Opinion: Remembering Sept. 11

By Cedric Yeh

Three months after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Congress officially charged the Smithsonian and the National Museum of American History with collecting and preserving artifacts that would tell the story of that day.

But where to start? If you were given the task, what objects would you collect?

Curators working at the attack sites were grappling with those questions. If they tried to collect the whole story, they would have quickly been overwhelmed. Instead they identified three points of focus to guide them: the attacks themselves, first responders, and the recovery efforts.

Fifteen years later, the collection includes more than a thousand photographs and hundreds of objects, among them memorials, thank you letters, pieces of the Pentagon, first responder uniforms from the World Trade Center, personal items such as wallets and clothing, emergency medical technician equipment, parts of fire trucks, and portions of the plane from United Flight 93 recovered from Shanksville, Pa.

The objects in the museum's September 11 collection show both the ordinary and extraordinary moments in the midst of the devastation, reminding us of the chaos, the bravery, the loss and the unity that we all felt that horrifying day.

We see it in the handwritten note from Daria to Frank Galliard. Both worked at the Pentagon, and in the chaos after the attack, not knowing one another's whereabouts or condition, they each separately made their way to a prearranged emergency meeting spot. Daria arrived first and scrawled a note in black pen on a scrap of yellow paper: "Sweetie I am okay," the "okay" underlined three times.

We see it in the hard hat of Dennis Quinn, an ironworker from Chicago who journeyed to New York to help clear debris. The skullguard-style helmet is practical—it's designed to withstand high temperatures and is equipped with welder's lugs. But it's also personal—the owner's name and union affiliation are carefully written in permanent black marker, surrounded by union and 9/11 stickers bearing the American flag, a bald eagle, and the statue of liberty.

And we can see it in the twisted metal and scratched stripes of blue, pink, and orange in the fuselage of Flight 93, whose passengers and crew lost their lives fighting to ensure that no more buildings would be hit.

To commemorate Sept. 11, the National Museum of American History is offering visitors the opportunity to interact and respond directly to select objects from our collections. The artifacts will be presented in an unmediated physical display, with no glass or casework between the visitors and the collection. We invite visitors to share their memories and thoughts, either in conversations with staff and other visitors, or sharing through our Talkback boards, which provide the opportunity for written comments. .

As historians, we continue to ask ourselves: How will Americans remember these events 25, 50, or 100 years from now? What questions will future generations ask? We can't know for sure, but we do know that places like the National Museum of American History enable us to reflect on what it means to be a part of history, to contemplate how historic events affect our lives as individuals and as a nation.

Cedric Yeh is Deputy Chair of the Division of Armed Forces History at the National Museum of American History. He wrote this for What It Means to Be American, a partnership of the Smithsonian and Zócalo Public Square.

Opinion: Why is it so hard to stop rave overdoses?

By Louis Patterson

When the music comes on at a rave, a synergetic feeling of mass escape and euphoria runs through the crowd. But this unparalleled collective high has come at a cost.

In July, three people were found dead at the Hard Summer Music Festival near Los Angeles. During the two-day festival, which drew a record 147,000 attendees, an additional six people were hospitalized. Prior to these deaths, the Los Angeles Times counted 26 rave-related fatalities in the American Southwest since 2006. That doesn't include non-fatal overdoses, a number which could easily reach triple digits if tallied across the country.

The reaction by lawmakers in cities like Los Angeles has been to clamp down on the events, either banning them entirely or demanding strict control over the crowds. Promoters have instituted stricter security policies, while contending that at such large-scale events, drug use is inevitable. But the recent deaths suggest that these "solutions" haven't solved anything.

Even though this latest tragedy is fresh, the problem is so familiar—and so unchanged—that an L.A. Times write-up of the Hard Summer deaths didn't even bother to find a new doctor to talk to. They just recycled a quote from last year, in which a doctor frets that "there's something about these events that leads to this rampant drug abuse" but is unable to put his finger on why.

I’ve been going to raves for six years, and I don’t find the current approach to addressing the problem convincing. What I am convinced of is that it’s possible to have raves without any deaths.

Why has it been so hard to “fix” raves? Because we have not accurately identified the problem, which to my mind does not stem from kids disregarding their own lives, but rather from the fact that they never learned how to handle the spectacular, seductive freedom offered by raves.

