

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

FEDS SPY ON US

“The U.S. government is collecting electronic records on the travel habits of millions of Americans who fly, drive or take cruises abroad, retaining data on the persons with whom they travel or plan to stay, the personal items they carry during their journeys, and even the books that travelers have carried, according to documents obtained by a group of civil liberties advocates and statements by government officials. The personal travel records are meant to be stored for as long as 15 years, as part of the Department of Homeland Security’s effort to assess the security threat posed by all travelers entering the country. Officials say the records, which are analyzed by the department’s Automated Targeting System, help border officials distinguish potential terrorists from innocent people entering the country. But new details about the information being retained suggest that the government is monitoring the personal habits of travelers more closely than it has previously acknowledged. The

details were learned when a group of activists requested copies of official records on their own travel. Those records included a description of a book on marijuana that one of them carried and small flashlights bearing the symbol of a marijuana leaf...Zakariya Reed, a Toledo firefighter, said in an interview that he has been detained at least seven times at the Michigan border since fall 2006. Twice, he said, he was questioned by border officials about “politically charged” opinion pieces he had published in his local newspaper. The essays were critical of U.S. policy in the Middle East, he said. Once, during a secondary interview, he said, “they had them printed out on the table in front of me.” (Ellen Nakashima, Washington Post, Sept. 22)

PUT ON YOUR DANCIN’ SHOES

The Michael Foley Trio will be performing Friday, Oct. 5 at the legendary 23 Club in Brisbane (23 Visitacion Valley (415)467-7717) from 9 p.m. to midnight. This club has the best dance floor in the entire Bay Area. Since 1941, the legendary 23 Club, located in the serene town of Brisbane, has been hosting music’s best and brightest—from Hank Williams and Johnny Cash to Jerry Lee Lewis, from T. Texas Tyler to Jimmie Rivers (who recorded his “Brisbane Bop” album @ the club in the early ’60s.) This musical tradition continues today with an ongoing assortment of current, pri-

marily country, western swing, rockabilly, and honky tonk bands, with some blues, rock, jazz, and a few surprises thrown in for good measure.

PIER PARTY

Celebrate the million-dollar grant to repair the Pacifica pier. Ian Butler, Rob Wullenjohn, and Andy “Crab King” Pappas emcee at 2 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 7. Info: 650-557-9097.

TEACH KIDS ABOUT BIRDS

Like to teach kids about birds and birding? Commit to one weekday a month at schools in San Mateo County. You don’t need to be an expert. Email Rita Jennings at rjenhmb@hotmail.com. Other volunteer jobs: sequoia-audubon.org.

VOICE YOUR CHOICE

See smdailyjournal.com (Sept. 24, “Voice your Choice” by San Mateo County Board Supervisors Gibson and Hill announcing public input on Vision 2010 Plan). Forums listed in article with dates, times, and locations. (c o . s a n m a t e o . c a . u s / sharedvision2010)

SAVE WATER NOW

•Capture rainfall from your roof during the coming rainy season and use it to water your plants and wash your car. One inch of rain on the average size roof generates 600 gallons of water. A gutter diverter and a rain barrel (or a few!) can cost less than \$50, take you less than an hour to

install, and save hundreds of gallons of water a year (See gardenwatersaver.com for diverters and conversion kits, and rainbarrelsandmore.com for pre-converted barrels, some of them extremely attractive.)

•One of the biggest uses of water in your house is probably the washing machine. You can divert the rinse water from your washing machine into a rain barrel. Set up your washing machine so it drains into a laundry sink; after the main wash is done, move the hose to a rain barrel and save the water. Again, use it for landscaping or car washing.

•If you replace your washing machine with a water-saving model by the end of the year, the North Coast County Water District will give you a rebate. See conservationrebates.com for details on the program. If the model you buy is energy-saving as well, you may qualify for rebates from PG&E, too!

•Toilets use a lot of water, as well. One interesting invention is the sink that replaces the top of your toilet tank (sinkpositive.com). Every time you flush, the incoming fresh water runs through the toilet-top sink. If you wash your hands there instead of at the basin, you’re saving water. Plus, you’ll know right away if your toilet is leaking—another potential water saver.

•Replace thirsty landscaping with drought-tolerant landscaping. I’m starting to replace my lawn with

festuca rubra “Patrick’s Point,” a native grass that is very attractive (blue-green in winter, a little silvery in summer) and should require no water in a year or two. Maybe I’ll interplant a few native bulbs or wildflowers. I’m trying it on a corner to see how it looks when it fills in. Admittedly it’s a lot of work and expense, but I let my lawn die in the summer rather than water it, so it’ll certainly look better than that. (Matt Levie)

BESAN’S BAZAAR

Besan’s International Market is a treasure trove of Middle Eastern food, including fresh halal (Islamic equivalent of kosher) beef, lamb, and chicken. The meat is organic, sourced from Niman Ranch and Fulton Valley. Owner Ahmad Alkhatib, a Jordanian-American, is a friendly guide to the delicacies of the Middle East. On the evening we visited his store, he was playing some upbeat music in celebration of Ramadan, and as we browsed the aisles and brought our purchases up to the register, Ahmad broke out a box of sweet semiramis (baklava, pistachio rolls, and other Syrian treats) for us to sample. This kind of gracious hospitality is very typically Middle Eastern. Besan’s also sells a variety of spices, desserts, coffees, teas, seeds, nuts, beans, dairy products, condiments, cereals, rice, jam and jellies, fruits, vegetables, incense, staple goods, soaps, hookahs, teapots, CDs—a veritable Middle Eastern bazaar. Besan’s is at 480 San Mateo Avenue in San Bruno (two

blocks east of El Camino Real), just minutes from Pacifica. Phone 650-872-7741. Ahmad says he is opening a Middle Eastern restaurant right next door. Coming soon. (besansintlmarket.com)

SITeseer

- Bay Area art, culture, and technology: laughingsquid.com
- Video on the wing: birdcinema.com
- Stop the war machine: filibusterforpeace.org
- Live environmentally: thegreenguide.com
- Eco-chic shopping: appellandfrank.com
- Ban the bag: plasticbagfree.com
- Psychologists for Social Responsibility: psysr.org

PIRATE LAW

Pirates do not clean up, except when gold falls out of a treasure chest (also known as pirate booty call).

SWAMI SEZ

“The difference between art and vandalism is permission.”

MAYBURRITOVILLE

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