

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

JOIN TODAY

With our man Barack Obama coming to power in Washington and Hillary Clinton becoming his Secretary of State, the foreign service is looking for new blood to serve overseas. The hiring window is officially open, as reported recently in the New York Times. Go for it, kids (and that includes the young at heart—the State Department always needs experienced, seasoned candidates as well as fresh young faces). My brother Joel, who serves at the American Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, says he would gladly sign up again because it is the most satisfying career he can imagine (and he left the world's most exciting profession—journalism!—to become a diplomat).

FORBES ON PEEBLES

Forbes magazine publisher Steve Forbes interviewed developer Don Peebles in the November 14 issue. Peebles, who owns Rockaway Quarry and is also a financial supporter of and economic adviser to President-Elect Barack Obama, has several interesting things to say about politics and development. Get the magazine at the library or go to forbes.com.

GOOSE EGGS

Scientists studying polar bears are excited about what they have observed in the arctic wilderness: The great white hunters are learning to eat goose eggs, which are abundant in the great white north. Ice melts cause by global warming have been threatening the bears' ability to hunt seals, but now it appears they are adjusting to a different diet, which may help them survive in arctic regions.



SHARKS

Beware of smooth-talking fundraisers on the phone and online. The California attorney general's office reports that commercial fundraisers sent less than half the money they collected from Californians in 2007 to the charities the money was supposed to go to. The fundraisers kept the rest, or 56 percent of the money raised, amounting to about \$90 million. If you give money to a charity on the phone or online, ask questions and make sure that most of your money is really going to the charity. Legitimate fundraisers will tell you on the phone and on their Web sites how much they take for administrative costs, and the good ones among them usually boast (and rightfully so) about how low their fees are and how well they manage the charities' money. That's what you want to look for. Don't get Madoffed, just get mad.

NOT OKAY CORRAL

Fans of Chef Brent's Corral Steakhouse on Cape Breton were saddened last week to see the popular Park Pacifica eatery close its doors. Boo-hoo, no more Manhattan clam chowder, crispy fresh coleslaw, and Cowboy Cut steaks. A failing economy and the Corral's remote location in the stables probably were partly responsible for the closure. Brent and Jolene gave it all they had for several years but finally had to admit defeat and move on to greener pastures. We all wish them well.

GREEN ENCHILADA

Hooray for Joe Murillo of Pacifica Farmer's Market in Manor shopping center. He just opened an organic Mexican taqueria next door to the market (in the old video store space) called The Green Enchilada. According to Tom Sullivan's article in the *Tribune* last week, Joe is open daily till 9 p.m. serving the finest and freshest Mexican food just like *mamacita* used to make (or my name ain't Juan Mayburrito).



OUTRAGEOUS

Could you believe your eyes last week when you read that the banks we taxpayers bailed out now refuse to say what they are doing with our money? What unbelievable gall! I can't wait for Obama to come to power and kick some pinstriped butt.

50 GRAND GREEN

Put on your thinking cap and help your organization win a \$50,000 grant for the best idea to "preserve, protect, and provide access to America's great outdoors." Environmental group Planet Green and Redwood Creek Wines of Modesto, California cosponsor this contest: blazethetrail.com/greatoutdoors

WHOLE ENERGY DOCS

Whole Energy Fuels' biodiesel refinery public documents and insurance certificate are now posted on PacificaRiptide.com. Just go to the site and search in the Google box on upper-right sidebar, or look under category Biofuel Brouhaha in the left sidebar.

GOOD BAILOUTS

On Christmas Day, Secret Santas handed out hundred-dollar bills to poor and working people in Michigan, and another Secret Santa helped burned-out fire victims in Minnesota get emergency shelter and food. Now those are bailouts you can believe in!



SUN DOGS

Winter skies across the country produce beautiful special effects such as ice halos known as "sun dogs." To see a variety of these optical marvels, Google "sun dogs."

SHOPLIFTER DOG

Check out the video of a dog shoplifting a rawhide bone from a grocery store in Murray, Utah. (YouTube.com)

NO MUSCLE CAR

A Beverly Hills plastic surgeon has been using body fat he sculpts and liposuctions off his obese patients to run his Ford Explorer and his girlfriend's Lincoln Navigator. They call the fuel "lipodiesel." (Forbes.com)

SWAMI SEZ

"47.2 percent of all statistics are just made up on the spot." (Dolores De Cabeza)

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2008 WORST IDEA

Burger King is selling "Flame" body spray: the scent of seduction with a hint of flame-broiled meat." Available online and at Ricky's retail stores in New York City for \$3.99.



AMERICAN IDOL

Americans seem to love their big trucks and SUVs so much that no sooner do gas prices fall than sales of big gas guzzlers rise again. Dumb and dumber, baby! (CNN.com)