



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

BAGGIE BUST

Next time you run into homeboy Scott McKellar around town, ask him about the time a human resources drama queen roused him for having a baggie full of a leafy green substance on him at work. After detaining, questioning, and scaring the bejesus out of Scott, the officious official finally determined that the baggie contained only green tea, and she set Scott free. He says that two weeks later she was fired. Sweet!

DIRTY DOZEN

You should spend the extra money and effort to find organic versions of these 12 food items, because the conventional versions are full of pesticides: peaches, apples, bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, kale, lettuce, grapes (imported), carrots, pears. Good news! The following foods are either not heavily sprayed, or they have thick skins, or their skins are removed before eating, so you don't need to worry about paying extra for organic versions of these: onions, avocados, sweet corn (frozen), pineapples, mangoes, asparagus, sweet peas (frozen), kiwis, cabbage, eggplant, papayas, watermelon. (foodnews.org, sierraclub.org)

TALL SHIPS

Two tall ships are visiting the Port of Redwood City, and welcome visitors for tours and entertaining sailing programs through March 7. The brig Lady Washington and topsail ketch Hawaiian Chieftain are berthed near the port offices on Seaport Boulevard. Three-hour Battle Sails

feature re-creations of typical 18th-century naval skirmishes between two ships. Both vessels fire real cannons charged with real gunpowder, but no cannon balls. Guests are encouraged to verbally taunt their adversaries and can take the helm of a real tall ship, conditions permitting. Three-hour Adventure Sails include a chance to raise a sail, sing a sea shanty, and hear maritime stories. Tickets are available online at www.historicalseaport.org or call 800-200-5239. Lady Washington and Hawaiian Chieftain also host a number of K-12 school groups. Space is available for school programs. Title I schools are eligible for large discounts on program pricing. For information, contact Roxie Underwood, education programs manager, at 800-200-5239 or runderwood@historicalseaport.org. Launched in 1989, Lady Washington has appeared in several Hollywood films, including *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*. Hawaiian Chieftain, launched in 1988, is a steel-hulled interpretation of a typical coastal trader of the early 19th century.

ALANDROME: TASER TANTRUM

In the aftermath of a park ranger firing a Taser at a Montara dog walker, GGNRA says it will issue new guidelines for when a Taser may be used. Pacifica palindrome lovers think they have the perfect title for the new manual: "Fires a Taser, if...." (Alan Wald)

CHOCOLATE: MORE GOOD NEWS

The news about chocolate keeps getting sweeter. Several large-scale reviews this past year offer the best evidence yet that chocolate is good for your heart. In one, in the British journal *BMJ*, researchers analyzed data from seven observational studies, which included more than 100,000 people. Those who ate the most chocolate had a 37 percent lower risk of heart disease, compared to those eating the least. They were also 29 percent less likely to have a stroke. In a second review, in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Harvard researchers looked at 10 clinical studies, with

a total of 320 people. Consuming dark chocolate/cocoa products for 2 to 12 weeks modestly lowered cholesterol. And in a third review of clinical trials, also from Harvard, cocoa products had a small but significant blood-pressure-lowering effect. Chocolate's health benefits are largely attributed to polyphenol compounds, called flavonoids, which have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-clotting properties. In particular, flavonoids increase production of nitric oxide, which helps relax and dilate blood vessels, and this may help lower blood pressure and have other cardiovascular effects. But even if chocolate is rich in flavonoids, think of it as a treat, not a health food. The chocolate confections that Americans love most are loaded with sugar, fat, and calories (about 235 in a 1.5-ounce bar). Choose the darkest chocolate you like (dark chocolate has more flavonoids and less sugar than milk chocolate) and eat it in place of other snacks or desserts that are high in calories and saturated fat. (UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, February 14, 2012)

SITSEER

- Man goes for a bike ride with 16 of his best friends: Search YouTube.com for this amazing video called "freerunning sleddogs."
- Slide show of silly stuff: worldwidefred.com

SWAMI SEZ

Drinking tart cherry juice can help prevent gout attacks, relieve muscle soreness after exercise, and possibly help with arthritis pain because of its natural anti-inflammatory properties. Unlike its sweeter cousins (Bing cherries and black cherries), tart cherries are bright red and higher in antioxidants. (Home Health Remedies, AARP Bulletin)

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