



Wandering & Wondering John Maybury

HOLIDAY TIMEWARP

Every year, time seems to speed up around the holidays. From the first Halloween pumpkins to the dead Christmas trees in January's gutters, the days speed by. All that anticipation of trick-or-treating, Thanksgiving turkey, family reunions, Christmas and Hannukah presents, rosy cheeks, and New Year's celebrations finally gives way to the grand anticlimax, the big letdown, the air going out of the balloon. No wonder some people get depressed over the holidays. Expectations of jolly spirits and good cheer are so high that you feel disappointed if you don't burst with happiness, and once the parties and red-letter days are over, things get really grim. So here comes Santa Mayburrito with a big picker-upper for those of you who have crashed and burned: Be like those stubborn holdouts I see around town who keep their Christmas lights and decorations on at night. Cheer up. Don't go to the dark side. Keep the lights on until Super Bowl Sunday. And I will keep my HO gauge trains running full blast. PG&E thanks you!

FRESH & EASY GOES STALE

According to business columnist Andrew S. Ross (San Francisco Chronicle, January 8), Walmart and Grocery Outlet are two possible contenders for the Fresh & Easy grocery stores, including the one

here on Pedro Point. With our "shop local" mantra, I have to say that our homegrown markets (Oceana, Farmer's, Sun Valley) suit me just fine, so I am not out there beating the drum for yet another corporate chain to come into Pacifica. I would much rather see a local business take over that space in Pedro Point. In my dreams, Mister Lee's Chinese Food would return! Please email me your food for thought.

WINTERING WATERFOWL

Up at Gray Lodge (and two federal bird refuges nearby), the flooded rice paddies teem with migrating geese and ducks. The quacking and honking birds depart soon for points south, so make the pilgrimage to the Sacramento Valley this month to enjoy this natural spectacle. Even beyond January, you will see resident waterfowl, hawks, herons, egrets, owls, plus deer, coyote, and giant jackrabbits as big as jackalopes. Hiking trails and drive-through routes are available, plus protected blinds for close-up birdwatching. Avoid shooting days (Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday) if you dislike the sound of duck hunters' shotguns in the (safe) distance. Chronicle outdoorsman Tom Stienstra says the birds have wised up and now avoid the hunters, but judging by the lineup for shooting permits, there are still quite a few unlucky ducks. Though I prefer the peace and quiet of non-shooting days, I recognize that duck hunters' fees help pay for bird refuges. Hunting groups like Ducks Unlimited have made it possible for birdwatchers like me to enjoy wildlife. The massive Sutter Buttes are the landmark to orient you whichever bird refuge you visit. So set your GPS for Colusa, and enjoy the adventure. If you want a good place to stay overnight, I recommend River Valley Lodge in Colusa, with its brand-new rooms. On the

way up I-5, I saw an electronic billboard advertising a \$49 special, but normal rates start at \$89. Connected to the hotel is Colusa Casino. Hotel guests have free access to a wonderful outdoor, heated swimming pool at the Cachil Dehe Wintun tribe's adjacent Wellness Center. A few miles away in Williams is Louis Cairo's famous old Italian restaurant, featuring Louis' special garlic bread.

INNER EDIROT

A fellow editor recommends Carol Fisher Saller's book "Moonlight Blogger" and her blog "The Subversive Copy Editor." See if you can find her book at Florey's. The blog is you-know-where.

NAME THAT TUNE

One of Scott McKellar's favorite songs is Janis Joplin's "Me and Bobby McGee." Scott invites Wandering & Wondering readers to submit their favorites. My email address is at the end of the column.

SWAMI SEZ

"I spent my youth worrying about corporate power. Now I worry about corporate incompetence."
(John Kenneth Galbraith)

BLOCK THAT CLICHÉ

"Kick the bucket." Apparently, this figure of speech refers to either execution or suicide by hanging. It just depends on who is kicking the bucket: the executioner or the suicide. (Source: Gregg Levoy)

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