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## Why You Shouldn't Move to California

by Philip Greenspun; created 1998

Whenever I'm suffering through a miserable New England winter, I ask myself why I don't just move to California. I finally figured it out one day in downtown Santa Cruz. They've posted signs throughout the city center listing the things that you can't do (photo above):

- no skateboarding
- no skate devices
- no alcohol
- no bikes on sidewalks
- no dogs

No dogs? That's right. You can't walk a dog down the street in downtown Santa Cruz. Downtown Santa Cruz isn't especially crowded either.

Why do Californians need so many rules? Because they all moved there to enjoy the land, the climate, to take a job. They did not move there in order to become part of a community. In fact, they might very well hate all the people around them but still choose to live in California. This does not happen in northern Michigan or central Massachusetts. If you don't like the community, you move. There is no other reason to be there.

If Californians did not have myriads of carefully set forth rules, they would simply kill each other.

My friends in California mostly have contempt for their fellow citizens. I ask them "today you're going to run into a person on the street that you've never met before. I'm not going to tell you anything about this person. The person could be of any age, sex, or economic class. Do you think you will enjoy meeting this person?" The response is always "I think the person will have the wrong political beliefs" or "the person will probably be a smoker" or "I bet the person won't be a vegetarian, so I can't talk to him" or "I doubt that this person will be educated or intelligent."

### Photographic Evidence for my Theory



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Very astute. I did move to California from back East for the weather, jobs, etc. that Easterners believe are worth moving for. After ten years here, meeting my wife and having made dozens of friends, I haven't really "settled in". **The sense of community is lacking, and the feeling that people don't like one another in general is real. I suppose those of us who left to "get away" have stayed away, lacking the desire or skill to revive what made home "home". It is unsettling to feel vaguely threatened most of the time.** Strangers aren't overtly rude - they are inconsiderate and unapologetic, never acknowledging one another with an "excuse me", "thank you", or stiff nod. The stranger ignores you, immediately forgetting the discourtesy as long as he is not confronted. I'm guilty too, making private judgments of people based on their dress, opinions, speech, etc. Maybe one day I'll move back to DC, and take a long vacation in California whenever the cold, humidity, and traffic start to wear me out.

**Paul Holbrook, July 14, 1998; 09:32 P.M.**

**I lived in California for a good part of my life, finally leaving in 1989. After I moved away, I finally realized what a completely messed up state it is. Phillip has it right: CA is a wonderful place to visit, but completely unable to manage itself.**

i finally found a book which set down a cogent argument for what I'd already felt about why CA is out of control: Peter Schrag "Paradise Lost : California's Experience, America's Future"

Schrag explains some of the reasons why a state that was a leader in education, progressive environmental movements, and lot more has turned into a state where the old refuse to build schools for the young, where libraries are still only open part of the week, and where every year or so the voters try to patch it up with another referendum. One hint: think Proposition 13.

**David Longerbeam, July 14, 1998; 11:51 P.M.**

Some of what's said here about Californians is true, IMHO, primarily of those people who moved here from elsewhere (i.e., who LEFT their original communities behind them.)

**For some of us, California is home, and not some place to move to for job/climate/land or to escape from some other reality back home. We bemoan how crowded, expensive, anonymous, and at times crime-ridden life has become here. I grew up in a small town in California (S.F. Bay Area). People are friendly there. People actually say hello. ;-)**

**Brian Birtle, July 20, 1998; 08:53 A.M.**

I'm grew up in Columbus, Ohio. I was fortunate to spend seven months living in the Sacramento area last year. (Well okay I would much rather have been in the Bay Area, but I'll take what I can get.) Anyway, I actually found Sacramento to resemble boring old Columbus, Ohio in almost every way. The people are nice and laid-back, the surrounding are boring farmland, it has about the same cost of living. The difference being that within about 4 hours of driving you've got a great city (San Francisco), the ocean, and hundreds of 10,000 ft. mountains to climb and ski --- you can be a tourist all year round.

I can't comment too much on San Francisco or L.A., but I mean if you had to pick a place to live, I'd say you could do much worse than Sacramento.

**Ryan Young, July 31, 1998; 03:30 P.M.**

I feel like Phil has confused his own issues about roots and community with some sort of absolute truth about California.

When you go from one landscape and community that holds memories and meaning for you, to a new country, you are likely to find the natives less friendly, the society less welcoming. Some of the social prickliness Phil attributes to California matches my own experience - in moving from California to New England (I'm back home now, and I'm not leaving).

There is quite a lot of community in California, but it's based more on affinity than the fact that everyone in town went to the same elementary school. Californians heavily on their sub-cultures (gay, jewish reform, Hispanic, motorcycles, whatever) for their communities, finding real richness and joy in relationships built on commonality of interests rather than of place.

Which is not to say that "traditional" community of place doesn't exist. I know many hard cases who persist in building community gardens, block groups, scout troops, etc., in the face of the concentration of poverty, urban violence, latchkey children, Proposition 13, and other centrifugal social forces.

Phil's experience, as that of other commentators, is both true and valid; it is not universal

**Roger Monroe, August 06, 1998; 03:05 A.M.**

While California bashing will never go out of style, it seems to be particularly in Vogue right now. California has problems, many of which Phillip has identified. I take particular notice of the criticisms of the people and California society. The item that Phillip and others conveniently forget is this, California is by and large, populated by migrants from other states( This would include Massachusetts and Michigan...) It's called population re-distribution. Those Californians were at one time Bostonians, Washitonians, Arizonans, etc.. California is the rest of the union to some degree, a mirror. I'm ever aware of the bumper sticker "Don't Californicate Colorado" - I believe it's a Colorado original. When I was in Denver two weeks ago, the irony was tremendous. As drove through suburb upon suburb, development upon development, I laughed to myself. Coloradans have done good job with propagating urban sprawl all on their own. The self righteousness was almost absurd. California is so conspicuous, because it lives in the extremes. The negative facets are really negative, and it's dreamy qualities are quite dreamy. Without sounding too fluffy, the golden state is a representation of the other 49 in some shape or form. It's a dramatic collection of the good and the bad. As another person has posted, Phillip might do well to visit other parts of the state that are away from the tourist circuit. Maybe even, get below the surface. Otherwise, you'll see only the part of the state that you want to see. The California that critics find so easy to stereotype.

While, I now live in Arizona, I've called many parts of California home. Middle school through the college in San Diego, the Southern Sierras(Bass lake), Santa Maria, and Santa Barbara before moving to Arizona. Frankly, I miss California a whole bunch, warts and all.

**Ron Stecher, August 26, 1998; 06:02 P.M.**

Being a native New Yorker (Born in Brooklyn, raised in Queens) and having an opportunity to live on the central coast of California for three years now, I get the best of both worlds. Anyone who thinks that L.A. is the "real" California is just as mislead as anyone who thinks that Manhattan is the "real" New York. Yes, these cities have alot to offer and each has a "personality" all it's own, but if you want to experience the real New York then take a trip over the Brooklyn or Triborough bridge and venture through the outer borough's where the "real" people are. Someone once told me that New York's food (Pizza was one example) was overrated. That's because they never ate in Brooklyn or Queens in one of the many family owned restaurant's. Try Rosa's or Coratto's pizza in Queens and you'll never eat any other. I will admit that I miss New York and plan on returning, but California is very diverse and abundant with natural beauty. When you get right down to it people are pretty much the same wherever you go. I could make the same arguments for or against California as I could for MOST other states. Yes, there is a sharp contrast in the overall "personality" of the two states but when you consider people living in the northeast are used to being crammed together, thus being forced to learn how to deal with others on a more personal level. Out west there's all these wide open spaces that people prefer to be in there own little zone simply because they either moved hear from other places for that reason or they grew up in that envirinment. Either way this is still the greatest country on the map and I would choose any of the 50 over another country any day. That's my .03 cents.

**Rich McIntosh, January 13, 1999; 04:14 P.M.**

Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil;

While you did manage to capture some of the societal signs that have gone up in the Golden State you have overlooked a ton of stuff. (In Travels with the Samantha you at least spent some time in variuos locales). You got good sign pics but blew the commentary. Californians are not the ones who don't buy into the community. It's all the transplants that do not converse with each other that don't commune. I have been here since 1951 (11 months old Dad moved here from Oregon) and there is a very strong sense of community. And while you obviuosly toured the central coastal cities you missed most of California. The farming communites of the Central Valley, the cities of the Sierra moutains and foothills and most importantly the northern coast are all places that could have easily given you a different view. As another writer has commented it looks like you didn't stray to far off the beaten path. Good lord man you were in Santa Cruz. It's a beach town! People go there to loose control! As an example of commmunity my wife and I are life long residents of Fremont, CA. We cannot go anywhere locally with out running into someone we know. My wifes parents are good friends of the owners of the local hardware store which is a fourth generation family operation. My wife's grandfather started the llocal fire department on a volunteer basis in 1931! The local Mission in the chain established at the turn of the century (18th) two years ago celebrated it bi-centenial. This is the stuff of community. Granted our cars do not rot away from underneath us, we do not enjoy the icy roads of winter, we don't burn down part of the town during Halloween and of course we lack the superiority complex that goes with all that right coast stuff but all in all we're just like everyone else, only warmer. Even LA has some social redeeming values.

**dave smythe, March 07, 1999; 02:26 A.M.**

I agree that Ca is zany these days but who's to blame?When i moved there from Canada i befriended real natives who were normal,mellow.All the freaks and attitudes come from transplants who descended on Ca in search of their Holy Grail but end up burning out.You can hear their stupid never ending pipedreams,plans,sure things etc from their loud conversations in public places.One thing i noticed over the years is a wave cycle of transplants-like they would arrive then be gone within a year.This was as sure as the tide and never relenting.Imagine if in your home state you were bombarded constantly by people arriving and leaving and have them bore you with their fantasies/complaints/opinions of your state.Or how much better it is "back east".I couldnt believe the amount of ethnic groups that demand that their obscure culture/language is not fairly represented in govt/school or dmv brochures.I also found it pretty gross that people went to great lengths to identify themselves as hyphenated-Americans.Surely if Americans went to their home countries and acted as they do,they would be hung.California's solution probably is to stop all immigration-interstate/international before it is ruined with this social snobery. Outside of the social problems,i found LA to be the most beautiful city in N.America 1-incredible landscape-ocean,white capped 10k ft. mtns.,perfect climate,Malibu.,Santa Monica mtns 2-Great architecture and garden landscaping.From lo income to wealthy neighborhoods you will find great architecture and gardens in great abundance 3-Best climate-winter was my fave time,temps in the 60s ,rarely lower or higher

Now if all those people who hate the place would just go home maybe the traffic would ease up and Ca would return to mellow paradise...Sigh...Had to move back to Canada to due to illness in the family....DaveS

**Jonathan Lowe, May 12, 1999; 02:43 A.M.**

After spending the first 25 years of my life in New England (Pennsylvania, Massachussets, and Maine), I came to Berkeley for graduate school and have spent the next ten living in various Bay Area cities. At first I felt exactly the lack of community that you describe. But in the past three years, I've realized that I have something in common with a lot of the people around me--a pioneering spirit. People in California, whether they grew up here or arrived here more recently, are often pioneers who get a charge out of trying new things and testing new ideas without the sanction of long-held societal traditions standing in their way. New England is just as beautiful as California, but has more deeply embedded traditions and always feels more puritanical to me. I have found my community here in California among the many entrepreneurs and experimenters, wacky as they may be, who depend on California's Western pioneering spirit and "do your own thing" ethic to encourage their new ideas. It's a fascinating, supportive, and extensive community to which I am relieved to belong. It's worth staying for.

**Klothes Kristallreich, May 14, 1999; 04:02 P.M.**

I have lived in California all of my life. Upon reading "Why You Shouldn't Move to California", I was disgusted and angered, but I was also amused. "If Californians did not have myriads of carefully set forth rules, they would simply kill each other." Really? I did not know that without rules I would just go around killing people. As for common Californians, the afore-mentioned friends' perspective that "I doubt that this person will be educated or intelligent" is an opinionated blanket statement which should be seriously reconsidered. **Re-read the paragraph -- the person who wrote this obviously does not have a command of the English language above a ninth- or tenth-grade level. I am appalled! How anyone can judge an entire state based on what they see in a single city is beyond my comprehension!**

Furthermore, as for the rules addressed, those change from city to city. I live in a rural town in the California foothills, and people ride their horses on the clean, beautiful hillsides around here. Skateboarding and rollerblading are against county ordinance, but most of the time the cops don't care what the teenagers do so long as there is no damage being caused -- and I would venture so far as to say it is the same way down in Santa Cruz. Why would cops waste their time chasing down people with dogs if right down the street a bank robbery is taking place?

Even further, people don't move to California "in order to become part of a community"? Maybe not, but in my happy little rural area, we all know each other. We are a tightly knit community, and the sense of unity is strong. People up here may not like everyone else, but there is certainly very little cause for hatred. When somebody gets in a car accident, everybody knows about it, and if anybody dies, almost everyone in the community is found to be grieving over the death.

Just remember: before it is possible to judge an entire group of people, all persons within that group must be seen in an unbiased light.

**Nick Sweeney, May 24, 1999; 07:13 P.M.**

Mark's right, I think. A friend has just got back from cycling from Istanbul to Tehran, and described Iran as simultaneously the least Americanised place he'd ever been ("Coke" meant nothing to the people he met) and the place where he'd found the most generosity and warm-heartedness among complete strangers. Most of the time, he and his friends communicated in hand signals: who needs five-paragraph codes of conduct?

**Neil "Fred" Picciotto, May 25, 1999; 08:32 P.M.**

my first thought as i read this was, "yeah, so what's your point?".

specifically, i don't understand his point about there being so many rules -- how does that tie in to his issue with people generally not liking each other? and i'm not sure what his point is with respect to the "free speech area" sign. i think it's cool that they set aside a space specifically for people to demonstrate!

i dunno, maybe i have the "yeah, so what's your point?" attitude because i grew up here, so it all seems so natural to me.

but yes, honestly, if you were to select any random person from the population of california, i don't think i would have much in common with that person. i don't have a specific gripe about what they "probably" would be like (like those people saying the random person would probably be a smoker, or not vegetarian, etc), but i do think it pretty unlikely that they would be someone i would enjoy hanging out with.

but i don't see that as a bad thing -- on the contrary, it's because california is such a diverse place, and i think that the diversity is a great thing. so yes, most of the people around me are people i probably don't really like, but why should that be a problem for me?

that's exactly why there exist so many special-interest sub-communities (as Ryan Young mentioned, way up near the top). because within those groups, you're guaranteed to have at least that special-interest in common. one of the greatest things about being in the bay area is that there are so many of those sorts of groups -- whatever you're into, there are probably people who get together to do that; in fact, there are probably several groups, each with its own unique atmosphere/flavor/whatever.

i guess the point that he's making is not so much having to do with the diversity as it was with the contempt that people have for the people who are different. but personally, i

think that in places where people have less general contempt for each other, there's probably a lot less diversity too. and i'll take the diversity and contempt over uniformity and respect any day of the week. but who knows, maybe i'm wrong, and there actually are places with great diversity and also where people have more respect for each other...

