

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury



OBAMARAMA!

From now until the November 4 election, MoveOn.org, the Sierra Club, and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) are coordinating closely with the Obama presidential campaign and the Democratic Party to build the largest progressive grassroots campaign in modern history. This represents a massive effort to pass a progressive agenda of clean energy, universal health care, and ending the war in Iraq. Info: Nancy Goodban, MoveOn Regional Coordinator, 650-365-3520 (home), 650-787-9859 (cell)

AE 911 TRUTH

See Richard Gage, AIA, on Saturday, Sept. 6, at the 10th Annual Power to the Peaceful Festival, where he will speak on the explosive demolition of the three World Trade Center (WTC) buildings. Gage speaks at 10 a.m. in Golden Gate Park's Panhandle at Ashbury and Fell. At 11 p.m. the group marches two miles to Speedway Meadows

to join 50,000 music fans for a free concert by Michael Franti and Spearhead, the amazing hip-hop-jazz-rock group. (powertothepeaceful.org, ae911truth.org)

ELECTION JOBS

Black Box Voting encourages anyone with a technical background to search and apply for temporary tech support jobs for the November 4 election. Hiring is under way for temporary technicians to help with voting machines this fall. Vendor dependence undermines clean elections, as described by votersunite.org. In a presidential election year, voting machine vendors hire and train thousands of technicians around the country. Wherever Election Systems & Software has a machine, it is under contract to provide an on-site support tech. Hart Intercivic, Premier (Diebold), and Sequoia also use election support technicians. Temporary election tech support jobs appear on hotjobs.com, rollouts.com, and local tech temp firms. A tech services firm may be a subcontractor for a Big 4 voting machine company. Sometimes you'll find the positions advertised by your county elections office. (blackboxvoting.org)



NATIVE GARDENS

Native Plant Communities for Bay Area Gardens. Speaker: Glenn Keator, author, instructor, field trip leader. Friday, September 5

from 7 to 9 p.m. Los Altos Library, 13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos (right off 280). Presented by California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter (cnps.org). Email: cnps_scv@yahoo.com Phone: 408-715-7020. In nature, plants occur in communities or groupings with shared requirements for soil, water, and exposure. Learn which plant communities are suitable for the conditions unique to your garden. Glenn Keator is the author of classic books such as Native Perennials for the Garden, Native Shrubs for the Garden, and most recently Designing California Native Gardens with co-author Alrie Middlebrook.

CITIZEN FORESTERS

This series of 12 classes taught by Friends of the Urban Forest staff and premier guest speakers is for experienced tree care and planting volunteers who want to deepen their knowledge of and experience with trees. Sign up for Citizen Forester training: six Thursday night lectures, each followed by a Saturday morning field day. Individual Section (Thursday/Saturday combo) \$35, Entire Series \$200. To register, call 415-561-6890 x102, email heather@fuf.net, or go to fuf.net.

POLLINATOR MAGNETS

Planting Natives for Pollinators. Don Mahoney, speaker. Thursday, September 4, 7:30 p.m. San Francisco County Fair Bldg in Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue & Lincoln Way. Preceded by free plant identification workshop from 6 to 7:15 p.m. Everyone welcome. Fun and empowering. Pollinators are very important components of native ecosystems, and are becoming less common due to urbanization. But you can help by planting the right native plants to attract bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Nectar should be provided for all seasons, and nesting sites should be left undisturbed.

PRESIDIO PROJECT

Saturdays, September 6 and 13, 10:30 a.m. to noon. Meet at the picnic tables at El Polin Springs, off MacArthur Avenue, in the Presidio. RSVP to 415-561-5357 or jnichols@presidiotrust.gov. Restoration of the Tennessee Hollow watershed is now continuing at El Polin Springs, a place remarkable for nature and wildlife as well as for its extraordinary human history. Beginning in September, habitat restoration will begin to return ecological richness to the wetland area surrounding the springs. As a first phase, eucalyptus, cypress, and pine trees will be removed from around El Polin Loop. Habitat will then be restored with plants and trees grown in the Presidio Nursery, including coast live oak and California buckeye, as well as wax myrtle, toyon, willows, and native grasses. Later, a number of improvements will showcase the history of the area and welcome visitors. El Polin Loop will be transformed into a boardwalk and trail with a new picnic area, public restrooms, and benches. The stone channels and well will be restored, and interpretive gardens and other features will share the long history at the springs.

SUMMER TRIANGLE

The Summer Triangle is now showing. We don't often get to see starry skies in the foggy summer, but we're getting occasional nights of them now. (Perhaps chalk this up to one of the by-products of climate warming?) I was startled on departing the house at the serendipitous sight of Jupiter blazing away high in the southern skies. Less startling but of interest to me is the Summer Triangle, now at zenith at nightfall. Aside from their prominence in the night sky, these three stars (Vega, Deneb, Altair) have characteristics—or personalities, if you will—that make them more than just another star. Each belongs to a different constellation. Deneb (which means "tail" in Arabic) is the tail of Cygnus the Swan. (In



1975, a faint star near Deneb flared up and temporarily became as bright as Deneb, giving Cygnus the Swan two tails.) Even in our dim, light-polluted skies you can make out the entire constellation. The swan's wings are just forward of Deneb, like a jetliner, and the body and neck are like the extended fuselage of a jet, pointing into the center of the Summer Triangle, where it's head is. That head, which is the "star" Albireo, is something you want to be sure to see if you ever have the opportunity to look through a high-power telescope. The reason for the quotation marks around star is that it is really two stars, which to the naked eye appear as one. One of the two is butter yellow and the other is sapphire blue. The contrast is such that people gasp when first seeing the ineffable beauty of the scene. I have seen pale-yellowish and ruddy stars, but never such strikingly beautiful and contrasting colors as this. As to the double star: Many of the stars we see are actually multiple. One, Mizar, constituting part of the handle of The Big Dipper, is considered an eye test. People with very good vision can see that it is a double star. Native Americans were known to recognize it as a double. (Jake Sigg, Nature News)

SEA LION DOCENTS

If you love the ocean, are curious about marine mammals, and enjoy talking with people from around the world, sign up today to become a Sea Lion Docent with The Marine Mammal Center. Sea Lion Docents talk with the public about Pier 39's California sea lions and how each of us can help protect our ocean resources. The next docent training session is Saturday, September 13. To learn more, call 415-289-7361 or email edu@tmcc.org

SWAMI SEZ

"If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague." (Anonymous)

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- e: mayburrito@goofbuster.com

