

# Wandering & Wondering



**John Maybury**

## POWER OF 1

Politics is an inherently dirty business. Over the years, we have learned about LBJ's backroom deals, Tricky Dick Nixon's dirty-tricks squad, Father Bush's disinformation campaigns, and Little Dubya's secret wiretapping and swiftboating initiatives.

Now Pacifica is learning about astroturfing and sock puppets. "The Web site [www.coastsider.com](http://www.coastsider.com) is alleging that PR pros hired by Peebles are pretending to be locals in e-mails to concerned citizens. This kind of fake grassroots campaign is called 'astroturfing,'" wrote San Francisco Chronicle columnist Leah Garchik (Sept. 1).

The San Mateo County Times "Insider" column independently verified Coastsider's story that

Peebles' PR company, Davies Communications, was indeed the source of the scam, a charge that Davies, of course, vehemently denied.

The Sept. 1 issue of the San Francisco Bay Guardian ([sfbg.com](http://sfbg.com)) carried an expose on Peebles' operations, including a history of some of his other development deals. See George W. Schulz's excellent analysis of the whole sorry quarry situation, "Here Comes Miami Beach: Developer Eyes Sleepy Pacifica."

If you wonder how Peebles has spent his \$160,000 (so far) on his quarry quest, wander down to City Hall and ask for his campaign spending report. It's public information. Curiously, at several venues, Peebles has offered to sign written promises to do this and that grandiose gesture in the quarry, yet never once has he actually signed any such document. Meanwhile, his slick mailings keep arriving in our mailboxes, showing some marketing guru's odd vision of a Florida resort superimposed on an unrecognizable, imaginary coastline. To me, these mailers ring false, like the rest of the Peebles juggernaut.

Frankly, I can't believe how many people have been taken in by Measure L. Oh sure, Peebles is handsome and

charming and all that jazz. I've seen him in action a few times: an impressive player, very smooth. But come on, people, he is a businessman with a huge investment to recoup, and an even bigger loan to pay off. He is not a charity. He is not here to rescue us from our fiscal dilemma. He is here to play high-stakes poker, win big, and cash in his chips. Don't fall for the sweet talk. Read between the lines. Use your head. If we hand him the keys to the city in November, will he respect us in the morning? I doubt it.

So instead of a stark either/or proposition, why not wheel and deal with the Big Wheeler Dealer from Miami, and come up with an acceptable compromise for the quarry, one that allows Peebles to make back his money while allowing Pacifica to absorb a limited number of new residents and/or merchants, with serious mitigations for traffic and usable open space (not just vertical land). Instead of splitting the city wide open, and winner take all, let's craft a win/win solution.

Greenbelt Alliance, Sierra Club (Loma Prieta Chapter), and other conservation groups oppose Measure L because of its zoning change to high-density housing, highway-choking

traffic, and environmentally disastrous footprint.

Feel like joining the fray online? Besides [coastsider.com](http://coastsider.com), there is Google Groups' Pacifica-L listserv, where you can chat and chew with insiders, outsiders, and live real estate agents. Quaint Old English terms such as "shilling" and "lackey" pop up on these Web pages, as in "shilling for the man" and "capitalist lackey." Turns out that lackey is derived from very old Gaelic meaning "someone who works on a hillside covered with stones." Ah ha!

Go to the source, the mother lode of quarry facts, downloadable signs, blogs, background articles, community involvement opportunities, and a PayPal donation feature: [pacificaquarry.org](http://pacificaquarry.org). Pacifica Today and Tomorrow needs your help to prevent 355 houses in the quarry. If you prefer, call PTT at 650-532-0511. Lionel Emde will help you accessorize your car with a bumper sticker reading: "No on L, another big lie." E-mail him at [monkmusic2000@yahoo.com](mailto:monkmusic2000@yahoo.com) or call 650-359-4433.

Bravo to creative thinkers such as musician Michael Foley, who wrote a Letter to the Editor last week suggest-

ing that one solution to the quarry quandary might be to scoop it out and build a boat harbor. Yo, Coastsider Fishing Club, do I get some street cred for mentioning this idea?

Finally, let's celebrate our embattled hole-in-the-ground in Rockaway by digging out our old records and replaying those early skiffle band tunes by John Lennon and The Quarrymen (predecessors to The Beatles). Rock on!

Because Tribune readers represent only about a quarter of the town's population, each of us must try to educate at least one resident voter who does not read the Tribune. We owe it to one another to learn as much as we can before the election, and to share our knowledge with potential voters who are out of the loop. That is our civic duty. Call it the Power of One.

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**John Maybury's opinions are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Pacifica Tribune.**