

T'is the Season to be Scary



“Maybe all one can do is hope to end up with the right regrets.”

Arthur Miller

“When you stop drinking, you have to deal with this marvelous personality that started you drinking in the first place.”

Jimmy Breslin

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Halloween is two weeks away, but I bet most of you haven't purchased your Halloween candy for Trick or Treats. There's time aplenty. However, you wouldn't think there was enough time for any upcoming holiday because the department and home-improvement stores I have visited lately have been deluged with Christmas displays for trees, decorations, lighting, and gift ideas. It's never too early to begin one's holiday shopping, except I really don't believe that. I think it's sad for stores to be hyping an otherwise stress-laden holiday with encouragement to buy now, buy now, buy now. Reports on consumer spending have recently turned negative, oddly, in what many retailers are hoping to be a record-breaking holiday season. So I believe that in a few weeks from now there will be price slashing sales hawking overstocked inventory that must be sold or else. It will happen before the Black Friday madness, which occurs the day after the U.S. Thanksgiving. By the way, Happy (belated) Thanksgiving to all our Canadian friends (last Monday). Their Black Tuesday has concluded.

The trend to earlier holiday shopping will not be soon reversed, if ever. Retailing seems to be a one-trick pony ... hit 'em up in Q4 with everything you got. In fact, it's difficult to determine exactly what holiday one is shopping for in mid-October, Halloween? Thanksgiving? Chanukah? Christmas? Maybe all of the above(?).

Last week CPUC President Peevey announced his intention to step down at the end of this year upon the conclusion of his current term. With that announcement the Expartegate story died off. The LA Times editorial board last Friday lauded Peevey's decision, stating

Western States Playbook

CAISO Stakeholder Symposium: Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 22-23 in Sacramento. For the full agenda click.

WPTF Post Symposium Reception: Wednesday, Oct. 22 from 9 p.m. to midnight at the Sacramento Sheraton Grand. All WPTF members and registered attendees for the CAISO Stakeholder Symposium are welcome. Contact Jenifer McDonald for more information.

WPTF Houston Chapter Meeting: Wednesday, Nov. 12 from 3 p.m. to 5:30 followed by a reception hosted by Calpine Corp. Speakers and topics include Guillermo Turrent on Mexico's deregulation, Caitlin Liotiris on WECC assessment of EPA's 111(d), and

that public officials seeking contributions from special interests over whom they have influence, “[Is a frequent practice that Californians should find deeply troubling.](#)” Nevadans not so much, but Californians should be troubled.

Almost two years ago to the date, the last time the Giants trampled the St. Louis Cardinals for the National League Championship, I wrote in the October 26th Burrrito, “[On the same day that the Giants pummeled the Cards, CPUC President Michael Peevey was also getting a very public pummeling in the Bay Area media. Surviving family members of four of the eight casualties in the natural gas pipeline explosion two years ago, residents of San Bruno, mounted a protest calling for the resignation of Peevey. Why? Because the CPUC agreed to enter into non-public mediation with PG&E to establish a settlement regarding the utility’s liability as the pipeline owner. In a million years I would have never thought that the public outcry about the lack of a public hearing instead of private mediation potentially could be President Peevey’s undoing at the CPUC ... It’s the height of irony that a tragedy that took the life of a CPUC employee \(and her daughter\) should bounce back to the fore and demand the head of the CPUC President.](#)”

