

Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury



TRASH TALK

Pacifica Riptide's ace reporter Lionel Emde posted a real scoop over the weekend about the city's November 30 "community forum on solid waste disposal services, including recycling." Garbage collection was the main topic, but also that the notice fulfilling the legal requirement appeared on page 17A of the Pacifica Tribune (November 25). Why page 17A with no news story attached? "Tribune publisher/editor Elaine Larsen told me that the notice was received just before the newspaper's publication deadline, and there wasn't time to do a story, much less give it more prominent placement. If it weren't for Elaine, I never would have known the notice was there. I went right over it," Lionel wrote. "Now why would such an important, once-in-a-life-

time event such as changing trash collection firms be so under-noticed? Maybe because it's becoming evident that the City of Pacifica wants to shove the problem/contract at Recology and not do a request for proposal process (RFP). An RFP might (horrors!) protect the ratepayers, who have been paying the highest rates for garbage collection in San Mateo County, courtesy of the gougemasters at Coastside Scavenger. And, of course, the city mustn't be let off the hook for its complete lack of oversight between 1995 and 2006. An RFP would encourage a competitive bidding process—you know, that thing you've heard of and never seen here in Pacifica. The city manager characterized this process as 'contentious,' and he's right—it's really a bitch when all of us unwashed citizens come

out and speak our minds. But it's important that we do so, and ask that an RFP be instituted for this contract, and tell them what we'd like to see in recycling services—something other than being told by Coastside Scavenger that containers bearing recycling numbers 1, 6, and 7 be 'thrown away.'"

CLASS ACT

Assemblymember Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, has voluntarily reduced his salary by an additional 10 percent, for a cumulative reduction of 20 percent. On February 20, 2009, the day the budget was signed, Assemblymember Hill voluntarily reduced his salary by 10 percent, consistent with the state employee salary reductions. "I feel that this additional salary reduction request is necessary in light of last week's announcement by the Legislative Analyst's Office that our state faces a \$20 billion budget deficit in 2010 and the fact that state employees continue to receive furloughs and salary reductions," said Assemblymember Hill.

DO THE TWIST

In the San Francisco Chronicle (November 26) "Bandwidth" review of White Pee, bandleader Michael Boul

says the band's name means "the stream of life." Here is the opening paragraph of the review: "This quartet's eldritch sounds are hard to pin down. Guitar, percussion and knob twists emit abstract oscillations that range from unexpected abrasive noise to ambient drone. The band's music sounds shapeless—with nominal structure and no apparent breaks defining songs. White Pee plays with one's expectations: The listener is hypnotized by the meditative quality of minimal, elongated synth whispers, and then startled by a jarring, resistant guitar growl." I don't know which sounds worse, the review or the music.

BIZARRE DREAMS

Psychologist Darren Lipnicki of Perth, Australia, writing in a recent issue of the Journal of Medical Hypotheses, says that people have more bizarre dreams during low geomagnetic periods coinciding with high solar winds. If you can make sense of this, please explain it to me. I just report the news from Earthweek.com.

SPAM POLLUTES

Who knows how much energy it takes to send, process, and filter all the email we get and

send all day long! Several studies have been done on the amount of electricity and gas it takes to power the Internet. Sending an email may save a tree, but how much does it cost in other terms? It's yet another conundrum in the ongoing saga of modern civilization's unintended consequences.

ECONOMY REBOUNDS?

After my annual Thanksgiving bike ride around Linda Mar, and based on admittedly subjective data (my nose), I can report that this year more homes were roasting turkeys and baking pies than in the past few years. It smelled wonderful out there! But I have a question for the Oxymoron Department at Ford Motor Company: How can a car named Freestyle also be Limited?

SWAMI SEZ

"A pirate does not use the word 'fabulous.' Ever!" (Pirate Law Number 19)

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DOT COM

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