



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

DOOM AND GLOOM

One by one, the sparkling holiday lights come down off the houses, hedges, and trees. Winter sets in with a vengeance. The newspaper, once fat with Christmas shopping come-ons, shrinks as the doorbuster sales wind down. The besieged malls and stores empty out. The awful, piped-in faux holiday music gives way to normal Muzak. People stay indoors watching contact sports on TV, thinking about signing up for Weight Watchers or gym memberships. Fishing boats out at sea light up the horizon all night long, working to bring us the seafood we crave but probably can't afford to buy anymore because Wall Street has robbed us blind. Bright stars twinkle in the clear night sky, but where is the rain? It is way too dry and cold. The creeks are so low you can see rocks and debris lying high and dry on the nearly empty streambeds. What is wrong with this picture? What has happened to our so-called happy new year? Do you need a happy pill? Sorry, afraid all I have for you is bad news and more bad news.

CITY BUDGET CRISIS

An alarming yellow postcard from the City of Pacifica hits everyone's mailbox on New Year's Eve shouting with a bold headline: "BUDGET CUTS ARE IMMINENT! AND CITY SERVICES WILL CHANGE!" In the crosshairs are our libraries, senior services, and police department. If you care about your community, make your voice heard at City Hall: Take the online survey on the city website at cityofpacifica.org/FinancingOptions or on PacificaRiptide.com. Also, attend the Open House on Wednesday, January

11 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Community Center, Crespi Drive at Highway 1. If you don't take the survey and attend the meeting, if you don't scream and holler like bloody hell, you may lose your librarian or cop. They are talking about cutting library hours and the Pacifica Resource Center budget. They are talking about shutting down our excellent, community-focused police department and contracting out law enforcement to the county sheriff – a really bad idea, a bonehead move.

FIGHT THE 1 PERCENT

As if our local fiscal crisis were not bad enough, we also face a troubling future on the national front. Four years ago we elected our first African-American president, Barack Obama, amid high expectations and high fives. Today we cling to the hope that our underdog hero from Illinois can survive another beating at the hands of the Republicans, who have hounded and blocked Obama throughout his first term, while protecting and serving the interests of the 1 percent: the wealthy, the powerful, the untouchable, unspeakable class that is ruining this country. If the rich 1 percent continues to gridlock Congress, stymie the president, and dispossess us (the 99 percent), then we are done for. We had better focus on the real enemy and not waste our energy fighting among ourselves.

TEA PARTY PROPAGANDA

In recent weeks, you have been subjected to a stream of Tea Party propaganda at the top of this page. In letters to the editor, Mark Coby, Mike Gaynes, and others have done yeoman work responding to this propaganda and its true believers, so I have not entered the fray, and do not intend to. For a little counterbalance, though, I simply ask you to read political analysts like Michael Lind and Robert Reich, who see the rise of the radical Tea Party as a dangerous precedent for the Republican Party and the nation. And when you have processed that information, I urge you to write letters to the editor of this newspaper. As I do on my

Pacifica Riptide blog, I beseech my readers who comment for posting not to attack personalities but to address issues, ideas, and facts. In other words, keep it civil, even if the other side does not. Do not stoop to their level. Whatever you think of the Tea Party and its teabaggers, try to take the high road!

SWAMI SEZ

"People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered; forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish motives; be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; succeed anyway. If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; be honest and frank anyway. What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; build anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; be happy anyway. The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; do good anyway. Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; give the world the best you have anyway. You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; it never was between you and them anyway." (attributed to Mother Teresa)

FOR THE RECORD

Last week's Wandering & Wondering column about my 20 years in Pacifica was supposed to be titled "Twentysomething," but somehow the gremlins who live in the alley behind the Tribune building got into our page proof and changed my headline to "Thing," which of course makes no sense. Oh well. FUBAR happens and I don't want to make a big "Thing" out of it. Just wanted you to know.

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