

**Wandering
&
Wondering**



John Maybury

HELPLESS, HOPELESS

I am as big a fan of conspiracy theories as the next paranoid. Whenever I read the words “grassy knoll,” I visualize telescopic sights and dark late-model sedans with tinted windows. Now Robert Stone has made a new documentary, “Oswald’s Ghost,” about the conspiracy-theory industry that has grown up around President John F. Kennedy’s assassination in Dallas in 1963. Stone told the San Francisco Chronicle (October 11): “The belief that there are powerful unseen forces in this country—well, it’s true that there are powerful unseen forces—but the idea that these people are so efficient and together and work in such perfect synchronicity that for 40 years they could cover it up, and have no one ever step forward—is beyond belief. [The conspiracy theory] is believed by the majority of the American public. What you are really saying is the average person is powerless—it’s a

message to not think, to not get involved, and, frankly, it’s kind of a cop out. It gives people an excuse to not act if someone else is running things. It’s a distorted view of history.” Something to think about as we come up on yet another anniversary of JFK’s assassination.

COHO A GO GO

Leisurely hike along Lagunitas and San Geronimo creeks in Marin County to look for spawning coho salmon and other creekside species. Led by experienced creek naturalists. Learn fascinating life history of endangered coho, stream ecosystem, and how to help protect and restore salmon in California. November 17 through January 12. Two tours each Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Reservations required. Call 415-663-8590, extension 107, or email CreekWalk@SpawnUSA.org.

BUS 14 THRIVES

SamTrans expanded service on Route 14 (Linda Mar) mid-August and already 14 has shown significant ridership growth. SamTrans hopes the trend will continue. “The ridership increases we have seen on Routes 17 and 14 shows what we can achieve when communities and stakeholders work collaboratively with SamTrans to create routes and schedules that riders want,” says SamTrans Chief Operating Officer Chuck Harvey. For bus schedules and trip planning, call Customer

Service at 1-800-660-4287 (TTY 650-508-6448) or visit samtrans.com. Operators speak Spanish and other languages.

RAGIN’ RAVENS

Scott and Patty McKellar successfully defended a poor, hapless owl sitting in a tree in their backyard against four noisy ravens that were hassling the owl. Scott and Patty used their million-candlepower, high-beam flashlight to ward off the ravens. Nice work, guys.

JAZZ UNDER THE STARS

Jazz Under the Stars at the College of San Mateo. Drive down 280 to 92 East, exit Hillsdale and go north to campus. Park at Building 36 and join the fun. Pizza and drinks are served in the lobby, then take an elevator to the rooftop, where telescopes are available to look at stars, planets, satellites, and the moon. Helpful astronomy docents explain what’s in the night sky. KCSM deejays play jazz music for your listening pleasure as you ogle the firmament. (KCSM 91.7 FM is a 24-hour noncommercial radio station with studios right on campus. If you have been living on another planet, KCSM is the Bay Area’s jazz station, also streaming live on the Internet at KCSM.org.) This event occurs the third Saturday evening of every month and is totally free. (collegeofsanmateo.edu/astronomy)

MIND YOUR BEESWAX

Sometimes beeswax is a bit pricier than other candles, but a longer, cleaner, greener burn makes it a better option. Soy candles burn cleaner and longer than your average candles, and are petroleum-free, but be aware that some people are allergic to soy. Regular paraffin candles are made from petroleum byproducts. Beeswax candles have a higher melting point than other candles, so they keep the flame burning up to three times longer than other waxes. Beeswax candles produce less soot than petroleum-based ones. Check labels for 100% beeswax, because manufacturers are allowed to label candles as beeswax even if the content is only 51%. Choose less-refined yellow candles over white. Find beeswax candles at farmers markets. (idealbite.com)

WINTER GARDENING

Create a wildlife haven this winter. Plant natives that offer food (acorns, berries, seeds). Clean and fill the birdbath regularly. Provide cover by starting a compost pile of pine needles, pinecones, and wreaths from your holiday decorations. Create wildlife habitat in your backyard: nwf.org/habitat, 1-800-822-9919.

CAR-FREE

Berliners celebrated World Car-Free Day by taking to the streets on bikes on September 22. Kreisfahrt

(Circle Ride) bicyclists owned the streets. Car owners were encouraged to stay home, or at least turn off their engines and watch the endless parade of bikes make their merry way hooting and hollering around Berlin. The procession ended at Sudkreuz train station, a new venue for the annual Environment Festival, where bikers recovered from the demonstration ride with a bio-bratwurst or an organic, vegetarian meal while learning about new green trends. It may not have changed the world, but the goal was to mobilize more people to work toward that ideal.

WORLD CHALLENGE

BBC World Challenge 2007 is a “global competition that seeks out projects and businesses that not only make a profit but also put something back into the community.” There are 12 finalists worldwide. BBC World, in conjunction with Newsweek and in association with Shell, awards a \$20,000 first prize, with two runners-up each receiving \$10,000 to benefit their project. The winner is determined by your vote. It’s very simple: Go to theworldchallenge.co.uk and vote before November 16.

SWAMI SEZ

Delicious Vermont organic fruitcake: Old Cavendish, 1-800-536-7899. Tell them I sent you.

SITeseer

- San Francisco Green Festival, November 9-11: greenfestivals.org
- San Mateo County Green Festival, November 13: sustainableanmateo.org
- Power for the people: worldchanging.com
- Green thumbs: motherearthnews.com
- Original Thai cooking: PacificaThai.com
- Old-time car tunes: oldfortyfive.com/CarsWeDrove.htm
- How smart are you? Take a timed test: flashbynight.com/test/
- Fixing restroom deficit: worldtoiletsummit2007.org
- Festivals, fairs, farmers markets, football: samtrans.com
- Peninsula happenings: visitsanmateocounty.com
- Save water and energy: boschappliances.com
- Gorgeous nature photography: michaelforsberg.com

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- PacificaRiptide.com: local news & opinion
- My columns: WanderingAndWondering.com, PacificaTribune.com.
- Email me your stories & photos: mayburrito@goofbuster.com