**Jeffery Eddings, May 29, 1999; 04:28 P.M.**

I moved to California in January of 1996. I grew up in Tokyo, went to school in Florida, and just assumed, much like many of my classmates (went to an American school in Japan), that if I were to move to the United States, that it would be to 'somewhere in California.'

Well, I spent three years there trying to figure out why I had to move there, and never found out. Yes, I made a few good friends, and I treasure them, but to be frank, I can find friends all across the world. That is my lasting good memory of California.

Recently, I moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts (mere blocks from where Phillip lives, apparently!), and I feel more at home here than either Florida or California. Don't know why, but maybe an earlier post-er had it right: you come back to what you find familiar, where you grew up. Cambridge, in a lot of ways, feels like suburban Tokyo, where I grew up.

That is to say, maybe it's not California, maybe it has to do with the individual. I can only say that I share Phillip's experiences.

**david hickey, June 05, 1999; 10:16 P.M.**

I am a California native. I had to say this up front so you would know my bias. Many of my relatives live on the East Coast and I also have family in the Midwest. I have spent extensive time in both places and have heard many a comment about how screwed up California is compared to New York or the suburbs of Chicago. GIVE ME A FREAKIN BREAK! And Boston - oh my GOD! Have you ever tried to get around in Boston? It's a mess! The attitude of superiority that many people on the East Coast often disseminate is very funny to me. It's amazing that anyone in California can even tie ones own shoes or count to ten. Living in California for 44 years has given me a great sense of community. When I was young I was an avid surfer and the surf community runs strong here in Dana Point. Some of my friends are into motorcycles. They ride with friends almost every weekend because it rarely rains in San Juan Capistrano. I play tennis with a group of friends, many who play in local tournaments with other people who are very interested in tennis. One can play tennis almost every day of the year here. There are photo clubs in San Juan and all kinds of community services activities for people to participate in. I went to UCLA, a very fine academic institution where they have one of the best medical research facilities in the world (I just threw that in because after what I've heard from my East Coast connections I realized that it wasn't widely known that California even had higher education institutions). I know Phil, Cal Tech is nothing compared to MIT. I have gone surfing in the morning and later the same day gone to Big Bear for an evening ski session. I became scuba certified and dive with buddies who are into scuba (again this is a year round activity here in stupid, smoggy, crime ridden, rule driven, tourist trap, earthquake torn and brain dead California). Take Phil's advice! Stay away from this living Hell on earth. California is bad! VERY BAD! And the people here are ALL a bunch of loser criminals, fake, ignorant, classless, clueless morons who wouldn't know what community was if it hit them between the eyes.

**John Karu, June 22, 1999; 06:29 P.M.**

I have lived in California for the last 16 years, and I am still enjoying discovering new and

exciting things things to do, places to visit, friends of common interest etc. Here the community is not based on physical proximity but on common interest. Phil's comments are like the blind man feeling out the Elephant for few seconds and then telling someone what an Elephant is. California is so diverse and huge it's crazy to make a generalization.

Each time I visited my friends in the East Coast and midwest, it surprises me as to how ignorant they are about life here. I don't think it's bad, as it is one of the factors that keep our population growth under check.

**Alan Alan, July 15, 1999; 09:18 P.M.**

I think your writing on California is right-on!

**trev jord, July 28, 1999; 08:47 A.M.**

Dude! the glass is half full! You gotta put up with annoying stuff wherever you go. You cannot judge a place by one trip. I lived in New England, California and many other places and grew to love them all in different ways. But I did have to get past the first impressions. You can be happy anywhere if you have the right attitude. My mom used to tell me "a man who has friends must show himself friendly." I have found that to be true.

ha Dave hickey I like the sarcasm!

**Tony Beville, August 03, 1999; 08:40 P.M.**

Well, while I understand the point of view of the author, as a transplanted transient, I'm as home here in California as much as anywhere! Here's my little tribute to the community I'm currently living in, Ocean Beach in San Diego:

[Ocean Beach Photo Essay](#)

Community lives in OB!

**Jennifer Dyess, August 11, 1999; 11:23 A.M.**

I'm originally from Texas, but I've lived in both California and the East Coast. To me, neither San Francisco nor Boston have the sense of community that my hometown in Texas offered. But, that's probably because I grew up there and lived there for 23 years before moving to Boston. After living in Boston for four years, I grew to like the locals who I originally found cold and rude. But, personally, I like San Francisco better. I've met lots of people in SF who are originally from the East Coast. I think being in California makes them much friendlier!

**Jay Copley, September 15, 1999; 08:43 P.M.**

I lived in New England for 35 years before moving to California; for the past three years I've been living in Santa Cruz. I like Santa Cruz a lot and don't feel hampered or put off at all by the "rules". Some of the rules are just common sense spelled out for the clueless and others only apply to limited areas and not all of town. The sense of community, I think, depends on how you view your role in the local society and how actively you pursue your role. I had a strong sense of community in New Hampshire and Massachusetts where I lived for many years, but almost no sense of community in Maine while I attended college there. Santa Cruz requires a certain amount of "letting go" of your past prejudices and preconceptions in order to get the most out of the community. Santa Cruz, as is much of the cities in the SF Bay area, is made up of many transplants, but the people who live here

really like it or they leave. I think it's a good example of the love-hate thing, like black licorice. Some people really like black licorice, but then lots of folks don't. I enjoyed reading everyone's comments, lots of interesting insights.

**James Stevenson, September 27, 1999; 02:04 P.M.**

California is a state of extremes. Its got desert, its got oceans. Its got the lowest and highest geographic points in the nation. Its got sprawling smog filled metropolises bounded by mountains full of solitude, fresh air and natural beauty. Its got crime filled cities and quaint mountain/rural villages filled with people who know and care about each other. Its got some of the highest paid technology jobs as well as the most menial strawberry picking positions. California's GOT IT ALL. Life can be extremely good in CA and it can be extremely bad. The trick to living well in CA is learning how to circumvent the bad and enjoy the good. This little truism is true of most places one could live however, the rewards to getting it right are much greater in the Golden State.

So, on balance, I'll take California. I say this as I've taken on the new experience of relocating from CA to MN. Here the social and geographical extremes (notice I said nothing of weather!!) are not so great and therefore life is not so interesting. Although I've learned to enjoy life where ever I live, I've decided that living in a place of extremes has its benefits. Benefits that outweigh the negatives.

**Cory Haggart, October 26, 1999; 11:52 A.M.**

**First**, by making a generalisation you are already admitting the fact that you are wrong, that there are a multitude of counterpoints to whatever statement you have made. Still, we live our lives by generalisations, because despite their inherently flawed nature, they are still useful.

The bottom line may be that California is not so different from the rest of the U.S., but there are still *generalisations* that can be made that are unique to California. As a result, it is the unique differences that we must comment on.

**So**, I think Phil is right in many ways about communities in California: scenery, culture, and jobs are the motivating factors to move to one of its varied regions, not the neighbors. Communities pay for their consistency by being static. People have to stay in one place for a while to create a community, and in extremely tight communities you can live ten years and still be "the new family." The flow of life(generally!) is more transient in CA. The architecture in the neighborhood has a lot more in common than the people. This results in people that tend to be friendly with each other but not close. People align themselves together differently.

I grew up in small towns in California's central valley and the Sierra foothills near Tahoe. The foothills are interesting and a uniquely Californian phenomenon: A rural community, not so different from the Midwest, mixes with the families of the hippies that escaped to the mountains, mixed with the wealthy from southern CA that wanted to live somewhere pretty. As a result, I saw Alan Ginsberg give a poetry reading in his cabin in seventh grade, had friends whose parents where members of the KKK, and got to meet Hollywood actors who were in town to visit family.

California is completely eclectic. Going to school @ UC Berkeley hit me over the head with this fact. For all the religions, ethnicities, races, politics, and 'world-views' it was obvious that there were lots of people that were just not going to agree on some very fundamental levels. This diverse group of people tended to isolated themselves into groups based on their differences, and the social mixing was amiable, generally, but separate. One of the consequences is that California does have a lot of these rules that Phil talks about. This is people to keep people from stepping on each other's toes, which

come in widely varying shapes, sizes, and sensitivities. Smoking is outlawed in the restaurants there, which I think is still unique to California: you can't make health or aesthetic decisions for people with your second-hand smoke(yes, I said 'aesthetic,' a smoky bar has an aesthetic quality). I don't think this is an effort to stay the potential wave of death and chaos, as Phil seems to suggest, but it does make life a little less stressful in the wacky place that they live.

**Denise Williams, November 05, 1999; 07:32 P.M.**

Anyone who doesn't like California, is always welcome to move away. I was born in Long Beach, grew up in various parts of southern California, lived in the northern most corner in Crescent City, and now reside in Sacramento. Given the choice, I will never leave California. Why would I? It has everything. Good and bad, beautiful and ugly, slow and fast, up and down...whatever you are looking for, you will find somewhere in California. I've lived in several states throughout the US, a couple months in Florida, a couple months in North Carolina...Seattle, Washington...Anderson, Indiana...and have visited almost all of the 50 states. While I found beauty in all of the places I visited, none of them encompassed as much as California. My suggestion to those who find fault...1)try to improve it, 2)accept it, 3)move...but stop bellyaching about it, as it does no good!

**Chad DiGennaro, December 10, 1999; 03:17 A.M.**

California embodies a part of every state - both good and bad. Despite being born and having lived in New England, I still consider California my "home." Both coasts offer things the other doesn't; New England is full of old history, while California has a fast and progressive mentality. I don't expect to have the best of both worlds in one state, but California is about as close as they come. In mere hours I can be making snowmen or walking along the beach; my choice. The vastness and expanse in California and other Western states is amazing; you could fit one state of Connecticut inside the area of Death Valley National Park, or 32 states of Connecticut inside one state of California. With all that space and difference in population, you can't expect it to be New England. Or the Midwest. Or the South. There is something for everyone out here - you simply have to look for it. And home is not a particular location, but one where you feel comfortable and happy.

**martin dorn, January 07, 2000; 05:50 P.M.**

I grew up in Chicago and moved to California in 1991. I think there are vast cultural differences depending on what part of the state you are in. The bay area, where you focus, seems to be the most politically correct (to a fault). California is a very large state, and it is a mistake to generalize about "california". You can analyze individual towns, but you can't paint california as a whole with such a broad brush. There are rural towns, urban towns, liberal towns, conservative towns, cozy towns, industrial towns, etc. I currently live in Orange County. I love it: no long, gray winters, better traffic flow than Chicago (yes, it's true), less crowded than chicago (yes, it's true), and so on. The climate can't be beat. I take my kids to the beach every saturday, year round. I don't understand all the california-bashing that goes on. I think most people are just basically discontented no matter where they are.

**J D, March 06, 2000; 04:14 A.M.**

First off, let me start by saying that, iam not a native Californian (big surprise). Iam originally from the state of Colorado, a state that has no room to talk about Californicating Colorado. Colorado could never be what California is. All this talk about

how smoggy, and dirty, and rude, california is, and whatever else has appeared on this site, is to be put bluntly, a bunch of crap. All these Cali-bashers, seriously need help. Since my move here (2 yrs ago) I was shocked to find that californians, native or not, are very friendly, more so than in CO. Also, they are more in touch with God. And i live right in the L.A. Metropolitan area, and would never move anywhere else. And let me ask a question to those of you, that insist on saying how rotten CA is.... If it is so bad, then why is it the most populated, and most emulated state in the union? Im sorry, im not trying to sound hasty, but i do not understand people who come here, hate it and leave. I mean this great state, has a beautiful ocean, miles of deserts, the most modern cities, and is the trend-setter for the rest of the nation. Not to mention we have the most beautiful women in the nation :-). Face it out of staters that bash good ol' cali..... CA is not what the stereo-types make it out to be. CA has more style, more fun things to do, more beauty, and more of everything, than any other state. And any out of staters are reading this, i pity you for living where you do, but please dont degrade cali, simply because you dont know what CA is really all about. Sure we have our problems, but can anyone sit with a straight face, and say that their state doesnt?? I guess im just a die-hard CA lover. I always have love CA, and always will. So please, before anyone decides to put a insulting, or degrading statement about CA on this board, remember one thing..... even us, crazy, dirty, smog breathing, californians have feelings too.

**James Roberts, March 27, 2000; 10:41 A.M.**

Old joke: what's the difference between California and yoghurt? Yoghurt has an active culture...

Actually, California has many active cultures. None of them interact though. Many (most?) exclude or are actually at odds with others.

I live in Alameda, across the bay from San Francisco, having immigrated from Australia in 1992. The move coincided with the end of my school days and beginning of full-time work, so I can't eliminate that (or other personal shortcomings) as the reason for experiencing less of a feeling of community in my life. Of course I would feel at home if I had grown up here, but I tend to agree with Phil about life in California (well, the Bay area anyway) .

(Jonathan Lowe mentioned in a posting from May 12, 1999 that the "Western pioneering spirit" persists and has value because it encourages new ideas, and he's probably right, but I'm just offering some thoughts on the sense of community here.)

Many pro-Californians have indicated in these postings that they find community by seeking the company of those with similar interests, and that California is large enough and diverse enough to indulge them. While most Californians appreciate this diversity, maybe it is because this diversity exists (and allows one to find and surround oneself with like-minded individuals) that the rest of the population is excluded. One experiences a feeling of alienation from this remainder (I would say majority, but there is no majority). The paradox is that Californians worship diversity but largely avoid encountering it in their everyday lives.

While it seems natural to seek and find friendship amongst those with similar likes, perhaps it is because smaller or less diverse communities require more interaction and compromise between people with different interests that these people learn to deal with each other on more civil and friendly terms, enhancing the sense of community and obviating the need for all those rules.

There is diversity of background, and there is diversity of interests; are the best communities those that require one to confront and live with both? Large enough to provide friendships, small enough to require communal relations?

...As for the beaches around here (including Santa Cruz), well, the sand is coarse and brown, the water is cold and gray; not a patch on an Aussie beach. And unlike the silent but lifeless tranquility of a Californian forest, Australian bush teems with bird and animal life. And, if you live in Melbourne, within a half-day's drive you can be skiing not too far from some of the [tallest trees](#) in the world (if there is any snow). Of course, my Mum would want me to assure you that living in Melbourne doesn't even begin to compare with life in Tasmania, but she's a little biased...