Prescient words if I say so myself because that more or less is how it played out. One tragedy led to another until it culminated in Peevey’s retirement announcement. How, you might wonder, is Peevey’s retirement and the clouds under which it was announced anywhere close to a tragedy? Well, after twelve years of public service as the agency’s president, the longest serving president in the Cappuccino’s history, and scores of cases on which he voted, I think he wanted to leave with more than just a pat on the back. I’ve chronicled over these many years matters where I agreed with him, and where I disagreed. Everyone had the same experiences. You can’t help it in this business but to agree on some things, and disagree on other issues. However, Peevey’s endgame has been tinged with behind-the-scenes deals that knocked the luster off his much-deserved trophy. I pulled an ancient copy of the Burrrito, January 26, 2001, where I first mentioned Michael’s name, “[Advising Governor Davis will be Michael Peevey ... I am especially jazzed about Peevey. I know some former New Energy Venture customers who will choke me for saying that, but let’s face it, having an advisor who knows the difference between direct access and a political focus group is a huge leap forward in this State. Mr. Davis, if you are reading this, then please send Mr. Peevey to the CPUC as its President when he is done advising you.](#)” And then the governor did just that in late December of 2002, although I can unequivocally assure you that Governor Davis never read what I wrote. He only read what the [LA Times](#) quoted me saying about the Governor’s esteemed energy stewardship. In early January 2003 I wrote, “[New Year’s Eve was ushered in by the announcement of CPUC Commissioner Peevey ascending to the Presidency in place of Loretta Dearest. We were overjoyed. This signals a positive step at the Commission, one that points to constructive dialogue rather than political grandstanding. The New President of the PUC wrote a letter to the staff of the](#)

Western States Playbook (cont.)

Jim McIntosh on next year’s hydro forecast. Email me if you are interested in attending.

Platts’ California Power & Gas Conference: Nov. 13 & 14 in San Francisco. Special discount for WPTF members. Click here for conference details. Email me if you’re interested in the registration fee discount.

Commission, responding to some instant public criticism that Peevey was tied to SCE and private business too closely to be impartial. Peevey wrote, ‘I do not represent the utilities, though I worked for one. I do not represent business interests, though I have founded several. I do not serve any particular industry, though at times my policies and decisions may support one group’s particular interests (for example, the renewable industry was pleased that I included renewable procurement requirements for the electric utilities earlier than was required by legislation). I do not represent organized labor, though I served as a union official. I do not serve only ratepayer financial interests, though I am a ratepayer. I recognize that sometimes it is in my interest to pay a little more for better products and services and a better environment. In summary, I serve the public interest as a whole.’”

The Burrito has chronicled the public service career of Michael Peevey from start to

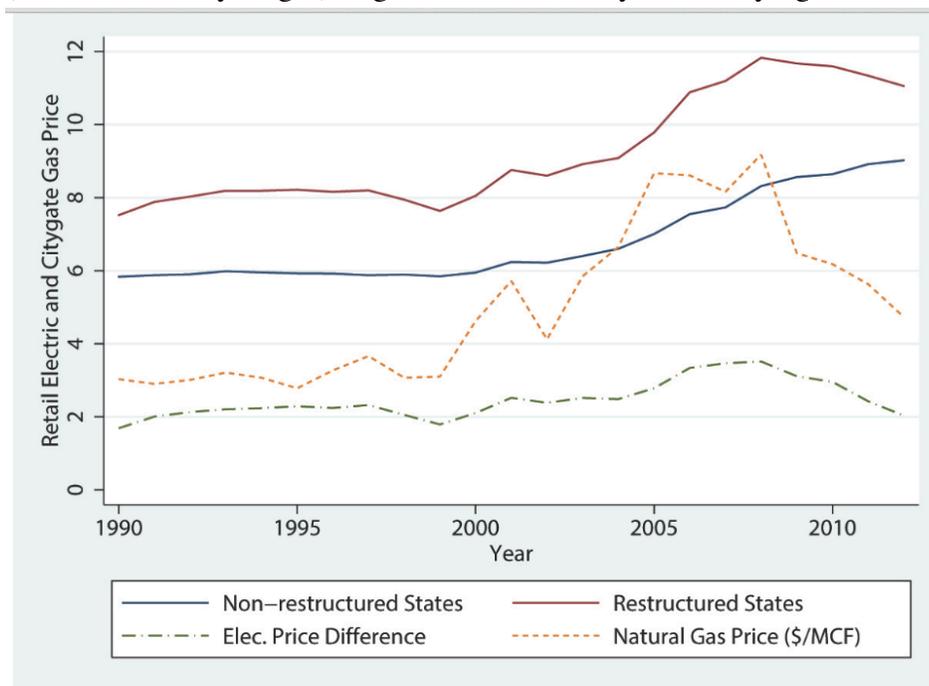
What we believe...

