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ON THE GO

Whale Center plans trips to Farallones

The Whale Center, 3933 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, will sponsor whale-watching cruises to the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, through Nov. 11.

Between mid-July and mid-November of last year, 90 percent of the Whale Center cruises sighted blue whales or humpbacks. Minke, killer, and sperm whales, Dall's and harbor porpoises, and white-sided dolphins also were observed on some trips.

Among the more than 200,000 seabirds that nest in the Farallones Islands National Wildlife Refuge are common murrelets, pigeon guillemots, Cassin's and rhinoceros auklets, tufted puffins and gull-bombardiers. The area also has such migratory birds as black-footed albatrosses, northern fulmars, sooty shearwaters, and pomarine jaegers, plus blue and white sharks and a variety of marine mammals.

Tracing history from Sutro Heights

By GEORGE HOWER Staff Writer

If someone had been able to put a camera on Sutro Heights in 1836 and record the changes in landscape photography, these are the things you could see in playback.

The Cliff House burned three times, twice because of kitchen fires, once from an explosion caused by a cache of dynamite mysteriously stored on the premises.

Sutro Baths was constructed near the Cliff House in 1883 by Adolph Sutro. It burned in the late 1960s after it was sold. Sutro came from Germany, made a fortune in silver and shared his good fortune with the public.

Playland at the Beach was constructed early in the century and torn down in the 1970s. Replaced by condos. But don't shed tears for Playland.

Donald Scott, a Golden Gate National Recreation District park ranger, first came to San Francisco in 1963 and remembers seeing Disneyland about the same time he saw Playland. Disney was the new kid on the block. Playland was old and showing its age.

"For someone in the 1920s, Playland at the Beach would have been extraordinary. It had a diving bell, a roller coaster that probably would be a national monument if it still existed, bumper cars and the Fun House," Scott said. The Fun House had Laughing Sal, a huge, bizarre wood puppet that would

Sign language

American Sign Language is the preferred mode of communication at Celebration '89, honoring Deaf Awareness Month from 4 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Zellerbach Auditorium, University of California, Berkeley.

The program will showcase local and nationally known deaf artists. Performers and educators in a day of poetry, storytelling, panels and performance art.

Highlights will include the keynote address by Eric Malskahn, author, playwright and first deaf actor on Broadway, 9:10 a.m.; "Playing with Language," with Peter Cook, poet, storyteller and performance artist, 1 p.m.; traditional play performed in ASL, 1:30 p.m.; Laney College Rappers, 2:15 p.m.; and comedy by J. Charlie McKinney and Alan Burrows, 4 p.m.

Chocolatfest

Fort Bragg Sirotopians will sponsor the Chocolatfest from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday at the intersection of Highways 1 and 20. There will be chocolate tasting, and bake-off exhibits from local restaurants and bakeries. For further information, call 891-3525.

Sign language

A survey of the Great Highway in the 1920s California had the eye thing and was trying to improve the rest of the country. Today the road is a park.

The Modernist put Americans on wheels and there was a big push for highways," said Donald Scott, a friendly fellow who is a park ranger for the Golden Gate National Recreation District. "Promoters would go from town to town, saying if you help pay for this we will run a highway through your town."

There was an attempt to get a transcontinental highway without using government money," Scott said.

To get an idea how impressive the Great Highway is, Scott suggests you park your car at Sutro Heights Park above the Cliff House and go the section that looks south — providing a panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean Beach, the Great Highway and homes that came within hundreds of yards of the beach.

"That's a good way to get the lay of the land," Scott said.

Less than 150 years ago, sand dunes stretched across western San Francisco. The dunes were made of fine-grained sand that shifted and could be blown around by the faintest breeze. The dunes eventually yielded to houses, highways and amusement parks.

The Great Highway probably was intended to be a coastal highway and scenic drive, Scott said, and the fact it was called the Great Highway to start with indicates it was going to be longer than the few miles it remains today.

An 1855 newspaper story said that on Sundays, San Franciscans flocked by carriage to Ocean Beach and rode their carriages through the surf. Presidents Grant, Hayes, McKinley, Roosevelt and Taft and actress Sarah Bernhardt rode from the Palace Hotel to the Cliff House.

"The Great Highway was built when 'motorizing' was a recreation," says Dave Rice, a National Park Service public affairs secretary. "It was touted as a pleasure drive, not that it was a pleasure drive, but from from anywhere to anywhere, but they may have thought at the time it would connect up with highway system."

For the sake of argument, we'll say the Great Highway actually started on a hillside in Sausalito, a modest place with a name from out of a Humphrey Bogart movie: Lovers' Restaurant. Lovers' is a no-nonsense place run by real people. It has a no-nonsense sign.

SYLVIA Nicole Hollander



Highway

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They were put in before World War II, taken out after WWII and now Fort Funston houses a native plant nursery and plants that stabilize the soil.

Fort Funston may also be the only place in San Francisco where you can see sand dunes as they existed before the carpeted cover them after World War II.

