



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

BEAR HEAD ROCK

Last week I rode Amtrak's San Joaquin train to Merced and caught a cushy YARTS bus (three-point seat belts!) to Yosemite National Park. I posted grainy photos of Half Dome and Yosemite Falls on my Pacifica Riptide blog, using my Blackberry camera/phone. But the best shot I got was this mysterious rock (see photo, right) on the Valley Trail, near the John Muir millrace site. After looking at this picture, I decided to call the huge boulder Bear Head Rock. Can you see why?

QUARRY COYOTES

Coyotes frequent Rockaway Quarry and Mori Point. Jan. 29 a pack of them attacked a dog-walker's dogs. Warning signs are now posted on trails leading into the area.

EAGLE EYE

Do you automatically correct friends' speech and colleagues' memos? Are you an eagle eye for grammar, spelling, and punctuation? If so, consider becoming a copyeditor/proofreader. Editors help writers think logically and communicate clearly. It is a good way to make a living if you enjoy reading, writing—and marking up other people's work! This informative Saturday afternoon class covers skills, training, terminology, pay rates, comput-

ers, marketing, job definitions, handling criticism, deadlines, and part-time and freelance opportunities. Class is April 9 at De Anza College, Cupertino. Visit communityeducation.fhda.edu and click 'Short Courses' to register for course number 021: Become a Copyeditor/Proofreader. Instructor: Yours truly!

INDUSTRIAL WASTELAND OR BIRD REFUGE?

Cargill/DMB claims that its Redwood City salt ponds—the largest piece of restorable bay shoreline at risk of development—are an industrial wasteland, insisting that “any bird who tried to land here would get his fanny burned.” Save The Bay video and photos say otherwise. One of Cargill/DMB's primary strategies is to mislead the public about its controversial plan. Photos, video, petition, and more information at DontPaveMyBay.org.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Mitch Reid discovered a YouTube video of a band named Pacifika covering the old Chicago tune “25 or 6 to 4.” Check it out at youtube.com.

DEATH SENTENCE

Scholars are warning of the impending demise of that basic component of human communication: the sentence. “I see creep-

ing inarticulateness,” says James Billington, the US Librarian of Congress. This assault on the lowly—and mighty—sentence, he says, is symptomatic of a disease potentially fatal to civilization. If the sentence croaks, so will critical thought. The chronicling of history. Storytelling itself. He has a point. The sentence itself is a story, with a beginning, a middle and an end. Something happens in a sentence. Without subjects, there are no heroes or villains. Without verbs, there is no action. Without objects, nothing is moved, changed, destroyed or created. Plus, simple sentences clarify complex situations. (“Jesus wept.”) Since its invention centuries ago, the sentence has brought order to chaos. It's the handle on the pitcher, a tonic chord in music, a stair step chiseled in a mountain-

side... From his office, Billington sounds the warning: “The words ‘community’ and ‘communicate’ come from the same root word... It logically follows that greater communication would lead to greater community, would bring us all together.” Great leaps in communication create an illusion, he says, that everyone is going to come together. The irony is that every major information revolution in the modern world has failed to stem misunderstanding and societal mayhem—or even slow it down. “In the mid-15th century, Gutenberg's printing press did not forestall bloody holy wars. The multimedia revolution of the mid-19th century... led to increased nationalist passions and wars among nations... We are moving toward the language used by computer programmers and air-traffic con-

trollers; language as a method of instruction, not a portal into critical thinking.” (Washington Post)

SWAMI SEZ

“In trying to cling to power, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak is in a state of de-Nile.” (Gary Hanauer)

SITeseer

- Devil's Slide creative contest: tunnelvisionwriters.blogspot.com
- Rain barrels, solar panels, conservation training: acterra.org

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