

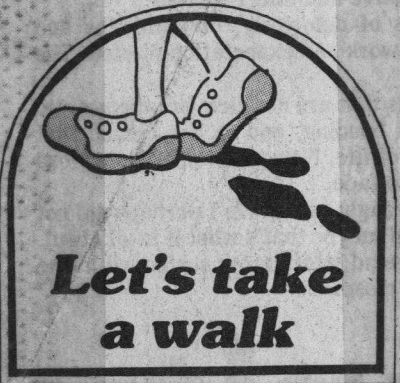
Beautiful beach scenery is par for the course at La Selva

By LAURIE SLOTHOWER
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OK. SO WE didn't get a summer in 1986. It happens.

Think of the weather this year like one of those Mr. Coffee rebates: You pay a little more, but you get a little kickback later on. Sure, you unpacked your galoshes pretty early in the season. Come February, you'll be breaking out the suntan lotion and heading for the beach.

The other advantage of this year's schizophrenic climate is that autumn has been here since mid-August. And autumn, because of its mild temperatures and parade of changing trees, is the best time of year for long walks.



La Selva Beach, a quiet beach settlement toward the southern end of the county, is one of many places which is at its best in the fall. Tall

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
September 21, 1986
REFERENCE

trees line the wide, gently sloping residential streets, and the ocean looks flat and blue against orange harvest sunsets.

A stroll through the Parcourse to the beach is scenic and can be done in half an hour or take as long as a couple of hours, depending on how far you walk along Manresa State Beach.

START the walk at Playa Boulevard and Arbolado Drive. You'll notice the white lattice-work sign with the community's name on it. Important community events also are posted on the sign.

Parking is plentiful along the side of the road. Turn right at Arbolado, toward the La Selva Beach Parcourse. Within a block, you'll come to the junction of Arbolado and Asta spelled out atop a row of mailboxes.

Both paths offer a pleasant rural meander, as they are amply landscaped with trees and shrubs.

Arbolado is a little more rambling and takes longer to get to our eventual destination. Asta goes through the Parcourse, subject of mucho neighborhood debate in La Selva. As you approach Breve Avenue, you can see the ocean.

What about the great Parcourse controversy? Seems that people who own homes across the road from the Parcourse aren't happy about seeing joggers do pushups in their front yards. (La Selva Beach Recreation District owns the land on which the Parcourse is located.)

Residents protested the installation to the county Zoning Board. A hearing is scheduled within a month.

I don't know about fractious foot traffic, but I did find the Parcourse markers a little jarring. They feature a bright black and white drawing of a referee. To this observer,

they looked like video game mar-quees.

Parcourse or no, the path is still lovely for foot or bike travel.

Follow the road down a hill to Breve Avenue. You'll see a locked gate with a sign over it, "Lamberston's Gate." Landowners who belong to La Selva Beach Improvement Association have keys to the gate, which leads to a private beach.

You'll want to continue left up Breve toward Playa Boulevard.

When you get to Playa, turn right, and continue down the pretty, palm-tree-lined road till you come to Vista Drive. Then follow the road as it veers left.

From here, you can look out over the ocean and the train tracks. There are benches where you can sit and watch the sunset ... or sunrise. Vista Drive is an enjoyable street to walk on. It's spacious and unspoiled, and has minimal traffic.

Follow Vista Drive till you come to the public walkway leading to Manresa State Beach. It's located just beyond a row of six mailboxes for 301-315 Vista Drive. If you find yourself at Anita Avenue, you've gone too far.

The beach path is maintained for the public by La Selva Beach Recreation District. Follow it downhill to the railroad tracks. You'll see a sign with the number "109" on it.

Cross the tracks and turn left, walking on a path that parallels the ocean.

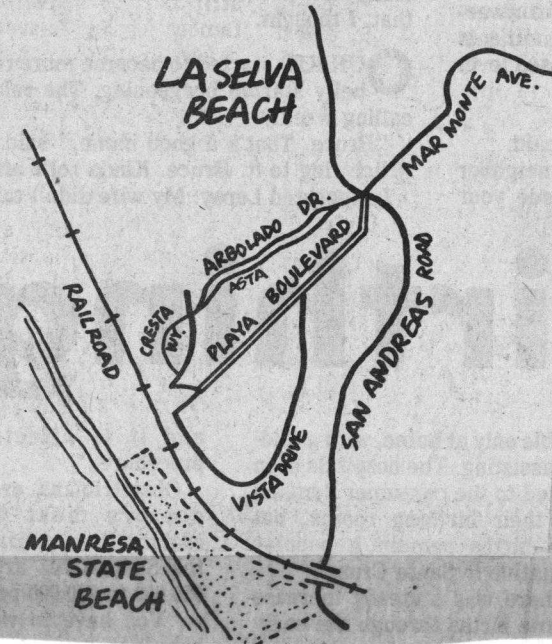
Soon you'll be at Manresa State Beach, hours 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Turn right to get to the beach.

The first beach entrance has a gate prohibiting vehicular traffic. Warnings are posted about ocean currents.



Photos by Bill Lovejoy

Man's best friend takes the steady course on a foggy Manresa morning.



