

# Wandering & Wondering



**John Maybury**

## PENNY POWER

A penny more a pound doesn't sound like much, but to tomato pickers in Immokalee, Florida, it means a great deal. It means getting close to making ends meet. It means a move from sub-poverty to poverty wages. That penny more per pound can mean a farmworker who now has to pick two tons of tomatoes to earn \$50 a day will increase his/her wage to a "whopping" \$55 a day. (A farmworker's workday goes from sunup to sundown.) More than the \$5 a day increase, that penny also means justice and dignity. It means recognition of the workers' right to join together to achieve fairness. It also could mean that those who frequent fast-food restaurants can be assured that the tomato on their salad or sandwich is "sweat-free." The Coalition of Immokalee Workers has been dealing with fast-food giants to get that penny more per pound. They are proud of their victories with Taco Bell (Yum Corporation) and McDonald's. Both

companies have agreed to pay a penny more per pound for tomatoes they buy from growers, stipulating that the penny be passed on to farmworkers. So what is the problem? Burger King. Yes, the same BK that recently announced an initiative to protect the rights of farm animals in its suppliers' operations! The same BK that has been conducting a campaign of deceit against CIW by declaring in press conferences that farmworkers make \$12 to \$18 an hour and have safe working conditions and clean comfortable housing. Not only does BK refuse to negotiate in good faith, it is pressuring Yum and McDonald's to renege on their agreements. Currently Yum and McDonald's are paying the increase into an escrow-type fund until threats against them are settled. Once again, it's justice delayed. BK refuses to listen to the many groups that support the farmworkers, such as the National Farm Worker Ministry. Recently, NFWM joined CIW in a prayer vigil in front of BK's global headquarters in Miami. During this vigil, religious representatives from across the country offered "bitter herbs" to BK's CEO. Bitter herbs are a symbol of the struggle of other oppressed workers. But the CEO was not available. (ciw-online.org, nfwf.org and click Florida)

## AHOY, MATEY

We look forward to a busy month of March, and invite you to board the fleet of historic vessels berthed at Hyde Street Pier, participate in

interpretive programs, discover traditional methods of boatbuilding, ship restoration and maintenance by shipwrights, rigging crewmembers, small-craft curators and volunteers, and view exhibits aboard Balclutha and in the Visitor Center. To sign up for a newsletter, email peter\_kasin@nps.gov. For a complete schedule of park programs, see nps.gov/safr or call the Visitor Center at 415-447-5000. The member-supported association is at maritimelibraryfriends.org. Dan Underhill says he has a jolly good time singing sea shanties at these events.

## SICK OF IT

Veterans For Peace kicks off its March 19 "Sick Of It Day" campaign to end the war in Iraq. March 19 is the fifth anniversary of the Iraq invasion. This campaign is for everyone who is sick of the corruption, lies, occupation, and war. Calling in sick on "Sick Of It Day" is a powerful way to withdraw consent from a government that continues an immoral, illegal, and SICK war. (sickofitday.org)

## ISRAEL/PALESTINE CONFLICT

Hundreds of peace groups work to end the Israel/Palestine conflict. Delia McGrath's favorites:

- MECA (Middle East Children's Alliance) in Berkeley raises funds to

send needed supplies (especially medical) to Gaza and the West Bank. Its fundraising events feature progressive speakers from around the world. (mecaforpeace.org)

- Sabeel in Jerusalem (Friends of Sabeel, North America has an office in Portland, Oregon) is a Christian ecumenical group founded in Jerusalem and dedicated to working for peace in Israel/Palestine. It has a series of conferences around the U.S. (sabeel.org)
- U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (endtheoccupation.org)
- Gush-Shalom is an Israel-based peace organization involved in demonstrations, transporting food and supplies to Gaza, and more. Israelis and Palestinians work together in Gush-Shalom. Click for English at the bottom of the home page (unless you read Hebrew). (gush-shalom.org)
- Bat Shalom is a Jerusalem-based peace group with a focus on women in the conflict. (batshalom.org)
- Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions is awesome. Thousands of Palestinian homes are destroyed each year by bulldozers (usually American-made Caterpillars). This group tries to intervene. Ahmed says house demolitions continue even now in Gaza, but supposedly Israel withdrew from Gaza in June 2005. House demolitions continue unabated in the West Bank. (icahd.org)
- Combatants for Peace is a group of former IDF and former Palestine

militants who have turned their swords to ploughshares, so to speak. They work together for an end to the occupation and peace in their land. (combatantsforpeace.org)

- "Avaaz" means "voice" in many Asian, Middle Eastern, and Eastern European languages. This is a new global Web movement (similar to MoveOn.org) with a simple democratic mission: "to close the gap between the world we have, and the world most people everywhere want." Avaaz is circulating a petition asking Israel to talk with Hamas, which more than 60% of Israelis want, including the mayor of Sderot, the most vulnerable city when Qassam rockets are fired. (avaaz.org)

## RIVERS FESTIVAL

California Rivers Festival is Saturday, March 15, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Waldorf School, 3750 Bannister Road in Fair Oaks near Sacramento (californiariversfestival.org). Free admission. Tuolumne River Trust could use your help with staffing its table: Peter Dreke, 415-292-3531, extension 301, peter@tuolumne.org. Friends of the River puts on this annual event when the snow begins to melt and the rivers start to rise. Spread the word to fellow boaters and river-lovers about this great opportunity to see old friends, check out the latest gear, find deals at the swap meet, and get the latest on what you can do to help save the rivers you love. Festival highlights include:

- Seminars and workshops, such as the state of the Delta and levees system; fly-tying and fly-casting; slide show from the Blue Nile in Africa and how to organize an international expedition trip; how to pack and plan for an expedition trip; a new run on the North Fork American River; trouble on the Tuolumne; how to have "deep fun" on any river trip.
- California Rivers Festival Art Gallery, with three extraordinary nature photographers exhibiting their river, fly-fishing and nature photography, and showing and discussing their work and craft.
- Adventure films, live entertainment, and delectable edibles.
- A pavilion full of the latest kayak and whitewater gear from your favorite retailers.
- Swap meet: buy and sell used boats and gear.
- Live and silent auctions with loads of great gear, including a 12-foot Hyside cataraft, a 14-foot Aire Tributary raft, and hardshell kayaks.

## SWAMI SEZ

"High Flash Flood Risk Due to Fire." (SoCal road sign)

## MAYBURRITOVILLE

- Email your stories and photos: mayburrito@goofbuster.com
- My columns online: Pacifica Tribune.com, Wandering and Wondering.com
- Breaking news every day: Pacifica Riptide.com