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## Alternative ways to celebrate the 4th of July; celebrate independence from environmental bad habits

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This 4th of July, let's re-evaluate how we celebrate. Certainly, we can remember the forward-thinking optimism of America's founding fathers when they declared triumphant independence from the tyrannical rule of King George III of Great Britain. However, England and its former colonies are now our strongest allies. How would it feel to refocus our independence in terms relevant to one of today's problems, such as declaring independence from environmental bad habits? Consider this: Fireworks this year will cause countless fires that will spread wildly in America's drought-stricken states, injuring or killing people and destroying property and forests.

Furthermore, scientific evidence is in that fireworks contribute to acid rain, and increase glacier degeneration. Detonation with gunpowder propels heavy metals: cadmium, barium, lithium and lead, as well as potassium nitrate, sulfur-coal compounds and arsenic high into the atmosphere. These atmospheric particulates mimic cloud-seeding, stimulating cloud and rain production, delivering acid rain. Also, air pollution accumulates as black deposits called "cryokonite", identified recently in Greenland glaciers. Cryokonite on polar glaciers absorbs radiant heat, causing melting and break-up into icebergs on a massive scale. This contributes to global sea-level rises. Sobering science and rational reasons to avoid buying fireworks.

How can we lead the change? Restricting the use of only "safe and sane fireworks" this 4th of July in Pacifica is a small start. For the new Pacifica Fireworks Task Force Recommendations, visit: <http://pacificapatch.com/groups/politics-and-elections>

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Instead, you could watch the East Coast firework displays on TV, or rent a movie about the American Revolutionary War, or attend a parade, or look for laser light shows. The Walt Disney Company has pioneered the use of compressed air as the propellant, instead of gunpowder. Consider the glow of a campfire or fire pit that will warm you on a foggy, cold Pacifica night. Roast marshmallows, hold a piñata party, make your own noise-makers out of dried beans shaken inside a couple of pie tins taped together, watch fireworks from other displays overhead; and, when the fire is out, enjoy the constellations, look for satellites and shooting stars.

During the day, you could check the tide charts, go tide-pooling at low tide to find sea-stars of red, orange and purple hues, right here in Pacifica, at Daly City's Mussel Rock or at the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, located at Moss Beach. You might visit one of our excellent, local aquaria (California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park, Aquarium on the Bay adjacent to Pier 39, Monterey Bay Aquarium), where the schools of sardines, movements of other fish and sea mammals provide excitement and color. And, you will see up close the beauty of these local representative creatures, similar to those we will be directly helping if we stop shooting chemicals and their plastic firework containers into the air.

Firework debris drains to creeks, beaches, and ocean, where it may be consumed by, or kill wildlife. Let's be forward-thinking, independently motivated, or take a revolutionary approach.

Then, if you want to do more, that night or the next day, clean the street where you live or work. Or come out the next day for as long or as short a time as you like, from 7:30 am, meeting at Linda Mar State Beach, Rockaway and Sharp Park beaches. Help clean up firework debris on the streets,

car parks and beaches. Look for Pacifica Beach Coalition members who will provide free bags for clean ups or take the initiative on your own and enlist your neighbors, children and friends.

Celebrate, but don't be part of the environmental problem; do it in a way that preserves wildlife, glaciers, and the environment this 4th of July. Long live the freedom to celebrate, long live our local (and global) environment!

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