

CALIFORNIA BULLET TRAIN

California's infamous \$68 billion Ghost Train to Nowhere (officially known as the High-Speed Rail Authority) now is talking about laying tracks from Bakersfield to San Jose instead of its original plan to build from the Central Valley to Los Angeles. The geniuses in Sacramento finally realized that it's cheaper and faster to get to the Bay Area over Pacheco Pass (Los Banos to Gilroy) than to tunnel through the massive, fault-riddled Tehachapi and San Gabriel mountains to the south. But talk is cheap: Show me the money! I know we should be overjoyed at the prospect of getting our own bullet train, but this politically and economically challenged "railroad" is still just a paper train. So far, not a single track has been laid.

MARTINS BEACH OUTRAGE

Can you believe the unmitigated gall of billionaire Vinod Khosla demanding \$30 million from the State of California for allowing public access to his Martins Beach?

WRONG-WAY DRIVERS

"I have not looked at the specific places where wrong-way drivers entered the freeway, but I am sure they have the usual red WRONG WAY – DO NOT ENTER signs. This of course will not deter drunk drivers from proceeding. The technology is available to detect that a car is moving in the wrong direction. This could trigger flashing red lights, sirens, klaxons, and even spikes popping out of the pavement to flatten tires. It's expensive. Are we ready to pay for it? On the other hand, where and how did those drivers get drunk? There was nobody around to stop them?" (Pierre Messerli)

SITeseer

Google Greg Grandin and explore a best-selling historian's insights on everyone from Henry Ford to Henry Kissinger. (Recommended reading from Edmonster.)

TALK SHOW HOSTS

Do you miss The Johnny Carson Show as much as I do? If so, check out Antenna TV (Comcast channel 187) every weeknight at 11. Not that I don't also get a few laughs watching late-night talk shows now hosted by the two Jimmies, Trevor Noah, and Stephen Colbert. But there is still no one as cool as J.C. In related news, Dear Departed David Letterman reportedly is NOT enjoying retirement. Dave recently told an interviewer who asked how he was faring as a retiree: "Don't do it!" I hope Old Grumpy Pants retires from his rocking chair soon and gets back on TV. His fans miss him as much as he seems to miss them and the spotlight.

VICTORIAN RECYCLING

"Shoddy" is an adjective meaning cheap, substandard, or defective, but originally it was a noun in 19th-century England describing an inferior-quality yarn or fabric made from the shredded fiber of waste woolen cloth or clippings, similar to "mungo," a cloth made from recycled woven or felted material. Trivia connection: Remember Mungo Jerry?

ALANDROME: EPITAPH

Alan Wald submits his latest palindromic creation: Forget all the conspiracy theories about Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's death. According to palindrome lovers, a crime scene investigator quotes Justice Scalia acknowledging his own ill health: "'I, Scalia, did ail' — a CSI."

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