

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

DIRTY MINDS

Last week I reprinted a post from PacificaRiptide.com, in which the writer complained about a road hog encountered on Linda Mar Boulevard and called him a name associated with a feminine hygiene product. According to Webster's dictionary, this is also a name for an offensive person, and it has been in the dictionary since about 1963. I am not going to repeat the name here because last week a Tribune reader got upset that his daughter read the name in the paper and had to ask him what it meant. So I am not going to mention the name, even though in itself it is not a dirty word. It is a perfectly innocent rubber product found hanging in many women's showers. Well, folks, let's get to it. Here is my apology: I am sorry the

reader could not handle his daughter's innocent question without turning this into a big deal. I am sorry the reader called the Tribune and yelled at an innocent employee here. I am sorry that dangerous, discourteous driving in Pacifica is apparently less important to the reader than trying to limit freedom of the press and bullying my editor. If the reader wants to shield his daughter from dirty words, I suggest he get out his little black marking pen and start crossing out words such as war, murder, rape, hunger, poverty, and racism. Now those are words worth getting upset about.

FROSTY THE PELICAN

When pelicans began turning up sick a few weeks ago, scientists were puzzled as to the cause. Now they think they know the real reason: frostbite. Apparently, the big wave-skimmers with the fishing pouch and giant wingspan had dallied too long this winter in Oregon, where extreme cold caught them unaware, and by the time they could migrate southward down the coast to California and Mexico, they began showing signs of frostbite. Fortunately, many of the rescued birds have been treated and released.

CATS VS. BIRDS

"I was dismayed to see your mention (Pacifica Tribune, January 7) that we should keep our cats in, especially during the day (reminds me of the Coasters song lyric, 'Bring in the dog and put out the cat, yakkety yak, don't talk back') because they are responsible for killing millions of songbirds (or something to that effect). I was dismayed because it's not really true. Alley Cat Rescue, a national organization like Alley Cat Allies (whom I work with and whose principles we're following to trap/neuter/return the feral cats around the Pacifica Pier—to date we've helped 37 cats) has come to the rescue. It's humans who have done far more to destroy the habitat of birds, which is far more harmful (along with the use of pesticides, etc.) than what cats could ever do. Misinformation about cats is what leads misinformed people to trap, shoot, poison, or kill cats. And further, yes, it would be better for the cats to be inside—they'll live longer. But bring them in at night, too. That's when they tangle with other wild predators (raccoons, skunks, opossums, feral cats, dogs) that will cause injuries and disease and flea infestations. The animals have been here longer than we have, and the solution isn't just to get rid of them. Birds generally don't cause any

trouble, so we like them around. Just don't blame their demise on cats. Thanks, John, for listening, and for dispensing valuable information in general." (Betsy Ballenger)

INNER EDIROT

President Obama knew right away that Chief Justice John Roberts had misspoken when administering the oath of office during the presidential inauguration January 20. Obama paused and nodded at Roberts to cue him to correct himself, but on the rereading he still got it wrong. The next day, on advice of counsel, the head of the Supreme Court came to the White House and readministered the oath. This time he got it right. And so did Obama. (For the record, it should have been "faithfully execute.") Lawyers and grammarians can sleep well at night once again. Still, this was a helluva lot better than hanging chads and stolen votes.

OCEANA FOR OBAMA

Last Wednesday I walked onto the Oceana High School campus to swim at the pool. I was wearing my Obama t-shirt. A group of students greeted me with a big "OBAMA" victory cheer. I want to salute these kids for being aware and engaged politically. I think it is terrific that kids who can't even vote yet are interested in current events.

This means that their parents and teachers are doing a good job, and we should all be grateful for that. On Inauguration Day, Oceana provided a big-screen TV so students could watch the historic proceedings in Washington. Now that's what I call a cool school. That's the kind of school I wouldn't mind going back through again. Bravo, Oceana!

DOGGONE

The city's Open Space Committee has voted 9-0 to recommend that City Council ban dogs from the sand areas of Pacifica State Beach at Linda Mar.

GREEDHEADS

Major banks and financial institutions have been exposed in recent weeks for stashing their cash (your bailout money) in tax-free offshore accounts. But where is the outrage? Are we so numb that we can't get mad anymore? Are we just sitting back and hoping that Obama will nail these greedheads?

SCIENCE IS BACK

Obama's EPA chief Lisa Jackson has issued a memo to staff saying that science and due diligence are back in favor at the beleaguered federal environmental agency, which has

suffered eight years of lost credibility and manpower under the anti-science Bush administration.

IRAN AWAY

Tehran's infamous winter smog is driving crows, pigeons, nightingales, and other birds out of Iran's capital city. (Earthweek.com)

SITeseer

- Obama off to good start on campaign promises: politifact.com/truth-o-meter
- Revisit eight years of a disastrous presidency: goodnightbush.com/librarium
- Read all about local sales tax and **Pacificurrency**: pacificariptide.com (use Google search on upper-right sidebar)

SWAMI SEZ

"If we couldn't laugh, we'd all go insane." (Jimmy Buffett)

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