



Wandering & Wondering

DOG DAYS OF AUGUST

August 2010 has five Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays, all in one month. This happens, on average, every seven years. But who's counting. Just enjoy the dog days of summer. Soon enough we enter the months that end with "ber" and that can mean only one thing: BAH HUMBUG!

MOUNTAIN DEFENDERS

"I am visiting one of the hidden treasures on San Bruno Mountain, a small shell mound, evidence of the Ohlone civilization that lived in the Bay Area for more than 5,000

years — a very stable, largely peaceful human presence. It is humbling to think about the Ohlone, and to be here, listening to the birds in the canyon, seeing the oyster shells on the mound and the surrounding buckeye trees. It's a good place to think. Across the way, I see the northeast ridge, with two housing developments on either end of it, connected by a road — Mission Blue Way — with bad erosion problems above it. Both developments, and the road, have had issues due to poor construction, in less than 20

years. Now 71 more houses have been approved by all the government entities involved — city, county, and federal. With their combined "wisdom" and the developer's money, they decided that 71 more large houses on this hillside would bring no more long-term harm to the endangered species. In fact, building will be a good thing, they say, by providing more money for habitat repairs. No matter that the habitat repairs are necessary because of modern overdevelopment in the first place: fragmentation of natural ecosystems; massive infusions of invasive non-native plants; and air, water, and ground pollution. A week ago, I received news that the judge ruled against us in our lawsuit aimed at lessening the impact of the new development. I went up to the site of the future housing project yesterday for the first time since the ruling, and visualized 71 more three-car-garage homes at the site.

It was depressing. We will decide soon whether to appeal this decision, or what other legal action, if any, would have a good chance of bringing some relief to what is left of the northeast ridge. Please know, though, that we feel even more urgency as a result of the ruling to preserve what will be left of San Bruno Mountain. It may be hard to imagine our civilization stabilizing and lasting for 5,000 years, as the Ohlone did. But we can certainly imagine preserving this mountain and its native species as a portal into the natural world for many generations to come. That is our firm intention. Thanks for your support. Please join us in our work to save our wild mountain." (Ken McIntire, Executive Director, San Bruno Mountain Watch, mountainwatch.org)

GARBAGE INTO GOLD

While acknowledging Tribune letter writers' trash can complaints, overall I

am pleased with Recology of the Coast, particularly its expanded recycling and composting service, which reduces my trash can size and rate significantly, and makes me feel warm and fuzzy about being able to divert all those chicken bones, coffee grounds, and milk cartons away from landfill. Recology turns garbage into gold: All that yucky stuff breaks down and ends up in farmers' fields growing new crops. The food chain is complete.

SWAMI SEZ

"Working for the earth is not a way to get rich; it is a way to be rich." (Paul Hawken)

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