



# Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

## SAN FRAN-SICKO

First, somebody cut down dozens of trees in Golden Gate Park. Then somebody drove a car around the park's golf course, tearing up the greens. And somebody poisoned thousands of honeybees in their beehives. Now somebody has killed one of the mute swans in the pond in front of the Palace of Fine Arts. It's a long way from the Summer of Love. Monsters now walk the streets of the cool, gray city called San Francisco.

## SARAH PALIN FOR DUMMIES

Sarah Palin recently told Glen Beck on FOX News: "This speaks to a bigger picture here that certainly scares me in terms of our national security policy. But obviously we've gotta stand with our North Korean allies." And then there was this whopper: "I want to help clean up the state that is so sorry today of journalism. And I have a communications degree. I studied journalism, who, what, where, when, and why of reporting."

## PLANES, TRAINS, AND AUTOMOBILES

The San Bruno Grade Separation Project will elevate the Caltrain tracks above three existing at-grade street crossings at San Bruno, San Mateo, and Angus avenues. In addition, a new elevated Caltrain station will be built between San Bruno and San Mateo avenues, replacing the existing station at Sylvan Avenue. A total of 201

parking spaces and a "kiss and ride" lot will serve the station at the former San Bruno Lumber site. Elevators will provide easy access for Caltrain customers. Streets and sidewalks, including those at Posy Park [Sorry, Buster, not you!] also will be improved. The grade separation is bounded by Interstate 380 to the north and San Felipe Avenue to the south, a distance of a little more than a mile. Construction activities will include track and signal work, utility relocations, and limited right-of-way acquisition. Preliminary construction began in November. Actual grade separation and station construction work begins in December 2011 and is expected to be completed by fall 2012. The total cost of the San Bruno Grade Separation Project is \$147 million. Funding includes \$85.6 million in Measure A tax dollars, \$54.8 million in state funds, and \$6.6 million in federal funds. Measure A is a half-cent sales tax that has funded nine grade separation projects in the county and provided more than \$222 million to cities in the county for local streets and roads since 1988.

## DA WARNS TSA GROPERS

San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe says he will prosecute any TSA inspectors at SFO who inappropriately touch airline passengers going through security. Way to go, Steve! We certainly understand the Feds' need to do their job to

protect us from terrorists, but when you see photos of burly federal agents patting down little old ladies in pantsuits, you have to kind of throw up in your mouth a little bit.

## PAIN IN THE DRAIN

Frying a turkey this holiday season? The Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group has placed stickers on turkey fryer boxes sold at Home Depot and Orchard Supply Hardware to remind residents not to pour leftover grease and cooking oil down sinks and drains. Doing so causes sewer system backup. Check out baywise.org for a list of free fat, oil, and grease drop-off locations around the Bay Area. Also check with Recology of the Coast for Pacifica collection service.

## INTERESTING NEW SKILL

City of Cupertino Parks and Recreation Department Winter 2011 Classes flyer: "#44182 Pre-Public Speaking: Confident Voice. Want your child to be an effective class participant and successful public speaker? ... Confident Voice teaches skills vital to developing a strong voice, including volume, pace, and annunciation."

## HELP LITTLE BROWN CHURCH

Clorinda Campagna writes: "The Little Brown Church (LBC) needs YOU to continue the restoration. Money is needed from all possible sources. Pacifica Historical Society (PHS) is in debt due to unexpected necessary repairs on the north side of the building. The 4F Group, Inc. is doing what must be done, giving a lot on a pro bono basis. PHS pays for materials and work as money comes in from donations and "FUNders." Recently, the four-day rummage sale brought in about \$5,000, and the LBC Birthday Bash made about \$4,000 and still counting because we have

LBC Centennial commemorative glasses for sale at \$5. Much, much more is needed NOW as we continue the Partnering Together Campaign. We have inherited this historic building. Please help to preserve our history. Consider making a generous year-end donation to Pacifica Historical Society for LBC. Visit pacificahistory.org; mail a check to PHS, P.O. Box 752, Pacifica CA 94044; or call 650-359-5462. And tell them Juan Mayburrito sent you! Thanks."

## COEXISTING WITH COYOTES

Janet Kessler writes in Jake Sigg's Nature News: "By becoming aware of coyote behavior and needs, you can become part of the solution to make coexistence work. Coexistence means sharing the environment amicably. Peaceful coexistence entails a constant process. At our homes, it means not leaving out food that will entice coyotes into our yards or our garbage, and not leaving pets unattended. In the parks, it means not threatening coyotes by getting too close, or making them uncomfortable as a result of excessive dog activity. The solution is restraining our dogs when coyotes are out and about, keeping dogs and coyotes from communicating visually or through body language by moving on, keeping our dogs calm. We can't control the behavior of coyotes, but we can minimize their instinct to react to our dogs. Almost all coyote behavior toward dogs is a reaction to dog behavior: from being chased, to antagonistic communication, to territorial invasion. Coexistence entails keeping coyotes as naturally wild as possible. Of course, coyotes will get used to dogs and humans in an urban park setting, but the goal is to minimize any interaction between them. NEVER feed or attempt

to tame a coyote. Remember these observed behaviors: When chased, coyotes, especially alpha coyotes, become upset and may chase back, bark, or even nip to move the dog away and warn it. Coyotes remember every chase incident and are prepared the next time—more ready to defend. Coyotes like it calm in their territories—best to move active dog play elsewhere. Coyotes enjoy "watching" dogs being walked; they have a need to know what is going on. Visual communication and body language can sometimes be antagonistic between dogs and coyotes; this is why we need to keep distance between the two by restraining dogs and moving on. During pupping season, beginning in about March, coyotes become especially protective. Maybe you have come across a coyote that seems friendly—your dog and the coyote wag their tails and sniff each other at both ends—all seems pleasant and safe and happy. But you need to know that every coyote reacts differently—and you will not know until after the fact. Alpha coyotes will be protective, not only of themselves, but also of other members of their packs. They could run to the defense of this friendly pack member. This is why it is best to follow the guidelines, even if your personal experience suggests otherwise. Injured animals may behave aggressively. Please report injured animals to the humane society or ASPCA animal shelter.

## SITSEER

Holiday indulgence: Google pumplecake!

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