**David Farkas, April 23, 2000; 01:50 A.M.**

Hello! Greetings!

I totally concur with your statements and opinions about Santa Cruz culture.

You stated the truth when you wrote: "Do you think you will enjoy meeting this person?" The response is always "I think the person will have the wrong political beliefs" or "the person will probably be a smoker" or "I bet the person won't be a vegetarian, so I can't talk to him" or "I doubt that this person will be educated or intelligent."

Ex-kyooz me!! I am sorry for the people who need to pretend that they are like "Brownshirts" and need to control everyone's behaviors.

My parents were born and raised in Santa Cruz and my grandparents lived in Santa Cruz. Even if I had Bill Gates' money, I would not return to that environment. My daughter, who is a 4th-generation Californian, recently fled from Santa Cruz County. My escape was twenty-five years ago.

**Bill Vrabel, May 06, 2000; 01:15 P.M.**

I am a native Californian who has had the opportunity to live in some beautiful places; Colorado, Wyoming and Wisconsin to name a few. I've also spent considerable amounts of time traveling in most of the west. In my experience my own attitude has had more to do with defining my experience than that of those around me. A wise person once said "Wherever you focus, there you are" and I think it couldn't be more applicable than in this most fantastic of places. I live and work in the second most visited tourist area of the U.S., the Napa Valley, and find the locals as friendly as anywhere I've been. Our visitors, likewise, are exceptional (once you separate them from their automobiles). Even the transplanted East Coasters, (given enough time), eventually mellow out and drop the attitude. As for culture, where else can one get up early for a hike/bike/whatever with the local Sierra Club/Audobon Society/NORBA, have a Massage/Mud Bath/Shower, enjoy some of the world's finest cuisine/grab a burger/local microbrew/wine and finish with a SF play/Tibetan Buddhist Dharma teaching/Watercolor workshop/quiet beach sunset? If one wants culture all one has to do is put forth the tiniest amount of effort and opportunity and welcome abound. And don't even get me started on how fantastic the Santa Cruz area can be !!! Sure there does seem to be a huge amount of rules these days, and the signs are more common than I'd like, but I don't think California has any monopoly on legislated morality. Most of the people I grew up with here would prefer less laws and more freedom, but I've noticed that it's the people who move here from somewhere else are the quickest to cry "Not In My Backyard" and take over the city council. And go to a great place like Colorado and you'll find lots of people who claim to be Californians, but when you get to know them they fess up and admit they're from Ohio,

Kentucky, Kansas... I guess it's just cooler to claim to be from California than someplace else? I just wish they'd behave a little better and not tarnish our reputation. Actually, this all said, as California RAPIDLY approaches 100 million and home and land prices skyrocket (check out prices in say, Lodi (yeah, LODI !), Calistoga, or Sonoma County) I can only hope that people will take your advice and not move here. Enough is enough. "Call someplace Paradise and you can kiss it goodbye..."

**sahala swenson, May 06, 2000; 02:19 P.M.**

Interestingly enough, I think some Europeans and other non-Americans would say the same thing about Americans in general that East coasters say about California.

A lot of comments above have summarized California as a huge group of "transplanted" individuals. In the same sense, this is the way America is (albeit on a higher level) and interestingly enough many say Americans are "without community" or focus more on rules, rather than tacit conventions and considerations.

Me? I'm a full American (whatever that means), but I lived overseas my whole life and didn't come here till college. In general I agree with some of the above posts in that people are \*mostly\* (not alway) the same everywhere, and it's just circumstance and environment that define the overall behaviors of a local society.

**cassy cassy, August 06, 2000; 04:13 P.M.**

I kinda stumbled upon this page, while surfing links of my former hometown, Santa Cruz, California. I am about to return there for a visit, after an absence of over three years. It is my opinion, that in many ways, Santa Cruz is like a black hole. It seems to suck me back in, no matter how many times I attempt to break free. Your webpage made me think about my memories.

I admit that many of the things the readers have said are true. Santa Cruz is a community infiltrated by rules and modes of conduct. Being PC, and I don't mean computers, well, in order to graduate from UCSC, you have no choice but then to surrender to it. (I did so in 1996, following two attempts to move away. Santa Cruz just keeps calling you back...) For the inhabitants of the town however, being politically correct, is a way of living. In thier eyes, they have made the personal choice to live free from "guilt" of attacking the lifestyle, race, etc. of one another. The reality of this truth, however, can be debated. (And yes, I do debate this often with family and friends who have made Santa Cruz thier home.)

About 10 years ago, a family friend who lives on the east coast (from where my family is originally) made the comment that Californians just "can't put down roots." HE contrasted them to midwesterners, and was highly critical. He explained himself by saying that CA is full of all the people that moved west, trying to escape the hypocrisy, homogeneity, comformity...etc. that they felt was permeating the country. They got as far as the west coast of the USA, and there they stopped, as there was no where else to go....they were forever stuck. Thus, he said, the state of CA is overrun by people who are lost in confusion, who long for a home, yet fear setting down roots for thier families.

HOonestly, I am not sure who is right. I love Santa Cruz County for its gorgeous scenery, its fantastic redwood trees, its coffee houses, its wide variety of people and cultures. Yet, the same liberal minded individuals who claim to accept "everyone" are the first to criticise those persons who attempt to conform to the status quo of America. ` Again, don't get me wrong, I love my family and friends who still live there, I just look at things honestly.

In my 28 years I have lived on the central coast of CA, as well as the north and south east states of the USA. I have spent extensive time traveling and living in Europe and South

America. Santa Cruz will always hold a special place in my heart. Most likely because I lived there for 15 years of my life.

In my mind, I think about the Eagles' song, "Hotel California" and the line, "You can check out any time you like----but you can never leave!" Indeed, at nearly all of the places I go, and towns I see, I am forever comparing them to Santa Cruz, and the beautiful California coast line. But, for now, my home is not there. I am not sure I will ever live there again. But, I recognize the lessons that little town taught me, and I remember it fondly. And as they say, home is where the heart is. So maybe I never really left.

**Jonathan Dimaano, August 17, 2000; 04:36 P.M.**

Milky Way is the Galaxy to be! Solar System is the Planetary System to be! Earth is the planet to be! America is the Continent to be! US is the Country to be! California is the STATE to be!

Heaven & Hell, in the same place! I love it here!

I LOVE CALIFORNIA!

**Ryan Randall, September 02, 2000; 06:17 A.M.**

I've lived in the Santa Cruz area for the last decade and a half. In that time I've seen downtown Santa Cruz transformed from an enjoyable community focus into a Santa Barbara style mall. Some of the changes were a reaction to the presence of too many street kids, some were a result of a tilt towards the downtown merchants after the earthquake devastated the old downtown, and some are due to the influx of people moving into the area to escape the housing crisis in the valley. The signs you cited are also symptoms of the same processes. The odd thing is that while you read the signs as pointing to a lack of community I read them as pointing to the destruction of a community. Ten years ago Santa Cruz was a small town on the California coast with good bookstores, a university, good waves, and people who didn't want to live in Los Angeles, Columbus, or wherever they came from. Nowadays Santa Cruz is a bigger town, the waves are still good but they're crowded, there's a nasty fight to protect the local "good" bookstore from the chain "bad" bookstore, and the majority of people are either working all the time to pay for their SUV's and houses or they just want Santa Cruz to be like everywhere else in California.

**Kathy Frankforter, September 03, 2000; 05:55 P.M.**

I'm a native Californian, born and raised in Southern California. I grew up in Torrance, CA. Believe it or not, back in the 50's and 60's, California was a fantastic place to live. In the neighborhood I grew up in, we knew everyone. We were a tight close knit community. In the last 25 years things have changed here. We have a terrible problem with illegals coming up from Central America. We also have many people moving here from the mid-west to escape the cold weather. There aren't too many native Californians left because they have all moved out of state. You can't afford to buy here anymore unless you move 50 miles away and don't mind commuting to and from work. Our wonderful state has become a cesspool so to speak. What is keeping me here? The Ocean...My husband's job...(He's a tug boat operator) I hope to retire in another 20 years and get the heck out of here. Crime is up! And, no one knows their neighbor anymore. My advice, don't come to California because you will be disappointed!

**Keri Akers, September 13, 2000; 02:55 P.M.**

Maybe San Diego is the exception to this rule?? I'm a native Floridian who spent the past

three years in gray, rainy Seattle, and I just moved to San Diego in July, mostly to see the sun again. My boyfriend, a California native who went to school in San Diego but later moved to Seattle, also moved with me. I love it here!!! Yes, there are some rude people -- but I've met people in every other city I've lived in who were just as rude. For the most part, I have actually been treated better than in Seattle, where people are more reserved and tend to "keep themselves to themselves." Microsoft money has really given Seattle it's own snooty air in the past decade, too. I'd rather put up with a little big-city attitude in San Diego than the redneck behavior of some small towns I've lived in.

I think a lot of the readers are right -- most of the people with really bad attitudes have come here from somewhere else, think this is THEIR personal heaven on earth, and take an aggressive, contemptuous attitude toward anyone else who crowds "their" space or interferes with "their" California dreamin' lifestyle. Not many native Californians seem to be this obnoxious.

Maybe San Diego, being a Navy town, has more forthrightness and manners, and less pretension, than LA and San Francisco. People here are more mobile, and they're just trying to enjoy it while they're here, before they're shipped off to someplace less idyllic. It's also a border town, and the large Mexican population is more tightly-knit and has a greater sense of community identity.

My boyfriend and I have become active in our neighborhood planning association, and I can assure you that there are many, many people who are committed to their neighborhood, their neighbors, and to maintaining liveable communities. Maybe it's the neighborhood itself -- we live in an older residential area, in a 1912 2-bedroom Craftsman bungalow, unpretentious and on a postage-stamp size lot, with a street full of similar, old but charming houses, and we can walk to everything: fantastic restaurants, coffee houses, churches, bookstores, movies, parks, shops, the post office, the laundromat, the weekend farmers' market, and the grocery store! There's no way to spend so much time on the streets and not meet your neighbors! Of course, people who move to new, upscale subdivisions full of cookie-cutter 8,000 square foot, 4 car garage homes on cul-de-sacs and grand boulevards, miles from any amenities, aren't going to meet their neighbors -- who needs neighbors when your car is your best friend??

Yes, California living is expensive, and yes, the rules are pages long, but for right now at least I'm very happy with the decision I made to move here. If you don't like where you're at, maybe San Diego is the low-key California alternative.

**postmus nathan, September 15, 2000; 03:48 A.M.**

i live in michigan, and ive been out to california twice, i have relatives and a girlfriend there, and i think that california mirrors the rest of the states as a whole. Most of the people i met seemed very smart and knew what they wanted out of life unlike most of the people i associate with back in michigan. CaliforniA might have its problems, but i plan on moving out there!!!!!! Michigans cool too if anyone wants to come for a visit.

**Jason Hernandez, October 11, 2000; 12:18 P.M.**

I have lived in california for most of my life all of 20 years.I am from Sonoma county, I have noticed the same things you have. After travling out of the state.when i was younger sonoma county was more of a community.A great place to live.As the years have gone by more and more people moved to our area.Mostly rich yuppies who thought it would be a nice place to live. After this invaison things started changing fast. more and more rules and restrictions showed up. I also noticed that most of the these rules are targeted at the youth of these communities. I love california. But i don't know how much more i can take.If you move some where blend in to the community don't f!@# it up.

**Jane Ocsenas, November 21, 2000; 06:46 P.M.**

Being a California native, I have resided in Oregon for seven years. When I visit California, I usually have fun. However, I do not foresee myself moving back there any time soon. I feel like California is ruined. Its wonderful if one likes overcrowding, urban sprawl, high cost of living, pollution, and being in a rat race. Additionally, the main car to drive is the SUV, which is not needed for the California crowded freeways. People do not know how to drive those vehicles down there. Also, its nice going to the store without worrying about how I look. In California, a lot of people won't step outside their house without wearing make-up.

**Thomas Oleson, November 23, 2000; 06:52 A.M.**

Your entire theory is based on the assumption that Californians "might very well hate all the people around them." How do you know this? Because your California friends are all jerks? You're willing to condemn the whole state based on some friends you made and some signs you saw, and that is fairly narrow minded.

Yes, I am a Californian; I was born and raised here. I can tell you from first hand experience, we are not so disturbed that we would all kill each other without rules. As I contemplate my friends and acquaintances I've met over the years, I can honestly say that they are a genuinely nice lot.

That said.... California is not for everyone. Moving thousands of miles to California is invariably going to produce some degree of homesickness for people. Visiting California might induce a bit of culture shock. I understand this, and if people do not like California that is their opinion and they are certainly entitled to it. Please, just because you did not like it here do not go labeling all of us as unfriendly and on the verge of killing each other.

**Christy Cuslidge, December 21, 2000; 06:49 P.M.**

I think that people who like to bash Cali are just jealous because they don't live here...and want to, but can't for some reason. What other reason would they have for bashing it, other than jealousy? Please, we are here minding our own business, and would appreciate it if others do the same.

**br, January 06, 2001; 07:31 P.M.**

I am 32 and was born and raised in Santa Cruz county as was my husband (in Watsonville). It was beautiful back then, a great sense of community, very friendly, a small town. The beaches are still gorgeous and the climate is nice but the people are all becoming yuppies, driving BMW, porsche, or SUV, extremely rude, building giant houses and basically destroying everything that made Santa Cruz nice. Added to that, it is completely unaffordable and most people who grew up there cannot afford to live there, let alone buy a house. If they can afford the 400 to 500K small house it's because they are working in San Jose and commuting at least 3 hours a day. Yuck. It's very sad to see our hometown destroyed like it has been. We will not be moving back.

