

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

FLUSH, YOU'RE BUSTED

Researchers have figured out how to give an entire community a drug test using just a teaspoon of wastewater from a city's sewer plant. The test wouldn't be used to finger any single person as a drug user. But it would help federal law enforcement and other agencies track the spread of dangerous drugs, like methamphetamines, across the country. One fairly affluent community scored low for illicit drugs except for cocaine. Cocaine and ecstasy tended to peak on weekends and drop on weekdays, while methamphetamine and prescription drugs were steady throughout the week. The idea of testing on a citywide basis for drugs makes sense, as long as it doesn't violate people's privacy, said Tom Angell of the Students for Sensible Drug Policy, a Washington-based group that wants looser drug laws. "This seems to be less offensive than individualized testing," he said. (Seth Borenstein, Associated Press, August 21)

SPICE BOY

Turmeric, that magic ingredient in curry that we touted last week for its apparent benefits in possibly preventing Alzheimer's disease, is a tuberous root resembling ginger. Its main purpose in curry is color, and it is relatively tasteless. Cumin seed, when roasted and ground along with coriander seed, becomes the basic flavor of Indian curry. The same combo, plus chili powder, makes up most Mexican flavorings. Both cultures use almost the same stuff, but with widely different outcomes. (Research: Jeff "The Chef" Bagshaw, who still prefers to cook under incandescent light bulbs, not new CFL fluorescents, which he says contain mercury.)

POWER TO THE PEACEFUL

Michael Franti and Spearhead headline at the Power to the Peaceful concert in Golden Gate Park, Saturday, September 8 (powertothepeaceful.org). Christian Ryvlin, a member of Pacifica Peace People, writes, "Julie and I have been going to this for several years. It's great and all the more needed in terms of the war continuing."

NEW AT FARMERS MARKET

Dieter from Octoberfeast Organic Bakery makes German-style pumpernickel bread, croissants to die for, and a collection of gluten-free delights. Killer Brownie is OOT next week but will be right back. Erin Tormey re-

ports that blueberries are gone, but sweet corn is here. Read her column on PacificaRiptide.com.

NO FACT CHECK

"A classic goof on the front of the Bay Area Living section of the San Mateo County Times (August 21). A photo caption describes Vallemar as a 'small town south of Pacifica,' then repeats the error in the text of the story." (Peter Loeb, resident of Rockaway Beach, a small town south of Vallemar)

PAINTING PARTNERS

Watercolor artists Brenda Hall and Lorna Schreck are planning a wonderful getaway and art retreat in Mendocino in September. (paintingpartners.net)

SICKO CURE

Physicians for a National Health Program have a Web site to organize support of H.R. 676, a bill in Congress to create a national single-payer health insurance system, like Medicare For All. (sickocure.org)

PALMETTO EXIT SIGN

"I have been trying since Fog Fest to get this done. I have an old college friend at Caltrans who tells me all we need is for Pacifica to submit the request and it can be done. She even suggested that we do it anyway and by the time someone at Caltrans noticed it, we could just ask for forgiveness and they'd probably not care. [Better

to ask for forgiveness than permission!] I am waiting to let the new City Manager get settled in before I start it up again. Any help is positive help. The most comments I got at Fog Fest were that no one knew Palmetto and its shops were there, and most attendees wanted to know why there wasn't a place overlooking the pier, like the Beach Chalet. I know you and I won't always agree on issues in the City, but I appreciate your offers of help." (Cynthia Montanez, Palmetto merchant)

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

"Call the Department of Elections, 650-312-5222, and ask for the language of the measure we voted on to increase our taxes for Pacifica firefighters. Also, get a copy of the city budget and payroll of the firefighters for the past three years, from Kathy O'Connell at City Hall, 650-738-7300. It's public information. David (DJ) Canepa of State Senator Leland Yee's office says to call him anytime and he'll do his best to help: 415-513-9410." (M.Q. Contreras)

CAN'T HAPPEN HERE?

"Five weeks ago it was 10 'Notice of Trustee's Sale' (foreclosure), then it was 15, then 17, 22, and, in last week's Trib, 29! I've been reading the Trib for 40 years. I've never seen anything like this. There is a reason for a stock market crash—we're seeing it in the legals." (Lionel Emde)

INNER EDIROT

•Catherine Gray got a refund check from her phone company, and was amused by the notation on the check stub: "FINALLED ACCOUNT. PRINCIPLE AMOUNT REFUNDED."
•Oxymoron of the week: "Motorized Pedal Exerciser" (Carol Wright Gifts)

PACIFICA WOMEN'S ART

American Association of University Women (AAUW) celebrates 50 years of Pacifica women artists. Exhibition runs through September in Community Center art gallery. Reception is Wednesday, September 5, 7 to 9 p.m. (Jan Dutton)

SPEAK UP NOW

The Bay Area transportation plan is available for review at the MTC-ABAG Library and at mtc.ca.gov. Written comments from the public are due by September 4: MTC Public Information, 101 Eighth Street, Oakland, CA 94607. Fax 510-817-5848. Email info@mtc.ca.gov. For a printed copy of the revised draft or an electronic copy in alternative format, call MTC Public Information at 510-817-5757. MTC will translate document into Spanish and Chinese, and other languages on request, and will make these versions available soon on its Web site.

SITSEER

•Just like it says: veryfunnyads.com
•Protect your civil liberties: npenaclu@comcast.net, 650-579-1789
•Field trips, birding, conservation news: sequoia-audubon.org
•GGNRA Trailkeepers: parksconservancy.org, 415-561-3068
•Improve your commute: commute.org, 650-588-8170
•Jim Grantham jazz theory classes: nightbirdmusic.com, 510-271-7904

PRESIDUNCE

"No, I can't. I can barely speak English," said President George W. Bush to a reporter covering the recent meeting between Bush and French president Nicolas Sarkozy at the Bush summer vacation compound in Maine. The reporter had asked Bush if he could say something in French to Sarkozy.

SWAMI SEZ

"If the Indianapolis 500 took place in India next Memorial Day, would it be known as the Hindi 500?" (Scott McKellar)

MAYBURRITOVILLE

•Love letters and hate mail: mayburrito@goofbuster.com
•Check out my cherry new Web site: pacificariptide.com
•Archives and fun stuff: wanderinandwondering.com