DID YOU KNOW?

- It is hard to recognize Big Sur’s largest Redwood, known locally as the “Pioneer Tree,” because its top has been shortened by lightning strikes. 

- The Lone Cypress is trademarked. You cannot legally publish a picture of it.

- In 1948, a young woman by the name of Norma Jean was crowned Castroville’s first “Artichoke Queen.” She later gained fame as actress Marilyn Monroe. Castroville produces 85% of the nation’s artichokes.

- The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary covers 5,312 square miles, one and a half times the size of the largest national park (Death Valley NP) in the continental U.S.

- Robert Louis Stevenson modeled Treasure Island’s Spyglass Hill after Point Lobos State Reserve.

- Neon signs, billboards and hot dog stands are prohibited in the quaint village of Carmel, and a permit is required to wear high-heeled shoes.

- Built in 1846, California’s First Theater in Monterey is California’s first (and still operating once a year during Christmas) theater. Nineteenth century melodramas have been presented here since the 1930s.

- The Bixby Bridge in Big Sur was built by prisoners eager to earn “good time” off their prison sentences. It is one of the world’s highest single-span bridges at 714 feet long by 260 feet high.

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• Before 1987, it was illegal to sell and eat ice cream outdoors in Carmel. When Clint Eastwood ran for mayor, he campaigned against this restriction. He won (not just for his stand on ice cream), and quickly worked with the city council to remove the archaic ordinance. Ice cream of all sorts is now enjoyed on the streets of Carmel.9

• Although the route has changed over the years, since it first opened in 1881, 17-Mile Drive is still exactly 17 miles long. To assist motorists from venturing into the maze of neighborhood roads, a red-dashed line down the center of the main road marks 17-Mile Drive. Motorcycles are prohibited entry.10

• The Old Del Monte golf course that opened in 1897 is the oldest in continuous operation west of the Mississippi River.11

• Monterey Bay was colonized by the Spaniards in fear that the Russians were going to invade their “claimed” land.12

• An area called the Impossible City was developed at Fort Ord during the 1970s and utilized as an advanced training area. The training area included a small town, called Dodge City, which had pop up shooting targets of bad guys and good guys.13

• Oral tradition reports that the Memory Garden at Pacific House in Monterey used to host bullfights and bear fights. The walls that used to keep spectators and wild animals in now are lined by lemon trees, magnolias, wisteria, pomegranate trees and old rosebushes.14

• The restaurant 1833 (formerly known as Stokes Adobe) in Monterey is said to be haunted. Built in 1833, it became California’s first pharmacy under the care of James Stokes, who was a common sailor but convinced others he was a doctor. It is said that many died under his “pharmaceutical” business, including the governor of Monterey; some say he was a serial killer. He allegedly died under his own hand, after taking poison in front of his two young sons.15

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• Partington Cove is a Big Sur explorer’s complete treat. On the south side of the point is a historical tie up for ships. The hoist stanchion is still in place, so are the iron eyes drilled into the rocks. It looks like a pirates’ hideout, or a booze smuggler’s cove, and probably was both.16

• Don’t touch the monarch butterflies when they come to visit for the winter - Pacific Grove police will fine you $1,000! 17

• In 1941, Artist Salvador Dali designed an elaborately decorated costume party at Hotel Del Monterey.18

• As the #1 agricultural region in the United States, the Salinas Valley earned its nickname "Salad Bowl of the Nation," due to the wide variety of fruits and vegetables grown here. The total economic contribution of Monterey County agriculture is $8.2 billion.19

• Carmel-by-the-Sea has one art gallery for every 34 residents. 20

• Point Lobos State Reserve near Carmel hosts a geologic wonder: rocks of four "ages" can be found there, including the unusual Carmel formation dated back to the Paleocene age (over 60 million years old).21

• Nearly 1/4 million tons of sardines were processed on Cannery Row in 1945, the year John Steinbeck’s Cannery Row was published.22

• Local settings from around the Monterey Peninsula have provided the backdrop for more than 180 films, including From Here to Eternity, Basic Instinct, East of Eden, Lassie Come Home, Rebecca, Star Trek: The Voyage Home and Treasure Island.23