

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury



SALMONELLA STEW

Peanut Corporation CEO Stewart Parnell came to Washington last week to answer for his company's total lack of regard for public health. Federal investigators told a Congressional panel that Parnell's peanuts were full of salmonella bacteria and his factory full of mold and rat droppings. When a Congressman held up a jar of Peanut Corp. product and asked Parnell if he would eat some of it, the full-faced Georgia executive took the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer. (Note: Regular store-bought peanut butter has not been implicated in the scandal, only peanuts and peanut paste that Parnell shipped to nursing homes, school cafeterias, and food manufacturers across America.) If ever there were a more likely candidate than Parnell for my "public enemies" list, I don't know who that would be. As Bruce Hotchkiss posted on PacificaRiptide.com recently, "When [Parnell] goes to jail, let's hope there are lots of PB&J sammies for him to eat."

KAISER OUTRAGE

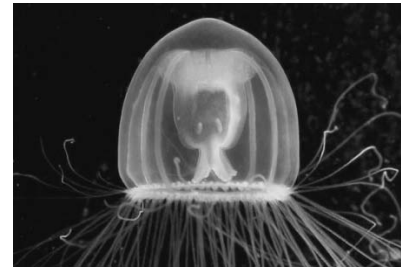
Many Pacificans who belong to Kaiser Permanente health care and medical plans are outraged that Kaiser allowed Nadya Suleyman, a Southern California Kaiser member, to be implanted with and deliver octuplets at her Kaiser hospital. Suleyman already had six children. The delivery team was led by Karen Maples, MD, chief, Obstetrics; Harold Henry, MD, director, Maternal-Fetal Medicine; Mandhir Gupta, MD, Neonatology; and Jalil Riazi, MD, chief, Anesthesiology. The team - numbering 52 in total - also included three obstetricians, two anesthesiologists, seven neonatologists, seven respiratory therapists, 11 Neonatal ICU RNs, 13 labor and delivery RNs, and nine other medical health professionals. If you want to protest: Kaiser Member Services for Northern California, 800-464-4000 (toll-free). Member Services representatives are available 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. PST Monday through Friday, and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. PST Saturday and Sunday. Members can sign in to the Kaiser Web site and email Member Services. Many Kaiser members (and others) are outraged that the octuplet mom's care will drive up their health care insurance premiums.



DON'T TOUCH SEAL PUPS

NOAA's Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary advises beachgoers not to attempt to "rescue" any seal pups they may find. Healthy harbor seal pups are needlessly separated from their mothers by people who mistake them for orphans. Har-

bor seal mothers may leave their pups unattended while feeding at sea, only to later rejoin and nurse them. The presence of humans or dogs near a seal pup could prevent a mother seal from reuniting with her young one. Report suspected orphaned or injured pups to Marine Mammal Center, 415-289-7325.

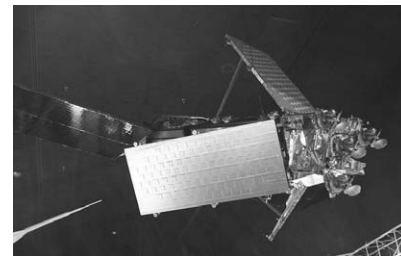


IMMORTAL CREATURE

Turritopsis nutricula is a jellyfish-like hydrozoan native to the Caribbean but spread to oceans worldwide by ships' ballast water. It reproduces and then reverts to its younger state; instead of aging and dying, it actually gets younger. As you can imagine, scientists are madly studying this sucker to see if they can figure out its secret to immortality. (Earthweek.com)

OBAMA SCHOOL

Students at Ludlum Elementary School in Hempstead, New York have campaigned successfully for a name change to Barack Obama Elementary School.



SATELLITE SMASHUP

"Experts are calling it an 'unprecedented event.' Two large satellites

have collided in Earth orbit. Kosmos 2251 crashed into Iridium 33 on February 10 over northern Siberia; both spacecraft were destroyed. The resulting clouds of debris contain more than 500 fragments, significantly increasing the orbital debris population at altitudes where the collision occurred. The Air Force Space Surveillance Radar is monitoring the clouds as they pass over the radar facility in Texas. We, in turn, are monitoring signals from the radar and you may be able to hear debris 'pings' by tuning in to our live audio feed." (spaceweather.com)

HONOR FILIPINO VETS

Included in the economic stimulus bill approved by the United States Senate is a provision to address a 63-year injustice for Filipino WWII veterans. Specifically, the bill would provide a lump sum payment of \$15,000 to Filipino veterans living in the US and \$9,000 for those who live abroad. The payment is in response to the 1946 Rescission Act, which stripped benefits from Filipino WWII veterans. Such benefits include healthcare, disability pensions, and burial expenses, now essential for the 16,000 or fewer surviving Filipino veterans and their families. "The Rescission Act of 1946 was a sad chapter in American history," says Democratic state Senator Leland Yee, who authored state legislation calling for passage of a federal equity bill. "It is our responsibility to end this injustice and start caring for these soldiers who fought so hard for our country's freedom." Yee's district includes the largest Filipino community outside of the Philippines.

CASH FOR TRASH

Landfills in Idaho and Montana sell their waste methane to utility companies for cash and credit. (Source: High Country News, hcn.org) Isn't it about time that we joined this cash-for-trash alternative energy system? Instead of

burying our garbage at Ox Mountain and flushing our treated sewage into the ocean, let's start capturing the methane and use it to power our city.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Asiya Wadud rides her bike all over the East Bay foraging for backyard fruits and vegetables to trade. She was featured in the San Francisco Chronicle on February 2 (available in the archives at sfgate.com). Some Pacificans already harvest produce from their trees and gardens and donate it to the Pacifica Resource Center food bank. The senior gleaners of Sacramento and Santa Clara gather up the bounty of fallen fruit and share it with soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and Meals on Wheels programs. It just seems such a shame to see perfectly good, healthy fruits and veggies go to waste.

SIXTIES COPPER

I watch a lot of BBC and PBS TV series, mainly British cops and robbers, but I had never before heard of a show called George Gently until I read about it in the Acorn Media catalog. There it was, along with other well-known series such as Rumpole of the Bailey, Midsomer Murders, Prime Suspect, and Foley's War. George (played by Martin Shaw) is a 1960s Scotland Yard detective who winds up working in northeastern England after tracking down his wife's killer there. He decides to stay and work out of a provincial police station in Durham (he finds the fly-fishing rather good up north). His murder cases involve sex, drugs, rock-and-roll, motorcycle gangs, Irish nationalists, and other themes of the times. Great acting, writing, and cinematography. Acorn sells the DVDs, but I found the series

on Netflix, so now I am hooked.

BOMBS AWAY

Look out below! I learned the hard way recently not to step out of my car on Beach Boulevard promenade with a cookie in my fist. The seagulls and ravens were on me in seconds, hovering right over my head, ready to snatch my snack out of my grasp. So I wolfed it down quickly and waved off the "buzzards," but not before one of them let loose with a you-know-what that just barely missed me. Ah, living dangerously on the wild side of Pacifica!

YOU RIDE CALTRAIN?

Caltrain stops closest to Pacifica are South San Francisco, San Bruno, and Millbrae along the bayshore route between San Francisco and San Jose. Peninsula commuters, bicyclists, shoppers, and daytrippers use the double-decker trains. But I was wondering if any of you Tribune readers use Caltrain or know of other Pacificans who do. If so, I would like to hear your Caltrain-riding stories. My email address is at the end of this column.

SWAMI SEZ

"You don't have to shout to get your point across if you use the right words." (Harvey Mackay)

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