

**Met any invisible people lately?**

A few years ago a movie, *The Emerald Forest*, told the story of a South American Indian tribe who referred to themselves as "The Invisible People." This was their way of surviving in a world filled with enemies, including whites and other native tribes. They lived so quietly, never breaking a twig, never making precipitous movements, that they were, for practical purposes, invisible. As you shop, walk and drive in Pacifica, you are passing hundreds of invisible people every day, Pacifica's visitors and tourists. They are here every day of the week. They drive through on Highway One. They enjoy our beaches and our surf. They shop our stores, stay at our hotels and motels, eat in our restaurants, pay sales taxes, make phone calls. There aren't nearly enough of them. They don't spend nearly as much as they would like to. Sometimes, inadvertently, we make it difficult or impossible for them to leave money behind. We want all the visitors we can get. They should be welcomed and encouraged. We want them to hike our hills, walk our parks, get their feet wet on our beaches. We want them to golf, shoot arrows. In years past, they used to use the rifle range. They love our city, its built-in airconditioning, its sunsets, its hills and creeks, its trails and history. They are often disappointed when stores are closed at the time they are ready to do business, or don't have the product they want to buy, or the clerk or business owner can't or won't help them, or there is no place to spend their money buying goods and services they want. They want to enjoy life in scenic Pacifica.

Last January I bought three tickets with the intention of seeing the elephant seals at Ano Nuevo state reserve once again. Unfortunately, for several good reasons, neither my wife or I could make it at the last moment.

Rather than waste \$12 worth of tickets, I decided to make lemonade with my lemons, and so I offered them to two pleasant women who came into the Chamber of Commerce asking for details about what it's like on Highway One from here south.

I didn't know anything about them beyond their pleasant manner, since I didn't quiz them on their origins.

I thought no more about it until I got a thank you note from Ohio, telling me how thrilled they had been to see elephant seals close up. They might have been from Fremont or Milpitas.

At the Chamber each weekend, I talk to Germans, French-Canadians, and a hundred other nationalities identifiable by accents, but how can you tell the difference between Ohioans, Idahoans and Petalumans?

A lot of effort has been made by the Chamber and the City to maximize benefits Pacifica receives from visitors and tourists, but the bottom line is that we are still dealing with one invisible person at a time. You never know who's ahead of you in line at Thrifty, or on the highway, or getting gas at Dave and Lou's, or buying a card at Patty's Hallmark. The impression we make is the impression we leave.