- 1) Competition yields lower electricity rates.
- 2) Stable and transparent rules and regulations promote private investment.
- 3) Private investors, rather than utilities, will spend money on new power plants and transmission facilities if they can earn a return that is balanced with the risks.
- 4) Private sector investment results in lower average prices without risking consumers’ money.

finish. In fact, you could say it occupied much of what I wrote about since the Burrito first appeared in September 1998. It will be damn difficult to find a replacement for Mr. Peevey. That is, someone who can measure up to his experience and ability to calmly steer the ship known as the Cappuccino. He made errors along the way, just as you and I have done in our endeavors, and that’s what it means to be human. Of course, his were more public than either yours or mine. It’s important for us to assess Michael Peevey’s contributions across all business areas over which the CPUC has jurisdiction and over the many years he served. Then we can judge the man accordingly.

I note a recent letter by Senator Markey and Congressman Kennedy sent to FERC Chairman Cheryl LaFleur regarding capacity markets in New England. I didn’t think there would be much to this letter other than the usual rant about how capacity markets are unfair, and so on and so forth. But the letter reports on something about which I was unaware, “[The ISO-NE] Forward Capacity Market Auction (FCA8) was the first time an auction concluded with a capacity shortfall.” Huh? How’d that happen? Did coal and/or nuclear generators suddenly not participate? In any event the letter’s authors complained that the clearing price for the last auction was much higher than the floor price recorded in the earlier seven auctions. You folks doing business in that part of the world need to explain to me what occurred last February when the auction was held. The Congressman and the Senator no doubt writing on behalf of the New England states in the ISO-NE are asking FERC to reconsider its tacit approval of the auction results when a full panel of five commissioners is seated. Why would five commissioners render a decision that four cannot figure out? The letter goes on, “According to the U.S. EIA, in 2013, New England consumers and businesses paid the highest average retail electricity prices in the continental U.S. at 14.48cents/kWh.” I thought California earned that distinction for having the highest retail electric rates. I guess not. California will need to try harder.

Speaking of organized markets, since mid-September I've been sitting on an [Energy Institute at Haas](#) blog post authored by Jim Bushnell that is well worth reading. It poses the question that Jim answers briefly in his post but greater detail is promised in a forthcoming academic article. The topic regards the relative retail electricity prices between restructured markets and areas of the country where there are no organized electricity markets. The brief history of electricity restructuring begins with, "[Back in 2000, Severin \[Borenstein\] and I had written a paper arguing that the motivations for restructuring were driven more by a desire by some groups to avoid paying for stranded assets \(like nuclear and coal plants which looked like white elephants in the late 1990s\) than by a belief that restructuring would reap massive efficiency gains.](#)" Isn't that the truth! The "some groups" referred to above were large industrial and commercial customers, and they sensed through restructuring that power plants of more recent vintage (i.e., combined cycle gas) might be far less costly than carrying the old stock of



generators. Bushnell goes on: "[The great irony of this period is that a half decade after transition arrangements largely compensated utilities for the losses incurred in selling or transferring these assets, the market value of those same assets had fully recovered.](#) By

[the mid-2000s the relationship between average and marginal cost had largely reversed, and states like Illinois and Maryland expressed a great deal of regret about the decision to restructure.](#)" What seemed like a good deal in the 1990s became a not-so-great deal ten years later. Now, however, the original economics of the gas fleet, in light of declining natural gas fuel costs and environmental rules urging early retirement of coal facilities has made the trajectory of marginal costs more favorable relative to the average costs. And the quickest way to pick up the marginal cost savings is through restructured markets. See the comparison chart above found in Jim's blog.

The red Restructured States electricity cost line roughly follows the dotted yellow pattern of natural gas prices. Not so for the blue line representing the electricity costs in Non-restructured States. So goes the pendulum, but what can be learned? Bushnell notes that even with the economic advantage of marginal cost pricing, additional states are not clamoring to embrace restructuring.

