

PACIFICA'S FIRST HALLOWEEN

On October 31, 1769, Spanish explorer Gaspar de Portola and his mounted troops and livestock trudged down Montara Mountain into San Pedro Valley. The uniformed soldiers and vaqueros on horseback, followed by cattle and pack mules, must have made quite a sight for the Ohlone Indian residents of the valley. One can imagine their curiosity, fear, and awe. Accounts of the event say that some Indians hid, some ran, while others confronted the strangers. Portola's men and their Indian scouts offered the natives "treats" of shiny, colorful glass beads, commonly used to initiate rapport with Indians. The beads were well received. The Indians used them like money in trading as well as ornamentation on clothing and baskets. Today, these beads still can be seen in museum collections housing California Indian artifacts. The Cantor Museum in Palo Alto displays fine examples of baskets decorated with the shiny trinkets. At the time the Portola expedition entered Pacifica, native people made up 100 percent of the ethnic demographic. Today it is approximately 0.6 percent. That, sadly, is another story. (Ron Maykel on Pacifica Riptide)

PACIFICA'S LAST HALLOWEEN

Rick Bauman says, "Something in our Linda Mar neighborhood needs to be acknowledged. My friend Mike Moore and his wife Lisa have been putting on this elaborate haunted house for the past 15 years. It features a Pirates of the Caribbean motif and has a full-size ship in his front yard on lower Alicante. The garage is done up like the Disneyland ride of the same name; it's very cool. Mike says this is the last year that he will be doing it. It will be missed by young and old alike."

BAD PRECEDENT

Before last week's election, Dan Underhill wrote: "I have just received my Official Ballot -- Consolidated Municipal, School and Special District Election -- County of San Mateo, and I don't recognize any of the names. Can you shed some light on this race?" Many voters I spoke to agreed with Dan. No one seemed to know any of the candidates or why they should even bother to vote,

though this was a historic first-time, all-mail election in San Mateo County. If some evildoer had wanted to scuttle all-mail voting, this would have been the perfect way to do it.

EL NINO IS EVERYWHERE

Signs of a strong El Nino are everywhere, with both good and bad effects, according to Earthweek.com. The “diary of the planet” says that recent rains over the normally bone-dry Atacama Desert in northern Chile awakened dormant seeds in the soil, covering the area with colorful wildflowers and “exotic floral aromas.” But El Nino’s negative effects in Brazil and the Caribbean caused drought and wildfires, while in East Africa they caused floods. Sometimes, Mother Nature can be a real beotch.

VERY FUNNY POLICE BEAT ITEM

Citizen Assist 1510310278. Occurred on Corona Drive, Pacifica. Couple's bed fell apart -- wants help putting it back together -- bed is not broken -- they just don't have the strength to do it. Disposition: Log Note Only. (Pacifica Police log)

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