

The New Year News

1 January 2022

Santa Cruz, California

ITS BEACH SUNSET



Surf City USA

Steamer Lane
Santa Cruz



Mother-daughter volleyball

Twin Lakes State Beach
Santa Cruz



Sailing

Monterey Bay
Santa Cruz



ITS BEACH SUNSET

Sunsets have always played a big part of my New Year's Day, and the California coast has always been the focus of my New Year's newsletters, the last of which I published in 2017. (All eight of them are here.)

Once I began going to school, sunset on January 1 marked the end of the long Christmas-New Year holiday break and time to do the homework assignments I'd been given in mid-December. First semester exams were just two weeks away. It was a downer of an ending to a break that had seemed infinite just two weeks before.

Living in North Carolina, I quickly discovered the return of homework could be delayed by three hours by the Rose Bowl football game, which was played in California from where the televised sun still shined three hours after it was dark in Hamlet.

The Rose Bowl was traditionally played between a hefty, crew-cut team from the Midwest against a skinny team from Southern California with hair flowing from beneath their helmets. The skinny, long-haired team usually won because it exploited a rule little-known north of the Ohio River, which permits a team throw the football in addition to running with it.

Now, by the time the sun sets on my New Year's Day, a large majority of Earth's population is already moved on to January 2, school and work. The activities I'm most interested in are those people themselves are playing to prolong their holidays.

Around Santa Cruz, the beach town where I went to shoot pictures yesterday, those activities were quintessentially – but not originally – Californian: sand-and-water-based pastimes like sailing, beach volleyball and surfing.

Surfing is closest to Santa Cruz's heart, however, because it's where the sport began in California.

The first California surfers were three Hawaiian brothers, princes and nephews of Hawaii King Kalākaua who were sent to school in San Mateo in 1885. On weekends, Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole, David La'Amea Kahalepoule Kāwananakoia and Edward Abnel Keliiahonui would take the train through San Jose to Santa Cruz to enjoy the beach. They had three surfboards carved from California redwood timber at a local lumber mill and introduced the sport to the United States at the mouth of the San Lorenzo River.

Their story is told in the Santa Cruz Surfing Museum, housed in the lighthouse that stands above Its Beach, where the photos on the cover and last page were shot, and Steamer Lane, the old shipping lane into Santa Cruz where the surfer on Page 2 is cruising beneath the cliff. The volleyball match and sailboat were shot at the entry to the Santa Cruz Harbor.

By now you may be frustrated about the origin of the beach with the strange name of "Its." Apparently it was named for the women who liked to swim and sunbathe there without their tops, so it was given a name without a "T."

Good night, Sun

Lighthouse Point
Santa Cruz

