

Wandering and Wondering

By John Maybury Pacifica Tribune

Updated: 07/08/2014 05:13:42 PM PDT

MercuryNews.com

DROUGHTBUSTERS

Bravo to Bob Lange of North Coast County Water District, who heard my concern about swimmers wasting water in the Brink Pool showers. Bob went to the pool and gave the supervisor laminated drought-alert signs to hang in the showers. Bob also met with Gary Hoffschneider, superintendent of Oceana High School facilities, and gave him low-flow showerheads and timers to install. I told Bob we should pray for rain. He said we might also do some rain dances.

FLAG FLAP

Gary Aasland (The Flag Man) left me a message at the Tribune about the American flag controversy I covered in recent columns. He professes great love for our country and flag. He has placed American flags on the Highway 1 pedestrian overpass in Manor, but notes that someone defaced them with peace signs. Bridget of the Bridge admitted to such in last week's column, performing her own version of patriotic license, which got letter writer Bob Hutchinson in high dudgeon. Oh my! Aasland says he and his wife think Sleepless in Paradise made a "derogatory" comment about the flags. Aasland justifies placing American flags on public property, and says it "brings joy and a renewed feeling of patriotism to all." Fair enough. I hope this brings the matter to an end. Everyone had a say -- the essence of free speech in a democracy. Perhaps none of the individuals named above are happy with the outcome, but it's a free country, isn't it? Personally, I love beautiful, waving flags of all stripes and stars and scimitars. It makes no difference to me which country or religion the flag stands for. Honestly, folks, a flag is just a scrap of cloth with pretty colors on it. What matters to me, and what I think is important to remember, is what our country and flag stand for: protect the earth; prevent human suffering; promote life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

DEMAGOGUES THREATEN DEMOCRACY

Richmond City Council has had it with foul-mouthed hecklers at its public meetings. The council votes July 15 on a proposal to ban disruptive speakers. "Allowing a handful of troublemakers to take control of public meetings has consequences beyond just inappropriately insulting elected officials," writes San Francisco Chronicle columnist Chip Johnson (June 20). "This kind of behavior is the antithesis of free speech and expression -- it's a toxic practice that thwarts the democratic process...it discourages public participation, the very essence of democratic rule. People stop listening and watching, and soon enough they might stop caring altogether." Anyone who has watched the freak show at Pacifica City Council "oral communications" (sounds like a dental procedure!) can appreciate how Richmond proposes to protect democracy from demagogues. Take a hint, Pacifica City Council: Stand up to bullies.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Apply by July 15 to Healthy Communities Leadership Academy (healthycommunitiesbayarea.org). Inspired by Acterra's "Be the Change" program and started in 2013 by Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, the academy is a nine-month advocacy training program. Scholarships available.

SWAMI SEZ

"You know that tingly little feeling you get when you really like someone? That's common sense leaving your body." (forwarded by Pierre Messerli)

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