

# Go for the roller coasters, stay for the animals

By Kathryn Reed

VALLEJO – I have yet to meet a roller coaster I didn't like.

Old rickety ones like the Big Dipper at Santa Cruz, or the stomach-in-your-throat Big Shot at the Stratosphere in Las Vegas, or the 85-year-old Cyclone at Coney Island, or Space Mountain at Disneyland. Love them all.

Growing up in the Bay Area we would go to Great America. All those rides. And the games to play. I don't know how long I had that nearly 3-foot-tall stuffed animal in my room.



Six Flags in  
Vallejo opens  
March 17 for  
the 2012  
season.

Photos/Kathryn  
Reed

Last fall I went to Six Flags Discovery Kingdom for the first time in years. Today begins the 2012 season at this Vallejo park that is the only combined marine life, wildlife, and ride theme park in the United States.

With names like Pandemonium, Hammerhead Shark, Cobra and

Voodoo, it's impossible not to scream. My screams, though, are in exhilaration. Sue's, well, those were more like screams of fear.

She is one who has to be dragged onto a roller coaster. I learned from my parents you should run to these twisty, turny, loopy-loop contraptions. Then race to get back in line. Food is the only thing that should stop the fun.

And always go on the water ride first thing so you can dry off as the day goes on.

Sue, well, she thought the animals should be seen.

OK, the shows – especially the dolphin one – were entertaining.

Seeing a tiger go after food under water was pretty darn good, too.

It's definitely one of those places to spend the entire day. We didn't stay the night, but I have childhood memories of roller coasters being even more fun when the sky was black and those neon lights sparkled.

### **Things to know:**

The park opens today for the season, but won't be open seven days a week consistently until Memorial Day weekend.

For hours, prices, directions and more info, go online.

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