



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

COASTAL & BAYSIDE CLEANUPS

In Pacifica, our focus on September 21 Coastal Cleanup Day is our five great beaches. But over on the bay side of the Peninsula, cities like South San Francisco sponsor cleanups along the bayshore and creeks that feed into the bay. Especially if you bike or hike along the bayfront trail between SFO and Oyster Point, please join the work crews along Colma Creek and San Francisco Bay from 9 a.m. to noon on September 21. Get more info on the events: flowstobay.org

OPEN CHECKBOOK

San Mateo County Controller Bob Adler announces the launch of the county's free public database detailing checks written by county departments and agencies for the first month of the county's fiscal year (July 2013). From now on, each month's new checks will be added to the site: (data.smcgov.org/checkbook).

SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN WISH LIST

Here is a wish list of tools and materials that we need for projects ranging from building planter boxes for schools to increasing office efficiency. Sometimes what you no longer need is just what we need. Please look at the following list, and see if you can provide any of these items. Then call 415-467-6631 or email sanbruno@mountainwatch.org. We would be happy to acknowledge your donation as an in-kind gift: folding tables, plastic storage containers (30 gallon preferred), direct current outdoor lighting, wheelbarrow, exterior pack frames with padded shoulder straps and hip belts (need for hauling native plants up to off-trail locations), office supplies (Post-Its, business envelopes, ballpoint pens), Mac laptop that can run OS 10.5 (Leopard) or higher, tools (rechargeable drill, drill bits, wrenches [box, open end, socket sets; non-metric], planter box and nursery materials (lumber 2x4, 2x6, 4x4, at least 30" in length; exterior plywood 3/8" to 3/4", pieces at least 2'x4'), bolts (machine, carriage, or lag, 3-5 1/2"), galvanized fine-mesh chicken wire or hardware cloth for gopher-proofing.

COMMUNITY CENTER PARKING

Marv Morganti writes: "If you are a member of Seniors In Action at the Community Center, you receive a placard for parking in the western lot. But the card is valid only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you attend a class or a meeting at the center in the evening, it's gonna cost ya \$3. Some peeps are upset about dat AND apparently if you use a DMV Handicap placard, it not only aids you to find a close parking spot BUT permits you to park WITHOUT feeding a meter. Don't know how true that is (as I don't need a Handicap sticker yet), but have asked several users, who say, "I never pay to park." But the city is NOT following that practice and is charging peeps with those placards. So I dunno. Wonder what the law is on this."

BLOWING THE WHISTLE

If the number of phrases that make direct reference to whistles is anything to go by, whistling looms large in the consciousness of the English-speaking peoples. Examples: as clean as a whistle, not just whistling Dixie, wet your whistle, wolf whistle. "Whistle blowers" are people who attempt to

draw their superiors' attention to something they believe to be wrong and, if they fail in that attempt and if they feel strongly enough about the matter, go public. Such folk may have been around for a long time, but it is only recently that they have been given a name. The first profession to be labeled as "whistle blowers" were the U.S. police, who blew whistles to attract attention to wrongdoing. The association with the blowing of whistles and the drawing of attention to a misdemeanor has now been extended into figurative use. The new use of the expression began in the 1960s. Search engines seem to have caught on to this mutation of phrases into words very quickly. A Google image search for "whistle blower" brings up pictures of people blowing whistles. A search for "whistleblower" retrieves pictures of Bradley (a.k.a. Chelsea) Manning. (Adapted from phrases.org.uk)

FIGHTING DIRTY

Fighting with a partner is one thing. Fighting dirty is another. Queendom.com's study of 27,643 people who took the "Arguing Style Test" reveals that couples who take a negative approach to fighting, both in attitude and technique, are more likely to experience a breakup as a result. Conflict, arguing, fighting. They are words so intertwined with negativity that they can't be weaved apart. See a couple fighting in public and people will stare. Hear neighbors arguing through an open window and the surrounding houses suddenly get suspiciously quiet as they listen in. But everyone does it - so why is it a problem? Everyone agrees that arguing can be healthy in a relationship (at least to some degree), but there is one caveat: How a couple fights - each individual's "arguing style" - can mean the difference between healthy conflict resolution and an all-out, spiteful war of words. Dirty fighters also have a more negative attitude toward conflict itself, indicating that they are more likely to believe that nothing can be gained or learned from fighting with their partner. So what are the ground rules for constructive fighting? Here are some tips from Queendom: Don't attack your partner's character. Figure out what the fight is really about and focus on it. Try to understand how your partner sees the situation. Admit your mistakes. Take a timeout if things get too heated. Accept that some issues just can't be resolved in one argument.

CORRECTION

The correct URL to vote for Lynn Adams of Pacifica Beach Coalition as a Cox Conserves Hero is: coxconservesheroes.com

SWAMI SEZ

"The words 'consent of the governed' have become an empty phrase. Our textbooks on political science and economics are obsolete. Our nation has been hijacked by oligarchs, corporations, and a narrow, selfish, political, and economic elite, a small and privileged group that governs, and often steals, on behalf of moneyed interests. This elite, in the name of patriotism and democracy, in the name of all the values that were once part of the American system and defined the Protestant work ethic, has systematically destroyed our manufacturing sector, looted the treasury, corrupted our democracy, and trashed the financial system. During this plundering we remained passive, mesmerized by the enticing shadows on the wall, assured our tickets to success, prosperity, and happiness were waiting around the corner." (Chris Hedges, "Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle")

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