

The Bay Area Bugle

Independence Day

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

*HAPPY
FOURTH
OF JULY*



The 33-star 1861 U.S. flag flies over the parapet of Fort Point beneath the southern end of the Golden Gate Bridge. *Story begins inside.*

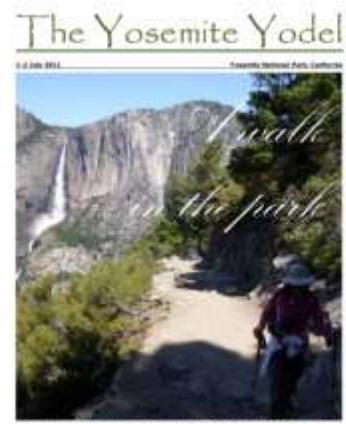
Happy Fourth of July



2009
Lassen Volcanic N.P.



2010
Sequoia National Park



2011
Yosemite N.P.

Three years of Fourth of July newsletters. This year's maintains the national park theme.

It's a safe bet that many – if not most – of the visitors to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area don't realize they're in a park of any kind, much less a national park, much less one of the largest urban parks in the world.

That's because they're driving through on a freeway or California's Highway 1 or because they think they're on a military reservation.

Most likely it's because they're in a city.

Forget that the National Mall in Washington, D.C. – America's monument-strewn front yard stretching from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial – is also a national park.

We've just come to think of parks as mountain wildernesses, uninhabited stretches of wild coastline or freakish examples of natural wonder such as, for example, enormous holes in the ground.

– Continued overleaf

Cover photo

Fort Point was rushed to completion in 1861 to protect the entrance to San Francisco during the Civil War. Once that task was completed, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnson resigned his commission to join the Confederate Army. He was killed a year later, the highest-ranking soldier on either side to die in battle.

Fort Point shares a distinction with all the U.S. military installations within the GGNRA in that the attack it was built to repel never came.

However, it was built on the site of the Castillo de San Joaquin, which the Spanish built when they settled the San Francisco area in 1794. When rebellion erupted on July 1, 1846, the fort was abandoned by the Spanish and taken without a shot by a force of 10 American soldiers.

Happy Fourth of July

– From previous

Allow my fourth annual Fourth of July newsletter to expand your concept of what a national park is and can be.

This year, because of complications in coordinating holiday plans, I didn't get to one of those traditional parks. But Gordon, the family's new college grad, and I did spend a little time exploring an unconventional one.

The GGNRA, as I will refer to it for brevity, stretches along the California coastline north and south of the Golden Gate for 50 miles.

It incorporates, among other things:

- Mountains,
- Hiking trails,
- At least eight former military installations dating from 1776 through Nike missile sites and including the Presidio of San Francisco,
- Multiple campsites,
- Beaches named and unnamed,
- Species safe and endangered,
- A former federal prison, Alcatraz, and
- The bridge.

The bridge, by the way, is neither the park's namesake nor is it golden. It's orange.



Map of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area

The strait that provides the entrance to San Francisco Bay from the Pacific Ocean – the “gate,” if you will – was named “golden” by U.S. Gen. John C. Fremont for what he foresaw as its importance to the West Coast.

Two years later gold was discovered, proving Fremont right.

Happy 236th birthday to the U.S. of A., and may you enjoy your holiday as much as my family will when we roast our beast in celebration.



Gordon leads the way up Mount Tamalpais.



Road on the edge of a continent. Marin Headlands.



Ocean Beach, San Francisco



Hang gliders at Fort Funston, a coastal observation and gun ranging facility in World War II and then a Nike missile site until 1963.



Goodbye from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area



Fog envelops the Golden Gate Bridge from the Marin Headlands