To paraphrase a bit, there is a game afoot. It's a game of hot potato regarding who (i.e., which class of customers) will end up paying for the installed infrastructure costs. Distributed generation and home-based storage technologies make the game a tad more serious in that households will invest, theoretically, thousands of dollars for equipment to avoid paying fixed distribution and transmission charges that are sunk costs. Bushnell draws a parallel between the present-day distributed generation (plus storage) and retail access, once the hallmark of the originally restructured markets. Of course, I'm more critical of the current situation because incentives to invest in distributed generation/storage have been triggered by misleading retail electricity rate designs that thwart efficient economic signals. That is, there are small fixed charges that are lower than a utility's fixed costs and are being compensated through the revenue collected from variable energy sales. Distributed generation/storage reduces the amount of energy consumed from the grid, and increases energy (maybe wastefully) produced and consumed in the home.

We have met the enemy, and it is us.

Screw it. Let's get squashed. Laura Manz, our Burrito *chef de magazine*, tells us how to get there. ["I am ever thankful to Ellen Wolfe whose healthy and thoughtful eating consists of 'things without faces'.](#) A recent MOOC (massive open online course), 'Our Energy Future' run by UC San Diego, had students calculate a personal carbon footprint that included the day's food consumption. This short exercise offers a little self-reflection about thoughtful food choices, including local and seasonal sourcing. For most Burrito readers, seasonal and local squash abounds in eye-catching shapes and sizes. [Savor a spaghetti squash as a pasta substitute, dressed with](#)



Simply Suede

[\[Click here to learn about the author\]](#)

*So much for my home team the Nationals. After their humiliating 3-1 loss to the Giants, the Washington Post moaned, "Fans Wallow in Doom." And, indeed, we do. Likely, demand resource owners that have been selling into FERC's wholesale markets feel a similar foreboding doom. PJM's new white paper, *The Evolution of DR in the PJM Wholesale Market*, is directed at them and their future role in PJM's markets, and it's not cheering them up. PJM remains committed to preserving the value that DR provides its system and markets, but it also concedes it must respond to the risk the EPSA ruling presents to the continuing participation of demand resources not only in its energy market (the subject of EPSA) but also in its capacity market. It is concerned that ongoing participation of demand resources in capacity market auctions will instigate litigation, unsettling those markets for years to come.*

So, PJM proposes to limit DR participation in its capacity market to bids by wholesale market entities—as a commitment to curtail, which would be modeled as a reduction in capacity obligation. The demand would bid a curtailment commitment at a price. If cleared, PJM would procure less capacity for that wholesale (load-serving) entity in the same amount as bid. The DR would receive no energy market payment. PJM would work with current curtailment service providers to help transition their demand resource commitments to load-serving entity-based curtailment commitments. The un-transitioned resources would be released from their capacity commitment. Nats fans might resignedly call it "soul-crushing."

pesto or marinara. Fat-free butternut squash pureed with maple syrup and brown sugar makes a delightful side dish or spread. Drop me an email with your ideas or questions. This week's presentation features acorn squash that will serve 4 people, but other varieties will work just as well. Served using the squash rind as a bowl, this can be enjoyed as a meal or hearty side."

First prepare the rice: Mix together in a saucepan 1 cup of wild rice blend, and 2 cups of vegetable stock. Bring to a boil, stir once, reduce heat to simmer and cover. Cook for 50 minutes covered. Remove the rice from the heat and let it rest, covered, for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork, and then add in the onion mixture and ½ cup roasted pumpkin seeds that are prepared per the instructions below.

What we believe (cont.) ...

- 5) However, when IOUs do the investing, the risks to them are minimal or non-existent because ratepayers cover all of the costs.
- 6) Overcapacity lowers electricity spot market prices; yet retail rates can increase in this case due to full cost-of-service regulation.
- 7) Markets work best when there are many buyers and sellers.
- 8) At-risk money will be put to work and attract new investment where markets exist that are legitimate and yield credible prices.

For the squash: cut in half lengthwise 2 acorn squash, remove and discard the seeds. Place the four halves flesh side down into 2 baking pans filled with approximately 1 inch of water, or enough to cover any exposed cut edges. Roast the squash at 375 degrees F for 35 minutes until the flesh is tender. Remove the halves from the hot water and set aside, tented with aluminum foil to keep warm.

