

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

FEELINGS

Jayzus, the stock market sounds like some bipolar basket case. The financial reports are full of words like fear, panic, irrational exuberance, surrender, capitulation, bounce, and depression. But I am more worried about Sarah Palin stirring up racist hate speech at her campaign rallies, and John McCain's apparent inability to rein her in. And I am even more worried about recent revelations by former federal agents that they and their confreres had spied on innocent Americans' personal calls to loved ones overseas. One of these ex-spooks reported a typical comment heard in the Feds' wiretap room: "Hey, check this out. You're not going to believe what I heard." Where is the shame? This kind of intrusive, inappropriate monitoring of private phone conversations is one of the uglier aspects of our post-9/11 world. It is unacceptable in a democracy and is yet another reason why many Americans fear and hate their government. Things need to change from the top down.

REAL MCCAIN

"The current Rolling Stone article about Senator John McCain shows us a short-tempered, self-centered person who has always been focused only on self-gratification, who is hot-tempered when he does not get his way, who regards and treats women as less than equal, and who consistently lies to get ahead in his career. Yes, John McCain was a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. So were 600 other Americans at the time. He would have us believe that he was offered special privilege because of his family (three generations of high-level armed forces officers). As the Rolling Stone article says, '... In fact, his wounds were attended to only after the North Vietnamese discovered that his father was a Navy admiral. What has never been disclosed is the manner in which they found out: McCain told them. ...' (Summer Rhodes, PacificaRiptide.com)

REAL MAVERICKS

A descendant of cattleman Samuel A. Maverick (d. 1870) was interviewed on KGO Radio on October 6. She said her family does not appreciate Republican presidential candidate John McCain and his running mate describing themselves as "mavericks." (Reported by "Undisclosed Recipient")

GREASY HANDS

When the media got wind of AIG's plan to throw a big party for itself at the Ritz-Carlton in Half Moon Bay, to be paid for with a half-million dollars of its ill-gotten gains from the government bailout (i.e., yours and my tax dollars), the giant insurance conglomerate suddenly cancelled the posh event.

FRESH & EASY

"Fresh & Easy Buzz" is a blog with a wide readership: Fresh & Easy execs, Tesco execs in the U.K., Fresh & Easy store workers, people in the food and grocery industry globally, and consumers in general all over. Pacifica Riptide has been sharing local news with Buzz about Pacifica's new Fresh & Easy store now under construction in Pedro Point shopping center. Email comments about Fresh & Easy to Mayburrito@goofbuster.com.

HUMMER FACE-OFF

Last week I told you a story about Patty McKellar having a "spiritual" encounter with a hummingbird out on her back deck. Former Pacifican Niki Wise, now living in Eugene, Oregon, responded: "I had a hummingbird confront me in the garden like that. There was nothing 'spiritual' about it, merely territorial aggression. That's what hummingbirds seem to be about, aggressive and territorial, chasing each other away from the food sources." Have you had a run-in with a hummingbird? Email Mayburrito@goofbuster.com.

REDWOOD BLUEGRASS

Redwood Bluegrass Associates present the Del Williams Band and the David Thom Band on October 25 at 8 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 1667 Miramonte Avenue (at Cuesta



Drive) in Mountain View. Tickets are \$18/advance, \$20/day of show, half-price for teens 13-18, free (when accompanied by a paid ticket-holder) for ages 12 and under and for music students. Pre-concert jam session at 5:30 p.m. usually includes a special guest musician or two. Refreshments include fruit pies and savory meat pies. Music information: rba.org or call 650-691-9982.



BAD TV

"Watching television may be bad for the kids; making televisions, it seems, may be bad for the climate. To produce flat-panel displays, manufacturers rely on nitrogen trifluoride (NF3), a potent greenhouse gas that was not covered by the emissions-regulating Kyoto Protocol when it was drafted in 1997, because so little of it was used then. Now exploding sales of flat-panel TVs and other digital devices, coupled with incomplete recapture of the chemical during manufacture, could spell trouble, warn researchers at UC Irvine." (Scientific American, Sept. 2008)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The National Science Foundation funds the Deliberative E-Rulemaking Project (DEER) at the Benton Foundation (benton.org). It explores models to improve the quality of public comments submitted to legislative and deliberative bodies. We sure could use their help for our City Council meetings.

CARBON FOOTPRINT

Measure your carbon footprint with a fun, new ecological calculator and quiz. Earth Day Network's new tool helps you understand and combat climate change. Create a three-dimensional avatar and tour your virtual neighborhood. Then you will be asked a series of questions about your food consumption, energy use, transportation mode, residence type, recycling commitment, and spending habits. The calculator tells you how many "planets" would be needed to sustain human life if everyone lived like you do, and how many acres of land and tons of carbon would be needed to sustain your lifestyle. You can revisit your quiz to see where "you went wrong," and find out how to reduce your carbon footprint. (EarthDay.net)



KANGAROO BURGERS?

Professor Ross Garnaut, the Australian government's main climate change expert, says that bovine belching and flatulence are leading causes of global warming due to methane, and he recommends switching from beef to kangaroo, which emit almost no greenhouse gas. The head of the cattlemen's association called the professor's proposal preposterous. (Earthweek.com)

NANO/BIO/CLEAN TECH

The 5th International Congress of Nano/Bio/Clean Tech 2008 is October 27-30, San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel. More than 100 speakers cover a spectrum of the emerging fields of nanotechnology, biotechnology, and clean technology—from the latest scientific research and development, education, environmental, societal and health and safety implications, to nanotech venture capital investment and technology joint ventures. The congress includes plenary sessions, breakout sessions, exhibitions, poster presentations, and industry-focused forums.

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