Shipwrecks — There are several shipwrecks along the ocean beach. Winter storms sometimes expose part of wreck of the King Philip which sank in 1878. The wreck is near the point at which the Great Highway comes down near the ocean.

Tombstones — You can see them, but tombstones from a San Francisco cemetery are someplace along the beach opposite Rivera Street. When early San Francisco developers needed the land, they reclaimed a cemetery and moved the tombstones under the beach.

Sea Rocks — Get out of your car, don't forget to lock it and walk around the Cliff House to get a good look at sea rocks. Sea rocks were probably the first marine wildlife refuge designated by Congress. Start before the Cliff House and you can get a good bracing shot of walk air, watch the sea lions and listen to them barking at each other.

Sutro Heights Park — Sutro Heights Park is not a slick, glibby park but it's a great place for lovers to take a quiet walk, feed the squirrels or get a fantastic view of the coastline.

This is where the late Adolph Sutro lived. A German immigrant, he made his money mining in Nevada and his wealth enabled him to practice his philosophy of sharing what he had with others. He built Sutro Baths, which had

five swimming pools, some heated. It wasn't just a swim center; it was an education center. It had restaurants, art galleries, theaters, above the pools, swim pools filled by tidal action and environmental displays.

Sutro Baths was sold to developers in 1966 and it burned down shortly after. The National Park Service is considering preserving the ruins to show what was there at one time.

Sutro Heights Park occupies 22 acres where Sutro once lived. His home was there but he regarded it as a park rather than a home site and even the gardens around his home were open to the public.

San Francisco Zoo — The San Francisco Zoo is at the intersection of Sloat Boulevard and the Great Highway and boasts a world class primate discovery center. You can see something here you might not be able to see anywhere else: nocturnal monkeys. These "night people" of the primate world can be seen in a living space purposely kept dark.

Golden Gate Park — San Francisco would be a sad city without Golden Gate Park. The park has the Japanese Tea Gardens, the Conservatory of Flowers, an Asian Art Museum, the Academy of Sciences, windmill, picnic spots, a planetarium, seniors baseball fields, an aquarium, and even a short but tricky par three golf course.

Are we going to make a recommendation? Scott said, "I was ashamed to see the Great Highway, walk if you want to see Golden Gate Park, walk."

Just about everything along the Great Highway — but not the Great Highway itself — is run by the Golden Gate National Park Association. The Park Association also runs Sutro Heights Park, Fort Point and the Hyde Street Pier. In fact it manages everything from Tomales Bay south to Half Moon Bay.

What will the area along the Great Highway be like in 2015? That depends, Scott said, on which of two decisions the National Park Service chooses. The NPS sometimes knocks things down and starts an area return to nature. At other times the service restores everything.

The Great Highway, Scott pointed out, is a meeting place between the wild environment of Golden Gate Park is home for all kinds of wildlife. Unlike flourishes just behind trees and bushes which border Golden Gate Park.

When I was 14 and delivering a morning newspaper in San Francisco in 1945, my route began near Golden Gate Park, on 43rd Avenue. At 4 a.m. in the morning, peacocks in Golden Gate Park would cry out to each other through the morning fog. Their cries sounded like someone calling for help and if nothing else you give goosebumps, shrieking peacocks and.

Sonoma homeless seminar scheduled

An experimental seminar on homelessness in Sonoma County is planned from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Community Support Network, 110 Petaluma Hill Road.

The event, "Exposure Education Experience," is sponsored by Service Outreach Ministry (SOM), a non-profit volunteer organization headquartered in Sebastopol.

Seminar participants will take a tour of agencies which serve the homeless population and will delve into understanding causes and solutions to the homeless problem.

Enrollment is \$10. Pre-registration is required; call 829-7567.

NEIGHBORS WHO CARE

The Volunteer Center of Sonoma County, a United Way agency, recruits volunteers for placement in non-profit health, welfare, educational and civic organizations.

Call 544-9480 in Santa Rosa, 762-0111 in Petaluma, or 906-6644 in Sonoma. If you are interested in applying for a volunteer opportunity, just right for you.

Neighbors who care

Conduct phone and direct client interviews to ascertain needs, then refer people to agencies that can meet their needs. Volunteer four hours per week in the Sonoma County Social Service information and referral department.

You can make it possible for seniors to maintain their independence by providing them with transportation to and from crucial appointments. Drive your own car or more half days per week. Mileage reimbursement is available.

See that shut-in seniors get one hot meal each day. Meals are prepared by Council on Aging. Volunteer two hours a week to pick up and deliver these meals. Volunteer four hours a week and assist physically handicapped preschool children with toys, puzzles, and playground equipment. Volunteers need patience and an interest in special kids.

Special Seminar

AIDS, ARC and Us: Saturday, June 3. The Journey Back to the Heart. 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 22 Rancho Tropicana 2200 Santa Rosa Ave. Santa Rosa \$10. Sponsors by Church of Religious Science. Information & reservations 546-4553. (Tickets available at door).

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