



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

SAVE SAN PEDRO CREEK

Rich Zipkin belongs to an environmental group called Protectors of San Pedro Creek that is trying to stop developers from constructing the multi-building, multilevel Oddstad Assisted Living Center at 721 Oddstad Boulevard in Pacifica. He says: "We are not against assisted living as such. It is just that this is the WRONG location. They want to build this where many semi-endangered and endangered species live: steelhead salmon, red-legged frogs, garter snakes, deer, bats, raptors, and more. Also, the construction period (up to two years) would severely and negatively impact the mating habits/cycles of these creatures, quite probably upsetting or curtailing this activity, causing their extinction. If this project were allowed, the added air, land, and water pollution would be truly devastating, not only to the aforementioned wildlife but also to residents of the area." See the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) and final draft environmental report (EIR), both at Sanchez Library, Planning Commission office (1800 Francisco Boulevard), and online at the city website (cityofpacifica.org). Contact Kathryn Farbstein, assistant planner, at 650-738-7341. Pacifica Planning Commission holds a pub-

lic hearing Monday, November 21 at 7 p.m., City Council Chambers, 2212 Beach Boulevard, to discuss this proposed project in depth.

MENTORING PHOTOGRAPHERS

"I teach because I believe I can make a difference for people. It is a deep ethic, with three decades of photography and teaching experience, combined with some great feedback from my students," says Pacifica photographer Steve Johnson. "We are pleased to announce the inauguration of our new Mentor Program, giving students around the globe a chance to work directly with me on their photographic development, in person or virtually. Our Mentor Program is an exciting formalization of work we have been doing with photographers for years. It has been one of the core interactions that has proved extremely valuable to students. We are offering prepaid packages of hours where individuals can book mutually agreeable times at our studio, in the field or online virtually to work with me one on one. Bigger discounts come with more time prepaid." Email info@sjphoto.com or call 650-355-7507 for details.

HOMELESS HEROES

San Francisco Chronicle columnist Leah Garchik recently wrote about a homeless man in San Francisco who saw a guy park his motor scooter and walk away, leaving the keys in the ignition. The homeless man took the keys out and guarded the scooter. When the worried-looking owner returned, the homeless man handed over the keys. The grateful guy emptied his wallet, giving the homeless man every cent he had: \$17. A few days later, the Chronicle reported that a homeless man in Oakland (who had read in the paper about St. Mary's stolen church bell) spotted the bell under a tarp by the freeway and phoned police. How cool is that! Let's hear it for homeless heroes, and recovering church bells, and reading print newspapers, and St. Mary's rewarding the homeless man who found the bell.

DERAIL HSRA

The High-Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) has been a great disappointment. Instead of delivering a fundable plan with private industry support, clear benefits and low risk, the agency intends to break its promises to taxpayers and gamble \$98 billion on a political pork barrel no private investors will touch...The "new and improved" business plan still fails to answer legislative critics who have been asking the authority for three years how it would find private funds for an operable segment. Even more seriously, there is a threat that the authority will try to press ahead with construction of a vastly overpriced line

with the public hearing all the risk. A successful California plan would efficiently connect areas of high population while avoiding high-speed running through populated areas. The agency has failed to achieve either of these goals and stirs up trouble wherever it goes... Its insensitivity to locals managed to unite venture capitalists on the San Francisco Peninsula, Latinos in Los Angeles and Kern counties, farmers in the Central Valley and anti-tax activists in opposition. The High-Speed Rail Authority has spent more than \$800 million of public funding over the past 14 years and hasn't produced a single mile of service or lined up a single private investor. The agency has set back the cause of high-speed rail nationally, and made itself a poster child for government incompetence. Gov. Jerry Brown's unquestioning support of the destructive agency, upon release of its new plan, may be the final fatal blow to the controversial project. The \$98 billion price tag for the project ballooned 300 percent from the \$32 billion promised voters in 2008, and reveals that the governor's new team never reined in the engineers...The California Rail Foundation (is) convinced that the High-Speed Rail Authority is incapable of delivering a viable project. The time has come to shut down this agency and seek competitive proposals from private industry. Instead of letting bureaucrats design a fantasy project based on a wish for \$98 billion, a better formula, one followed by Texas and Florida, is to ask successful high-speed rail operat-

ing companies to demonstrate what could be built, matching the existing \$12 billion of public funding with private capital. Railroad operating companies are much more capable than public agencies of convincing banks and investors that their projects are financially sound. The project might not be so vast as what is currently proposed, but it is far likelier to actually provide service within our lifetimes. (excerpted from Richard Tolmach's op-ed, Sacramento Bee, November 5, sacbee.com)

ALANDROME

As reported in the Pacifica Tribune, Ian Butler recently found a giant mammoth tooth near the Pacifica-Daly City border. In light of this, a palindrome-loving store clerk told Ian's wife Avril that her husband should use Tom's of Maine toothpaste to keep the tooth clean: "Mammoth tooth? Tom, m'am." (Alan Wald)

SWAMI SEZ

"Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy." (Benjamin Franklin)

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