

DEAR READERS

Thanks for all your letters to the editor during the past month. I appreciate your support more than I can say. To my friends who urged me not to return here as a matter of principle, I hope you understand that I value this column as an opportunity to be an alternative voice in the newspaper. In the final analysis, I decided that was the greater good. I won't bore you with any Alice in Wonderland metaphors (down the rabbit hole, Mad Hatter's tea party, etc.), but suffice it to say that this long, strange "suspension" was no fun. I missed writing my column and getting your emails. One good thing about the time away was that I had a chance to do more blogging on Pacifica Riptide. You are always welcome to visit us there online and see what our motley crew of writers, photographers, and rabble-rousers is up to. Meanwhile, welcome back to Wandering & Wondering. Let's continue to celebrate free speech, freedom of the press, and the San Francisco Giants huge World Series victory.

THE GANG OF KNOW

The Coastside is full of nature lovers. Many of us moved here and stay here because of the incredible scenery, wide-open spaces, green hillsides, hiking and biking trails, long beaches, and free and easy lifestyle. Many of us are escapees from the urban rat race. That moment when we come over the hill on Highway 1 and look south along the rugged coastline always takes our breath away. Knowing this, we locals work hard to keep things natural. We know what we like. We know we don't like freeways, cookie-cutter housing developments, big shopping malls, and other such blights on the environment. We are The Gang of Know.

BAN THE BUMS

California's new plastic-bag ban is fantastic, but wouldn't you know that the plastics industry already is mounting a referendum drive to repeal the law. If you see paid signature gatherers for the referendum, engage them in friendly political banter, ask politely for their names and employers' names, and report your encounter to Californians Against Waste in Sacramento (Mark Murray at murray@cawrecycles.org or 916-443-5422).

WONTON DISREGARD

On October 16, Daly City Police arrested a Pacifica man on a charge of "wonton disregard for safety." We're not really sure what it means, but perhaps the man failed to blow on his hot soup to cool it down. In any case, he certainly wasn't using his noodle.

JIM JEFFERSON, R.I.P.

Jean Bartlett of this newspaper wrote a fine feature last spring on my railroading friend Jim Jefferson of Pedro Point. I am sad to report that Jim died August 22. His wife Diane, also a railroader, wrote a fine tribute to Jim on a website maintained by his old World War II Navy shipmates. Find ussdehaven.org then click DeHaven Association, In Memoriam, and Jim Jefferson.

SWAMI SEZ

"Weather and cats do what they please, and men and dogs may as well accustom themselves to it." (anonymous)

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