The way I see it, the danger presented at raves stems from the fact that more than a few attendees are the products of our culture of over-protective parents. These ravers grew up highly supervised without the chance to be left to their own devices. Add to that the subtly influencing hand of teenage hormones and it’s almost surprising that there aren’t more tragedies.

Our society has become increasingly afraid of letting children run wild, and young kids today don’t have the same opportunities as previous generations to venture out into the world on their own, to learn how to handle the small freedoms of youth, to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from them. Instead, children are funneled from an early age into myriad adult-monitored activities such as team sports, school dances, and summer camps.

As teenagers, these hothouse kids begin to break out of their confinement. Raves are the perfect venue for youthful experimentation. Even the word “rave” sounds new and different from the “concerts” or “shows” of which adults hold fond memories.

Rave culture has always celebrated the illicit. The very definition of the word “rave,” meaning “to talk wildly or incoherently, as if one were delirious or insane” conjures intoxication. The first raves were born as a mutation of 1970s

and ’80s discotheques, the distinction being that raves were held in basements, lofts, and abandoned warehouses, rather than established venues. These parties often lasted for upward of 10 straight hours, and people could bring in their own substances hassle free.

At raves, kids are given a shot at unmonitored social interaction, and the chance to finally partake in all sorts of risk-taking away from hovering parents. Unfortunately, these are not the baby-step risks of younger years. And without past lessons to guide them, it’s easy for bad choices to escalate without anyone realizing.

The question of rave safety is not a narrow one. In the past few years, the American electronic dance music (or EDM) scene has exploded, with longer, multi-day festival events routinely pulling in crowds of more than 100,000 people. EDM has penetrated the heart of the musical world; it has its own category at the Grammys, and heavily influences the sound of contemporary pop music.

When I got into raving in 2010, I had always felt like a social outcast, but raves connected me with a group of likeminded people who I would never have met otherwise. It wasn’t long before I started going out more, getting into trouble with my parents, and having more fun than ever before.

Since then, the rave scene has become firmly cemented in the realm of popular culture. But that didn’t mean the end of drugs or danger. Even as security checks have gotten stricter, drugs have been present at every rave I’ve ever been to. And security checks haven’t prevented deaths.

The good news is that thoughtful alternative approaches have emerged. Some raves are starting to protect their attendees, often by bringing together people who understand how raves work and getting them to work together in the crowds.

The Bunk Police, a group now a few years old, built a strategy

on the insight that most overdoes happen after kids at raves take mystery drugs they bought from strangers. Many of these drugs are actually harmful chemicals masquerading as popular club drugs.

The Bunk Police show up at events armed with tests kits that can tell whether a bag of powder is real MDMA, or one of the countless synthetic chemicals that have flooded the rave scene since the popularization of online drug dealing websites, such as the fabled “bath salts” scare of years past. Since their existence acknowledges the presence of drug use, festivals have tried to ban groups like the Bunk Police. Despite this, members hop fences, bribe security guards and risk jail time so that they can keep other people safe.

At Steez Promo’s Moonrise Festival in Baltimore, volunteers make sure attendees stay safe while they’re partying. They check on people who look sick or zoned out, and hand out gum, water, and fruit. The best thing about the volunteers is that they’re also ravers, and can be considerably less intimidating than the security staff. In the event of an emergency, a volunteer can help you feel better, whereas a security guard might just detain you. When things get too rough for volunteers, Moonrise is also equipped with two medical tents near high traffic areas, staffed by a team of emergency medical technicians.

While unsupervised spaces like raves inevitably invite dangerous activity, they also provide a place for youths to grow, experiment, and flourish, free to make mistakes away from the judging eyes of adult society. Regardless of what the law says, the youth will continue to party on. The best thing wecan do is to ensure that spaces they party in are as safe and nurturing as possible.

Louis Patterson is a senior at Occidental College studying English, and a summer fellow at Zócalo Public Square.

Letter: Feinstein advocates for money for dead trees

Publisher's note: ***The following letter was sent Sept. 7, 2016, from Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., to Tom Vilsack, secretary of the USDA.***

Dear Tom,

I ask that you reprogram $38 million in previously-appropriated funding in order to execute 19 high-priority tree removal projects, for which environmental clearances have already been granted, that cover 38,000 acres of federal land in the three national forests most affected by California's tree mortality crisis.

Dianne Feinstein

After five years of historic drought, which has led to the death of an estimated 66 million trees in California alone, my state and its people face a heightened and potentially catastrophic risk of wildfire this year and for years to come. California has already weathered several devastating wildfires this year, despite the fact that our traditional fire season has not yet even begun. Addressing the unprecedented tree mortality crisis in California is an urgent public safety

issue that must be met with the most aggressive action possible.

