



TUE SAN FRANCISCO BAY MODEL

By John Goepel, Jr



Sausalito's working model of San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is so large and detailed that there's a model of the model to help you understand what's going on. Built in 1957 (and enlarged in the late '60s), operated by the Army Corps of Engineers, the 320 by 400-foot model aids in evaluating planned water projects. It's so accurate, with its computer-governed currents and tides, that it not only can determine the effects of changes in ship channels, changes in the shoreline, and spills, but can suggest ways to counter unwanted effects. It does this through extreme topographical accuracy and an ability to zip through the entire 24-hour, 50-minute lunar day in 14.9 minutes, King Canute would have loved it.

The elaborate interpretive aids for your self-guided tour begin, Michener-like, with the creation of the world. Aided by graphics, working models and quotations from such disparate sources as Omar Khayyam, Shelley and John Paul Jones, they rapidly move you from the nebulous clouds of genesis to the mid-20th century. Much is of necessity omitted, but you do get a good sense of the bay's ecological importance. A brief slide program gives some background on the model's creation. As you approach the actual model, overlooking it from a balcony you may have some difficulty orienting yourself—even with such helpful guideposts as model bridges and a model San Francisco, looking very much like the artwork heading

Herb Caen's column.

The model may or may not actually be working during your visit. It is a functioning

- scientific instrument, not operated for visitors. But so slight is the change in water level (3/8 inch) and so slow the flow that they are nearly imperceptible anyway The vastness of the Bay and Delta—and the surprising amount of change man has made in them—impresses whether the model tide of man-made sea water is
- flowing or not. One leaves
- ~ with a sense not only of the vastness of this water system but of its intricacy

The model's surroundings are interesting as well. It's housed in a huge building once part of the World War II Marinship Shipyard, where 75,000 employees built tankers and Liberty Ships. A display on Marinship history has photos and mementoes of the era,

In drydock here is the World War I-era steam freighter Wapama, slowly being restored. And the Army Corps of Engineers maintains two debris-gathering boats here. Part of the Corps' duty is keeping the bay free of flotsam and jetsam (both helpfully defined in another interpretive display) and they have two boats with huge, flotsam! jetsam grabbing pincers. Unlike the model, these attractions are not generally open for tours, but they are interesting to see from shore.

Instructive, low-key, and fun, the Bay Model tour is also free, Individual tours are self-guided; ranger-guided tours can be arranged for groups of 10 or more. Located at 2100 Bridgeway, the model is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 to 4 most of the year. July 1 to Labor Day it is open from 9 to 4 Tuesday through Friday and 10 to 6 Saturday, Sunday and holidays. Telephone (415) 332-3871. K~