

HEARTWARMING

Afghan translator Qismat Amin, who risked his life helping American troops in the fight against the Taliban, finally escaped from Afghanistan after three years in hiding and tangled in bureaucratic red tape. He received a hero's welcome at SFO last week, reuniting with his old comrade-in-arms, former Army Ranger Captain Matt Ball. With the help of fellow Stanford Law School students, Ball had worked tirelessly to get Amin a visa to come to safety in the United States. (Source: Jill Tucker, San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 9)

RIDING THE RAILS

My Amtrak train trip home from back east was uneventful except for a snow delay in Donner Pass. The incredible scenery included a daylight traverse of the Colorado River canyon through the Rocky Mountains. The river ran rapid and full of ducks and kayakers. Fishing eagles perched patiently in cottonwood trees on the riverbank. Amazingly, all across the country, a number of homes alongside the railroad tracks had kept their Christmas lights and decorations on in February. It seems to go well with the cold temperatures and snow on the ground. But the best special effect is moonlight on snow. I have learned to enjoy these sights at night by turning off all

the lights in my compartment and watching out the window until my eyes close.

SPEIER TWEETS ON TRUMP

Coastside Congresswoman Jackie Speier has joined the Trump Twitterverse with her own weekly review of what she calls the president's "tumultuous and trivial antics." Follow her at #TuesdayTrumpDump.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Here's a new book for all of us nature lovers: "The Nature Fix" by Florence Williams reviews recent research on the physical and mental health benefits of playing outside. Turns out it's not just the exercise that's good for us: Nature's sights, sounds, and smells help our brains and our bodies get right with the world. Anxiety, depression, indigestion, aches and pains – all can fade away on a walk in the woods or a dive in an ocean wave. So strap it on and head out the door, lazybones! You'll thank me later. (Danny Heitman reviewed this book in the Wall Street Journal, Feb. 11.)

THREE-POINTER

Golden State Warriors straight shooter Steph Curry fired one of his famous three-point shots on the court of public opinion with a comment about his sneakers

sponsor Under Armour. UA CEO Kevin Plank had said President Donald Trump's pro-business stance "is a real asset to our country." Curry told a Bay Area News Group interviewer, "I agree with that description if you remove the 'et' from asset." (Source: Scott Ostler, San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 9)

MYANMAR MONK'S METH

A Buddhist monk in Myanmar was arrested for possession of 400,000 methamphetamine pills in his car and 4.2 million of the pills in his monastery. Police also discovered a grenade and ammunition at the monastery. (Source: News of the Day from Around the World, Chronicle News Services)

SWAMI SEZ

As a guest on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," Billy Joel said that when Elton John asked him why he didn't write more songs, Billy asked Elton why he didn't write fewer.

MAYBURRITOVILLE

- Email: Mayburrito@Goofbuster.com
- Blog: PacificaRiptide.com
- Copy Editor: Goofbuster.com