



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

Blue state of mind

After the smoke cleared and the mirrors were put away from last week's elections, we were left with a U.S. map clearly fractured along party lines. The two coasts and the Great Lakes were solid blue (plus good old New Mexico and Colorado, with their chili peppers and pot plants), while most of the heart of the country bled red. Makes me glad to live here in a blue state, in my blue state of mind. But now we have to get beyond the coloring book mind-set and get to work on solving mutual concerns about climate change, the fiscal crisis and gridlock in Washington.

Hey you, get off of my cloud

My old limo-driving partner Scott McKellar enjoys the natural peace and quiet around his Pacifica hillside home, but lately he has been getting buzzed (and ticked off) by low flying planes out of SFO. So he was excited to see others complaining about this problem in recent letters to the editor of the Tribune. To thank the Tribune, Scott called up and renewed his subscription for home delivery. (Warning: The following is a shameless self-promotion.) Scott also told the newspaper's circulation guy who took his order on the phone: "I can't get enough of John Maybury." Awww...

The Highwayman

Paul Slavin, who occasionally writes think pieces for

this page, has been giving some thought to the highway widening debate. He wonders why the city (particularly the police) could not assume responsibility for timing the traffic lights between Fassler and Reina del Mar to alleviate the bottlenecks and congestion at both intersections, and thus avoid the costly, time-consuming, and disruptive Caltrans plan to widen Highway 1. The Highwayman concurs with Paul. See the light, baby!

Block that cliché

"Beat around the bush." Easy peasy, says Gregg Levoy. This refers to the centuries-old practice of hunters hiring "beaters" to flush game birds out of the bushes.

Now that's what I call globalization

I really enjoyed watching the PBS broadcast of the Americana Music Festival from Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. Bonnie Raitt was in fine form, along with a whole slew of guitar-pickin' country musicians. And sponsoring the show was the Japanese car maker Nissan.

Holiday train returns to the Peninsula

Santa and his elves are coming Dec. 1 and 2 when the Caltrain Holiday Train returns to the Peninsula. The glittering show train is back after a two-year hiatus, thanks to the generous support of Silicon Valley Community Foundation. Glowing with more than 60,000 lights and holiday decorations, the train, which begins at the San Francisco Caltrain station, will stop at eight train stations over the two nights, collecting toys for the area's needy children. Free entertainment will be

provided at each of the station stops prior to the train's arrival. During each 20-minute stop, people can enjoy holiday music led by a traditional Salvation Army brass band and on-board carolers. Santa, Mrs. Claus, Frosty and the whole gang will get off the train to greet children and pose for pictures. Members of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and representatives from the Salvation Army will be on hand to collect donations of new, unwrapped toys for local children who might otherwise go without this holiday season. The train starts both days at the San Francisco Caltrain station with musical entertainment at 4:30 p.m. and a chance to meet Santa before heading down the Peninsula. The same show will be repeated at four station stops each day. Santa's helpers can get into the holiday spirit by donating or becoming sponsors. Info: holiday-train.org

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Swami Sez

"A mine is a hole in the ground owned by a liar." (Mark Twain)

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