The California Governor's Tree Mortality Task Force, which includes federal, state, local, and private interests, has identified 19 shovel-ready tree removal projects on federal lands that are simply awaiting the necessary federal funding. The projects are located on 38,000 acres of Tier 1 High Hazard Zones in the Stanislaus, Sierra, and Sequoia National Forests that present the most severe threats to human life. The 19 projects have already received all necessary environmental clearances, including NEPA. I have attached a July 15, 2016, letter to you from Chief Ken Pimlott of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection describing the 19 projects in greater detail.

I recognize that the Forest Service budget faces significant pressure from the current rules governing how Congress appropriates money for wildfire suppression, as you pointed out in your August 5, 2016 letter to me, and I want you to know that I am doing everything I can to get a budget fix passed. I have cosponsored the standalone legislation introduced by Senators Ron Wyden and Mike Crapo; I have joined with Senator Murkowski to include the budget fix in the Fiscal Year 2017 Senate Interior Appropriations bill; I have sent a letter to House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy urging him to move the budget fix through the House; and I have written letters urging the inclusion of the budget fix in the Energy bill conference report as well as in forestry reform legislation being drafted by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

However, I want to remind you that Congress specifically appropriated an extra $600 million for wildfire suppression above the 10-year average in last year's Omnibus and $823 million more than your Fiscal Year 2016 Budget requested for wildfire suppression. Therefore, there should be no need for fire borrowing this year or for holding back funding for

critical fire prevention activities like the 19 NEPA-ready projects mentioned above. These 19 projects are the top priority for the State-Federal Tree Mortality Task Force, and I ask that you reprogram $38 million in previously-appropriated funds in order to execute the projects as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein

Opinion: EDC cheating voters out of the process

By Larry Weitzman

In my last column about financing the new sheriff facility, which the majority of the county fathers and mothers voted to initiate, I spoke of a possible prohibition against doing so without voter approval (50 percent, plus one).

The California Constitution says that any debt authorized by a legislative body greater than $300,000 shall require a vote of the people. But sharp lawyers soon found a way around this law by doing leasebacks where an entity (a straw company) builds and leases back to the government with a long term lease with ownership of the property transferring to the government at the end of the lease. Such an arrangement was up held by the courts.

Larry Weitzman

In El Dorado County, in about 1990, the county without a vote of the people, issued revenue bonds of about $22 million for the purpose of building what is now the county government center. When that wasn’t enough money there was an attempt to issue about another $10 million in bonding. However, that was met by irate citizens who knew of the constitutional provisions of Article 16 (borrowing more than $300,000 without voter approval) and decided to put a law before the voters that prohibited the use of lease-revenue bonds with respect to lease purchase or rental agreements in connection with lease-revenue bonds that would be used to finance county facilities and improvements. This description is almost the exact language from the actual ballot. It became known as Measure A and was passed by the voters in 1990 by an overwhelming majority with nearly two-thirds of the voters (65 percent) saying yes to measure A.

To understand the concept lease-revenue bond financing is quite simple. Instead of direct borrowing by the legislative body (the BOS in this case) that would be prohibited under the Constitution, a straw corporation is set up to borrow the money and it creates a bond authority to issue municipal bonds which uses as bond security a long-term lease executed by the legislative body which effectively pays, through the lease payments, the bond interest payments including amortizing the bond principle. That is what Measure A specifically prohibited. A revenue bond means it is paid not by an increase in your property taxes like a school bond but it is paid out of ongoing general county revenues, just like a long-term

lease or loan payment. But the technicality of having a straw corporation (the bond authority) to do the borrowing and not the county directly avoids the state constitutional prohibition. There is a series of case law saying this.

Because of the technicality of Measure A barring use of the façade of revenue bonds wherein a straw corporation is created to borrow the money from bond buyers as they are sold in the market place with the long-term lease signed by the county as the security for the bonds, the BOS will create a straw corporation to borrow the money, not by borrowing via the issuance of municipal revenue bonds, but a direct loan from a private or government entity, in this case a U.S. Department of Agriculture, which has a program that does this. The loan will be secured same security, the long-term lease signed by the county and not by the straw corporation and that is why the USDA required a fully balanced budget for at least five years in the future from the county because that is the security for the loan.