**S Thompson, March 15, 2001; 01:50 A.M.**

It is March of 2001 and I have lived in San Diego since the Fall of 2000. I took a new job that offered to move me to either Columbus, Ohio or San Diego, California. I went west rather than north from Houston, Texas and have not regretted it yet. My wife and I just got over a spell of homesickness I had been expecting in light of our both growing up in Louisiana/East Texas. We are now settling into life in California. We have found the

locals basically like people everywhere else we have been which includes a few continents and a bunch of blobs divided by lines in places like Europe and Central America. Texans are generally a lot more conservative, fiercely independent, and proud of their state as compared to most Americans. The Californians who grew up here (a bit hard to find as you may have gathered from earlier postings) are very proud of this beautiful place. We have visited a lot of the local sights in San Diego County and have been very impressed. Compared to Houston, this is like living a vacation. At the same time, we feel a bit like we have "Kick me, I live in California" signs on our behinds. The loonies in Northern California who think every problem can be solved by the same idiot government that got us into the problem in the first place just keep us lurching from one stupid crisis to another. This is just the way the government likes us to be: dependent. The net result is that gasoline costs 1.17 in Houston and 1.71 in San Diego. We use about half as much electricity and pay bills three times larger than they were in Houston. Plenty of other bills reflect the higher cost of everything else as far as inputs to those products and services. We have no idea how average, middle-class people can afford to hang on here. We also have been annoyed by the ridiculous gun ownership restrictions here. Are we the only ones who find it absurd to pass a bunch of gun registration acts that only law-abiding citizens will observe if the legislation is supposed to prevent crime? Our fellow Californians should keep their noses out of our gun cabinets just as diligently as they keep them out of our bedroom. I also miss my fellow Southerners who are black. We grew up among a much larger percentage of Black Americans in the South than live in San Diego and their influence is missed. Talking with the locals who are black makes me a bit homesick. We are definitely pioneers and we are definitely staying put. I think the roots will settle in with time and we may very well draw some friends or relatives out here to bask next to the Pacific Ocean. There are a lot of entrepreneurial and adventurous folk like ourselves here and we like that. Like my ancestors, some of my heart will always remain in Dixie. Best of Blessings,

**eric sarti, April 04, 2001; 07:02 P.M.**

How about all the Fences everywhere! As a landscape photographer, I tell you, everytime I see a great view over a hill, and park my car(illegally on the side of the road), there's a barbed wire fence or some ugly sign in my picture. argg. Somebody's always worried you'll trip and fall in their property that they've never seen in 50 years anyway. Not to mention the "no cameras", "no flash photography", etc. rules everywhere. Try taking your camera into Filoli and not have one of their many staff members say no photos unless you come on "Photo Day" and pay extra. One time, in Muir woods, a ranger asked me to move my tripod leg (after setting up for 15minutes and in the middle of a 1 minute exposure)--to move it 6 inches from the dirt with leaves on it, onto the trail without leaves, while he stood there as I moved it and ruined a sheet of film. Always remember the "Don't ask for permission" rule about taking a photo, just take it, and then say "Oh, sorry, didn't know there was a rule against it" later. Have fun shooting in california.

**bob t, May 07, 2001; 06:05 P.M.**

California native here, but have lived in Texas for a year, Australia for a year. Have visited 43 states and most major foreign countries.

Having enjoyed Philip's travelogues immensely, I'm surprised he would be so judgmental about any place - so quickly. Perhaps the Santa Cruz dog thing caused him to overreact, him being a dog lover to an exceptional level.

This is a diverse place, with people coming from all over the world and the US. One of the reasons we end up with rules is that with people from so many backgrounds, you find a lack of "common sense."

Thus in a free spirited place like Santa Cruz a dog thing gets going. Pretty soon everyone has two, bigger the better. After a couple of years, you have to wear waders because the town fills up with dog shit. People cannot move around on the sidewalks because dogs are tied up everywhere. Pretty soon the only people the town works for is the dog people, and that turns into an economic problem.

It was like that in the 60's in Berkeley with drug sales (I was there).

Reading Phil's travelogues, I was instantly taken back to my days of backpacking around Europe, New Zealand, etc. You bond with fellow travelers. You want to experience THIS PLACE, but you tend to do so with a bunch of people that like you, aren't from here.

Which is a whole different thing than perhaps living with friends/family in a given place for say a month. I've done a lot of both.

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But here's the real deal with California. No matter what it is you want to do... be a surfer, dance to the city lights all night, live off the grid and grow your own vegetables, drink expensive wine or smoke cheap pot, there is a place here in California where you WILL fit in. You can even just live in a nice suburb, with friendly people around, and raise a family, which is what I do!

Those laws/rules generally come about due to people in the community that feel passionate about the community. I.e. there wasn't just some person that decided he didn't like dogs.

There are things you just can't pick up on as a tourist. You know what happens when some little skateboarder crashes into someone at the mall? We all pay. Take the building I work in. Junior decides to grind his skateboard down the stair railing. Cracks his head open. His daddy gonna sue the building owner. We are just trying to deal with what IS, not what we want it to be.

I'm in the Sacramento area, you know, where you are waiting for God to tell you what value this place has. Anyway, have met many families that have moved here from places like Washington state, D.C, Pennsylvania, even India and Iran. None of them want to leave.

When we travel, I tell my kids to open their eyes and ears, shut their mouth and learn - not judge. We don't have to stay, we don't have to go back. But our rule (HA! RULES IN OUR HOUSE!!!!) is that you can't criticize the people/places unless you live there long enough to understand them.

He didn't say anything about us being longwinded, but it looks like I'm guilty of that. We are into technology here, so I type fast.

Anyway, one more story. I'm 18 years old, I'm on the subway in Stockholm (with my Swedish girlfriend). It's pretty quiet, we are whispering in English. So it was pretty obvious when these two women started conversing in French, and not quietly. To their amazement, all of a sudden all the people around them turned and stared. The evil eye. They turned beat red.

My girlfriend told me that they had just said "how boring these swedes are, just staring ahead and not talking to anyone." Guess they didn't realize how many of same spoke French.

Just like you'll hear when you visit and shop: HAVE A NICE DAY!

**Jah! Budz, May 10, 2001; 06:30 P.M.**

OPEN LETTER TO CALIFORNIA BASHERS

Let's make California an independent country.

America has engaged in some finger wagging lately because California doesn't have enough electricity to meet its needs. The rest of the country (including George W. Bush's energy secretary Spencer Abraham, who wants Californians to suffer through blackouts as justification for drilling for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) seems to be just fine with letting Californians dangle in the breeze without enough power to meet their needs. They laugh at Californians' frivolity.

Well, everybody. Here's how it really is:

California ranks 48th in the nation in power consumed per person.

California grows more than half the nation's fruit, nuts and vegetables. We're keeping them. We need something to eat when the power goes out. We grow 99 percent or more of the nation's almonds, artichokes, dates, figs, kiwi fruit, olives, persimmons, pistachios, prunes, raisins and walnuts. Hope you won't miss them.

California is the nation's number one dairy state. We're keeping our dairy products. We'll need plenty of fresh ones since our refrigerators can't be relied upon. Got milk?

We Californians are gonna keep all our high-tech software in state. Silicon Valley is ours, after all. Without enough electricity, which you're apparently keeping for yourselves, we just plain don't have enough software to spare. We're keeping all our airplanes. California builds a good percentage of the commercial airliners available to fly you people to where you want to go. When yours wear out, you'd better hope Boeing's Washington plant can keep you supplied. There isn't enough electricity here to allow us to export any more planes than we need ourselves.

And while we're at it, we're keeping all our high-tech aerospace stuff, too, like the sophisticated weapons systems that let you sleep at night, not worried you might wake up under the rule of some foreign kook.

Oh, yeah, and if you want to make a long-distance call, remember where the satellite components and tracking systems come from. Maybe you could get back in the habit of writing letters.

Want to see a blockbuster movie this weekend? Come to California. (No, on second thought don't) We make the movies here. Since we'll now have to make them with our own electricity, we're keeping them. Even if we shot them somewhere else, the labs, printing facilities, editing facilities, and sound facilities are all here.

Want some nice domestic wine? We produce over 17 million gallons per year. We'll need all of it to drown our sorrows when we think about the fact that no matter how many California products we export to make the rest of America's lives better, America can't see its way clear to help us out with a little electricity. You can no longer have any of our wine.

You all complain that we don't build enough power plants. Well, you don't grow enough food, write enough software, make enough movies, build enough airplanes and defense systems or make enough wine.

Keep your disgusting fat white bodies covered and well away from us, please. We don't need your racist, misogynistic, homophobic, southern politicians. Keep your fascist bible belt conservatism, your crappy auto and steel industries.

This is your last warning, America. Lighten (us) up before it's too late.

Love, The Californians  
Welcome to California, you need a passport. Now go home.

**Lepanto Taormina, May 12, 2001; 12:57 A.M.**

Let me restate a fact: California is a BIG state. It's got deserts and temperate cloud forests, alpine tundra and beaches, and lastly but most importantly lots of people. The people are as diverse as the land. Every ethnic group that exists in N.Y. also exists in California. For this reason in areas of high diversity "We Californians" must adapt by making many rules to insure the smoothness of interactions between different parties. It takes longer to find people with similar view points thus, to keep oneself from becoming depressed or outright shocked and disgusted, one must develop a false shell of indifference. Now, I've got relatives in Northern Kentucky and the Midwest that I visit every summer and I do know the nice sense of community that exist there, but I also know that this same sense leads to obsessive tradition, exclusion of outsiders, and in the end a slower rate of adaptability. Now I'm not saying everyone there is a KKK member or Christian extremist, on the contrary, but living in that kind community for a long time tends to narrow one's experience and perspective. There are communities here, some not as developed as the one's your used to, but they do exist. It's actually sorta cool in that respect. I can be bi-sexual, go to mass, and learn Arabic. I can eat organic granola for breakfast, MSG laden Philipino food for lunch, snack on some Japanese candy, then end my day eating Ethiopian cuisine for dinner. When I wake I'll make it just in time to get that McDonald's breakfast special.

Right now you may be saying well I visited California and I didn't experience any of that. Where in CA did you go? When most people think of California culture, it's usually L.A., Hollywood/Beverly Hills in particular.

If you want that small town feeling there are plenty of communities in the Central Valley or if you really want rural go to the northern mountains like the northern Coast Ranges or the Cascades.

I'm a native and that's my 5 dollars worth. If you have a response to what I said, you can email me at walroixa@hotmail.com. I will thoroughly read your email but I will not respond. I find everyone's point of view refreshing, especially if it is well supported with evidence.

**Kathy Frankforter, May 13, 2001; 12:54 P.M.**

Ok, here we go. I was born and raised in California 48 years ago. Have I seen change over the years? You bet. Good or bad? Bad. And, what has changed? Too many people.

I don't mean to be vindictive or rude but it's simply a fact. California is over-loaded. It takes me 20 minutes to get from South Redondo Beach to North Redondo Beach to my daughters home. Is that crazy or what? Traffic is terrible and we just have too many people period!

Energy Crisis...Ok, here's my view. Hey, what has California done for GWB? Why should he bail them out when they have spit on him? What has Barbara Streisand, Martin Sheen and the rest of them said about GWB? He's an idiot. So I ask you? Why should he come here and bail us out? Well hey, what do those dim wits care? They got bucks and can afford high electricity and gas bills. California is a Democratic State period. We have but one Republican up in Sacramento, I believe. We have two State Senators who are Democrats and one of them is keeping the Chinese in her back pocket. Did you hear Diane Feinstein apologize to the Chinese for the spy plane incident? Most of the cities in California are run by democrats and who makes up most of the population in California now? Hispanics. What group likes major hand-outs? Hmm, isn't that easy to explain? Well, how about the growing hispanic population which by the way come here from Central America and NOT Northern Mexico. People in Northern Mexico laugh at us and want no part of California.

I worked 15 years in the Oil and PetroChemical Company and saw what these ding bat

"Environmentalist" here in California did to many small businesses. They drove them out- And, they continue to do so. I ask you, what would we do if Saddam Hussein decided to get a hair up his patooty and blow up the oil fields over in Kuwait? Where would we be? Up S\*\*\* creek without a paddle. Those countries are highly unstable and when GWB speaks about oil exploration here in the states, he is absolutely right. Who blocks it? The Left- It is time we quit being dependent on foreign countries. Very unstable and if people in America do not wake up, what has happened here in California will most definitely spread.

Demand is high because our population continues to grow. It's not because we (Caucasians) who are having babies at an alarming rate, it's because the people who come here from third world countries continue having babies and the hispanic population who come here illegally don't help our situation. They don't believe in birth control-

I'm now a minority in California. I can't wait to retire and get out and you will here that from most natives here. The quality of life has gone down.

Quit blaming GWB for California's mess because California is their own worse enemy. They continue to let every Tom, Dick and Harry into our state and embrace everyone yet, the "Environmentalist" have our politicians in their back pockets. Therefore, no power plants were being built and companies were driven out of the state because of regulations. Lastly, never underestimate the Democratic Party because let me tell you, they love their money just as much as the Republicans and I think they are worse(Democrats).

GWB, don't bail us out-- It's called Karma, you get what you pay for and we are paying big time for our mis-managed state.

#### **C. R. Outlaw, May 17, 2001; 04:22 A.M.**

Here's my experience with living in Los Angeles... When I first moved there, from Raleigh-Durham, NC, I rented an apartment in West LA in between Marina del Rey and Culver City. The neighborhood was okay during the day, but at night it's a different story. The weather seemed to stay at 75 degrees all year around (no kidding)! The first six months there I was completely miserable. It took some time to get use to the noise (ie. police helicopters at night, or random gunshots every now and then). Believe it or not, I got use to that. I also got use to living a mile from the beach and all the wonder places to eat and shop. When I finally found a job with a film company in Santa Monica, things started to get good.

But then... my car got broken into and vandalized at my apartment, which is one of those underground, remote entry parking lots. I had a hard time trying to pay for ridiculous car insurance and rent with an entry-level job. I was getting fat from all the IN & OUT burgers and fries I ate since I worked such crazy hours as a producer's assistant and didn't have time to cook. All the movie stars and filmmakers I once idolized while in film school turned out to be paranoid, self-involved jerks -- with the people I actually worked for being even worse. When my roommate and myself parted ways, I moved to the Valley (gasp!), Encino precisely. I didn't mind the drive to work... I didn't mind the constant harrassment of people saying, "You actually live in the Valley?"... I didn't mind the big cloud of smog that always seemed to cover the San Fernando Valley... and I didn't mind the weather... until it became SUMMER. Holy crap is it HOT during the day! Now I come from hot and muggy North Carolina and am use to hot weather. But 112, whether humid or dry, is hot as hell. So right there you will have a nice electric bill and that's before all this energy problems they're dealing with now. At night it gets cool, so you can turn off the AC and open some windows, unless you live right beside Hwy 101 like I did. The first week there, my car was broken into again; so, whether you live in the exclusive Hollywood Hills or in the not-so-exclusive Inglewood, crime is always something you

have to deal with.

I have since moved back to North Carolina, but I now appreciate Los Angeles, and California as a whole. There are so many things I miss, like television interruptions to broadcast the latest car chase, the slew of great restaurants that you cannot find anywhere else, the ability to find something to do no matter what time of night it is, the incredibly hot latino mailwoman that delivered the mail to my apartment, the ability to get into the car and drive to Las Vegas in five hours, the beautiful beaches of Malibu and Santa Barbara, and all the beautiful, wannabe people that flock to Los Angeles every year like locusts.

