. Unclaimed. Unused. Untrampled. Completely unethical to take.

I picked it up anyway, turning it over and over in my hands. Had I really just found a valid Rolling Stones ticket on the ground?

Being convinced a ticket was going to fall out of the sky, and having one literally do so, are two different things.

I was waiting for the reality TV and/or practical joke gotcha moment, when a guy came up to me on a bike, asking me how much I wanted for the ticket. He offered me 50 bucks. I told him it wasn't mine, and that I was waiting for the person who'd lost it.

Then I realized it was 3:45 and I had to get back to the others in line. When the gates opened at 4, my Clarksville ticket would be inside the fence without me.

I handed bikedude the lost ticket, making him promise that, if possible, he'd return it to the person who'd lost it. I even asked if he was aware of the ethical ramifications of accepting a lost ticket. Of course, he said yes.

OK, OK, so who wouldn't have said yes to whatever whacky theory for a free Rolling Stones ticket.

I sprinted back to my group, completely amazed and flustered at what had just happened. Consequently, the Clarksville crowd sold me their extra ticket for 20 bucks.

I had wanted a Rolling Stones ticket to fall out of the sky for me, and crazily one did. Ethically, I couldn't keep it, fearing what bad cosmic ju ju I would attract.

I needed a ticket to get myself inside and someone to sit with during the concert. I ended up with a bunch of greater Clarksville folks, all of us singing along with Mick Jagger as he closed the show with "You Can't Always Get What You Want."

You can't always get what you want.

But if you try sometimes you might find

You get what you need.

I guess I got what I needed.

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