

## Wandering and Wondering

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### THE GANG OF NO

Pacifica has a long history of infighting, probably a function of our disparate neighborhoods without common interests. Scattered along 10 miles of coastal hillsides, deep valleys, beaches, and floodplains, our 40,000 residents range from blue-collar workers to white-collar professionals, and self-employed entrepreneurs to retired civil servants. Lots of new money is coming into town, while lots of old money desperately hangs on. There is plenty of friction, resentment, bitterness, and distrust. This atmosphere engenders a kind of McCarthyism in which groups that have nothing in common blame other groups for Pacifica's woes, demonizing and dehumanizing them with silly labels. Reading comments on the four blogs of the apocalypse (Riptide, Index, Fix, Patch) and Tribune letters to the editor, you may have seen a "Gang of No" label applied to various local environmentalists and conservationists because of their principled opposition to the highway widening and other public or private development/construction proposals. As one of the aforementioned bloggers, and as a columnist for this newspaper, and as a member of the much-maligned "Gang of No," I would like to ask for a timeout. I do not claim to speak for my fellow gang members. They are fully capable of speaking for themselves, and many of them do so on the blogs and in these inky pages. I simply want to say that as a green-to-the-gills enviro, I am not primarily a naysayer. I love Pacifica's green hillsides and blue waters. I moved here and I stay here because of the natural beauty of this little burg, just over the hill yet worlds away from the mad, mad mess of San Francisco. Okay, I do say "NO" to anything that I think would endanger all this great scenery or all this laid-back small-town vibe. To me, bigger and faster is not better. I want to fix the town's problems as much as anyone does. I may not share the same ideas as you about what is good for Pacifica, but make no mistake: I belong to "The Gang of Yes." I say "YES" to slow growth, smart development, small business, and green initiatives. From my deeply felt opposition to bad ideas and poor planning comes a wealth of positive alternatives and creative solutions. Now if only I could get the powers-that-be to listen to me and my gang members once again, as they finally did with the Tom Lantos Tunnels at Devil's Slide. That brilliant and popular solution came from the very same people who are now unfairly smeared as "The Gang of No."

### DALY CITY CONDEMNS CLEARCUTTING

The City Council of Daly City has passed a resolution calling on Governor Jerry Brown and the state legislature to ban clearcut logging in California, making it the first city in San Mateo County and the wider Bay Area, and the second city in the state, to pass such a resolution. The City of Davis has passed a similar resolution. The resolution highlights negative impacts of clearcutting on climate and water. (Daly City's Water Department offers free water-saving devices, rebates, and school programs for residents, commercial users, and students. The city also has a climate action plan to reduce its carbon footprint.) "I am delighted to partner with the Sierra Club in making sure that the governor and the California legislature take immediate action to prohibit industrial clearcut logging in the forests of California," says Daly City Mayor David Canepa. "I am also proud that Daly City is the first city in the Bay Area to demonstrate such leadership." A growing movement composed of local communities, environmental groups, and fishermen's alliances is calling on the governor and state legislature to end clearcutting in California and to ensure that logging in California is done in a way that will preserve and protect fish, wildlife, forests, streams, and

carbon sequestration. Clearcutting is an ecologically destructive form of logging in which nearly all native vegetation is removed, soils are deep-ripped, and herbicides are applied across the landscape. It harms water quality and wildlife habitat, and exacerbates climate change. It replaces diverse forests with tree farms that can have a higher risk of catching fire. But timber can be harvested using a less destructive method known as selective logging (or culling, as practiced in Europe), which involves carefully planned removal of some trees while leaving the overall forest intact. What happens in the forests — especially in the Sierra Nevada — is important to Bay Area cities. Some 60 percent of Bay Area water is stored in and filtered through Sierra forest watersheds, and 15 percent comes from the forested Santa Cruz Mountains. At least 15 percent of California's carbon dioxide emissions are sequestered by California forests, and clearcutting both reduces the amount of carbon that forests can retain, and releases excess greenhouse gases. (from a Sierra Club press release, edited for space and clarity)

## THE DOMINATOR

The American River Café at Harrah's South Lake Tahoe serves a \$66 pork sandwich called The Dominator. On a "Godzilla-size" onion roll, the five-and-a-half-pound bellybuster is packed with sliced ham, breaded pork cutlet, smoked pork loin, pulled barbecued pork rib meat, regular and country-fried bacon, Asian-style red pork, and polish sausage. And the Dominator challenge? If you alone can finish the whole sandwich, it's on the house. Of course, you might end up paying more than \$66 to get your stomach pumped at an emergency room.

## SWAMI SEZ

"Any fool can make things complicated. It requires a genius to make things simple." (economist E.F. Schumacher)

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