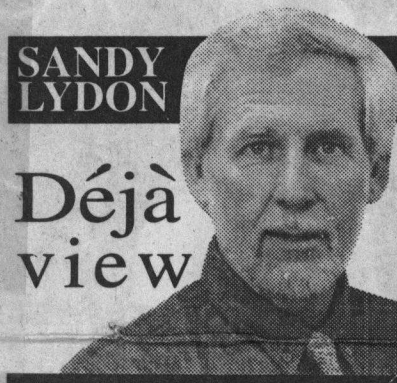


Curse not the summer fog

**SANDY
LYDON**

**Déjà
view**



IF MEMORIAL DAY weekend was any indication, we are now in our "summertime weather pattern" — that's meteorological code for fog.

From now into late September the cool, gray mass of moisture will surge inland overnight and burn back (reluctantly) most afternoons, giving our days a familiar and temperate rhythm.

Our summertime mists have generated a wide range of opinion over the years. The mariner's vote was cast early: In July of 1579 Sir Frances Drake called them "stinking fogges." (A surprising judgment coming from an Englishman, don't you think?)

Once folks came ashore, however, they quickly observed the fog's beneficent effects. A Spanish visitor in 1792 noted that while the "constant mists" make it difficult to sail into Monterey Bay, they "temper the heat of the sun in summer, irrigate the soil, and make it fertile...."

(If you want to see a graphic representation of the fog's influence on local temperatures, turn to the back page of this section and see how the recent fog has tightened those temperature lines.)

Santa Cruz County's early tourist industry was built on that summertime fog bank. As late as 1917 the editor of this newspaper wrote: "Delicious is our present regular morning fog, the delight of our many visitors from the hot interior."



Dr. Alfred Sutton, Cooksey Family Collection

Fog shrouds trees along Seabright Avenue, summer 1913.

People came here to cool off, not sunbathe.

Without the fog's cool embrace there would be no redwood trees, artichokes, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, evening fires, sweaters or fog horns.

I still remember getting "fog passes" at the Skyview Drive-In movie when the fog became so thick that we couldn't see the screen. (Not that any of us at the drive-in noticed it, however.)

I love the fog. I still stop at the vista point on Highway 280 and watch it spill down into Crystal Springs Reservoir, and sometimes drive over to San Juan Bautista to watch the fog slide over the Gavilans like a great white comforter being pulled over us for the night.

Of course sometimes the fog hangs around too long even for us fog lovers.

Even the Rumsien Ohlone, the Indians who lived along the Carmel River for thousands of years, grew impatient enough with the fog to compose a "Song to Make the Fog Go Away."

There's no need to sing the song just yet. Summer's here.

If you have a photograph you would like to see used in this column, or one that you would like some help identifying, send a good photocopy (color copies are best) to Déjà View, Sandy Lydon, care of the Santa Cruz County Sentinel, 207 Church St., Santa Cruz, Calif. 95060. E-mail address: salydon@aol.com.

Sandy Lydon is a member of the history faculty at Cabrillo College.