

## Wandering and wondering

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### POST AND RIPOSTE

Here in the pages of the Tribune and online at the various Coastsider blogs (Riptide, Index, Coastsider, Fix, Patch), you see back-and-forth arguments, some based on fact and reason, others based on hidden agendas driven by fear and greed. To me, the most telling revelation is John Keener's informal door-knocker poll of 1,100 Linda Martians, who told the Pacifica City Council candidate that they oppose Highway 1 widening 4-1. Wow. Apparently, these smart cookies have figured out that the widening lobby's scare tactics are just that -- nothing but trumped-up horror stories from some Internet troll's fevered imagination. For a little more rational perspective, read Santa Cruz environmental attorney Gary Patton's "Two Worlds" blog post (linked to on Pacifica Riptide) showing how Highway 1 widening in Santa Cruz has not helped the traffic situation one whit. Basically, Patton says that just as predicted by the law of induced demand, "if you build it, they will come." In other words, no sooner had extra lanes been added than traffic increased to clog the highway again with more cars, same as it ever was.

### BRIDGET OF THE BRIDGE

"My name is Bridget. I started that whole flag thing and I'll tell you how. I am, politically, about as far to the left as the Tea Party is to the right. I believe this country should be run by and for the people, but instead of sounding like a patriot, I often come off more like a communist. To me, communism is looking a bit more democratic than what we got going on here, these days. Anyway, one day I see an American flag attached to the chain link fence of the overpass, above the freeway. And I'll be honest, I was offended. I know that sounds unpatriotic, but to me that flag does not represent the interests of the American people anymore. It is in fact a symbol of oppression all over the planet. It represents the profiteers of wars and weapons. And I for one DO NOT like it being shoved down my throat everywhere I go. I would not be so bold as to tear down or in any other way disassemble a flag that is being waved by my fellow citizens, in their own private way, but over the freeway? I'm pretty sure that's illegal, so in broad daylight, this overweight, middle-aged woman (a disguise that renders me virtually invisible) tore it down with my bare hands. It was well secured by tons of zip ties, so if anyone was looking, they would definitely think I had lost my fricken mind. I used the tattered pieces to pick up a big mound of dog s---. Now, I know that makes me sound really bad, but I had nothing else to use and I was up this long ramp, and, well, I thought: 'Am I going to let some unsuspecting, fellow American step in this nasty pile of s---, just to protect the integrity of these shreds of a flag that I was about to throw in the garbage anyway?' Crucify me if you will, I just couldn't rationalize it. So I come back a couple of weeks later and the flag is back up, accompanied by a bunch more flags over at that closed restaurant. I think to myself, obviously this means a lot to someone and I want to be respectful of all people, even if I don't agree with them. It's part of my 'new' philosophy -- love one another. I know, that's SOOO two thousand years ago. Imagine a born-again pagan and devout communist telling everyone: 'Let's just do what Jesus said to do and all our woes will be over!' So I decided that I would not tear the flag down again, I'll just change it to more accurately represent the diversity of beliefs in our wonderful US of A (fact: 83 percent of the American people are against the war). So the next day, suddenly, a stroke of genius, I casually walked up to the flag, which was again firmly zip-tied to the fence, and I cut out the inside lines of a peace sign. It was a thing of beauty. It brought together the right wing and the left wing, a coalition of which Ralph Nader describes as 'UNSTOPPABLE'

in his latest book. It means united is greater than divided. Ron Paul said it very well in his 'dissent is patriotic' speech: '...it is dissent from government policies that defines the true patriot and champion of freedom.' Needless to say, the beauty of my 'new' flag fell on blind eyes and it was torn down, thus starting the battle of the flags. My mother was petrified by my behavior and made me promise to stop, so I did, for her sake. But then your article came out and I'm glad to say it is another mysterious force taking the flags down now. It just goes to show that sometimes a small action can change things completely. Anyway, I know I suck at writing, but I wanted you to know the story and to thank you for the role you played in it. Wishing a happy Fourth of July to all."

## STILL SLEEPLESS IN PARADISE

Sleepless in Paradise salutes Bridget (see above): "To me this is the classic story of what the flag represents to different people. To the neighbor who keeps putting up the flags, it is a symbol of some country in which everyone believes and acts as he/she does. (Don't ask.) To the 85 percent Bridget represents (her number), it simply refers to a symbol of our citizenship to a country that still accepts many belief systems (hopefully) and that does not require a litmus test, like displaying the flag on a 24-hour basis. Unfortunately, flying the flag now appears to be a polarizing symbol for the conservative right and the rest of the country."

## WHAT IT IS

Our palindromist pal Alan Wald writes: And now President Obama suggests we partner with Iran to resolve the crisis in Iraq. Pacifica palindrome lovers say we should stay away from both of those arid places: "Damn! Arid Iraq. Arid Iran. Mad!"

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