

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

READ IT AND WEEP

“The cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could total \$2.4 trillion through the next decade, or nearly \$8,000 per man, woman and child in the country, according to a Congressional Budget Office estimate scheduled for release today.” (USA Today, October 23)

NO-BRAINER

A friend was just killed riding his new bike without a helmet. It makes me sad to have to repeat this, but in his memory I will tell you the plain truth: Everyone must wear a helmet when riding a bike. Bike helmets aren't just for kids; they're for adults, too. Be smart, stay alive, and always wear your helmet.

BRAVO, FIREFIGHTERS

Kudos to Pacifica firefighters who battled blazes in SoCal last week: Bob Trapp, Steve Engler, Chuck Pomicpic, Jim Marinelli, Howard Brown, and Mike Albrecht.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“The fires of October 2007 have sharpened questions about the costs of protecting the increasing numbers of people who live in remote and highly flammable areas, reawakened old jealousies that simmer across Southern California and forced new examination of the tension between the need for local emergency services and the willingness to pay for them. San Diego County, the largest county in California without a fire department, relies on a hodgepodge of local departments that are almost all serving areas where populations are growing faster than their tax bases, and which are often low on money among a constituency that is generally allergic to taxes.” (New York Times, October 25)

GREEN HALLOWEEN

Buy outfits at used-clothing stores or rent costumes (try yelp.com). Or make your own (makezine.com). These options are less expensive than buying new get-ups that just end up in landfill. You're not gonna win any costume contests wearing that packaged fairy-princess outfit from the drugstore. Let's face it, you usually wear a costume once and then get rid of it. (idealbite.com)

DEVIL'S SLIDE JAM

Until mid-November, expect one-way traffic control between Montara and Gray Whale Cove as PG&E upgrades the electrical transmission system along Highway 1. Day and

night work is scheduled and one-way control will be in effect Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sunday through Thursday from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. Expect minor delays if you travel on Highway 1 during these periods. Please allow more time for your journey. (John Cunliffe, Public Affairs, Caltrans, 510-286-5754)

YOU COULD BE A WIENER

Somebody is missing out on a big fat business opportunity here in Pacifica. Why isn't this cash-strapped city selling hot dogs and sodas on the beach? My partner-in-crime on this scheme, a fellow rocket scientist, sez: “The city could charge \$50 a weekend and get paid back in less than five years, and the nonprofits could make a fortune. I couldn't even guess how much they could make on a weekend. They could do a bake sale, sell bottled water and sodas for a buck apiece, and hot dogs for two or three bucks. Move it around town to different events and hit the beach.” (starter kit: americandreamhotdogcarts.com, gourmethotdogs.com)

HELP WANTED

To apply for bird biologist gig, send cover letter, CV, and contact info for three references, email preferred: jthanson@sfbbo.org. Janet Hanson, Executive Director, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, 524 Valley Way, Milpitas, CA 95035. Info: sfbbo.org.

HASTE MAKES WASTE

If your household uses a roll of paper towels a week, you could save more than \$100 a year by switching to dishcloths and tea towels. Americans send 3,000 tons of paper towels a day to landfill. To make paper towels white, many producers use chlorine bleaching, which releases cancer-causing toxins into the environment. Cotton tea towels are thicker and can hold more moisture than quicker-picker-uppers. (idealbite.com)

RABELAISIAN DELIGHTS

Todd Bray's favorite local delicacies: meaty lunch buffets, Corral Steakhouse (Cape Breton Stables, Park Pacifica); handmade butternut squash ravioli, Nona's Kitchen (Pedro Point); cheeseburgers and fries, La Playa (Pedro Point); ice cream and old-fashioned candy, Lucy's Sweet Delights (Crespi); ribs 'n' chicken, Gorilla Barbecue (Highway 1/Reina Del Mar); breakfast burritos, Salada Beach Cafe (Oceana/Paloma); bagels and donut holes, Fog City Cafe (Crespi); slices, Extreme Pizza (Pedro Point); coffee cakes for work, Mazzetti's Bakery (Manor/Oceana); a gym to work it all off (or not), Pacifica Athletic Club (Pedro Point); Florey's Books, worth the wait if they have to order, still faster than the Internet (Palmetto).

WORD WORK

Hilary Powers, fellow editor and member of Bay Area Editors' Forum, has written a useful guide to working with Microsoft Word. (theefa.org/res/booklets.html)

WORST-CASE SPAM

“Dear Correspondent, I am compelled to write you this email for the following reason: One of my client, who is now deceased, in his Will, left his entire Estate and Cash deposit, valued millions of U.S. dollars. The truth is that I do not know if you are the beneficiary or not. For over two years, I have tried effortlessly to locate the person on the will without success.” (spam emailed to Professor Lippman D'Gary)

DRIP DRIP DRIP

Even if you already have a low-flow toilet, switching to dual-flush can save 28 more gallons per day. Replacing one pre-1994 toilet (which uses about 3.5 gallons per flush) with a high-efficiency one can save a family of four \$90 on its water bill each year. Rebates: In some cases, your city or water district will reimburse the cost of a dual-flush toilet. Check with North Coast County Water District. (idealbite.com)

SITeseer

•Offset your carbon footprint and other ways to be kind to the environment: earth911.org, carbonaided.com, sierraclub.org/greenlife, terrapass.org, americanforests.org,

carbonfund.org, begreennow.com, carbonoffsets.org, climatecount.s.org, nativeenergy.com

- Scared out of my gourd: extreme pumpkins.com, coolopticalillusion.s.com
- Peak oil news: theoil drum.com
- Funny videos, games, animations, jokes, and illusions: maniacworld.com
- Here comes the sun: votesolar.org, findsolar.com, readysolar.com
- Make your own stationery: letterfu.com
- Green, organic, fair trade, soulful cards and gifts: taraluna.com
- Wacky cards: welcometoloop.com, sappycards.com, yeehawindustries.com
- Al Gore's new Web-TV interface: current.com
- Winter activities on San Francisco Bay: saveSFbay.org
- Hot winter reading: conservativescandals.com
- Inner ediot: hyphen hell, apostrophe catastrophe, quotation-marks.blogspot.com.

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