For the onion and fruit mixture to be added to the rice: heat 1 Tbsp. of cooking oil in a pan, and sauté until translucent ½ of a chopped red onion. Add 2 cloves of minced garlic, and cook for another minute. Add 1/8 tsp. of ground cinnamon and 1/8 tsp. of ground cloves. Add ¼ cup of golden raisins or dried cranberries and cook for one or two minutes more until the fruit begins to soften and give off its juices.

Finally, in a dry skillet, roast ¾ cup of raw shelled pumpkin seeds (*pepitas*) on medium heat until fragrant and slightly browned. Let them cool to the touch, and then chop and set aside ¼ cup of the roasted seeds

In the final step assemble all the food items. Into each squash half, heap ¼ of the rice mixture that has been blended with the onions, fruit and ½ cup of roasted seeds. Top with the reserved chopped seeds and serve immediately.

That recipe is positively autumnal, and sounds great. Here's your seeded squash-me for this week:

>>> Things in FERC

@@@ The Powhatan Case Heats Up

>>> Shout Outs

>>> Things in FERC

@@@ The Powhatan Case Heats Up

Like many of you who watch the doings of FERC's Office of Enforcement, none has been more curious than that of the allegations against Dr. Allen Chen who advised Powhatan Energy Fund regarding PJM Up-to-Congestion bids placed by Dr. Chen through Powhatan in the summer of 2010. Last Month FERC's Office of Enforcement recommended that the Commission issue a Show Cause Order on this matter. Is there a legal and factual bases for this action, or is it simply another example of "the cost of doing business" for transacting in U.S. wholesale power markets? That is, if FERC barks loudly, then pay the ransom money and move on. That answer may be okay for large well-funded commodity trading houses or banks. On the other hand, relatively smaller trading houses and especially individual traders/advisors at any trading function do not have the luxury of settling and paying unconscionable fees to the national regulator. Personally, I fail to understand how Enforcement Staff barrels ahead with blinders when there exists a preponderance of evidence to at least posit reasonable doubt.

So into the muck we must go. I read the September 24 letters sent to FERC by Dr. Chen's attorneys, Skadden Arps, and Powhatan's attorneys, Drinker Biddle & Reath (DB&R). The best sound bite in the Skadden letter was, "[Because we have no expectation that \[FERC Enforcement\] will change course, we gear this response to the Chairman and Commissioners themselves, and will email it to them directly.](#)" And not to be outdone, the

DB&R letter on behalf of Powhatan had this gem, "[FERC's Office of Enforcement had no case against Powhatan when it commenced its investigation four years ago, and it has no case now. And you will not extort a settlement out of us.](#)" 'Nuff said.

... and, what we should do:

1. Believe in ourselves.
2. Encourage creation of independent, multi-state regional transmission organizations that coordinate policies with respective state utility commissions.
3. Support rules for resource adequacy that apply uniformly among all load-serving entities.

The heart of the issue as I understand it is FERC believes the Up-to-Congestion trades in PJM made by Chen/Powhatan were risk free and further qualified for compensation from the collection of transmission loss credits. I hesitate to get into the mechanics of PJM trading instruments. I have enough trouble following CAISO trading instruments, so I will focus instead on the battle that slowly is taking shape. Where it may go from here is very uncertain. As the Skadden letter explains, FERC's Office of Investigations is recommending to the Commission that it approve an Order to Show Cause demanding why the accused, "[should not be made the subject of a public proceeding to assess a civil penalty and require the disgorgement of unjust profits.](#)" We await FERC's decision.

