



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

MANUEL'S SPECIAL

As a former Angeleno, I fondly remember legendary Manuel's El Tepeyac Cafe in the East Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights. Joseph Wambaugh's cop novels mention Manuel's, and a favorite menu item (the Hollenbeck burrito) was named in honor of LAPD's nearby Hollenbeck substation, whose officers consumed no small quantities of the awesome burrito. But the star of the show is always Manuel's Special, weighing in at just over four pounds. According to a sign over the grill, Manuel's will pay a \$100 reward to anyone who can eat two Specials at one sitting. Hillary Clinton visited in 1998 during her Save America's Treasures campaign but barely made a dent in her Special. All Manuel's burritos come in vegetarian versions.

TINFOIL HAT?

"8:33 a.m. A woman reported a man was assaulting her by means of telecommunications and radio frequencies that caused bruising. She said she would advise her doctor regarding her radio frequency susceptibility." (Grass Valley, California police blotter, June 2)

"BARK OFF" OR RIPOFF?

"Do ultrasonic anti-bark collars and handheld devices work? They are based on use of positive punishment to teach a dog not to bark. Positive punishment is one of the four types of learning theory to explain how dogs

acquire information and behavior. The terms are positive and negative punishment, and positive and negative reinforcement. These are not value judgments. The animal receives something (positive) or something is taken away (negative). Ultrasound anti-bark devices use the same learning theory as shock collars and citronella spray collars, but the unpleasant consequence for barking is a sound rather than a spray or shock. I have no experience with ultrasonic devices but would imagine the results would be similar to shock collars or spray collars with perhaps less discomfort. So sometimes, on some animals, the devices would work. Some animals develop phobias, because they are not sure what causes the irritating sound (the dog doesn't know if that unpleasant sound came from the child he just barked at); and because wind can cause some devices to go off, the dog can become confused, upset, and perhaps more neurotic. Sometimes dogs just get used to the pain or discomfort and ignore the sound (on shock-collared dogs I have seen burn marks where the dog ignored the pain to continue a behavior). Sometimes the underlying reason the dog is barking (not enough exercise or mental stimulation) can turn into self-mutilation or other stress relief if barking is discouraged. Ultrasonic devices can be a quick fix or they can create other issues. If possible, the reason the dog

is barking could be relieved, and alternative behaviors could be positively reinforced. More exercise (perhaps at a dog park) and mental stimulation (through Kongs and other puzzle toys) can often help cure the problem." (Bev Kingsbury, canine behaviorist with Pawsitive-Thinking.com and president of POOCH)

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

Ironically, Major League Baseball umpire Jim Joyce, who infamously blew an out call at first base to deny Detroit Tigers pitcher Armando Galarraga a perfect game, was named the best ump in an ESPN poll of 100 ballplayers. (Polled players also said not to extend instant replay to out calls, favoring the current policy of video only for disputed home runs and foul balls.) After Joyce saw replay of his blown call, he admitted his mistake and apologized publicly and personally to Galarraga, who accepted the apology graciously. Maybe Joyce and Galarraga could tour the country speaking on good sportsmanship. God knows the country, and all sports, could use more of that.

MAY THE BUS BE WITH YOU

Leave the car at home and discover how easy it is to get on the bus and go to fun destinations. SamTrans encourages bus ridership on the Peninsula and coastside with its Fun Destinations promotion, including games and prizes. Complete a survey and get a special gift. Over the next few months, look for the new SamTrans bus and tent, where you can win a \$25 Clipper transit card: July 24 at Coastside Farmers' Market in Half Moon Bay, August 7 at Kahuna Kupuna Surf Contest on Linda Mar Beach, and in late August at Serramonte Shopping Center's Back to School event in Daly City. Get more info at samtrans.com/fun. (I realize that

bus service is somewhat limited out here at the beach, but I still encourage coastsiders to use SamTrans to get around locally and commute to/from Colma and Daly City BART, where real rapid transit begins.)

WHY TRANSIT IS GREEN

The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has put the importance of helping America be energy-independent into sharp focus. Taking public transportation is one way an individual can help reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels. Public transportation saves the equivalent of 900,000 automobile fill-ups every day. Not only does public transportation increase energy independence, people who ride public transportation save on average \$9,293 a year. Info: samtrans.com, caltrain.com, bart.org, publictransportation.org

BE THE CHANGE

Want to become a more effective leader? Learn about emerging clean tech and green opportunities? Spend a year with 25-30 dynamic people sharing similar values? Now in its sixth year, Acterra's Be the Change environmental leadership program has grown a network of almost 150 graduates. The program begins on Friday, September 10, with monthly seminar days that feature topnotch lectures from local civic leaders, professors, journalists who are experts in their fields. Includes insider tours of a water treatment plant, a recycling center, LEED (green) certified buildings, and a local farm. Info: acterra.org or contact Rebecca Iverson at 650-922-1787 (cell) or email rebeccaai@acterra.org

PARATRANSIT/LIFELINE FARES GOING UP

July 1 the SamTrans paratransit fare increases 50 cents to \$3.50 and the Lifeline fare increases

25 cents to \$1.75. SamTrans provides paratransit service using Redi-Wheels on the bayside of the county and RediCoast on the coastside. Paratransit is for passengers with disabilities who cannot independently use regular SamTrans bus service all of the time. Lifeline fares are for qualified low-income riders. The SamTrans Board of Directors approved these increases last fall to help cover increasing costs. Adult, Eligible Discount, and Youth fares also were raised in February, following a series of community meetings and a public hearing. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is federal law that guarantees persons with disabilities full and equal access to the same services and accommodations available to people without disabilities. The law requires public transit operators to provide paratransit service to persons with disabilities that are comparable to fixed-route service. Paratransit fares cover about 5 percent of the cost of the service. Passenger fares cover approximately 18 percent of the cost to operate regular service.

BALLPLAYERS BOYCOTT BP

As up to 60,000 barrels of oil continue to spew into the Gulf of Mexico every day, BP plays PR games. But one group of gulf residents is not amused. The Brevard County Manatees of the Florida State League (minor-league baseball) protest by refusing to use the traditional abbreviation BP for batting practice, instead calling it "hitting rehearsal."

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