In talking to one of the primary supporters of Measure A, it was the intent of Measure A to require that all debt entered into by the county be approved by the vote of the people of EDC with no shenanigans. The people were saying to the BOS, if the county wants to go into debt, ask the people first.

Until this proposed new sheriff's facility, which is sorely needed, the county has been debt free for years. Currently EDC is rehabbing the county government center built about 25 years ago, spending about $12 million. The current sheriff's offices were built almost 40 years ago and yet the first to get new offices and fancy digs will be the BOS, even before the assessor, tax collector, county clerk and more. EDC is doing it for cash out of its capital improvement fund. It was only three years ago that the county finished the year with a cash balance of $54 million of which a good portion has been spent covering the county's annual deficit of spending more than they take in. If EDC would have remained frugal, perhaps it

could have paid cash for the new sheriff's facility.

The county is using a slight of hand to finance the new sheriff's buildings so it can get around the intent of Measure A. This should have gone to a vote of the people even before EDC spent about $2.7 million for the 30 acres of land for the project, even if not required by the exact wording of Measure A as the BOS is skirting the intent of the law.

There are two BOS members (Michael Ranalli, 4th district and Sue Novasel, 5th district) who will be up for re-election in two years and two other candidates are vying for the vacant District 1 seat (Beth Gaines and John Hidahl) in November. Since most are long-term residents and were old enough to vote in the 1990 General election, it would be interesting to know how they voted on Measure A. Ranalli ran as a fiscal conservative and the only thing he has voted to cut is road maintenance along with Novasel and Brian Veerkamp. In the meantime our roads continue decay.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Opinion: Importance of Calif.'s Admission's Day

By Joe Mathews

As California celebrates Admission Day—we joined the United States on Sept. 9, 1850—we should give ourselves an overdue present: A founding story of our statehood starring someone we can be proud of, both as Californians and Americans.

Like too much else in California, the narrative of our

statehood is sprawling and complicated, involving the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush and migration—and devoid of a hero who can tie the history together The closest thing we have had is Sen. John C. Fremont, whose main talents were for insubordination and bankruptcy.

Joe Mathews

Fortunately, more recent scholarship suggests that California could cut through its obscure history in a Shermanesque way. William Tecumseh Sherman—the Civil War general known for his decisive march through the South—offers Californians a compelling but overlooked protagonist in the tale of becoming a state.

Sherman's military exploits have long overshadowed his earlier time in California—which was formative both for the state and for the man himself. A new biography from historian James Lee McDonough shows how Sherman served as a stabilizing figure for California during war, the Gold Rush, and various crises.

Originally from Ohio, Sherman arrived in California as a soldier in 1847. Stationed in Monterey, he never saw action in the Mexican-American War, but met almost everyone of note, visiting missions, hunting grizzly bears, patronizing the arts, and opening a store in Coloma (to supplement his Army wages). He was an early surveyor of the Sierra Nevada, traveled to L.A. by boat and horseback, and was a fixture of the gold country during the Gold Rush, even getting to know John Sutter.

In 1849, Sherman was the U.S. military's representative at the

California convention, which produced the state's first constitution. In 1850, California entered the Union as a free state, part of a famous compromise in the long run-up to the Civil War. That same year, Sherman went east to marry. But by 1853, he had resigned from the Army and was back in San Francisco to establish a bank, becoming a significant figure in the growth and travails of California's first great city.

Sherman's conservative management of his growing bank made him an outlier in the wildly unregulated and corrupt financial sector of 1850s San Francisco. McDonough recounts—with new details—how Sherman's care forestalled banking panic; in 1855, even as Wells Fargo and other banks closed during a bank run, Sherman's bank stayed open and calmed the city.

He did this all at personal cost. San Francisco was so expensive (some things don't change) that even a banker couldn't afford to live there; he went deeply into debt. His wife, not without reason, considered the city "thoroughly wicked" and begged him to leave. He suffered from terrible asthma that was aggravated by San Francisco's wet weather. And he was bitterly criticized by the press in 1856 when he opposed the Committee of Vigilance that had lawlessly seized control of the city, banished some enemies, and hanged others.

After another financial panic, Sherman would have to shut down his bank in 1858—though he was scrupulous about it—selling his own property so that depositors could be made whole. Having invested eight years and most of his money in California, he left the state that summer, but often would confess a desire to return (even in letters written at the height of the Civil War).