However, the Skadden letter points to several items, three in fact, that should be tested for the benefit of all wholesale power markets across the land. First, does FERC have a legal

duty to provide prior notice or warning that certain conduct in specific markets is unlawful? Skadden argues that without such FERC's action is unconstitutional. In fact, if there was any notice regarding the possibility of fraudulent behavior in terms of collecting transmission-loss-credit rents, FERC publicly deliberated on the concerns about paying virtual bidders transmission loss credits, but ultimately acceded to the point allowing such. Per the Skadden letter, "[When the Commission originally ordered PJM to pay transmission loss credits to traders engaging in up-to congestion transactions, it expressly anticipated the very types of transactions Enforcement now claims are manipulative.](#)"

Second, was there any fraudulent behavior? Powhatan, in its letter (and on its website), sent FERC the testimonies of twelve leading national experts who claim there was no evidence of fraudulent behavior. It seems reasonable that the submitted testimonies deserve some weight in this proceeding.

Third, does FERC have jurisdiction over these financial transactions ... i.e., the spread trades between selected PJM nodes? The Skadden letter states: "[FERC does not have jurisdiction over the asserted conduct. Neither Dr. Chen nor any of the other respondents are alleged to have actually received or delivered electricity under any of the up-to congestion transactions. The up-to congestion trades at issue here were purely financial transactions, and thus are not jurisdictional sales of physical power.](#)"

If those three items aren't enough to make you question FERC's actions, then the next item might. Last week Powhatan filed a motion before FERC "[requesting that \[FERC Commissioner\] Norman Bay recuse himself from future involvement in our case.](#)" That's hardball. The smoking gun for this request was an exchange of emails last October 28 (2013) between Susan Court, former head of FERC Enforcement, and Commissioner Bay, also a former head of FERC Enforcement prior to becoming a Commissioner a few months ago. Susan wrote to Norman that, "[As should be apparent by now, I sincerely believe that Powhatan did not violate the Commission's anti-manipulation rules.](#)" Mr. Bay answered, "[I have no doubt that you believe that the resolution you propose is helpful to your client and to FERC. Nor do I question the sincerity of your belief that Powhatan did not violate the anti-manipulation rule. Unfortunately, there we will have to agree to disagree. There appears to be a fundamental disconnect between the way you view the facts and the way we view the facts.](#)"

So what do you think, folks? Should Commissioner Bay be allowed to vote on the motion by the Enforcement Staff to issue an Order to Show Cause, or should he recuse himself? And regardless of that vote, do you think it makes sense for FERC to approve market rules that later become hatchets with which to chop up traders in enforcement actions? There's got to be a better way to improve trading practices.

Never a dull moment around here.



We have plenty of happy news to go around, and I call it the Story of Two Elizabeths. I received two transmittals this week regarding the births of new babies to fellow comrades across the field. The first was from Aubrie Dolan in Houston who informed me (kind of late, happened last May, but that's okay ... it still qualifies as news) that, "[Elizabeth Claire Dolan became the newest member of our family. She was born on May 15 and came in weighing 7 pounds/ 13.5 oz. My husband and I are over the moon.](#)" Elizabeth I's photo can be found to the left. The other happy notice was from Robin Lunt who more recently (good on her) announced, "[Our daughter, Elizabeth \(Eliza\) Jade Lunt, arrived on Sept 24th weighing in at 9 lbs. and 3 oz., and 21 inches long! Her big brother Oliver is taking it all in stride and so far, we're doing well besides the predictable lack of sleep.](#)" Elizabeth II's photo is on the right. So there you have the stories of Elizabeth I and II. Congratulations to both families.



Alan Meck had a few comments about last week's discussion regarding re-organizing the CPUC. "[I really like Jack Ellis's suggestion about increasing CPUC employee salaries. This should be on top of the Governor's agenda; it might even be one of the most](#)

...and, what we should do (cont.):

4. Enforce competitive solicitations by utilities for purchasing either thermal or renewable power.
5. Support choice among retail electricity customers.
6. Lobby for core/non-core split of retail customers.
7. Advocate against policies that limit, through bid mitigation, merchant returns on investment that are utility-like returns.

