

Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury



SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

Saving Pacifica Schools, a newly formed political action committee (PAC), is running an online petition to secure TARP funds for reimbursement of monies lost in the collapse of Lehman Brothers. The Pacifica School District (PSD) was required by law to deposit money in the county treasury, which invested the money in Lehman Brothers bonds. When Lehman Brothers went bankrupt, PSD lost \$700,000. On May 21, Congressman Barney Frank is holding hearings on disbursing TARP funds to public entities that have been financially damaged. If you would consider "signing" the online petition, it would help bring recognition of PSD's financial situation to Congressman Frank, and perhaps more important, to U.S. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner. Please sign the petition at thepetitionsite.com/1/savpacschools. (Matt Levie, PacificaRiptide.com)

MISTER CLEAN

Ian Butler took a picture of trashed Sanchez Creek, which runs through Sharp Park Golf Course, and posted the photo on PacificaRiptide.com, along

with an invitation to golfers and environmentalists to join him in a creek cleanup May 9 (both sides in the golf course debate claim to be stewards of nature). It was interesting to see who showed up to "walk the talk" with Ian: a sprinkling of folks of all political persuasions. (Read Riptide's Recent Comments to see what happened at the work party.) Meanwhile, I want to nominate Ian for a NoBull Prize for his Earth Day trifecta: He recruited a bunch of kids hanging out in front of Manor Safeway drinking beer, loaded them into his truck, and soon had them picking up trash on the beach. Ian said they were hard workers. And so in one fell swoop, Ian discovered a cure for pollution, teen alcoholism, and juvenile delinquency. Not bad for a comedian.

VEGGIE DAY

The Belgian city of Ghent is about to become the first in the world to go vegetarian at least once a week. Ghent means to recognize the impact of livestock on the environment. The UN says livestock is responsible for nearly one-fifth of global greenhouse

gas emissions, hence Ghent's declaration of a weekly "veggie day." Public officials and politicians will be the first to give up meat for a day. Schoolchildren will follow suit with their own "veggiedag" in September. It is hoped the move will cut Ghent's environmental footprint and help tackle obesity. Around 90,000 so-called "veggie street maps" are now being printed to help people find the city's vegetarian eateries. (Chris Mason, BBC News)

COUNTY TOPS

Moody's Investors Service has affirmed San Mateo County's issuer rating of Aa1 as part of its annual ratings review. The Aa1 rating was initially assigned by Moody's last August when the County refinanced its Youth Services Center bonds. Moody's also assigned an Aa3 rating to the County's 2003 Maguire Jail bonds and affirmed the Aa3 rating assigned to the 2008 Youth Services Center refinancing as part of the review. With issuer ratings of Aa1 from Moody's and AAA from Standard and Poor's, San Mateo County continues to be the highest-rated county in the state. These high ratings are a reflection of the County's creditworthiness. This means that the County can borrow money (issue bonds) at lower interest rates, which saves taxpayer dollars. (Marshall Wilson, San Mateo County)

PET FOOD ALERT

The U.S. Food and Drug

Administration (FDA) has confirmed that the agency is investigating NUTRO pet food, following a series of unexplained illnesses and deaths. Consumers have been complaining for more than two years that their pets have become ill after eating NUTRO products; many have recovered when they were switched to other foods. The company has steadfastly denied that its food is to blame. Until now, the FDA has been mum about whether it was actively investigating the company. Today, the FDA's Division of Freedom of Information confirmed the agency has an ongoing investigation into NUTRO and said that investigation could be criminal or civil in nature. The office did not elaborate on the nature or focus of that investigation. The investigation came to light when the FDA denied a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request by ConsumerAffairs.com seeking a list of complaints and lab results the agency has collected regarding NUTRO pet food. The agency denied the request and said that releasing the information could hamper "prospective or ongoing" action by law enforcement. "The document(s) constitute record(s) compiled for law enforcement purposes, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings," wrote the FDA's George A. Strait, Jr., assistant commissioner for public affairs. (Lisa Wade McCormick, ConsumerAffairs.com, April 20)

GREEN CAREER

Contemplating a green career change? Not sure how to start? Acterra's "Be the Change" environmental leadership program can give you the training and experience you need to help you down the path to a new "green" career. Many of our graduates have used the program as a way to ease back into the workforce after a period at home, and others have used the experience to "green" their current job or company. "Be the Change" is training a corps of leaders of all ages who are developing productive, innovative solutions to the environmental challenges before us. The program offers a 10-month course that starts in September and features monthly seminars that teach participants how to be effective change agents where they live, work, worship, or play. The curriculum revolves around environmental information, personal skills mastery, and social change processes and everyone does a project to put what he or she has learned into practice. We have top-notch speakers and advisors, and the other class members are also emerging leaders with demonstrated skills. All members learn from one another and come away with a group of 25-30 new friends. We are holding info sessions for potential program applicants to: learn more about program content; meet others who care about our environment; talk with "Be the Change" participants, advisors, and program staff.

Dates and locations (all from 6-8 p.m.): May 21, Sunnyvale Community Center; June 3, Redwood City Council Chambers; July 30, Mountain View City Council Chambers. Contact: Rebecca Araiz Iversen, Director, Be the Change Environmental Leadership Program, 650-922-1787 (cell)

SWAMI SEZ

"Your conscience is what hurts when the rest of you feels good." (Wiley Riposte)

SITSEER

■ Help ban Styrofoam statewide: environmentcalifornia.org

■ Nothing to do? Nowhere to go? PacificaRiptide.com event calendar

■ San Francisco top U.S. recycler at 72 percent: sfgate.com

■ New Bay Bridge construction photos/videos: bata.mtc.ca.gov

■ Warren Buffett's green prefabs: lowimpactliving.com

■ Erwin James, writer-convict-fugitive: guardian.co.uk

■ Puzzles, riddles, tests, games: humorsphere.com

■ Algae, fuel of the future: valcent.eu

■ The mayor of Mississauga, a real firecracker: youtube.com

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■ Columns: WanderingAndWondering.com

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■ E-mail: mayburrito@goofbuster.com