

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

BARACK BAKE SALE

Hundreds of MoveOn members have stepped up to help win back the White House by hosting “Hungry for Change” bake sales. There’s the “No Pie in the Sky” bake sale in Brattleboro, Vermont; “Baked Goods We Can Believe In” in Seymour, Tennessee; and a bake sale led by 9-year-old Alex in Missouri. And the best part: Most of these folks have never done anything like this before! MoveOn says, “We’ll hook you up with folks to help do the baking! We’re flooded with volunteer bakers, but we still need more bake sales in your area on June 21 and 22. These events are critical to winning in November. We’ll use the money raised to fund MoveOn’s big plan to elect Barack Obama this fall: the most effective voter turnout and persuasion campaigns that progressives have ever created. And did we mention that

hosting a bake sale is easy as pie?” You just pick a location, print out a few signs, and bring a table (or ironing board) and some treats to sell. MoveOn will guide you step-by-step through the entire process: providing signs and posters for you to print, and finding other MoveOn members to bring treats to sell, staff the table, and buy your delicious goodies. Hosting a bake sale is one of the most effective—and definitely one of the most fun—ways you can help elect Obama. Sign up now at moveon.org.

ECO CALENDAR

Saturn and Mars appear close together at sunset until the end of July. Beginning around June 17, Mercury and Jupiter can be seen in the morning sky. The full moon on June 18 is the southernmost of the year’s full moons, creating the illusion that it is larger than other full moons. On June 20, the sun will be directly overhead at noon and directly above the Tropic of Cancer. On June 20 and 21, Jupiter and the moon appear close together. Hurricanes and cyclones are now in season until November, spinning counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere. Sunflowers turn and follow the sun all day (phototropism). Salmon spawn in freshwater, swim downstream to feed in the ocean’s saltwater, then come back upstream to spawn in freshwater. (Ecological Calendar, Pomegranate Press)

MONTARA LIGHTHOUSE

A 30-foot-tall lighthouse once stood at Mayo’s Beach along Wellfleet Harbor, Massachusetts, a century ago. Historians originally thought the cast-iron tower was destroyed, but researchers recently discovered that the repainted lighthouse was shipped to California and has been in service as a Coast Guard “fog station” on Point Montara, just south of Devil’s Slide. (Pacifica Karen Brooks got this story from her sister in Wellfleet, where the local newspaper mistakenly identified Montara Point as being “at the south end of San Francisco Bay.” (This story was first reported last week on PacificaRiptide.com, which sent a polite geographical correction to the Cape Codders. The San Francisco Chronicle also ran the story on June 14.)

HANG UP & DRIVE

Beginning July 1, adult drivers in California can be pulled over and ticketed if they are spotted talking on a hand-held phone. And things will get even tougher for teenagers. Drivers under 18 using any cell phone, including hands-free devices that will still be allowed for adults, risk getting a ticket. Violations for both adults and juveniles will carry fines and penalties totaling \$76 for a first offense and \$190 for a second offense. (sacbee.com)

CLICHE KILLER

More nominations received for pet peeves: on the ground, on the street, on the same page, have the bandwidth to, win-win situation, late-great (name), too much on my plate, get my arms around, bear with me, that’s what I’m talking about.

TOXIC MULCH

If your dog likes to graze in your garden, it may lead to danger: sweet-smelling but potentially harmful cocoa bean mulch. Made of cocoa bean shells and considered desirable for its eventual degradation into organic fertilizer, this gardener’s choice can be toxic to canines if eaten in large quantities—some dogs have been known to eat amazing amounts! In 2007, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) handled 26 cases of cocoa bean mulch ingestion—one-third of them originating in California. “Dogs are attracted to the fertilizer’s sweet smell,” says Dr. Steven Hansen, ASPCA veterinary toxicologist and APCC director. “But like chocolate, cocoa bean mulch can be too much for our canine companions.” Ingestion of large amounts of cocoa bean mulch, which contains residual amounts of theobromine—a methylxanthine found in chocolate and known to be toxic to dogs—may cause a variety of clinical signs. These typically start

with vomiting, diarrhea, and elevated heart rate, and if large amounts are consumed, they may progress to hyperactivity, muscle tremors, and possibly other more serious neurological signs. Treatment includes administering medical-grade activated charcoal, bringing tremors under control, cardiac monitoring, and preventing further exposure. “One key point to remember is that some dogs, particularly those with indiscriminate eating habits, can be attracted to any organic matter,” says Dana Farbman, APCC senior manager, Professional Communications. “Therefore, if you have a dog with such eating habits, it’s important that you don’t leave him unsupervised or allow him into areas where such materials are being used.” To avoid contact, pet owners should consider a nontoxic alternative, such as shredded pine, cedar, or hemlock bark. These will keep your pooch—and your garden—healthy. For more detailed information, please take a look at our Animal Poison Control Center online at aspc.org/apcc. (Thanks to Camie Foust for forwarding this alert.)

IUPUI

Ha, bet you thought it was a colorful Hawaiian expression! Wrong, poi breath! IUPUI stands for Indiana University/Purdue University at India-

napolis. And speaking of acronyms, visualize one for the common hospital program known as Protective Overnight Observation Policy.

SWAMI SEZ

“Brain cells come and brain cells go, but fat cells live forever.” (Anonymous)

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