



A Personal View

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Back from traveling to discover that home is best, and we're glad to be home. Lots of good things were waiting for us.

But first, shock and disappointment to find that the Merry Pranksters Café in La Honda closed, with Craig Eddy and Laurie McClean looking for new owners. Their former chef and partner, Rufino Pacheco, is now cooking at the Bella Vista on King's Mountain.

Good news soon followed with rumors of new owners interested in keeping up the name, and hopefully the spirit of the place.

But some nostalgia for those warm summer nights on the patio listening to music, and most of all, for the day the real Merry Pranksters and the king himself, Ken Kesey, came to town. The Further bus on its way to England with its famous fellow travelers all aboard. The year was 1999, the month was June, and about 300 people gathered to see this unusual and spectacular sight. I don't think we were ever closer as a community. Ken Kesey promised to come again. So, we challenge the Merry Pranksters Café's new owners to bring us back Ken Kesey and the Further bus and the Pranksters one more time.

This summer, the sixteenth San Gregorio Coastal Protection Music Festival brought an exceptional duo to our grateful ears: David Lindley and Wally Ingram, a new sound for me, part reggae, part rock 'n roll. These two musicians were amazing. Colorfully dressed, from red suede shoes to multicolored patchwork jackets, they sounded and looked as good as any five-member band, their sound strong and magnetic.

But this year being my fourth at this event, my eyes started to zoom in on something else going on around me. Rituals, yes yearly rituals that you could rely on to be acted out at some point during the day. For example, about halfway through the day, the "Plant Native Trees" guy will turn up with free small trees in buckets that he will place around the stage with hopes of giving them away later. He will also bring out a large cardboard box full of secondhand clothes, all with the words "Plant Trees" stenciled on their backs. He will spill these clothing giveaways on the ground, and as the afternoon breezes of the coast pick up, slowly but surely, every piece of clothing is claimed and worn. By sunset we can see people wearing them and dancing about the stage.

The tambourine lady also seems to attend every year. Not in any of the local bands, she nonetheless stands by the stage, dances, and plays her tambourine in perfect rhythm. Proving you don't always have to be part of a band to make music.

Two little girls, under ten, will dance by the stage better than Michael Jackson and the Spice Girls, and then will lose interest and play somewhere else. But this year I noticed something new, something I've never seen before. Two young women sitting on a blanket in front of us were very busy for at least four hours making homemade lemonade. This was no small endeavor, since they had at least fifty lemons with them. One big glass jar, water, and a ten-pound bag of sugar. A simple plastic juicer, their method of fun. All afternoon they worked, cutting, squeezing lemons, mixing with water and sugar. Then, ritualistically, drinking their drink in little cups made from hollowed out lemon halves. At first, I thought that this must be a vehicle for something else, but no, it was all about the juice for them. So, I'll call them the "Lemon Girls," and see if they do it again next year.

The summer's last local music event is always the Pescadero Arts and Fun Festival. Now this town is so unique that a local favorite, The Gary Gates Band, sing a song called "Pescadero Days" and people go wild. Dancing and controlled partying, the fare of the day. This town loves its music and comedy, and this event moves along with good jokes and great entertainment. Native Aztec dancers, clever references to Pescadero's struggle during the bad winter and the "Survivor" program, as Pescadero is the true survivor of floods and El Niño.

The festival at Pescadero left us wanting more. More Mark Reid Band, and more local events. We crowned our musical summer at the Shoreline Amphitheater with the event of the year, Further 2000 with "The Other Ones" and Ziggy Marley making us grateful to go further, and on with fall.