

Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury



HEAL THE ECONOMY

I urge you to contact your elected representatives in Washington (Barack Obama, Jackie Speier, Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein) and tell them we need health care reform for the sake of our ailing economy. Nothing hammers a personal budget like health care expenses (insurance premiums, medical co-pays, pharmacy drugs, etc.). If we can afford to wage two wars abroad, we should be able to provide universal health care for our own citizens. Take action now at Credoaction.com.

NUDE BEACH BAN

"Keep that towel handy. California parks officials can enforce a ban on nudity at any state beach, even in areas that have been informally designated as 'clothing optional,' a state appeals court says. The new policy will take effect immediately, although officers will decide whether to warn, cite or arrest violators, said Roy Stearns, spokesman for the state Parks and Recreation Department. 'I'm pretty sure that we will try to tread lightly to get compliance at first,' he said [July 20], three days after the appellate court in Santa Ana published its ruling as a statewide precedent. 'We're not in the business of hassling people. ... Officer discretion will play a role.' Still, he noted, the ruling overturned a 30-year-old policy that had allowed sunbathers and swimmers to bask unclothed in isolated sections of state beaches from San Diego to

Eureka. Park rangers intervened only if someone complained, and then would merely tell the nudist to don a swimsuit or leave. The ruling doesn't apply to federal parkland such as the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which includes San Francisco's North Baker Beach and several other Bay Area sites frequented by the unclad, or private land such as a portion of Muir Beach in Marin County. The National Park Service does not prohibit nudity on its land, said Chris Powell, spokeswoman for the national recreation area. But some popular clothing-optional state beaches, such as Gray Whale Cove south of Pacifica and Red Rock Beach in Mount Tamalpais State Park, will be affected. Lawyers for the Naturist Action Committee, which sued unsuccessfully to preserve a clothing-optional zone at San Onofre State Beach in Orange County, said they would appeal the ruling to the state Supreme Court and lobby the Parks and Recreation Department to exercise its long-unused authority to designate areas where nudism is allowed." (Bob Egelko, S.F. Chronicle, July 21)

OAKLAND POT TAX WINS

"Oakland residents overwhelmingly voted [July 21] to approve a first-of-its-kind tax on medical marijuana sold at the city's four cannabis dispensaries. Preliminary election results showed the measure passing with 80 percent of the vote, according to the Alam-

eda County Registrar of Voters. The dispensary tax was one of four measures in a vote-by-mail special election aimed at raising money for the cash-strapped city. All four measures won, but Measure F had the highest level of support. Scheduled to take effect on New Year's Day, the measure created a special business tax rate for the pot clubs, which now pay the same \$1.20 for every \$1,000 in gross sales applied to all retail businesses. The new rate will be \$18. Oakland's auditor estimates that based on annual sales of \$17.5 million for the four clubs, it will generate an estimated \$294,000 for city coffers in its first year.

Pot club owners, who openly sell pot over the counter under the 1996 state ballot measure that legalized medical marijuana use in California, proposed Measure F as a way to further legitimize their establishments. The measure had no formal opposition; in November 2004, a ballot initiative that required Oakland police to make arresting adults using marijuana for personal use their lowest priority passed with 63 percent of the vote. Support for Measure F was expected to be just as strong. As a result and given the mail-in nature of the election, there was little campaign activity.

Although California's 800 or so pot clubs also are expected to pay state sales tax, Oakland is the first city in the country to create a special tax on marijuana sales. Advocates of legalizing pot for recreational use hope to use Oakland's experience with Measure F to persuade California voters next year to approve a measure that would legalize and regulate marijuana like alcohol." (Lisa Leff, Associated Press, July 22)

CELL PHONES FOR SOLDIERS

From Debbie Smyser of Pacifica Military Moms: "We have a collection canister in the Pacifica Community Center (behind the recep-

tionist) that people can drop their old cell phones into. I am about ready to mail a box of phones. We are listed as a drop-off point on cellphonesforsoldiers.com."

SQUADRON BOTTLE UPDATE

From Kathy Hall: "As I reported here last week, the Squadron Bottle has been reinstated at the Top of the Mark bar at the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco. During World War II, servicemen would purchase a bottle of liquor from the bartender, sign it, and leave it behind with instructions that a shot be served free of charge to an active-duty member of the armed services. Local legend said that having a drink from the Top of the Mark while gazing at the Golden Gate Bridge would bring good luck for a safe return home to a deploying military service member.

To this day, service members still come in and ask for their free drink, but about 12 years ago, the last Squadron Bottle was finished and not replaced. The tradition has been dormant ever since. Recently, that changed when LT Mike Hall of Pacifica purchased a bottle of Wild Turkey from the manager of the Top of the Mark and left it, along with a leather-bound logbook, with the bartender. His message in the logbook offers good wishes and a free drink from 'his' bottle to the next few service members who come into the bar looking for the Squadron Bottle. Anyone is welcome to purchase a Squadron Bottle for our heroes in uniform. Here's how it works. This must be arranged through the manager of the Top of the Mark at 415-616-6916. He will select a new bottle from the bar's reserve and quote you a price. You may purchase it, sign the logbook, so a free shot can be served to an active-duty service member. It's important to understand that this is exactly like buying a round of 10 to 15 drinks

for your friends at the retail serving price, with tax and tip. Figure about \$200 per bottle. Not much, when compared to the cost of freedom."

LINCOLN HIGHWAY

Built in 1913 as the fastest, smoothest path from one coast of the United States to the other, the Lincoln Highway is the star of this Rick Sebak-hosted documentary called "A Ride Along the Lincoln Highway." As Sebak travels the highway between New York and San Francisco, he discovers much about America through conversations with historians, travelers, motel operators, restaurateurs, and others, including an 85-year-old man who had spent one whole summer as an Eagle Scout crossing the country on the Lincoln Highway. In the film, he visits a stone marking the western terminus of the highway in San Francisco's Lincoln Park. Highway 50 from Carson City to Ely, Nevada (also known as "The Loneliest Highway") is just one segment of the Lincoln Highway. This film recently aired on PBS locally, but Netflix has it on DVD and instant streaming.

SWAMI SEZ

Pacifica Resource Center helps local kids from low-income families get back-to-school supplies. Sixty bucks buys a deserving kid a book bag and all the supplies needed to fill it. Mail or drop off a check today to PRC, 1809 Palmetto, or visit pacresourcecenter.org

SITeseer

The correct URL for coastal weather and surf reports is pacificwaverider.com.

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