It's such a sacrifice, in every way, to live in Los Angeles. Do your research before you move out there. The funny thing is when I was driving my U-haul out West, for every 1 moving truck that was heading in my direction, there were 3 heading in the other direction.

**nancy diaz, May 20, 2001; 01:00 P.M.**

I am a third-generation Californian. I lived in California for all but approximately six of my 58 years. I lived mostly in San Francisco and San Jose. I have also lived in Cincinnati, Ohio and Houston, Texas. I have traveled to almost all of the United States and Mexico. I am now living in Houston, Texas and have been for the last 2 and 1/2 years. Many of the reasons to dislike California are true--it can be crowded, dirty, crime-ridden, unfriendly, smoggy, traffic-jammed, crazy, etc. But so is Houston, so was Cincinnati. And California also had the beautiful coastline, the fantastically beautiful Sierras, the Redwoods, the beautiful green-in-spring and tawny-in-summer hills, unreal beauty everywhere around every corner. It also has an open, exploring mind, less prejudice than I've experienced anywhere--especially in Texas--and a certain joy in life. Texas and Ohio have none of this from my experience. I miss my home intensely sometimes. No place can ever replace California, as far as I'm concerned. That is my opinion.

**william partridge, May 23, 2001; 08:08 P.M.**

Well what can I say? As a life long resident and native of the Golden State I heartily disagree with this piece. As has been stated before the biggest problem with California is the transplants. They do nothing but complain and compare. Go home! If I moved someplace to find I hated it I would move. Simple. And let's not forget the contributions California makes to the nation: first is our economy. If we were our own country we would have the 8th largest economy in the world. We produce more than half of the nation's fruits, nuts and vegetables. We are the number one dairy state. And let's not forget high tech industry, airplane makers and weapons systems producers. So the next time you think of California instead of dwelling on the bad remember everything we do for you.

**Ted Marcus, June 03, 2001; 07:34 P.M.**

I don't know how you can get away with making sweeping generalizations about an entire state. After all, what would you think if I spent a few weeks in Massachusetts and published a corresponding generalization?

That said, and as someone who has lived his entire life in Los Angeles County (except for four years of college in adjacent Orange County), I think your generalization is accurate--at least as far as Greater Los Angeles goes. We don't have a community here. Stephen Sondheim once called New York "a city of strangers," but that definitely describes Los Angeles.

I've lived in my current apartment building for four years and I don't know \*any\* of my neighbors. I previously lived in an apartment building for 12 years, and only got to know my neighbors when my car was stolen. Eventually they were all replaced with new tenants, so it was back to not knowing my neighbors. This is the rule rather than the exception. When I moved to my current building, I had thoughts about systematically visiting each of my neighbors, knocking on each door to introduce myself and meet everyone. But I never got up the courage to do this highly unusual thing, and to date nobody has made any effort to introduce himself or herself to me.

We prize mobility and individuality above all else, so community is not relevant. If aren't going to move in the next year or so, everyone else is, so why bother to get to know a neighbor who will surely disappear? Since everyone is a stranger, everyone become suspect. All the more reason not to bother getting to know nearby people.

The good things about living in Los Angeles? Mainly the climate, if you live within a few kilometres of the beach and don't need air conditioning in the summer (and it's actually quite simple to stay within the "baseline" allocation of electricity, beyond which the rates climb sky high). It's also public radio heaven, with no less than six stations available without the need for an Internet connection. There is also an incredible variety of things to do and places to go within a day's drive, if you're savvy and plan very carefully. Leave home in the wee hours of the morning (the most beautiful time of day), and then come home late at night after dinner and a movie, and you'll avoid much of the clotted freeways that would otherwise spoil a weekend outing (a trip during the week is more predictable in avoiding commuter traffic, but not always).

If you're going to move to Los Angeles, you have to know what to expect. If you're looking for a nice climate (which can get nasty in January or February, even though the rain and its disruptions are mild compared to much of the rest of the country) and lots of things to do, you might enjoy it here. If you're looking for community, you just have to know that very few people have any interest in such a thing. You'll have to rely on your spouse (if you have one) as your social network, or if you're very lucky you might make some friends at work (but since people have to commute so far to their affordable housing, it probably won't be feasible to socialize with them after hours). If you're not self-sufficient or are prone to loneliness, Los Angeles is not a place for you.

I can't say if the rest of the state is like Los Angeles. But since the demographic factors are similar, it's likely to be similar, particularly in the large cities.

**Eulalia Saucedo, July 08, 2001; 03:58 P.M.**

Look, nobody can criticize California unless they've seen and heard all of it. Yes, all of it. Would you read pages 5, 16, 32, 57 and 108 from a book and write up a review? Never. That would be downright stupid. So why dislike California when you've only seen a few parts? I know it's near impossible to see it all, but until you visit (at least)the north(forests and what not), the desert, the inner cities, the outer cities, the beaches, the suburban areas, the wine country and farmland, then I'll take your criticism seriously.

As for me, I was born and raised in California, and still live there, and have visited all of the above. California is incredibly diverse and some places, well, suck more then others do. I prefer small inner cities because there tends to be a strong sense of community there.

Phil, it appears to me that you have only visited part of the coast. Remember the book analogy? What gives you the right to judge on the basis of a couple of cities?

**mike costaines, July 11, 2001; 05:02 P.M.**

I tend to agree with the pro-California statements, though I admit I haven't lived there. They seem more sensible to me...reason being, you are going to find those various evils in any overpopulated urban center. Perhaps people find it more tragic when it happens in a beautiful setting that once was clearly not as burdened with problems as it is now. But those problems happened everywhere. I now live in D.C., and I want to move to California. I realize that I can find some sense of community here if I put forth some effort, but pretentiousness, blind materialism, and other anti-community and life-cheapening tendencies are as easily found here as in other cities. Despite how many spices I add, and I add a lot, my routine here seems humdrum and the winter is fast approaching! The thing is, I don't think I'm going to find paradise in California, that everyone I meet is going to join my little crusade of liking and disliking the things I like and dislike. I do hope to meet some people, as I have met everywhere I've been, who live with a sense of the redeeming values in life that it seems the majority of people is inevitably blind to. That Santa Cruz is becoming a yuppie hell sucks...I sympathize with those who knew a different kind of town altogether. This is happening everywhere though. Here's the program, as I see it: get ahead, buy an SUV, rush hurriedly to and from your dissatisfying job, and attempt to console yourself by feeding your ego with all the luxuries you can afford. Your neighbor? - You might engage in some chatter about where you work and trade suggestions on the intricate art of acquiring things, if you talk at all. Don't look at California -- look at the mass media and the engines that drive our economy. Look at the fact that children are - no exaggeration - being raised in good part by the glorious television. Please don't think I'm a communist either... But I figure, as long as I'm trying to escape the rat race and that often rigid way of life and mindset of the Northeast and other parts of the nation, I might as well make my attempt where the weather and landscape are gorgeous.

Mike

**chris leonard, August 09, 2001; 04:58 A.M.**

I moved to the Palo Alto area from Cleveland 17 years ago. I had wanted to move to CA since my early teens, and, 18 years after my first sight of San Francisco, my city at the end of the rainbow, I made it. I loved it here, despite a slew of personal problems that I encountered. It was expensive, yes, but none of the other places I thought of moving on to really grabbed me--Seattle was too rainy, SLO was too far from a major city, Arizona didn't have an ocean, Cleveland--where I still had friends--also still had the "W word"--the winters I'd moved to escape. Australia was too scary a leap. I couldn't learn Greek to relocate to Crete...So, I stayed in California, in fact fought to stay, stayed even when I thought I was dying of cancer--if I was going to die I wanted to die here. And this was even though it was so expensive here that I could afford to go up to San Francisco maybe once a month, if that, and couldn't afford trips to all the 'beautiful' areas people gawp at as tourists or use to justify staying here despite all the hassles.

But then came the Internet bubble, which I worked at the epicenter of...day after day I stared at the company principals, the hotshot lawyers, the smug underwriters, the boring accountants...housing prices skyrocketed, a cup of 'specialty' coffee was almost 4 bucks...gas was 2.29 for pump it yerself regular. I couldn't go anywhere that some bad-haircut Dockers wearing nerd next to me wasn't (a) pitching a dotcom (b) closing a 'deal' or (c) bragging about his stock portfolio. San Francisco was wall to wall yuppies and overpriced snootbag restaurants. Traffic was insane (and I only had a 5 mile commute on surface streets!) Then came the Big Thud in March 2000...and suddenly the bad-haircut Dockers wearing nerd next to me was (a) crying his stock options were under water (b) saying the Alternative Minimum Tax had wiped him out (c) lamenting that his idea was GOOD but the venture capitalists still wouldn't listen.

I'm not sure when California ended for me. Was it when the greedy landlord decided to sell the cottage I'd lived in for 9 years out from under me (and the retarded daughter whose income my late landlady had intended the place to provide till she died?) Was it when my employer, who could afford champagne and fancy cigars for the clients, tried to gyp me on a 52 dollar workers' comp claim? Was it when a Gen Y supervisor at the cafe I'd patronized to the tune of several hundred a month for half a decade smarted off to me when I complained about a waiter's rudeness, like I was someone who'd wandered in to use the toilet without ordering anything, and laughed in my face when I protested that I was an excellent customer and DESERVED good service? Was it when San Jose airport decided it was OK for rich, mouthy, obnoxious Larry Ellison to fly his private jet in past curfew?

I don't know the moment it ended for me. Only that it ended.

I bought a house in Florida (462/mo house payments for a 2 BR house with a yard big enough to add another room or even put in a pool, versus 800 bucks' rent for a dumpty 1 BR cottage with a strip of red rock around it [I had paid nearly 90K rent over the 9 years, enough to pay off a much nicer house somewhere else!])--had I bought a house in my CA neighborhood, I'd have paid 500K or more for a "needs TLC" house in a marginal area; for 56K I got a nice house in a safe, friendly family neighborhood). I'm getting ready to move this month.

Yes, it's perfectly fair to say what I'm sick of is not CALIFORNIA but SillyCon Valley. Maybe I should have tried Sonoma or SLO or San Diego before I bailed...and maybe I won't like Florida and will come back to try one of those places. But for now, I'm burned out. I need a rest in the slow lane. I've begun to mutter under my breath like Travis Bickle as I'm caught in traffic on El Camino between SUVs, "Some day a real rain will come and wash the scum off El Camino..."

**john lasterman, August 21, 2001; 06:22 P.M.**

California, you can either hate it or love it.....I moved to Providence Rhode Island for College, and then moved to Newburyport, MA a little bit after college in Providence. In 1996 I moved to Honolulu, HI and lived there for three years (which other than being on an island 30 miles from one end to another, it was great). I moved to San Diego, CA in 1999 and lived in the I think is the best damn Beach Town in the United States (Ocean Beach or O.B. for locals). I must admit, rent is high, home prices are out of this world in LA, San Fran, and even now San Diego. Electric prices are screaming high, oil prices are the highest in the country.....But you know what....I would not trade it in for anything. Ocean Beach has such sense of community, it is a place where you can walk down the street and see Black, Asian, Surfers, Homeless, Blue Collar, White Collar, Hippies, Tourist, Jewish, Buddist, Christian and all other types of people living under one community name. It is a place that only one or two stores are corporate (Rite Aid and Jack n the Box and of course gas stations), but all the other stores are local mom and pop stores. If Californians do not have a sense of community then I do not understand how this little beach town has pushed out both Exxon and Starbucks within the last two years. They did not want Starbucks pushing out the little mom and pop coffee shops out of business. So one night 3000 plus or minus people came to a rally to tell starbucks what they felt, but starbucks kept building up there "New" Store. As months went by, more and more people had piecefull protest (of course there were some stupid people that later broke a window), but finally Starbucks pulled out of our little beach town. Ocean Beach is a small town within the city limits of the ever growing San Diego.

California, is not for everyone, and to be honest, there are to many people moving into California so it is getting a little over croweded. But people are moving here, because little town where I grew up in South Western PA do not have the opportunities that California

has. Yep, you all have Deer season, wind chill factors, and lightning bugs...But California has Ocean Beach, other people other than white christians, and a place for a child to grow up understanding that there is more to this country than a white english speaking redneck from West Virginia.....(this is coming from a white boy from PA).....When you look at California you can see that we have more diversity than any other state in this great country.....If you want to stay out of California....that is fine with us, stay out....Go to Florida on Vacations and we will still be happy out here

**Kathy Frankforter, October 03, 2001; 11:49 A.M.**

FOUR WORDS to describe California.

TOO EXPENSIVE & TOO CROWDED

**Yee Jiun Song, January 13, 2002; 07:47 P.M.**

You guys are just jealous because you don't live in California.

**Kristen Miller, February 08, 2002; 07:16 P.M.**

Phil,

While at first I would agree with your comments and opinion of California. I now have learned to open my mind and appreciate the diversity of a state that is SO much farther ahead of any other in the UNION. I can understand your inability to appreciate this state, for at one time I felt the same. Being a transplant from several states on the East Coast. California is more than a state, it is a state of mind. An OPEN state of mind in the truest sense of the word. Not to say that what you observed isn't present, but it is your approach to what you were observing. To truly appreciate our freedoms, one must realize that all have a voice. That is an exercise that is practiced and discussed on a daily basis in this wonderful state. I must say that there are few in the Union that have that same luxury. Look at some of the state laws. Yes there are some laws or ordinances that we could change, but NOTHING compared to the OLD Archaic laws of many of the other states. I THANK GOD EVERY DAY FOR CALIFORNIA!

Long live the California dream!!!!

Kristen Miller

**Scottie Sharpe, March 18, 2002; 07:42 P.M.**

Odd how most everyone felt the need to write more about themselves and their story than about CA...

Scottie

**Faith Watson, April 15, 2002; 12:26 A.M.**

You were just in the wrong part of California. I live in Northern Sacramento and we are very friendly. My parents are from Missouri and Illinois, when they first came to CA they moved to Fremont(Bay Area). The people there are not friendly at all. They seem to be like New Yorkers.(they only care about themselves.) Please don't judge all of California by one area of the state.

**patrick salladin, July 17, 2002; 06:31 P.M.**

California is the only place where I'll call home. Enough said.

**daniel raphael, September 18, 2002; 09:40 P.M.**

California, Peoples republic of. Yea. Nice to visit. Wouldn't wanna live there. I used to work for a company based in New Port Beach. I travelled so I continued to live in Austin. At one point it was discussed that perhaps I should relocate. I own upwards of twenty firearms. Only one or two would have been legal to import to California.