"If I had no family I would stay in California all my life," he wrote in one letter. Alas, he would come back only as a visitor.

Sherman's view of California, formed in that founding period

from 1847 to 1858, still resonates. He loved the natural beauty of the place and the adventurous culture of its people. But he was distressed by its volatility, its boom-and-bust economy, and he learned to distrust its democratic spirit, since that could curdle so quickly into mob rule.

“Sherman’s lack of patience with democratic republican government … emerged full blown during the Californian years,” writes McDonough, adding: “He beheld a society dramatically transformed, in an amazingly short period of time. It was not a pretty sight.”

California, McDonough shows, helped convince Sherman that humans needed a strong hand—and that authorities should deal forcefully with those who might step out of line. It would of course be the South that would feel the full force of Sherman’s conclusion.

Sherman became Sherman here, just as California was becoming the state of California. After 166 years, isn’t it time we adopted a founding narrative that is more Shermanesque?

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

Letter: Liberty-STPUD need to fix streetlight

To Liberty Utilities, STPUD and the SLT Engineering Dept.,

On July 14 I wrote a letter and asked that it be published because I was having troubles getting a streetlight fixed after contacting all the proper people and agencies and

waiting for a period of time. Well here we are months later after my letter and the streetlight still isn't fixed.

I'll just mention that I know someone at Liberty Utilities saw my letter on July 14 because I got a very not nice message on the 15th berating me for my letter. I will just say that if I wasn't beholden to Liberty Utilities for my power, I would not be a customer after the message that was left on my answering machine. I'll just say that their CSR needs to review their training.

Now, here we are months later, my STPUD bill is coming due, and they want a streetlight fee even though I haven't received the service.

Again I don't think it's right to be charged for a service if I haven't received it.

Just fix the light already.

John Spinola, South Lake Tahoe

LTN celebrates 7 years of daily news

It was seven years ago today that *Lake Tahoe News* was launched. **The story** was about the parade celebrating Jaycee Lee Dugard's release from captivity.

Much has happened in Lake Tahoe since 2009. *Lake Tahoe News* has been there to record the good, the bad, the happy, the mundane, the excitement and so on.

We have no plans to stop. We will keep bringing you daily news

about the people and happenings of Lake Tahoe.

We recognize without loyal readers like you, our words and photographers would be pointless. Each day you read *LTN* is a gift to us – thank you.

Many of you are subscribers; which means you have supported us financially. Some of you have done so since nearly day one, others have come on board in the last week. Thank you. As a gift to our subscribers we sent *LTN* T-shirts to them, which will be arriving this week. This is just one of the perks to being a subscriber. Other benefits include being able to write comments, being in the running for freebies, receiving breaking news alerts and knowing you are helping to sustain Tahoe's only daily news source.

We also would not be successful without our advertisers. Thank you to all the businesses and individuals that have supported us and continue to do so.

Without these two revenue streams, we would not be able to keep producing the news seven days a week, 24 hours a day. If you are interested in advertising, send an email to info@LakeTahoeNews.net with "want to advertise" in the subject line. To subscribe, go **online** or send a check to Lake Tahoe News, PO Box 13406, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151. Cost is $10/month or $100/year.

We look forward to another wonderful year of delivering the news to you wherever you are reading us – which as of yesterday included more than 100 countries and more than 3,300 cities.

– Lake Tahoe News staff

Opinion: Court opens door to changing CalPERS

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

California's perpetual debate over public employee pensions has always revolved about what's called the "California rule" – a series of court decisions that seemingly prohibit any changes in pension benefits once they are granted.

Dan Walters

The debate has intensified in recent years as the California Public Employee Retirement System and other state and local pension systems grapple with multibillion-dollar "unfunded liabilities" for pension benefits and increase mandatory payments from governments to reduce them.

The rule, first enunciated in a 1955 state Supreme Court case out of Long Beach, has often been cited by public employee unions and others as they resist efforts at state and local levels to overhaul pension programs and reduce their heavy costs.

It's based on clauses in the federal and state constitutions prohibiting the "impairment" of contracts and the assumption that pension benefits are, in fact, protected contracts.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Coyotes are just like hipsters

By Dan Flores

If you don’t have a coyote story, give it time. You will.

The tawny, golden-eyed, sharp-nosed wild dog of the American deserts is now our backyard predator, everywhere from Miami to Seattle.