[important issues for California to tackle this year. Higher salaries could help attract and retain top tier talent while providing \[insert more econ jargon\] to produce high quality work.](#)

["On a more serious note, I don't think we could manage with 20% fewer employees. There's already too much work as it is and sometimes it seems like we're triaging energy policy. As for Expartegate, I worry that these recent scandals will inflict collateral damage on the CPUC rank-and-file and that the Governor will be tempted to take it out on the whole agency by restricting our budget even more \(which likely means less workers or furloughs\). Also, I find it weird that the response so far has been to increase transparency on ex parte communications](#)

[because this is only a superficial fix. If we don't want judge shopping then just take away from the Commissioners the power to assign judges. Every court I've ever heard of has problems with managing its docket, but none of them solves this problem by letting politicians make the call on judge assignments. Or to put it another way, rather than sit by and hope that the president ignores the temptation to listen to outside parties on who gets which judge, just remove the temptation altogether and insulate the process of assigning judges. Or am I missing something?"](#)

I don't know how administrative law judge assignments are made at the Cappuccino. Alan would know more about that than me. As for the governor slashing the CPUC's budgets, etc., I don't see that happening. Not this governor, and therefore nothing like it over the next four years. And Alan's vote for higher CPUC salaries is less than a surprise.

However, get real ... can you imagine the outcry from employees at other state agencies if that were to happen? There'd be a civil service migration en masse to work at the CPUC and, if I'm not mistaken, seniority would trump all other attributes for getting a posted position because it's a state agency. So hold your enthusiasm regarding more pay.

I always thought the Capp House was an ideal training ground for young analysts, attorneys, and whatnot who wanted to pursue a more profitable career in the private sector. There's nothing wrong with that as long as we in the private sector help the CPUC place capable people at the CPUC, and do our best to provide education and advocacy on the matters we most dearly cherish.

Finally, here is a really sad note from a Washington Nationals fan, brokenhearted of course: Scott Miller. When you read his lament you'll want to send him a condolence card. ["The Washington Nationals were eliminated from the baseball playoffs last week, effectively ending my baseball season. While I will continue to think good thoughts for the Orioles and watch the World Series, I am at a loss. Baseball lacks the urgency of the small amount of games that Football has. It lacks the stunning athleticism of Basketball and Ice Hockey. It ceased to be the "Nation's Pastime" years ago. But Baseball is like a friend that is there for you every day from the beginning of Spring Training in March to the end of October. It is a wonderful thing to rely upon when you are doing something in the garage or in the house and have on in the background. It is wonderful to attend in person. It is there for you. My best sporting friend, the Washington Nationals, now goes away and the days become shorter and the weather gets colder. I will look forward to that wonderful day in February when the phrase, 'Pitchers and Catchers report' to Spring Training. At that point, the long winter of my soul is illuminated by the hope of Spring."](#)

Sniff ... pass me a tissue. Well, Scott, your good Juju really helped the Orioles in their series against the Kansas City Royals. Now buck up, and root for the Giants in the World Series.

Erin's Corner



It's impossible for me to explain in a few words the atrocities I've witnessed and the fallacies special interest groups have conditioned us to accept

regarding senseless, cruel animal experiments. Relying on animal research and testing to protect and improve human health is unsafe, expensive, time-consuming, and unreliable. Humans and animals differ in anatomy, organ structure and function, toxin metabolism, chemical/drug absorption, and mechanisms of DNA repair. The only true thing humans and animals share is feeling pain and sentience. Penicillin is toxic to guinea pigs, aspirin is poisonous to cats, and the drug phen-fen caused heart damage in humans but not animals.

Despite millions of animals experimented upon and billions of taxpayer dollars spent on cancer research, 95% of cancer drugs that work on animals fail on humans. "We have cured cancer in mice for decades—and it simply didn't work in humans." Dr. Richard Klausner, former Director of the National Cancer Institute. More than 80 HIV vaccines prove safe/efficacious in chimpanzees yet unsafe for humans.

STOP ANIMAL TESTING!"

>>> Odds & Ends (!_!)

My brothers, cousins, and I play a game among ourselves called, “Do We Believe Our Mother (or Aunt)?” My 91-year old mom can come up with the most amazing stories about things going on in her life that are entirely fabricated. Not all the time, of course. Every once in a while she gets it right and forces us to recalibrate our truth-meters. She told me the other day that she didn’t like her dentist anymore because her dentist was mean to her, and wants to take out all her teeth and replace them with dentures. Well, I know for a fact she hasn’t been to her dentist since June, because I took her there. The people in the office were as nice as could be, and never spoke to her about extracting her remaining teeth. I took her to that appointment because she was convinced that the same dentist closed its office and moved away. When we arrived at the medical center where the dentist has always been located, I offered, “It looks like they moved back.”