No thanks. I'll say where I can keep my guns - and carry them if I like. Only places better than Texas for gun owners that I can think of are Arizona (open carry is illegal) and Vermont - I think it is Verrmont - The "Don't Tread On Me State. Whoever has that motto, in that state concealed carry is legal without a permit.

Yes, I'm a gun nut. But no one will ever rob my house and forget the experience :-)

**Cora Cloud, October 18, 2002; 09:46 A.M.**

I am a native Californian, from Santa Cruz. Unfortunately, I have to go to boarding school in Massachusetts. There is so more of a community here than in Californian. If you don't live in California or have recently moved there, of course you won't feel the community vibe with the people there, you dont belong there! If people stopped moving to California and bringing their east coast attitudes over there, we would be less crowded and more of a community. I love California because of our strong economy. I love Santa Cruz because of its laid back vibe and fun enviornment. And what is with those rules? No one follows them anyway, so what are you complaining about? I dont agree with any of the things you said about California, but I do agree you shouldnt move there, because there are too many people there as it is. Stay where you belong, which is obviously not California if you agree with this lame, critical article!

**Cora Cloud, October 18, 2002; 09:51 A.M.**

I totally dissagree with your article, but I do agree that people who are considering moving to California, DON'T! California is over populated as it is. Yes, we know it is beautiful and a lot of people want to move/live there, but enough is enough! I'm in Santa Cruz, cali and it used to be so nice and welcoming. Now my friends and I can pick out the tourists walking down the street. We welcome you to our state and town, but are glad you are just tourists. We want to keep the natural fun community the way it is ( or was before eastcoast people took it over). Leave our surfers, bookworms,and skaters alone and go back to Massachusetts!

**Graham Kenville, November 04, 2002; 10:21 P.M.**

Philip has some good points. Here's some perspective from a Northern California native that's spent the last 20 years of his life here in Santa Cruz.

First, the "No" signs went up as the city started rebuilding after the '89 quake. The downtown was destroyed by the quake, and the city counsel had an (almost) blank slate on which to build. A lot of details got decided based on what the merchants thought would be good for business. Homeless people and other "undesirables" (i.e. anyone who adversely affects business incomes) had been a longtime problem in Santa Cruz, so they put in very few benches, no public bathrooms, and signs with "NO" on them to keep people moving. Essentially they were trying to produce an outdoor version of the indoor mall -- you can't skateboard, have pets, drink alcohol or ride a bike in an indoor mall, so you can't in downtown Santa Cruz.

To be fair, most of the "No" rules wouldn't have been created if people hadn't been abusing them.

Next, for the issues of community. Santa Cruz used to be a small town, but it's been growing steadily over the years, and it no longer (for me at least) has that small town feel. It is now part of the San Francisco Bay Area sprawl.

Having said that, there are plenty of places in California that still truly have a community feel. I've been almost everywhere in this state (the exception is the North-Eastern corner), and each area has its own personality -- the north and south are very different from each other, but East/West is probably a more dramatic change.

Smaller towns tend to have more of a community feel.

Overall, the friendliest people I've run across are in the North Shore region of Tahoe. They don't have a lot of signs with "No" on them, either.

Lastly, Californian contempt for everyone. Yes, a lot of people get self righteous around here. I don't think we have a monopoly on that, but many people do take themselves a bit too seriously. Maybe we should all remember we're supposed to be laid back out here. :)

**mike sims, November 11, 2002; 05:00 P.M.**

I agree with the original point of reasons not to move to California and notice that 90% of the above reactions -- all of them pro-california -- prove the case against the state even more based on their blame-game approach to explaining social problems. The irrationality and naivete of most CA residents can be seen in the mindset of: deny the accusation of citizen hostility, but then go on to cover it up with explanations, which leads the listener to wonder why you are trying to cover it up when you just denied it's existence. But in California it doesn't matter, rationality is not necessary in conversation. The three paragraph scripture written at the top of this page by Phil, which includes a statement that if California legislators ever ceased their never ending rule-making obsession Californians would simply kill each other, was well written and deserves an honest laugh of approval.

California is a defunct system, now overly obsessed with minority-ism (white women and other-than-heterosexual white males included) which is banking 100% on past historical success previously built by good leadership and is heading downwards. In 10 years you can be sure that California will solidify it's status as fourth-world, not to mention that it's currently at about 3.5.

Perhaps nothing indicates the arrogance of Californians more than the explanation that "the reason everyone is so rude is because it has been invaded by 'migrants from other states.'" This shows all too well that California has really been invaded by political correctness and the inability to speak freely, and again shows the blame-game "it's someone else's fault." What about the illegal immigrants from foreign nations? Notice how every pro-california rebuttal bashes hard on 'migrants' from lovely little Idaho or Missouri, but Triad gang members from Hong Kong and tuberculosis-carrying boat refugees from Vietnam are a part of the massive "protected classes" that bring wonderful culture to California, and therefore the real invaders are sweet little country mouse types from a small town in Kansas that hope to bring a sense of niceness to California.

The corruption of both the state and local governments in CA I feel definitely have an effect on the it's social nature. I've noticed that there is no leadership nor figurehead politician in the state, and the government has no accountability yet prides itself endlessly as the #1 state in the union in so many regards. Unlike most of the midwest and for that matter almost every other state in the union, there is no standard of "right and wrong" decency in California. I'm not talking about "there it's a law and that's that," which is all too common here, but what I'm talking about is common sense human-natured behavior and good friendly neighborliness, kindness and respected

American principles of a little mixture of heroism and volunteerism.

Perhaps there is no bigger dirty-little-secret truth about California, particularly the Bay Area, than to say that it seems the region's real pride and mode of operation is that it's overall purpose is to be unconventional, to destroy any kind of tradition, which enters well into the range of hate. The problem is that the anti-tradition clearly blows into anti-human and anti-innateness, that means it is socially acceptable to rob another citizen or pedestrian of even his most basic American right of piece of mind.

I frequently feel when I'm walking a street -- and especially interacting with others -- that society is like that nucleus concept you learned about in junior high chemistry class. Inside the nucleus are thousands of molecules which travel in basically a straight path and when they contact with another they shoot off hostilely in random directions, and subsequently sometimes bump into other unsuspecting molecules, whereas then the question becomes, "whose fault was it?"

And don't think you can outsmart the system. I once heard a successful talk-radio host rightly say to a female caller, who was seeking relationship advice after explaining that her 25-year-old wonderful daughter was in a relationship with a scumbag druggie, that by being in a relationship with such a scumbag it honestly makes the both of them scummy. The host told the woman that in her eyes the daughter was no better than the man she was with. In other words, when you are in California, your innocence is lost, you see. You are part of the problem. By having your ideals you are one of those molecules that makes the inside of the nucleus so hostile. And as I said in a previous paragraph, unlike in most states it's not about who is right and wrong. If you are at the crime scene, you are a participant. If you stand your ground and get in the face of your housemate because he did something nasty, the cops will equally arrest the both of you and won't try to listen to who did what (that's another California obsession: "equality"). If you are a sweet 25-year-old from Nebraska working at a coffee shop, no one cares where you are from -- you are there and as such you are guilty of being a participant of the failed system known as California, and your rude and righteous customers will be sure and let you know that, and you'll earn your \$8.50 an hour not through hard work but by being a social punching bag. And thanks to the socialist government, it's only getting worse.

**Jeff Medkeff, November 17, 2002; 09:34 A.M.**

Way, way up there someone wrote:

*California is a state of extremes. Its got desert, its got oceans. Its got the lowest and highest geographic points in the nation.*

Thus bringing to our attention the acute and urgent problem of trying to explain gently and inoffensively to California that Alaska was admitted to the union some years ago. Mt. Whitney is roughly 14,500 feet, but Alaska has an insignificant little mountain over 20,200 feet high, which is in fact the highest geographic point in the nation.

Ok, the record is corrected. Now back to our regularly scheduled bickering.

**christine mercuro, January 16, 2003; 09:26 A.M.**

My two cents count, right? I'm from new jersey and all my life there seems to be an air about here that Jerseyans are infatuated with California. Many move there, many vacation there, many California dream on such a winter's day. I was never one until I actually paid the place a visit when my friend moved out there six years ago (by the way, he's still there). It's a beautiful place. Large and looming, mountainous and oceanous, mysterious and inviting...to a jersey girl...it is God's country. not only am i from Jersey, I am from the arm pit of new jersey, Union County which is about 20 minutes south west

of NYC, Ten minutes east of the pitiful NJ turnpike, and 5 minutes east of the sulfer strewn RTE 1&9. It's horrible to look at. Everywhere you go, there are ten ugly things for one beautiful tree. The state is much more concerned with making money and just getting by (it's quite extreme here financially) than making there surroundings more acceptable to look at. It is a fast paced minded society but everything takes forever. In every square mile there is at least three major drug stores, three Dunkin Donuts, eighteen banks and .2 parks. We are not concerned with the state of the planet, we are concerned with providing for our families and changing lanes in time for our exit. Yes there are roots here and believe you me, I love where I come from but gosh darn...I would move to California in a hot minute. This is because i do not fit in with the people of New Jersey. I prefer a place that can't be tussled with by man...I prefer a place that cares about the land they live on and enforces laws to protect it. i prefer a place where education prices aren't a rip off and society is pro-diversity. I am an American and this is my country. I can go wherever the heck I want. And I can bring my sence of community with me and spread it about. I believe that californians have issues with new residents because they come to their state and most of the time leave. Possibly they are hesitant to be friendly to the newbie on the block because they leave so often. Why begin a relationship with someone that will leave soon anyway? I am very grateful for this page, it has made my decision even clearer that moving to California is in my future! just as soon as i get that Degree I'm outta here!

**Joe Polems, February 20, 2003; 06:21 P.M.**

Well I don't really post on the Internet unless I feel somewhat strongly about something (and as I am moving to California from NYC in about a week again I guess I do!). There were some very interesting posts, even some that bordered on sounding like one of those Montana militia men manifestos. The main point for me is that everything is relative and to each his/her own. But cliches aside, I for one love California. For every one bad thing you can point out about California, I can point to two for New York/NorthEast. Financially there is no comparison - there is no more expensive place to live than NYC. I don't care what the real estate magazines say about comparative places in Boston or San Fran (Both places I have lived) - NYC is the most over priced. Live there paying \$2500 for a one bedroom shoebox, 8.25% state income tax, 3% city income tax (soon to be 5%), beers for \$7 dollars, cocktails \$12, bridges/tunnels \$6, and Bloomberg genius idea to follow the British and put cameras in congested areas of midtown so he can snap a shot of your license plate when you drive there and send you a bill for \$8!!! I won't even mention that attitude, rudeness, dirt, etc. I have lived in both SF and LA and prefer LA, even though I love SF as well. For me the overly PC liberal mindset, financially troubled government, etc. are all worth it. They say people are nice but fake in LA, well I would rather that than fake and rude in New York! I have made good friends in California. It was also interesting people mentioning about how Californians treat transplants from other states. Well in NYC no one is actually from NYC. Talk about a lack of community, the city is one big bus station where people are just arriving and waiting lo leave. I have found native Californians very gracious to me even though I am from NY which carries with it a stigma of being rude and pushy.

Nonetheless, again for me California is a paradise. To me it is beautiful nature, not too expensive, friendly, and sunny. But look where I come from!! So choose for yourself!

**Nick Martin, March 20, 2003; 03:33 P.M.**

I currently live in Boston. I am working as a tutor and play in a couple of bands. My girlfriend and I are considering moving to San Diego which we have heard is beautiful from friends already living there. Can anyone tell me about life in San Diego or in California in general. How is the live music scene out there? Are there cool places to

record and play? Are there many bands? What are the dominant music styles or is it diverse like the East? I've heard Cali can be anti-intellectual, but that could be Boston bias. What do you think? What other cities are cool? I've heard San Fran is expensive! How is the employment and cost of living scene? What about rent? We pay \$1600. now for a small 3 brm. How long does my girlfriend need to live there in order to establish residency for grad school? We are very serious about moving but we want to pick the right place for both of us. Any opinions or advice you can offer would be great. Just email me at [theimmortals@yahoo.com](mailto:theimmortals@yahoo.com) Thanks so much. I really appreciate it. It is a big move so we want to do it right. Peace- Nicholaus Martin

**Holly Calderone, June 12, 2003; 08:08 P.M.**

You should definitely NOT move to California. The weather isn't as great as it has been advertised—sometimes is as cold as 50 degrees Fahrenheit on the coast, even 40 degrees inland and, in fact, it has been known to snow on the Sierras which, by the way, are less majestic than those Ansel Adams photographs suggest. Other things that really suck about California are Yosemite, the sequoias, the Mojave Desert and what especially sucks is the miles of unspoiled coastline—Big Sur, the worst! And the people? Well, the wide ethnic diversity in the state and penchant for creativity amongst Californians are a real snore. I mean who wants to spend a day walking through San Francisco anyway; it's just a bunch of art galleries (Yawn.), Thai food shacks (Ew.) and sex shops (Dulls-fucking-ville.). And don't get me started on L.A. What, with 300-days-a-year of sunshine and a dense population of high-maintenance eye candy, it's a wonder anyone can tolerate it. Also, I'd like to substantiate the well-known fact that, yes, Californians do eat babies. So, yeah, don't move to California. It's not all that.

**Bernie Larrison, July 21, 2003; 01:16 A.M.**

So you've firmly decided to head out to California. All of the rants about that region couldn't phase you – certainly if I can just get as far away from dirty New Jersey as possible I'll be alright, or so goes the reasoning. Well since you're on your way, let's look at what you should prepare for.

First of all, if you're going to California you are almost certainly headed to one of the big 6 cities. You are not moving to CA to live in Barstow, nor does Modesto give you reason to relocate, and even if that were so, ultimately it's all one state. It had a reputable, rather historical far distant past suitable for Time Life Books, and a well known peak some five years ago, but we're talking now and the future. Would it mean anything to you that most of the savvy tech-whizzes and high-powered careerists have since moved out of state to other places? No? Oh you're not coming here for work but for social reasons.

The social description – what your life will be like for most of the waking day – can be described in one sentence: people here don't get along and they definitely do not relate to one another. Just like you, most people came to California with a notion about what California should be, and like you, they most certainly will never back down on their perspective. But those are the innocent and nice people; California life-long residents are the worst, secretly despising you while never actually showing it, but you'll figure it out over time, like when you're packing up that U-Haul for Oregon. (Also worthy of mention: if you migrated here from another state, you are hated; if you came from another country, you are adored. Pretty fair and equal, huh?)

