

MISTER GOODWRENCH

Remember Mister Goodwrench? Well, there is a real one in Linda Mar, my former neighbor Larry, who came to my rescue recently when I was cycling to Gearhead Bikes for some work on my beach cruiser. I literally had a screw loose (no comment!) and could not ride any farther, being without any tools to fix the bike. Luckily, I was right near Larry's place, and he was home. Repairs were made. I stayed on a bit to chat with Larry about the old neighborhood. He said the local fireworks had been a lot quieter this year. I said my thanks and goodbyes, and pedalled on. This is the kind of thing that makes the Coastside such a great place to live.

FRIENDS: WHO NEEDS 'EM

"A study published in February 2016 in the British Journal of Psychology looked at 15,000 respondents and found people who had more social interactions with close friends reported being happier -- unless they were highly intelligent. People with higher I.Q.s were less content when they spent more time with friends. Psychologists theorize that these folks keep themselves intellectually stimulated without a lot of social interaction, and often have a long-term goal they are pursuing." (Wall Street Journal, April 19, 2016)

GO WITH THE FLOW, BABY

Diets, exercise routines, creative projects, and personal resolutions (New Year's and others) all suffer from the

same risk of burnout and flameout. Everything starts out great, but then you fade in the homestretch, maybe even experience a little rebound (especially with diets). This tendency to choke before reaching the finish line is a challenge not easily overcome, but one way to fight it is to reach “the zone” or state of “flow” where your energy is self-renewing and where you can more assuredly reach your goals without running out of steam. “Flow” is an old 1970s idea (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, professor of psychology and management at Claremont Graduate University) that has been studied and adopted by athletes, dancers, actors, singers, artists, and other competitive or high-functioning individuals. “Flow” means actively paying attention, not just sitting around and meditating. It involves conscious focus, balance, mindfulness, self-awareness, self-control, confidence, relaxed concentration, feedback loops, even feelings of altered time (things seeming to go slower or faster than normal). I learned some of this long ago from a biofeedback therapist, and it has always been useful to me in dealing with my own personal demons. (Yes, it’s true what they say about writers!) Here’s one simple exercise you can try: Close your eyes and imagine your hands are slowly getting very warm. Okay. Ready? You can take it from there.

PERFECT AFTERNOON BREAK

Go into Nick’s at Rockaway Beach on a weekday afternoon around 4, grab a window seat, order a crab

sandwich, and enjoy the free whale-watching show just beyond the seawall.

SWAMI SEZ

“Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.” (H. L. Mencken)

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