

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

Brownout

Gulf Coast residents may well wonder what Brown has done for them lately—damn little, as it turns out, especially now that Michael Brown has quit as head of FEMA under a cloud of suspicion and bitterness. The federal response to Hurricane Katrina was (and still is) too little too late. Bureaucrats may fiddle while New Orleans drowns, but ordinary Americans know what to do. They take matters into their own hands. Take Leslie Davidson, for example. She hit up her Friday night poker game buddies for cash donations, and threw in some cash of her own, bought a couple hundred dollars' worth of medical supplies at Costco, and shipped them to a relief group recommended by Michael Moore: Veterans for Peace, c/o Omni Storage, 74145 Highway 25, Covington, LA 70435. Find out what kinds of things they need:

www.vfproadtrips.org/katrina.

Disinformation

You may have seen the alleged Hurricane Katrina photos going around the Internet. In fact, they are pictures of a tornado that took place five years ago in Alabama. To help you cut through the clutter of phony emails and bogus alerts, check things out at www.snopes.com and www.truthorfiction.com. Save yourself and your correspondents a lot of unnecessary grief.

Baseball gives it up

Guess which baseball team and its fans gave the most to the Red Cross for Katrina victims? The Boston Red Sox, with about half a million bucks. The San Diego Padres and the Los Angeles Dodgers each came up with \$300,000. Our two local teams barely managed \$100,000 each. Individual players stepped up and wrote big checks: Carlos Delgado, Jason Giambi, David Ortiz, and Vladimir Guerrero. (Tammy Aramian researched this on www.mlb.com.)

Bikes for flood kids

The Earlywine family of Burlingame is collecting kids' bikes and helmets for hurricane victims. Please deliver bikes in good working order to 1427 Castillo Ave. in Burlingame. Info:

katrinabikes@earlywinedesign.com (thanks to Pacifica Peace People for the tip)

Foreign aid

Foreign countries have pledged millions of dollars in cash and emergency supplies for Hurricane Katrina relief work. Some of our most generous friends are Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, India, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Venezuela. (Source: Associated Press)

The bubble burst

As images of starving, dehydrated babies flashed across our TV screens the past few weeks, the president said we shouldn't have to see such things. "Wake up, dude," says my friend Lisa. "This is what life is like in the rest of the world." Lisa is right. Let our shock at what happened in New Orleans make us more aware of poverty and suffering in the rest of the world. And that includes making our leaders be more mindful, too.

Nation states

This might be more fun than Monopoly, Risk, Diplomacy, and those nerdy Avalon Hill power games. Kevin Hall invites you to play Jennifer Government and other fantastic states of mind at www.nationstates.net. Maybe you can

find Kevin hanging out at The Raven Guild.

Haiku Kitty

Canny, pushy cat
Memsahib, you are door boy
Toll cat demand blood
(Brenda McManus & friends)

Stroke

Recognize the warning signs of a stroke with three simple requests: Ask the individual to smile, raise both arms, and speak a simple sentence. If the person has trouble with any of these, call 911 immediately. Info: American Stroke Association (www.strokeassociation.org) (thanks to Barb Caswell for sending this)

Black dog

Mickey "Spillane" Shaw and I were on a stakeout in front of the Manor Shell station last Friday night. The fog rolled up from the ocean. A strange-looking black dog that appeared to be a mixed breed (long heavy body, short legs, big head, swaybacked like an old horse) kept walking back and forth between Viva Italiano and some unknown point behind the gas station. We tried to follow him, but he kept disappearing through a hole in the fence. We figure he must have been running numbers for his owner, or else he was looking for love in all the wrong places. Just another foggy

Friday night in a sleepy coastal town without pity.

Strange sounds

Scott McKellar and his neighbors have been hearing odd animal noises coming from the pine trees in their backyards during the wee hours: something like a cross between a goose and a sea lion, Scott says. We await further news from the 'hood.

Ooga booga

S.F. Chronicle columnist Jon Carroll last week introduced his readers to a captivating watering hole in Botswana. In my household, we now have no time at all on our hands for anything but gazing at elephants, wildebeest, gazelles, zebras, and ostriches taking the waters in the game park. Now you, too, can spend your evenings watching wild-life. Botswana is nine hours ahead of Pacifica, so best viewing times here are 10 p.m. on: www.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/wildcamfrica/wildcam.html.

Swami Sez

Don't bite the hand that...looks dirty.

Mayburritoville

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