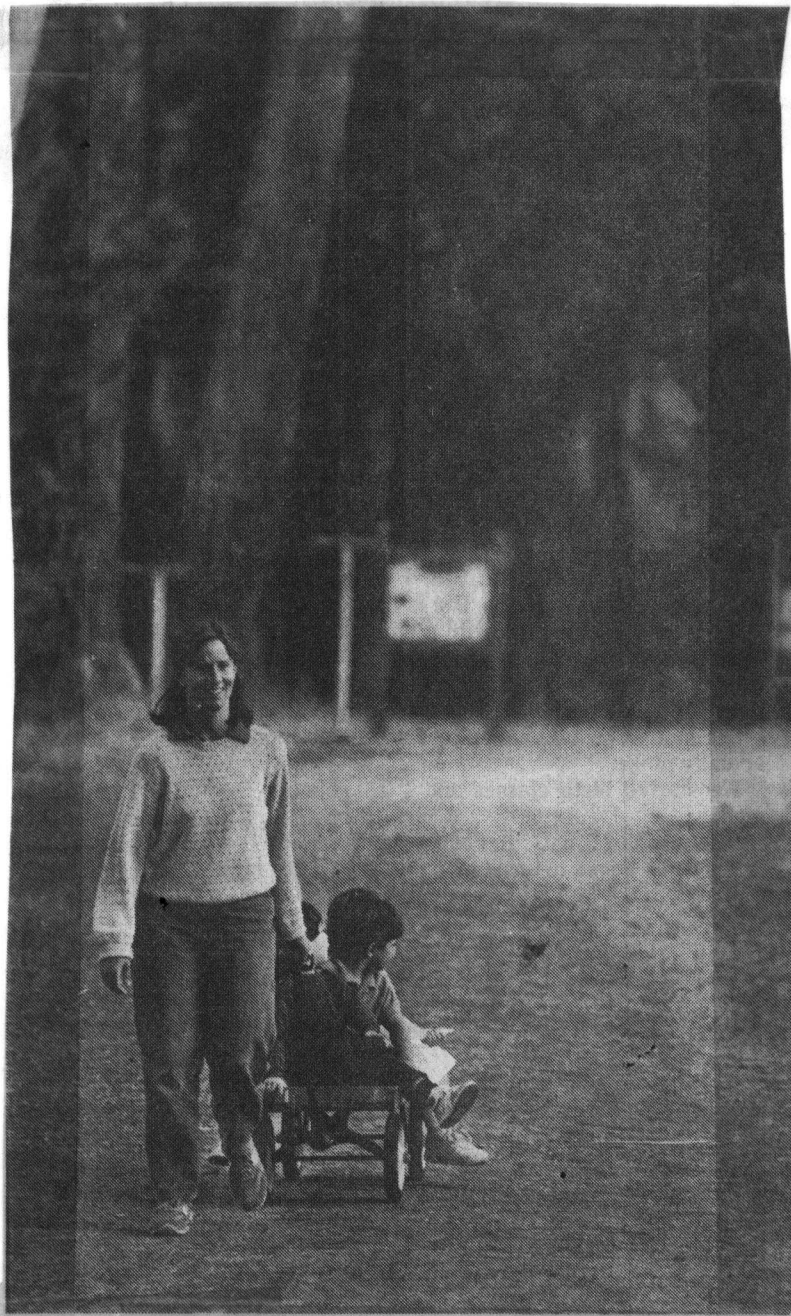
From here, you can walk as far as you desire. There's no way to cut back to the main road, unless you're a member of the Improvement Association, in which case you can cut across the beach near the railroad trestle to the private beach entrance, then past the gate to the nexus of Breve, Arbolado and Asta streets.

For non-La Selva residents, just go back the same way you came, back up Vista Drive to Playa. This time, take Playa (instead of the Parcourse) back to where you're parked.

At Playa and Estrella you can see La Selva Beach Clubhouse, a playground and the library, a quaint operation where patrons check out books by writing their names and phone numbers on a piece of paper.

"We haven't gotten our computer system yet," one of the librarians said, drolly.

"This is how we checked out books



Wendy Miller's passengers are on a roll at Parcourse.

when I was a kid," her associate added.

CHANGE seems to have been waylaid in the perpetual La Selva fog. At least, you might think so if you talked to some of the community's residents.

La Selva was developed in 1925 by David W. Batchelor, a land developer from Petaluma. He bought

the entire track of 265 acres plus almost a mile of beach from the Jesuit Fathers for \$50,000 cash. This information comes from a book compiled by the La Selva Beach Improvement Association.

The property, known as Villa Manresa, had been used as a retreat. Batchelor, a Scotsman, renamed the area Rob Roy Junction after the highlands chief Rob Roy

MacGregor. Scottish names were given to streets and roads, and the area was developed as a vacation spot.

The sale of beach homes slowed considerably after the Great Depression. In 1935, Batchelor sold the development to Edward Burghart, who changed the town's name to La Selva Beach — "the forest beach."

He also renamed the roads with Spanish names.

Parcels which were not developed were sold later to Joseph R.H. Jacoby.

La Selva remains a quiet, peaceful seaside community. "It hasn't changed much over the years," said one woman, who declined to give her name. She'd been a resident for 14 years.

A retired Southern Pacific railroad employee echoed her remarks, saying the town hadn't changed since he moved in 20 years ago from Aptos.

"I walk every day, 10, 12, 13 miles," he offered. "I like to walk from here to Aptos and back."

The peppy pedestrian also declined to give his name. A close-mouthed bunch, these La Selvans.

The Sentinel welcomes readers' suggestions for the best and most beautiful walks in Santa Cruz County. Please mail your comments to the Sentinel Living Department, 207 Church St., Santa Cruz, 95060, or call 423-4242, ext. 259.