



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

Phooey on Fact-Checkers

“Romney pollster Neil Newhouse, responding to media objections to a Romney campaign ad that falsely claimed the president had eliminated work and job training requirements for welfare beneficiaries, declared: ‘We’re not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact-checkers.’” (from a September 1 San Francisco Chronicle editorial “Do the Facts Matter?”)

Tom’s Tall Tales

For the ultimate in armchair travel around the wilds of California, San Francisco Chronicle outdoors columnist Tom Stienstra always spins good yarns about hunting, fishing, wildlife, hiking, camping, nature, and environment. Here are a few highlights gleaned from his August 26 column: Two men in Mammoth Lakes put a wild bear into a trance on their front lawn by playing didgeridoos on the deck of their home. At a Mono County garbage dump, a hungry bear snatched a full trash bag out of a man’s hand. In Yosemite, a record 17 bears have been hit by drivers, most of whom were speeding or driving distracted (rangers say they are cracking down on such law violators). Senate Bill 1221 to ban the use of dogs for hunting bears and bobcats is winding its way through the Sacramento legislative maze on its way to the governor’s desk for signing. Military veterans who are honorably discharged and have a service-oriented disability of 50 percent or more can get a state fishing license for \$7.05. In 2012, bald eagles have been sighted at Napa-Sonoma Marsh Wildlife Area and Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (editor’s note: and as previously reported, at Crystal Springs watershed and Chabot Lake wilderness area). A new handheld device called SunMate (\$10) measures ultraviolet (UV) levels and sunburn risk. A great white shark reportedly took a bite out of a kayak angler’s watercraft in Monterey Bay off Capitola.

Get Healthy

San Mateo County Get Healthy Collaborative is working to inform organizations and community leaders about ways our communities can “Get Healthy.” As a result of Get Healthy’s efforts over the past eight years, San Mateo County’s obesity rates declined this past year by 5.6 percent, making it one of only three Bay Area counties where obesity rates decreased. Get Healthy’s redesigned

website (gethealthysmc.org) provides a one-stop shop where people can share information, discover creative ways to stay active, and become informed on upcoming events, workshops, and available funding to support local programs. Starting as a task force to prevent childhood obesity, Get Healthy has grown into a successful collaboration of cities, community leaders, and organizations across the county. Because wellness begins where people live, learn, work, and play, Get Healthy works to develop strategies that can reduce and prevent obesity-related health conditions associated with unhealthy eating and physical inactivity. Get Healthy places a special focus on the areas in the county with the fewest opportunities and options for physical activity and healthy food. The Get Healthy website is all about what is happening locally, such as bike lanes, organizations with wellness policies, reducing sugary-drink consumption, and Safe Routes to School.

Child Car Seat Safety

Assemblyman Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, predicts that the child car seat safety bill he introduced and Governor Jerry Brown signed August 27 will save lives. Hill has hosted several child car seat safety check events in his district and observed firsthand that an alarming number of seats are not installed properly. “Ninety percent of parents and caregivers believe they have installed child safety seats correctly when, in fact, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research show that seven out of 10 children are improperly restrained, putting them at risk for serious injury or death when they are in a car crash,” Hill said. “This bill will save lives.” Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death of children 3 to 14 years of age. Many of these deaths can be prevented through the proper use of child safety seats. According to the NHTSA, child safety seats can reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers, 1 to 4 years of age. Current law requires every public or private hospital, clinic, or birthing center, at the time of the discharge of a child, to provide and discuss information on the current law requiring child passenger restraint systems to the parents or the person to whom the child is released. AB 1452, which takes effect January 1, 2013, adds a requirement that parents be notified about where, and at no cost, the child passenger restraint system can be inspected and proper installation instruction can be given. Hill **introduce** similar legislation (AB 2667) that was approved in 2010 by the Legislature but vetoed by then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who maintained that parents should take responsibility for installation and use of child safety seats. Some fire stations and California Highway **offices** are among the agencies that provide free car safety inspections. To find the closest agency that conducts car seat safety checks, visit safekids.org and then click

“In Your Area.”

Free Library E-Books

San Mateo County Library (SMCL), which includes Pacifica’s two public libraries (Sharp Park and Sanchez), has added a new digital platform for e-books and more than 1,500 titles to its collection. Axis360 is a new digital media service that offers interactive e-books enhanced by color, video, and audio. Library users can access a growing collection of bestsellers, new releases, and classic titles, as well as heavily illustrated e-books such as children’s storybooks, cookbooks, and craft books. Readers with a San Mateo County Library card can take advantage of the new e-book service 24/7 when they visit the library’s website from a computer or mobile device. The cloud-based delivery system greatly simplifies the process of downloading what patrons want to read onto the devices they prefer to use, including Apple, Android, and Windows tablets and smartphones. At the end of the lending period, titles automatically expire and are returned to the digital collection – eliminating late fees. Axis360 is the most accessible e-book platform available, allowing limited-sight patrons guided reading as well as text-to-voice options for all titles. To check out and download e-books and more, visit smcl.org/axis360.

Siteseer: Back to School

Visit parade.com/homework for a list of apps to help organize school assignments, create flash cards, and the new feature called History: Maps of the World, which connects historical events to their geographic locations. These apps are free, and they work on iPhone and iPad.

Block That Cliché

Acid test: from the use of nitric acid to test gold for impurities; inferior metals decompose, gold does not. (Gregg Levoy)

How’s That Again?

“Fast-paced direct mail firm seeks full-time proofreader on a part-time basis. On-site hours are 9-5 during September and October, with weekend work in October a possibility. Must have prior proofing experience, attention to detail, and ability to not make mistakes.” (Craig’s List want ad)

Swami Sez

“Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.” (Doug Larson)

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