



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

FRESH AND UNEASY

Movie mogul and supermarket takeover whiz Ron Burkle has bought the Fresh & Easy chain of small specialty grocery stores from the U.K.'s Tesco Inc. Burkle's Yucaipa holding company apparently will not rename Fresh & Easy but will seek to expand the brand. My business source says the Pedro Point Fresh & Easy will stay open, though a number of other Northern California branches will close under the new ownership.

PARLEZ-VOUS FRANCAIS?

Group French lessons (maximum five students) by a native French-speaking teacher from 7 to 9 p.m. at Linda Mar Starbucks. Cheap rates. Call Monique at 650-738-0377 for more information. Monique says, "I do a variety of things: some grammar, discussion of French posters and train tickets, analysis of French ads versus American ones, discussion of paintings and songs, some literature, articles from French magazines (mainly from L'express), reading children's books (like storytelling), as well as spontaneous conversation."

LA NADA

New remote sensing data from NASA's Jason-2 satellite show near-normal sea-surface height conditions across the equatorial Pacific Ocean. This neutral, or "La Nada" event, has stubbornly persisted for 16 months, since spring 2012. Models suggest this pattern will continue through the spring of 2014, according to the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center. "Without an El Niño or La Niña signal present, other, less predictable, climatic factors will govern fall, winter and spring weather conditions," said climatologist Bill Patzert of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. Long-range forecasts are most successful during El Niño and La Niña episodes. The "in between" ocean state, La Nada, is the dominant condition, and is frustrating for long-range forecasters. It's like driving without a decent road map — it makes forecasting difficult. (jpl.nasa.gov)

PERFECTIONISM

It may be time to redefine our beliefs about what it means to be perfect. Striving to do well as a student, worker, parent, and citizen is an admirable goal, but as Queendom's study of 1,206 people who took the "Perfectionism Test" reveals, wanting to be perfect will just make you perfectly miserable. Perfectionists can appreciate, with a certain sense of

bitterness, the fruitless toils of Sisyphus. Struggle as they might to be perfect, they just never manage to attain this lofty goal. This isn't to say that working hard has little value. Doing your best is one thing — trying to be perfect is a whole other mess. Queendom's study results reveal that while the determined efforts of extreme or moderate perfectionists do pay off in some cases, low perfectionists appear to be happier and better adjusted overall.

PET PARADE

A team of miniature horses will be part of the fun at the 10th annual Burlingame Pet Parade, beginning at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 28, on Broadway in Burlingame. Pet owners who wish to march with their pets must report by 9:30 a.m. to the parking lot near Broadway and Chula Vista. There is no charge to participate. This family-friendly event offers free entertainment and art projects for children. Every participant receives a souvenir ribbon and fancy ribbons are awarded for the Best Pet Trick, Most Unusual Pet, Best-Dressed Pet, and Most Original Float, Group, or Wagon. The Grand Prize winner receives a special prize. Judging takes place immediately after the parade at Broadway and Capuchino. For more information, visit burlingamepetparade.com

KOWTOW

"Kowtow" sounds odd to our ears because it is a Chinese word. To kowtow is to kneel and touch the ground with the forehead as an act of worship or submission. The practice first came to the attention of the English-speaking world late in the 18th century, when Westerners began to visit China. The word is an Anglicized version of the Chinese "k tóu," which derives from "k" (knock)+ "tóu" (head). (from "A Phrase a Week" at phrases.org.uk)

SEEING AND HEARING THINGS

Scott McKellar calls Pacifica a drinking town with a fishing problem. Maybe that explains the big Ford pickup Scott saw at Linda Mar Shopping Center with the license plate MOVEOVA. Scott also says he hears foghorns late at night. Does anyone know where that might be coming from? I myself can hear Caltrain horns blow on the bayshore when it is very still here in Pacifica, a curious reminder that we don't live in a bubble over here on the coast.

SWAMI SEZ

"A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized." (Fred Allen)

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