Are you a single male? Twenty years ago CA was loaded with mini-skirt wearing blondes that were available, now you have to go to very remote locales to still see them. The women nowadays cringe at the idea of being, well, womanly. Oh, so you don't want to be a dominant man but instead a kick-around for a successful woman, huh? It still won't

work, woman here are animals at work, but personally are very lost and really don't know what they want. Like one social commentator who was asked what he thought of the N.Y. show "Sex and the City," his reply was, "I've been to New York, lived there, and I can tell you, almost no one is having sex." Ditto for the West Coast.

Have children? Prepare for them to be ultra-mindwarped by one of the most unsuccessful educational systems in the country, as well as among most all other developed nations.

Are you a single woman? Men here don't bodybuild anymore – all those broad shouldered types moved to more manly states. Here guys aren't hippies, they just let their hair grow sideways, and out of their noses. Chests sink inwards, shoulders warp down, and faces look pathetic.

Ok so you're not headed here for greener pastures, but instead for "progressive" politics. You can't talk about CA without race. Are you white? Then by rule, you are a hateful racist. You're not personally responsible for it, it's just that whites are the majority of the nation and therefore by logic are "racist" since they would still theoretically have the most "pull" in power. The system is designed based on theory to rid of hatred or bias, which in reality is to rid of whites: non-whites hate whites, whites hate themselves and especially one-another, not to mention how back-stabbing they are to their own kind. Interestingly it's those same self-hating whites that don't seem to swallow the idea that they too are white and thusly hated by the very minorities they feel compassion for. Moreover, in California, "white" is not considered a race nor a culture, but simply a transparent, "unidentifiable" human-species when it comes to making requests or proposing desired legislation they may find beneficial, but ironically whites are considered very identifiable when it comes to villifying them or their history; immigrants on the other hand are celebrated as highly unique and granted significant whining rights whether legislative or judicial.

Here in California, you'll still have to go to school or work on Presidents Day, but not one month later on Cesar Chavez Day. You'll never see a mural of George Washington but Malcolm X's paintings adorn many concrete structures. It's fair, isn't it? Racial diversity is an idea which doesn't even work in myth, as seen by this region – all it really promotes is increased segregation and a thousand-times divided society in which everyone sees through self-obsessed, race-based camera lenses of more colors than any rainbow could ever make. But there's diversity where you're living now? Your five-cultured region doesn't even give you a taste of what it's like to live among thousands of races, most all of whom don't talk with one another. And if you plan on living here for life, be prepared to end up looking flabby, washed-up, exhausted and like a non-proud waste of human flesh – sort of like one of the Ben & Jerry's CEOs. That is, you'll be proud of your degeneration and demise.

**catherine hollmann, October 19, 2003; 12:47 P.M.**

Hi, I'd like to say that I appreciate your opinion...however you are not dissuading me! I went there for my first time this summer & immediately planned on moving. I'm originally from Annapolis MD, been living in NYC for five years. This article should be about NYC, not Cali!!! My advice is, dont move to New York, & not because its great here. It sucks, sure you have the best art, music, whatever scene is going on. That is the only great thing about it, and it still is bad because the truth is, unless you make at least 50K per year you cannot afford to have a decent enjoyable life. Plus the rat race mentality invades everyone, especially great talented people like artists, photographers, designers etc... everyone's competing to be on top. And all the super rich snobs stand around gushing about how great whoever IT is. The mentality of people here is: what can you get/do for me? And everyone bullshits about connections & what they're doing with their life, it's very fake. Also I think that because there are SO many people here, it's hard to

have long term relationships because there's always temptation in your face 24/7. And the rent of course is incredibly expensive even in crappy neighborhoods now. You can't pay less than \$1200 for a one bedroom in a decent neighborhood. Last winter it was so cold, from November to about May. I love the state of New York though, just not NYC. New York state is VERY beautiful. Still nothing like Cali though.

***Image Attachment: BrooklynBridge.jpg***

**Christian Thamer, November 29, 2003; 06:40 P.M.**

You forgot to mention that dogs can run free just a few blocks from where you took that picture (at Lighthouse Field State Beach). I used to take my brother's [dog](#) there all the time before I moved a few miles away to Felton. He loved it.

<http://www.dogfriendly.com/server/travel/uscities/guides/w/FOLDERca/wonlineca4293777li.shtml>

**Lee Weiner, December 31, 2003; 01:52 P.M.**

Phil-

I grew up in Massachusetts and spent the first 26 years of my life there. I had a short stint in Texas (which I absolutely hated) then made my way to San Francisco. I have traveled the US and the globe, San Francisco is the best city in the US, hands down. It is also quite liveable. I could say many things about the so called, "community" in New England, and I am a UMASS Amherst grad, so I am well aware of the differences between Western Mass and Boston. I am glad I left the negativity, and flat out misery that infiltrates many people and attitudes of New Englanders. I find Californians (San Franciscans especially), quite friendly and optimistic. I meet people on the street, at the market, in photo stores quite a bit and I have even formed a 'community' with these people. I can't comment on LA as I don't live there, but San Francisco is a great place to live and does not reflect many of the things you stated in your article about why not to move to California.

**Alana Franklin, February 13, 2004; 07:59 P.M.**

I find it remarkable that you managed to stereotype an entire state based on one little sign in Santa Cruz.

**Rocky Moore, February 17, 2004; 03:11 P.M.**

I would just like to say thank you to everyone. I am 24 years old and was born in Florida. I've traveled up and down the entire east coast and lived in several states. After living in Florida most of them were boring and too much like Phil suggests. You people have given me hope. You see I hate the fact that most communities on the east coast are this way. While Florida has diversity most of these states are not going to be somewhere you want to live unless you were born there. They are overly set in their ways. They don't want any new ideas or changes. As for the New England area, you couldn't pay me to live among the rudeness. Not to mention pure filth of Boston with no nearby retreat. The overall comments of the people above me have reassured me that the sense of freedom and openness I've been searching for maybe found in California. Once you move to an area on the east coast, you are stuck with the areas general philosophies, ideas, and traditions. With no hope of anything different. I love diversity which is greatly lacking on the east coast.. Get ready Cali you've been in my 5 yr plan for 3 yrs now. Im on my way.....

**Rachel Mae, August 03, 2004; 12:19 P.M.**

i am from Detroit, Michigan and i have been to California many times. My sister's

husband was a marine on Camp Pendleton Marine Base in Oceanside back in '92. i stayed the whole summer out there and it was absolutely beautiful. We visited many attractions and numerous cities. i went out there last year on Memorial weekend to Santa Monica/Venice area & and that was the best vacation my friend & i had ever had. We almost moved there, and i am still thinking about moving there. We met so many cool and nice people and it is so diverse there. i dig the scene totally. i don't understand why people are bashing California. it is such a wonderful state!! Granted, it is expensive, but it is just breath-taking and there is always something to do. i love Michigan because we have 4 seasons and i like the snow, but being by the ocean is just great. i love that area so much. Venice is so hip and everyone seems pretty cool. I think these people who are bashing California are just jealous cuz they don't live there!!!

**Josh Coutts, October 11, 2004; 03:33 P.M.**

California is hardly any different than any other location when it comes to community and friendship. People may be friendlier in certain areas once you get them to speak, but ultimately when sober, many people are simply too busy with their lives as they are and people they already know to go about meeting friend after friend after friend. Anywhere you go, it takes time to find your way into those things, even after meeting people. I'm fairly certain that if any of us up-and-moved to a small farm community in Kansas or Kentucky for an administrative position of a new wind-farm/hydroelectric energy complex, our Burberry and Calvin Klein office demeanor wouldn't lead to the warmest reception from many of the locals upon arrival. I have lived in Indiana, California and Colorado, and in all reality, my neighbors in Indiana and Colorado don't talk to me any more than my neighbors in California did. If you find someone with common interests and a little bit of free time (the latter being the harder to find nowadays...), you'll find your way in, regardless of your locale.

**Pete Antos, March 04, 2005; 04:09 P.M.**

As I sit here at work in Carmel, I think you brought out the essence of California and especially the Central Coast beautifully. It is a beautiful place to live, but not anything close to what I would call a community. Oh, and by the way, you forgot to mention Pebble Beach, the town you have to Pay to Drive-Thru.

**tawny spirit, May 19, 2005; 03:02 A.M.**

California...my my, where do I begin! I have lived in Indiana, Michigan, and Florida. I have visited most of the states. My dream was to come to California, and I did, and it changed my life forever. Everything that has been said is true. I have experienced the good and the bad.

My main complaints...too many people, too much crime, and too little money to live where I please. Property is impossible to own if you want to live at the beach. Even the desert communities are becoming expensive. California is a dream come true if you are rich. For the poor, it is a sinkhole...a bottomless pit.

People are people. If you open yourself up and become approachable, you will find your community. Bitching isn't going to accomplish anything.

I was 21 when I moved to San Francisco. It was paradise, even though I had little money. When you are young and optimistic, anything is possible. Look at all the creative people who have flocked to California to follow their dreams. In Los Angeles, we just got our first Hispanic Mayor in over 100 years. The Southern California area is a melting pot of diverse nationalities and personalities.

I suggest that all you California haters run back to the East Coast and the Midwest and join the communities you believe are non-existent in the Golden State of California. If you have no desire to make this beautiful state better, then leave. Jump on the next plane and fly away.

**Karl Smedley, January 28, 2006; 06:52 P.M.**

I have loved reading all these entries with all different opinions and takes on California life. I myself am fascinated by California and its many sides and cultures. I hope photo.net does not mind me recommending anyone that wants to discuss this subject further to register at my new "Moving to California" forum, located at [CAforum.net](http://CAforum.net).

**Terri L. 🇺🇸, March 08, 2006; 01:26 P.M.**

Very interesting reading all these opinions. I've been living in California (in or near the San Jose area for 20 years), but I was raised in Honolulu, HI.

Think at lot of the problems with California have to do with the very high cost of housing in many areas. I now live in a small rural community of about 3000 people just an hour from San Jose. There's no fast food, no movies, no noise & no traffic. (It took us 20 years of living in places we didn't really like to get enough \$\$ and equity to live here) We know our neighbors by name, like them & love to share a cup of coffee & hang out. HOWEVER, this little 2 bedroom/1000 square foot home on 2/3 of an acre will cost you about \$700,000. As soon as I leave my little oasis to go to work or shop, I'm surrounded by all the other people who are trying to make a \$3000 a month mortgage, get to work on time after a long commute, make it to daycare before they close to pick up the kids, and pray that neither one of you loses your job - because then you'll have to move. Everyone is rushing to meet an obligation, and many have no understanding or patience for anyone else who is slowing down "their" day.

There are definately nice people here - if you can fine the time to meet and get to know them! I love all the scenery, the variety of ocean, mountains, desert, etc. If only people could slow down enough to remember that we're all in the same boat.

I hope to move back to my home of Hawaii one day where the people are considerate and not so focused on having "things". Of course, by then all the people retiring to Hawaii from the mainland will have driven up the price of housing even more there and made it just like here!

**S K, March 19, 2006; 07:07 P.M.**

"Why You Shouldn't Move to California"

Actually, that title should be, "Why you should never move out of California."

I'm a second generation Californian born in Los Angeles. Since that time I have lived in various cities throughout northern and southern California. In March of 1997 I felt it was time to leave, and since then I have lived in Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, and most recently, Colorado. I have also traveled extensively across the United States.

Each state has its own unique beauty. However, no matter where I have lived, I just can't seem to relate to the people. I mostly enjoy the company of other California transplants. I enjoy their company, so much so that I have decided to move back to California. Not only do I think it is the most beautiful state in the nation with the most diverse landscape, I also think the people there are the most "normal" -- believe it or not.

Just 90 more days and I will be back home to beautiful California.

Avaria

**Gene Brewer, March 23, 2006; 07:15 P.M.**

I agree with Phil on his observation on California citizenry, when based on the larger metro areas. However, I live in Ridgecrest, a small town (pop. ~25K) compared to LA, SF and San Diego. We are located appx halfway between Death Valley and Bakersfield, about 3 hours northeast of LA out in the Mojave Desert close to the eastern side of the Sierras. I am 48 and having lived in the Eastern/Midwest US many years and traveled to and around most of the lower 48, I can safely say the 21 years I have live here in this quaint desert community is some of the best years I have known. Sure we get the effects of big city tourists passing through and hit with the never ending barrage of ill conceived taxes that Sacramento dreams up. Gas prices are 40 to 50 cents a gallon more than the rest of the US. But overall the residents here are kind and friendly, willing to help out a neighbor without trying to rob or rape them in the process. We tend to stay away from the hustle and bustle of the big cities if at all possible. They can keep their traffic jams, smog, overcrowded, nasty places in CA and we just hang out at the pool on a summer's evening enjoying the calm desert life for all it has to give along with many good friends.

Our weather is great for most of the year. An occasional storm finds it way out here but sunny and clear is usually the forecast most of the year. Summer is a bit toasty (110 plus most days) but as it has been said of many arid areas of the world, "At least it's a DRY heat". And yes the photography is excellent, especially in the spring when the desert wildflowers explode on the scene in every color of the rainbow. But watch out for the 'legless lizards'. Their bite is definitely worse than their rattle.

Would I move out of California? Depends where I was looking to go. Never again to the eastern seaboard thats for sure. Also not to the Gulf Coast. I've been through hurricanes and I'll chance a possible earthquake. Upper Rocky Mountain states holds promise of possible place to relocate in the future. Who knows?

I just wish CA could lower the price of gasoline!!!!

**John Hill, May 02, 2006; 07:20 P.M.**

I didn't read all the comments, but I must say I disagree with Philip and the rest of you guys who argued against moving to CA. First I would like to give credit to Philip for the great photos!!!

I decided to move to California 8 years ago. It is everything I expected it to be and more... laid back, great weather, no one bothers you, not very many "rules", good jobs, etc.

I think part of enjoying California is having an open mind. People say there are a lot of rules here, there aren't any more rules here than anywhere else. It seems that way, because there is so much freedom here, and so many people, it is a constant battle for the authorities to keep everyone in control!!! This is done automatically back east by the weather!!!

I think in a way, there isn't really a sense of community in California. I have to agree with you guys on that one.... But, people come here, (i did), so no one will bother them.

I live in Camarillo, a small city 45 miles north of LA, 10 mins from the beach. I had a great conversation with the shoe repair guy, a shop owner, a few years back. We were talking about how friendly everyone in Camarillo is, that is really is a small town (pop 30,000), and people know their neighbors, but at the same time, everyone minds their own business. I just moved back here from LA from living here a few years ago, and I went to the shoe store, and, yes, the guy remembered me.

I guess all I have to say to anyone considering moving to California, is just the same I would say to someone moving somewhere else- it is all about what you make of it....

Yes, I do pay the price to live in California... but to me the benefits far outweigh the price.

