



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

GREMLINS

Over the years I have grumbled good-naturedly to Tribune editor Elaine Larsen about gremlins mysteriously turning up in the newspaper office overnight and sabotaging our best efforts to proofread every word of my column. Things that looked fine the day before suddenly had mistakes in them. Now, this happens in all publications, large and small, but new spell-check software is supposed to foil gremlins and eliminate glitches. The problem is that computers can only spell; they can't discern shades of meaning and appropriate usage. In last week's paper, the gremlins invaded once again, to the bafflement of Elaine and her staff. In Jean Bartlett's front-page story on Marv Dutton, "flugelhorn" became "flagellation" and Salcido turned into "Salvidor." The original words were correct on the page proof but somehow got changed during electronic transmission to the printing press. The Tribune production team eventually traced the typos to a bug in the spell-checker. Elaine said it reminded her of the evil computer HAL in the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* — "Open the pod bay door, HAL."

KIKU & THE CHIROPRACTOR

"I have childhood memories of my mother going weekly to the chiropractor. The family dog Kiku (see photo) often came along for the ride. She was a friendly, long-haired German shepherd we adopted from a breeder who had cast her out due to her unruly coat. Although not show quality, she turned out to be the best family dog we ever had: kind, loyal, and smart. One week at my mom's chiropractic appointment, the doctor offered to check Kiku, too. She found some misalignments in the dog's spine, corrected them, and sent both my mom and Kiku home as happy patients.

Every Tuesday morning at 11:30 it was the same routine, until my folks went away on vacation. A pet sitter came to the house daily to feed and check on Kiku. Everything went well until Tuesday, when Kiku went missing. We all know animals are creatures of habit. Weekly chiropractic treatments became a habit that Kiku apparently had come to enjoy. It was not long before the office called our house with this message: 'Your dog Kiku is here for her 11:30 appointment. She's been adjusted and ready to be picked up.' Kiku had taken it upon herself to walk to the office on her own. I often marvel at this memory, now that I have become a dog owner myself. How is it that Kiku knew the treatments were good for her? How did she know the way there? What type of internal clock did she have that allowed her to be on time? What made her go, despite her mistress not being there? Perhaps Kiku went there to look for my mom. Who knows? All I know is that Kiku was one smart and loyal dog. I have been seeing patients



PHOTO BY LESLIE DAVIDSON

Turkey vultures roost in tree at Gray Lodge state wildlife refuge near Colusa, California.

for more than a decade now. Not one of my patients has ever walked to an appointment when he or she couldn't get a ride. Hmm. Makes me wonder. Is it me or the dog? I'll never know." (Dr. Cynthia Luce, D.C. practices chiropractic at 420 Old County Road in Pacifica. For more information, please visit her at lucbones.com.)

LAP BAND LAND

On a recent trip to Los Angeles, I noticed all the billboards advertising lap band surgery. Wassup with that? Guess you can never be too thin in L.A.

PRINT WARS

So the biggest, baddest, and oldest alternative newspaper around, The San Francisco Bay Guardian, has prevailed in its lawsuit against archival S.F. Weekly (part of the 16-paper Village Voice Media chain headquartered in Phoenix) for unfair competition. But the

Guardian is having a helluva time collecting its judgment, and a pending court appeal is slowing things down even more. The Guardian just got a lien and is now "liening" hard on the Weekly, seizing and selling off its two distribution trucks and going after its rental income. As editor and publisher of an underground rag of my own, The Isla Vista Argo (1967-1969), I have always looked up to the Guardian. I even wrote a couple of pieces for it a few years ago. So it's painful to see fellow members of the peace-and-love movement engaging in legal fisticuffs, but that's why we call it the free press. I'm rooting for the independent underdog Guardian to beat the corporate mutts from Arizona.

SOCCER MOMS

Backers of the California marijuana legalization drive apparently are counting on suburban soccer moms to put them over

the top on the November ballot, reasoning that the moms would rather have their kids buying clean dope from licensed shops than going to back-alley drug dealers. But I guess that those same moms wouldn't mind taking a legal puff now and then to ease their angst and ennui. Don't believe me? Ask Nancy Botwin.

SITeseer

Scroungers' Center for Reusable Art Parts: scrap-sf.org

SWAMI SEZ

"No pirate will ever raise his pinky when drinking any sort of beverage." (Pirate Law #51)

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■ Blogs: Pacifica Riptide, Peninsula Coastside (SF Gate)

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