

Wandering and Wondering

By John Maybury *Pacifica Tribune Columnist San Jose Mercury News*

Posted:

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GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Sleepless in Paradise writes: "First, a note to say how much I enjoy your Wandering and Wondering column. Your 'Ranting and Raving' item (December 18) got me thinking about the city I live in, how it's changed, and perhaps what might be changed to make it an even better place to live. So I started thinking about what I would love to see return from the past. That's a pretty easy question for me: peace and quiet. I know of no one who moved to Pacifica for the nightlife, construction sites, screaming sirens, and heavy traffic (OK, Highway 1 is a necessity for our city). No, we all (to a person, of the people I know here) moved to Pacifica because of its incredible beauty and inherent peace, to enjoy all that comes with that natural beauty. For many years I used to tell family and friends that I lived in paradise -- and I really believed that. Not so much now. Then I started thinking about the new year and what resolutions I might make if I were the whole city of Pacifica. What would be the one, single thing that could help us return to the quiet, peace-loving city we were not so terribly long ago?

Lots of thoughts and ideas, for sure, but one topic kept coming up as I talked to neighbors: habitually barking dogs. OK, I'll admit that I'm a dog lover and have had many dogs over the course of a long, happy (for the most part) life, and have no desire to keep anyone from enjoying a canine companion. I'm talking about the nuisance dog owners, the ones who just turn their dogs out into the yard for long periods (even overnight) at a time and just let the dogs bark for hours on end; those who rarely, if ever, take their dogs for a walk and fail to recognize, or heed, the stress levels of their dogs when they are constantly barking. So again, I am not a dog hater. I really do love dogs and almost all dogs like me. The vast majority of the dogs I see on an almost daily basis stop to greet me -- and I stop to greet them. Frankly, I share the opinion of many other dog owners that there are no bad dogs -- only bad dog owners (perhaps uncaring, thoughtless, or uneducated is a better choice of words). Most dog owners love and care for their creatures. It's just a handful of people who permit incessant barking that has changed many parts of our city. And the worst part is that these people apparently don't really care because they do nothing about the problem.

Here's the bottom line: There really is no effective way of dealing with barking dogs in Pacifica. Oh sure, the city website says to call the police. Right. And you're told to start documenting the problem, and then you're told to talk to the neighbor (isn't that common sense?), and then, from what I'm told, there is a whole legal process with the city attorney and, in the end, everyone is sort of back to square one, unless the owner agrees to do something, which seems pretty rare. The comments I've seen on the web almost universally agree that it is a long and pretty useless task. Frankly, I think the City of Pacifica can do better. The logical solution then is that Pacifica needs a new law/ordinance that addresses the problem at the responsible-dog-owner level. Anything would be better than what we have now -- virtually nothing. So I'll close my 'Ranting and Raving' with a suggestion that we, as a peace-loving community, use our collective genius (I know it's there) to solve a growing problem in Pacifica. Your column might just be the perfect forum for thoughts, ideas, and suggestions that might become the seeds of inspiration to make our beloved Pacifica the kind of place again that I once thought of as paradise. Anyway, those are my thoughts. Feel free to ignore them or start a national awareness campaign that might put Pacifica on the national map -- or anything in between. A very happy holiday and peaceful new year."

KNOW YOURSELF

Knowing what you hate about yourself and your life is not necessarily a bad thing, according to researchers at Queendom.com, and in fact should be used as a source of motivation to start the New Year on the right foot. If you've been spending the last few weeks of the year thinking about everything you hated about 2013, understanding what you dislike is a first step to figuring out what you DO want and how to achieve it. You are likely to count your grievances at the end of the year, but rather than simply stewing, use your dissatisfaction to propel yourself into action and change in the new year.

ALAN WALD'S ALANDROMES

- The growing fear of civil war in South Sudan comes as no surprise to palindrome lovers, who predicted long ago: "Put Sudan in a dust-up!"

- With the announcement that Devil's Slide Coastal Trail is expected to open March 22, Pacifica palindrome lovers suggest the newly surfaced roadway be designated

Devil Boulevard--aptly abbreviated DVL BLVD.

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