

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

ROAD HOGS

When San Francisco Chronicle car columnist Michael Taylor salivates over the big gas-guzzling pickup truck-on-steroids called the King Ranch F-150, doesn't it seem a little irresponsible in the face of global warming? Shouldn't his newspaper set higher journalistic standards? The Chronicle is oh-so-sensitive about not printing the names and pictures of juvenile offenders. So why not withhold the names and pictures of environmental offenders, too?

CREEK CLEANUP

Once again, winter rains have washed a huge amount of trash into San Pedro Creek. Help clean it up and protect wildlife that depends on a healthy ecosystem. Meet Saturday, March 24 at 10 a.m. in the parking lot next to the creek mouth on San Pedro Avenue. Wear sturdy shoes, long pants and sunblock. Bagels,

juice, and snacks are provided. Then please return Saturday, April 7 at 10 a.m. to restore creek habitat and remove invasive species. Spring flowers are starting to bloom and so are nonnative, invasive plants. It is time to start aggressively removing wild radish, poison hemlock and pampas grass before they take over recent plantings. Meet 500 feet beyond the barricade at the end of San Pedro Terrace Road, one block west of Peralta Road.

PLOVER PLEA

Park patrols protect precious plovers. State park rangers need volunteers to help protect endangered snowy plovers on coastside beaches. Attend a free, one-day training workshop at 95 Kelly Ave. in Half Moon Bay on Saturday, April 7, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. To register or for more information, call Ranger Nelle Lyons at 650-726-8804, voice mailbox 7#, or e-mail hmbplovers@hotmail.com.

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

Who made the first potato chip? According to Snopes and Wikipedia (see Saratoga Chips), Native American/African American chef George Crum invented the tasty taters at Moon's Lake House in Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1853. Apparently a diner had complained that Crum's French fries were "too thick and soggy" and not salty enough, so the irked cook

sliced potatoes very thin, then fried and salted them. Crum's potato chips were an instant hit, and today U.S. potato chip consumption averages six pounds per person a year. Hey, if you're under that average, thank your lucky stars: Potato chips pack a caloric wallop that is about one-third fat and way too much sodium. I can attest (unfortunately) that salt-and-vinegar chips taste fabulous, but I am duty-bound to recommend switching to baked chips (not fried) or a high-fiber, whole-grain, low-fat snack.

BIRDS AND BEES

Without nature's pollinators—birds, bees, and bats—we would have no fruits, and worse yet, no chocolate. So plant flowers that attract pollinators: nappc.org (call 415-362-1137) and nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens (call 510-642-0973).

CANOLA CRAZY

Czech roe deer are staggering drunk on bright yellow rapeseed (canola) that has flourished in Europe during this global-warming winter. Czech hunters are warning motorists to beware of drunk deer, and are trying to feed the deer hay to wean them off the intoxicating effects of excessive canola consumption. (Source: Earthweek)

BUZZ BAGELS

How about a little caffeine with

your caffeine? Coffee and a donut is about to become a double-wakeup call. Molecular scientist Robert Bohannon of Durham, N.C. has come up with a way to add caffeine to baked goods, minus bitter caffeine taste. Each pastry has the equivalent of about two cups of coffee. Although the product is not on the market yet, Bohannon has approached some heavyweight companies, including Krispy Kreme, Dunkin' Donuts, and Starbucks, about carrying it. (Source: Associated Press)

FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET

"Rail transit solutions are too important for us to leave to politicians. We have to figure this out for ourselves, you and me, and then give politicians their marching orders. I'll start. It will be a bullet train up and down California's Central Valley, with feeder lines to places like San Francisco, Monterey, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Sacramento. Santa Barbara is too small to qualify. There will not be a feeder line to Las Vegas unless casino owners build it themselves. Routing will be determined by service to the passenger, cost to build and completion date. Nothing else. Stops will be made only at feeder line transfer points. No bus or automobile parking will be provided at a transfer point. Local train lines will run parallel to the main line and stop at the transfer points. Bus and auto-

mobile traffic will be collected along the local train lines. Drivers can keep their cars, but they won't be allowed to clog up the high-speed stations with access roads and parking lots. Transfer points will not be built near any city or town (like Gonzales). That's it. Your turn. Cut out what you don't like. Insert your own preferences. When we're done, we'll have a citizen-generated "white paper" we can hand over to all of the nation's Congress people." (Roger Lagerquist)

THE EFFICIENT COMMUTER

A hidden cost of commuting is productive time lost while driving a car. A study by Napier University's Transport Institute in England estimates that car commuters waste 66 percent more time than transit commuters working on a laptop while riding on planes, trains, boats, and buses. (Source: The Guardian, 10-27-06)

SHUT UP AND WALK

New Yorkers who blithely cross the street talking on a cell phone or listening to an iPod could soon face a \$100 fine. New York State Sen. Carl Kruger, who says three pedestrians in his Brooklyn district have been killed since September upon stepping into traffic while distracted by their electronic devices, recently introduced legislation to ban use of such gadgets while crossing the street. (Source: Reuters)

YELLOW SNOW

Foul-smelling yellow snow fell on 580 square miles of Russia's Omsk region near the Siberian border. At first, residents were warned to avoid contact with the stinky snow, but later chemical analysis proved the culprit was either a dust storm from the Black Sea or mud from around the nearly dried-up Aral Sea. (Source: earthweek.com)

INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Darfur is in western Sudan, not southern Sudan, says he who should know, my brother Joel Maybury, State Department press officer at the American Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan.

SWAMI SEZ

"At 76, I feel terrific and, according to all measurable indicators, am in excellent health. It's amazing what Cherry Coke and hamburgers will do for a fellow." (Warren Buffett, multibillionaire, quoted in The Wall Street Journal, March 2)

MAYBURRITOVILLE

Spring cleaning: editor@goofbuster.com
 Spring training: mayburrito@goofbuster.com
 Spring break: WanderingAndWondering.com
 Spring fever: Goofbuster.com