-good weather, no one knows or wants to know your business, good jobs, the beach, the mountains, the desert, Santa Barbara, Monterey, the Central Coast, Joshua Tree...

-an entrepreneurial spirit, etc.....

All I can say is that in January, while you guys are out trying to skateboard down the sidewalk in freezing weather, with "no rules", I will surf in the morning, hit the slopes by noon, and close out the evening in the desert with a Margarita. And get up and do it all over again!!!!

JH

**Tom Zinn, September 04, 2006; 08:04 P.M.**

I just stumbled across this while seaching on real estate and decided to add my two cents.

I grew up in California and recently moved to Texas after living the last two years San Diego.

In Southern Calalifornia, driving is something that is hard to describe to someone who hasn't experienced it themselves. Use your turn signal to change lanes and the person in the next lane will speed up to cut you off...every time! Someone tailgating 24 inches from your rear bumper at 85 MPH is common. Emergency vehicle coming through...no one will pull over to allow them to pass. Want to go somewhere on a weekend...you had better leave the house at 6AM so you can get there without spending all day in traffic. All in all, southern California lacks quality of life in a big way.

Kloths Kristallreich is also a perfect example of why California is as unfriendly as it seems. With his/her response beginning with "Upon reading "Why You Shouldn't Move to California", I was disgusted and angered, but I was also amused." This is the typical Californian knee jerk response to another's point of view that differs from that of another. Californian's are always right and if you do or say anything contrary to what they believe, then you are damned.

Kloths Kristallreich follows up with his/her statement of "the person who wrote this obviously does not have a command of the English language above a ninth- or tenth-grade level. I am appalled!" is another typical Californian response - I don't agree so I am going to insult them and call them stupid.

I am happy I left California. I miss the beauty, but not the crowds, holier than thou attitude of many residents and gas prices that are almost \$1.00/gal more than I now pay. Sorry, but California is just not worth it anymore.

**Jeff Krieg, October 27, 2006; 09:04 P.M.**

I agree so much, I have to be here because my job is so specialized and this is it. I love the climate but I hate, yes hate living here with all the rude people, I am from the mid west, from Indiana to be specific, where people are real and they are friendly, offer you a hand if you need it, and you like the people you are arround.

I have not hardly found one person on the street that is freindly. My land lord is a jerk. I mean she is just rude and does not care about anything that maybe a hardship. I was late one time on my rent, I was never late even once before, and immediately she says that's 50 bucks. I had to take a look at my lease and it said after 3 days it is 25 so I had to scan it and send it to her email before she backed off by never repling and I guess she know's I

had her, it was only a 25 dollar late . I was 5 days in the mail by the way and she is already threatening eviction. There are people like this every where out here. I can't go any where with out being around jerks.

I hate it here- there is more to life than climate, but the job(THE PAY!!) is the only thing that keeps me here. I have to be here.

I plan to to expand my abilities (take some clases and get other experiences in my job- other than just my radiation hardness assurance and testing) and eventually get a job that pays well enough so I can just get out of CA.

I don't think Californian's should be allowed to vote in national elections either - they are only out for one thing themselves haha

**Jason Seaborn, January 11, 2007; 10:32 P.M.**

Born and raised in Orange County, about 5 miles from beautiful beaches, I thought I would live and die there. Nowhere in this country had I found any type of weather or environment that compared to southern California -- temperate climate, great beaches, fun waves for surfing. That is, until I visited Hawaii. Here was my calling for a place to live -- a still-beautiful coastline, miles and miles of beautiful postcard-idyllic scenic coastline, fantastic surfing waves year-round, and weather that allowed me to ditch anything called "pants" or "jacket" or "sweater" or shoes and socks the entire six years I lived there. People talked about "rock fever" for mainlanders who relocated to the isles; but I couldn't get enough of Hawaii. Every day I counted my blessings for living there.

And then I moved to northern California. I sneer when people talk about the "advantages" of living here. "Oh it's so great, you have the beaches, the mountains, wine country, San Francisco city life, all within a short drive!" Yeah, OK, so you've got frigid coastal waters with grey skies and rock-strewn beaches. Oh, and did you forget the great white prowling in the waters, or the fact that you need a wetsuit and booties to stay in the arctic waters for very long? And I suppose the other attractions might be nice, if you don't mind shuffling in mind-blowing traffic for hours to reach your destination. Oh, and did we forget to mention the 100+ degree heat in the summer, and below-freezing temperatures in the winter? Be sure to pick out a nice decor for your home, because you spend a helluva lot of time in it.

When I think about how good I had it in Hawaii -- the ability to wake up, drive 15 minutes, and take a hike to a waterfall that most people paid thousands of dollars in travel and accomodations to see. Or the ability to walk across the street and check out the surf to see if it's worth it to paddle out, and if not, just kill a couple hours relaxing on an empty beach listening to the waves crashing. Or hanging out at the local drive-in restuarant, talking story with the locals.

Now I get to enjoy a long drive under gloomy skies, past beige hills if I'm lucky, but more likely jampacked suburbs and industrial centers crowding and elbowing for every last square inch of open space. Too cold to do anything outdoors, I've become much better acquainted with my TV (a thing I did not even OWN in Hawaii) and my slippers. I venture outside to take the trash out, check the mail, or water the plants (in some vain hope they will grow, green up my background and offer encouragement visually). I eagerly await springtime, when hopefully there will be a dash of mild warm weather, just before the onslaught of the baking triple-digit heat of summer sets in until September again.

In other words, it SUCKS.

**Angela Bridges, March 15, 2007; 11:05 A.M.**

Let me begin by saying how happy I am to have found this discussion forum. My family and I are relocating to the Bay area this summer (we haven't pinpointed where yet, but my husband will be working in San Jose). I have lived in suburbs of Columbus, Ohio for my entire life but have spent plenty of time visiting CALI. My personal experience is that the "sense of community" that is so fondly referred to is something that you make with a time and energy investment and can only be forged with a variety of commonalities. I have lived in mostly small village suburbs while in Columbus and I have never felt like I was part of the larger community (with the exception of the University Community). I'm not sure if it's because I am a black American who typically finds myself residing in majority caucasian environments or because I am not one to engage in a lot of the small talk that comes before you "make a connection". Being a part of a large University here, I have found that I enjoy stimulating conversations with people who want to make a difference. I consider myself to be a straightforward, compassionate and loyal person who is committed to causes (mainly education) and am of the opinion (like most people on this forum) that if you don't like something you really have only two choices that won't annoy everyone around you. 1). Hush about it and accept it for what it is or 2). actively get about the business of finding a solution.

That brings me to my reason for moving to Cali. People there seem to be willing to do one of those two things. I'm sure it is different for everyone, but my experience living here in Columbus is that there is an awful lot of complaining about any number of things, but most tend to vent but not do much about it. People tend to connect more in the summer months...neighbors come out, community events abound...etc. The problem is you can only count on the weather cooperating from June thru October (with some variations...the weather here is down right schizophrenic). After that time, people are usually in a state of hurriedness that involves getting to wherever they have to be quickly so as to not be in the elements, and then getting back home. Once late spring rolls around, you begin the cycle of "connection" all over again. In addition, people talk about their dreams and their woulda, shoulda, coulda's as if they have no control over such things (that includes their geographical location). Once my husband and I found that we were starting to be guilty of that same thing and our kids might grow up and fall prey to this same "say a lot but do nothing" syndrome, we decided to make a change. This is certainly not to say that everyone here is the same, nor do I expect that no one in California will be that way (especially considering California is now mostly made up of transients). It is to say that we expect to find a lot more like minded individuals who don't balk at our ideas and constantly question our inability to conform to stereotypes. The temperate climate and beautiful landscape will only serve to enhance what we plan to make into a wonderful experience.

I might add that my sister relocated to LA about 10 years ago and recently moved back to Ohio thinking, like many people who are raised here, that the midwest is a "great place to raise a family". Ironically, she has since learned, like I have, that being a part of a diverse community that celebrates differences rather than finding fault is an important part of raising productive open-minded children. Likewise, weather isn't everything, but I can say first hand that people change when the sun is out and the weather is warm... they smile more, they exercise more, they get out and mingle more...in short, they feel more alive and since our time here is not guaranteed, life is best lived to the fullest (not six months out of the year).

**Patrick A, March 19, 2007; 09:19 A.M.**



I know I shouldn't be saying this, but...

... I'm thinking of moving to Cali. ....Illegally.

[WWW.myspace.com/patrick\\_arias](http://WWW.myspace.com/patrick_arias)

**clint kyro, April 10, 2007; 04:55 P.M.**

See, I'm so torn on moving back to Hollywood. I lived there for about 2 years, from 2001-2003 but now I have a son and I'm a little freaked out to bring him there. He was born in 2002 and now we're in Upper MI which is home but, man! There is too much snow and lack of culture up here. I miss the music scene, "I'm a drummer" and I miss the ocean. Just the good weather in general. Here it is, April 10, 2007 and there is snow all over the place up here. Ridiculous. But on the flip side, I've had several bad dreams about moving back to LA. They all focus on me not having a good place to live and the constant threat of gangs and the smog and the general badness of SoCal. I know there are decent places like in the valley though. The other thing is I just bought a house up here. It's my first house and my little man has his own room and back yard and that's a big pull too. The more I think about it though, I can rent out the house and live in the city that I love cuz I did love living there. Even though my apartment and car were both broken into and I had a couple gang-bangers get in my face. I worked with gang-bangers so I guess I got over it pretty quickly. I'm 33 now and my son is 4. Can anyone out there relate to this?

**Clayton Mansnerus 🇺🇸, June 16, 2007; 04:12 P.M.**

Hi Philip,

You have some interesting impressions of California and Californians, though my perception is much different being a native, originally from LA, and transplanted to Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz is clearly a mixed bag, but I'm willing to forgive most of it's short-comings. My wife and I feel very fortunate to live in such a beautiful place with wonderful climate, and believe it or not, a few fine neighbors in our community too.

I have a comment about the "rules" sign on the beach. Because there is such a diverse mix of people descending on our little town by the beach, peoples views regarding what is acceptable and what is not often do not match. It's unfortunate, but the sign is there to set you straight; even if you're on vacation from somewhere else and you want to let off some steam, you still have to behave like a decent human being, much like you would if you were still at home among those in your community who know you and would expect that from you!

Beyond that, it's hard to elaborate on the broad range of views already expressed. On a parting note, here's a link to my photo essay on the natural beauty of the Santa Cruz area.

A picture says a thousand words, right?

<http://members.cruzio.com/~clayton/sc&northcoast/sc&northcoast.htm> Kind regards,

-Clayton

**Mike Bonnes, November 12, 2007; 01:51 A.M.**

I'm a Californian against California born and raised here.( Including living in San Francisco, Monterey.) I moved away over 25 years ago and moved back due to job relocation. in fact my job moved me to the very arm pit of California "Sacramento" You know it is true you can never go home. After returning to California I found Monterey to be overcome with the idea above all else ?build the strip mall and they will come.? Some times I think California?s should just go ahead and make all of California a shopping mall just pave it all. Sorry I digress, Sacramento is the very lack luster one cow town and the cow has left. They worship the train trestle here (painted the color of bile) Californians only look to the beauty of this state so they can turn a buck so it confuses me here in Sacramento why they think a train trestle that stretches over a muddy river would be anything to fill pride in or a tourist attraction. what it does show is they are grasping at what ever they can to prove people want to come here instead of driving by on interstate 5. This is the only state in the union that passes laws to see if they can pass a law against passing laws (Wow allot of bad one liners). Anyway you can not go home because you grow and develop and change so I?m looking forward to moving from this state to another this time I will spend more time investigating the locations then just moving because the job will take me there.

**Clayton Mansnerus 🇺🇸, December 08, 2007; 01:20 A.M.**

Mike,

Happy trails then! Let us know when you find Utopia.

-C

**Lisa Mudd, January 10, 2008; 03:03 P.M.**

Hi all! I live in Northern Ireland, U.K. I am thinking of moving to the U.S. I was contemplateing moving to California. After reading your comments about community i am somewhat confused as to what why to see California. I am 23 i have 3 small children and a partner. Basically what i want to know is what life is like in California.

Many thanks in advance, Lisa.

**Denise Strack, February 06, 2008; 09:39 P.M.**

I am a traveling psychiatric RN. I am originally from Kansas so for me, relocating to California, was exciting!!! I did, however have several bad experiences though. For instance I got in two car wrecks, had my car towed three times, and sued one of the LA county hospitals for sexual harassment and racial discrimination on the job!!! One of my pet peeves as a minority woman and American, is that as a foreigner, you cannot come to this great country of ours and discriminate against it's natives, and then threaten and take away their jobs!! I dealt with this kind of obsurdity in Los Angeles County facility hospitals!!!!!! I lived on the southern California coast for 2 1/2 of the 3 yrs I was there and just recently moved back to Kansas due to an injury I sustained while on the job in Costa Mesa, California. The people here, do to a large degree,lack a warmth, that exists in the midwest all year. The immigration is just ridiculous. I feel that the judicial system in this beautiful state needs to better protect it's American citizens. The attitudes here, are thank God, not synonymous with the rest of the union. I love everybody. I have friends and

relatives of various races so I am not intending to be cruel. I am just so frustrated with my experience. The nursing profession in general is crazy no matter what state you're in. But the energy in California is high. I lived in North Hollywood, Bakersfield, San Pedro, and Costa Mesa. There is so much to do, so much to see. I traveled with my 2 wonderful kids and we lived right up the street from universal studios, met Drew Carey when in Burbank eating at Po Boy's restaurant!! He is the coolest guy!! And I saw several other stars while living in Hollywood also!!!!!! Santa Monica Pier is a must see with the amusement park right there on the Pacific!!!!!! And if some of the idiots there get to be too much to handle, then there are other places to go that are every bit as beautiful with a lot less hassle!! Los Angeles is jack-packed with people, it's overcrowded, and it's atmosphere is WE ARE THE IT BECAUSE WE ARE LA!! Which is a very unrealistic frame of mind!! How stupid!!!!!! So anyway, I am back in Kansas, recuperating and trying to heal, which may take several more months yet. But the weather in Southern California, the beaches, I miss so much. And some of the idiots there, are very miserable people. I have had to realize that they have the problems, not me. I am hoping that I will be able to go back soon. And hopefully, my circumstances will be a world better upon returning!! And for those of you contemplating the big move- always park your car in a designated area or they will tow it!! When you go to the doctor's office, attorneys office or anything, they charge you there for parking!!! Get use to it!! It's California, although it's not like that everywhere in California. Anyway, having said all of that, hopefully, my kids and I will be back real soon!!

RD Strack, RN <http://cbtopsites.com/s/1ba333> <http://cbtopsites.com/s/72cf09>

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