



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

ASH'S VALLEMAR STATION

Did you know that Ash's Vallemar Station is more than just a Pacifica restaurant? Besides the delicious steaks, seafood, and other specialties of the house, Ash's is a veritable museum of Ocean Shore Railroad lore in pictures and words. In fact, Ash's IS the old Vallemar depot, where tourists, fisherfolks, and other city dwellers used to alight from the train and go enjoy the pleasures of Rockaway Beach and the Pacific Ocean. So next time you get a yearning for some local history along with your calamari or top sirloin, make your next stop Ash's Vallemar Station. All aboard!

VOTE FOR LYNN ADAMS

Pacifica Beach Coalition President Lynn Adams was selected as one of three finalists for the Cox Conserves Heroes Award (cast your vote at coxconservesheroes.com). Since Lynn started leading Pacifica's Earth Day and Coastal Cleanup Days in 2005, more than 43,000 volunteers have collected some 130,000 pounds of trash, recyclables, and greenwaste during these citywide events. She works all year long for cleaner beaches and streets, and inspires thousands each year to pick up litter and engage in actions to help the ocean and environment. The winner of this contest (highest number of votes), which runs through September 26, wins a \$10,000 grand prize for the charity of his or her choice. Lynn's chosen charity, Pacifica Beach Coalition, will use the funds for Earth Day and plants for Linda Mar Beach habitat restoration.

PULL UP YOUR PANTS, BOYS

Sharp-eyed Pierre Messerli could not bear to bare his soul to the Chronicle about this dumb spellchecker error on sfgate.com, so he sent it to The Goofbuster (me) instead: "The popular trend to wear trousers in a manner that allows you to bear your backside is under attack in a number of U.S. cities that want to ban the practice in the interest of common decency."

RESCUING A LOST DOG

Author and professional dog behaviorist Bev Kingsbury of POOCH shares these tips: Inform animal control and all local veterinary clinics of the missing dog and keep checking back (in case someone catches and turns in the dog). If you see the dog, don't run after him, don't look at him straight on (always hold your body at an angle), toss treats away from your body at a great distance or near the dog, and continue to toss treats (if he begins to eat them) slightly closer to you (after some minutes you may have him eating out of your hand). Then try to get a slip-knot type of leash (like a lasso) around his neck rather than clipping a leash onto him. If the dog is more afraid of humans but okay with other dogs, have another dog with you when you attempt to capture him. Sometimes sitting quietly (with another dog lying down near you), near where he was sighted, he may come out of hiding and see what's going on. If the dog sees you, don't step toward him or call his name. Rather, turn around, bend down, put your face close to the ground, and make very weird noises to arouse his curiosity. Then start tossing treats toward the dog, but try to keep your face and body from directly facing him.

FROM MY IN-BOX

"Kudos to your contributor Danny Estrella. He not only knows that he lives in the Pedro Point District but also calls the place where I live San Pedro Valley. I've found that most people who live in San Pedro Valley mistakenly think that they live in Linda Mar." (Art Eggen)

TOUGH LOVE

Most parents agree that setting boundaries and rules is important, but there is a fine line between firmness and strictness. A Queen.com study of 1,234 parents who took a Parenting Style Test shows that healthy parent-child relationships and well-adjusted children require a different view of "tough love." The basic lesson remains the same: The best parenting comes from a healthy balance of love, responsiveness, fairness, and firmness.

SWAMI SEZ

"There is no past or future. Using tenses to divide time is like making chalk marks on water." (Janet Frame wrote this. She was a patient at New Zealand's Seacliff Lunatic Asylum when her first book, "The Lagoon and Other Stories," was published. Its success led to cancellation of a scheduled lobotomy. Frame went on to have a lasting literary career. Source: GoodReads.com.)

BEACH PARKING PROTEST

"Like many other seniors, we have a Golden Bear state park parking pass. This gives us free parking at all the state parks during the designated dates. Not known to us was that (according to the lady on the phone at the City of Pacifica), Linda Mar Beach is no longer a state beach but a city beach! (Still posted as a state beach!) Consequently, your state parking permit is not valid there: \$38 ticket. Want to go to the Senior Center for lunch or the Wednesday rummage sale? Tough. Park in the street. Many seniors are unaware of the trap this represents, set by their own city! Local parking permit: \$50 and good for only one vehicle, since it must be affixed to the windshield. Expensive and unwieldy! Are any adjustments in the works for this misguided, unfair program?" (Charles Parker)

FOOD SAFETY: DON'T WASH RAW CHICKEN

Washing raw chicken increases the chance of spreading food-borne pathogens (salmonella, campylobacter) on the uncooked bird all over the kitchen, according to food safety experts. Some studies suggest that bacteria can fly several feet away from where the meat is rinsed. So cook raw chicken without rinsing, and wash your hands, utensils, and countertops after preparation. (from an NPR story forwarded by Judith Tugendreich)

FOOD SAFETY: CONTAMINATED SPICES

Salmonella in ordinary kitchen spices may cause gastric distress. The USDA says that imported spices, especially those from India and Mexico, are the apparent culprits (coriander, oregano, basil, cumin, curry powder, sesame seeds, even black pepper). Contaminated spices added to food while cooking are generally safe because high temperatures kill the bacteria. The problem occurs when adding spices to food at the table after cooking. (Source: New York Times)

COASTSIDE HOPE

Coastside Hope, which serves people north and south of Devil's Slide, seeks volunteers to help deliver community services. Call 650-726-9071, see coastsidehope.org, or visit 99 Avenue Alhambra in El Granada.

CLASSICAL CHINESE DANCE

Fei Tian Academy of the Arts California announces the inaugural California Classical Chinese Dance Competition. Its goal is to foster cultural exchange and promote the beauty and goodness of traditional Chinese dance. It also provides dancers with an opportunity to demonstrate their achievements and contribute to their community while encouraging them to preserve their ancient Chinese heritage. Competitors are eligible for cash prizes and recognition. To help participants succeed, Fei Tian California is making available its team of expert instructors, who can help participants choreograph their pieces to both showcase their strengths and follow competition guidelines. They also can help students who need handmade costumes to fit their pieces. The competition is on November 2 at Skyline College Theater, 3300 College Drive, San Bruno. Registration is now open and tickets are on sale. Registration and information: feitiancalifornia.org or 415-431-3161.

TOUGH TALK

"They're a bunch of double-dealing sons of bitches." (Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, quoted in an S.F. Chronicle story on the U.S. Postal Service effort to close Berkeley's iconic post office)

INNER EDIROT

"300 Rock Concerts Are Bound to Effect Your Hearing" (headline on full-page ad in the S.F. Chronicle for the American Hearing Aid Center of Menlo Park, which apparently does not know the difference between "effect" and "affect")

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