My mom will tell stories that I’m never certain are true or not about other women in her independent living facility. My mom can get pretty ornery about stuff and especially about other people living in her complex. But I have met some of her new friends, and I think many of the nonagenarian residents are just like her. They get very fussy about the smallest things. Thus I renamed her place, “The House of Kvetch.”

When I join her for a meal in the dining area, I grind my teeth in anticipation of what awaits. She always makes anything simple very difficult. My cousin from Madison, Wisconsin recently visited my mom for a week, and I joined the two of them for dinner one evening. True to form, my mom started her order by telling our waitress, “I’ll have the matzo ball soup, but I don’t want the matzo ball.” Who orders matzo ball soup and declines the named essential element? Who indeed? Why not order a simple broth instead? “I don’t want broth,” she would say, “I want the matzo ball soup.” With that I rest my weary head, once held upright and assured but now feels as squishy as a cooked matzo ball in my upheld hands, and shake it back and forth. I think, “She’s doing it again. I know she doing this on purpose.”

Let’s talk about next week’s WPTF reception at the Grand Sheraton on Wednesday night. No invitation or RSVP is necessary; just show up. Whereas the Symposium will be held at the Sacramento Convention Center, our reception will be next door at the Sheraton Grand. Our reception will begin at 9 p.m. after the Symposium dinner and keynote speaker are finished. There will be food, beverages, and live music provided by the Jay Rolerz band. To enter the reception and receive two free drink tickets you must show your CAISO Stakeholder Symposium badge to our staff at the door. The drink tickets are for beer or wine, whereas hard liquor will be available at the cash bars. If you want water rather than an alcoholic beverage, then there will be water stations positioned around the room, no drink ticket required. The number of drink tickets handed out does have a cap, in honor of the pricing schemes embedded in our wholesale power markets. It’s first come first served for the first 300 or so people.

Government employees may accept the free drink tickets if they desire with a receipt that includes payment instructions. CAISO employees do not need a receipt to accept our hospitality. I checked with the CAISO.

No Burrito next week. I'll be too busy with the CAISO Symposium in Sacramento.



These stories will have to carry you for a time:

POOF, THE LIGHT GOES OFF!!!

A 72-year-old man goes for a physical. All of his tests come back normal so the doctor says, "Jim, everything looks great. How are you doing mentally and emotionally? Are you at peace with God?"

Jim replies, "God and I are tight. He knows I have poor eyesight, so he's fixed it when I get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, poof!, the light goes on. When I'm done, poof!, the light goes off."

"Wow, that's incredible," the doctor says.

A little later in the day, the doctor calls Jim's wife. "Barbara," he says, "Jim is doing fine but I had to call you because I'm in awe of his relationship with God. Is it true that he gets up during the night and poof! The light goes on in the bathroom, and when he's done, poof! The light goes off?"

"OH GOOD GRIEF!" Barbara exclaims, "He's peeing in the fridge again!"

That's me in ten years. Here's your closer:

John is at his doctor's office standing at the window looking down to the parking lot in contemplation. The past week he completed a series of tests and is nervously awaiting the results from his doctor. The doctor walks in and joins him at the window. Afraid to look the doctor in the face, John continues to stare outward.

The doctor speaks. "John, I've got good news and bad news, which do you prefer to hear first?"

John continues his vacant gaze downward. "I'll take the bad news first."

"Okay", the doctor continues, "It is as I feared, you only have six months to live."

John, prepared for the worst eventually turns his head and looks at the doctor. "So if I've only got six months to live, what could the good news possibly be?"

The doctor turns back to the window and pointing outward says, "Do you see that beautiful nurse down there? I'm sleeping with her."

That shouldn't make me laugh, but it does.

We'll talk again in two weeks. It will be Halloween. Send me your Halloween stories so I have something good to work with for the next edition.

gba