The stories pile up. During a heat wave, in broad daylight, a coyote strolls into a sandwich shop in Chicago and hops up on a freezer to cool off. Customers and staff flee for the street, where a shocked crowd peers through the windows as the coyote commandeers the store.

On the other side of the country, a California couple driving at freeway speeds plows through a pack of coyotes near Las Vegas. Hundreds of miles later, while unpacking the car near Nevada City, they discover a full-grown coyote snagged like a bug in the grill of the car. Their flying coyote ornament is fully alert, has one cut on a paw and another on its muzzle. Having hitchhiked to California, it is otherwise unhurt.

Such is the life of the American continent’s native small wolf in the 21st century. Our task, because there is really no other option, is to understand them well enough to enjoy them as neighbors.

Exactly a century ago, Joseph Grinnell of the Society of American Mammalogists proposed we allow coyotes and wolves to live unmolested in the parks of the country’s new National Park Service. Today rural coyotes outside the parks are still

shot and trapped in staggering numbers. So coyotes came up with an even better refuge than the national parks: cities.

Los Angeles and Chicago are now home to thousands of coyotes, and Denver has at least a thousand in more than 125 packs. City-dwelling coyotes are living richer lives than their rural counterparts.

History is on the side of the urban coyote. For one thing, the species has a lot of experience as wild town dogs. Coyotes were living in Indian cities like the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan and the ceremonial Southwestern city now called Chaco Canyon a thousand years ago. They've been practicing in contemporary U.S. cities like Los Angeles for at least a century.

Some biologists argue that city life may be selecting for particular canid genetic strains: novelty-seeking, "super-genius" coyotes that can solve the riddles of being a predator in a modern metropolis.'

Compared to rural America, where the average lifespan of a coyote is just 2½ years, in cities the living is easy. Leash laws and municipal programs that curbed feral dog populations made city living even better for coyotes. Mice and rats, a coyote's most dependable prey, are numerous, as are geese and ducks and exotic fruiting plants of all kinds. In the city, nobody is shooting at you, trapping you, or poisoning you. So town coyotes are living to 12 or 13 years old. Because urban coyote territories are also resource-rich, metropolitan coyotes often get more than 60 percent of their pups to adulthood. In the countryside that figure is commonly less than 15 percent.

The most dangerous element of modern urban life for coyotes is crossing highways teeming with cars. No Aztec coyote had to master 70 mph traffic, but modern coyotes are figuring it out. Biologists have watched them in Chicago rush hour: crossing

half a multilane interstate highway boiling with traffic, then sitting in the median until traffic thins enough for them to cross the other lanes. More than 60 percent of coyote deaths still come under the wheels of cars in Chicago. But with more generations of city experience in carmageddon Los Angeles, coyotes have lowered that figure to about 40 percent.

A media out of its depth has tended to portray coyotes as invaders, as unnatural in cities, often describing them in language associated with criminals or gangs. But once we get over our shock at seeing them lope through our suburbs, and accept their presence in town as normal, there are far more reasons to celebrate coyotes than to fear them.

While coyotes will guard their pups against our dogs in the spring-summer denning season, careful studies indicate the vast majority of city coyotes are upstanding citizens. Coyotes are not foraging from dumpsters behind fast food restaurants, and they do not carry rabies. The prescription to co-existence is to keep them wild and wary of us, or at least thinking we're too weird to trust, and never habituating them to associating humans with handouts. Then we'll get to enjoy them as a remarkable flourish of the wild and the ancient, smack in the middle of modern life.

As the Aztecs discovered long ago, coyotes are a fact of urban existence. Resistance is futile.

Dan Flores is an environmental writer whose newest book is "Coyote America: A Natural and Supernatural History."

Opinion: People of color missing from backcountry

By Nina Revoyr, Los Angeles Times

Last month, two friends and I backpacked for a week in the Sierra Nevada. We hiked through meadows dotted with wildflowers, slept beneath snow-draped peaks and met plenty of other hikers: the dad and son whose Green Bay Packers caps sparked a conversation about our mutual ties to Wisconsin; scientists from UC Santa Cruz studying flowers and rock formations; five recent college grads from Kentucky who were hiking the John Muir Trail before they scattered to begin their adult lives.

But as the days passed, I grew increasingly troubled by the people we didn’t meet.

There were a few Asian hikers, including a couple of hapas like me (I’m half Japanese and half Polish) and one of my friends was half-Iranian, but not a single backpacker who was Latino or African American.

Read the whole story