

Wandering & Wondering



John Maybury

NAYSAYERS

I hate to sound like a broken record, but the naysayers seem to have forgotten their American history lessons. This country was founded to protect free speech and free press. Every time I write this column, I enjoy those freedoms, as do you when you read this newspaper and write letters to the editor. But when naysayers harangue me or my editor about covering a particular issue or expressing a particular opinion, they dishonor the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. So, please, if you don't like my column, stop reading it. Why torture yourself? Turn the page. Exercise your right to choose. And quit whining. Nobody forces you to read my column. I don't want anybody reading my column who is not informed, educated, motivated, and entertained by it.

Naysayers not welcome here! And if you don't like American civil liberties, have I got a nice former Soviet republic for you to go to.

GONE FISHIN'

Nothing arouses a red-blooded man like being falsely accused of something. For the record, I do not hate fishing and hunting. I used to do both when I was a kid, but I found them really boring and so I took up frying ants with a magnifying glass. Seriously, I think recreational fishing and hunting are perfectly fine. I have no problem with either one. But I also pay attention when the U.S. Department of Commerce (Bush version) declares a "commercial fishing failure" because of overfishing off the California and Oregon coast, reducing the salmon population to 12% of its original size. I pay attention when bottom-fishing trawlers hook up with Environmental Defense and The Nature Conservancy to create "no trawl" zones in the ocean to allow fish stocks to rebound. (See Jon Christensen's story in the Aug. 8 New York Times, also covered at grist.org.) Finally, I urge all fishers, hunters, and everybody else to read the Los Angeles Times series called "Altered Oceans," by Kenneth R. Weiss and

Usha Lee McFarling (sign up free at latimes.com). I guarantee you will be sickened by the photos and articles about the overfishing, dead zones, algae blooms, pollution, agricultural runoff, and slime that are killing the oceans and everything in them.

CACHE COW

Geocaching is a worldwide treasure hunt where you explore nature and even take responsibility for removing unsightly litter from the landscape ("cache in, trash out"). See geocaching.com and enter your zip code for a list of caches near you; some 200 caches are hidden in or near Pacifica alone. Most caches contain a logbook and trinkets, but some are "virtual," designed to lead you to landmarks or scenic vistas. You need a handheld GPS device to find map coordinates, and some caches require you to solve a puzzle or riddle to find the cache. Now here is my geocaching friend's Big Brainstorm: Pacifica Chamber of Commerce sponsors an international competition for geocachers to visit us here in GeoCity USA and search our hills, valleys, and beaches for specially minted Pacifica geo-coins, to be redeemed at the Visitor Center for local goods and services. Our motels, restaurants, and

shops would be bulging with free-spending tourists.

GUILTY PLEASURES

It's fun to shop locally and support Pacifica. Sure beats driving over the hill, fighting the traffic, fighting for a parking space, and fighting for a place in line. But when you need a tropical treat (e.g., coffee, tea, chocolate, sugar), what choices do you have? Look for fair trade and organic labels, and buy from local merchants such as Bay Coffee, Fog City Java, Farmers Market, Food Town, and Sun Valley. Ask your merchant to buy from sustainable suppliers such as Equal Exchange (equalexchange.com, 774-776-7400) and The Rogers Family (sfbaycoffee.com).

PHONE LAW

If you call a wrong number, you never get a busy signal.

SITSEER

- Energy credit offsets: NativeEnergy.com, DriveNeutral.com, TerraPass.com
- Protest McDonald's Hummer toy giveaway: RonaldMcHummer.com
- Help Marty Anaya save our local TV station, cable Channel 26:

SavePublicAccess.com

•Explore the world at your desktop: GoogleSightseeing.com, heavens-above.com

•Fly by the seat of your pants: tinyurl.com/fanv

•Fools and Heroes, a film about two brothers, one who died in combat in World War II, the other a conscientious objector who wound up dying of alcoholism in the Tenderloin: rarebird.com (recommended by John D. Zina)

•ACLU wins lawsuit against Bush/NSA wiretapping. Join the local ACLU chapter: npenaclu@comcast.net, 650-579-1789

•Laugh Locally, Ian Butler's comedy/variety show, every Saturday night at 10 on cable Channel 26: pacificatv.org

SWAMI SEZ

"I love my country, but I think it's time to date other people." (Vacationing Tom Edminster spied this bumper sticker on a car in Portland, Ore.)

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