



**Your on the  
Street Reporter**



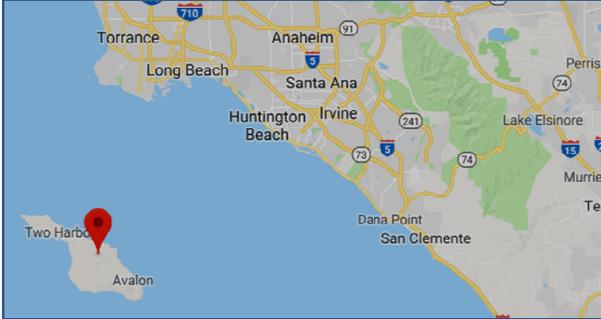
**Uyless Black**

**Races on Catalina Island**

## Races on Catalina Island

March 10, 2018

Hello from Your on the Street Reporter. Those of you who have followed these reports over the past thirteen years may recall I have written about Catalina Island several times. It is one of my favorite places to visit. Only 26 miles off the coast of southern California, it is an ideal place to get away from the congestion of Los Angeles, where I occasionally visit. I have inserted a map below to refresh your memory of the location of this island.<sup>1</sup>



The purpose of this trip was three-fold: (a) to watch some foot races; (b) to check how the island was changing; (c) to check if global warming and the consequent melting of icebergs was having an effect on the water levels on the beaches.

Dispensing with part (c) of this enquiry, my finding is that there is no additional sea water encroaching on or toward the town of Avalon, one of two small burgs on the island. However, if you and I are still alive thirty years from now, unless measures are not taken soon, we may have our shrimp cocktail delivered to our dining table by the shrimp themselves.

Given the lag effect--the time between an event (the melting of icebergs) and its effect (flooding of shores), it is probably too late to prevent the Miami Dolphins from eventually earning their name.

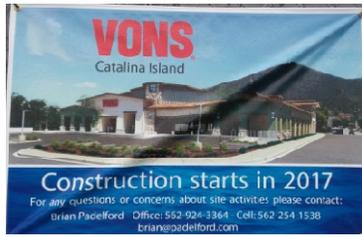
**Xenophobic?** I have been watching the town of Avalon's evolution since the early 1980s. The small rather run-down, but charming town has been transformed into a trendy yet still small and charming town. The town limits are not allowed to expand beyond a certain distance, and assorted government agencies impose a strict building code throughout the township. The shops are fancier, but Avalon still holds a special allure. As seen in the figure below, it is nestled on the beach side of a beautiful bay.



I hope it stays this way for the sake of tradition, if nothing else. The entire island has an appeal of its own, one I hope will be ever-lasting. Two of those charms are the funky grocery stores that are situated close to each other in the town. They are a throw-back to the 50s and 60s.

Alas, it appears the stores, owned by one entity, are destined for the dustbins. While walking around the town today, I noticed a local nursery and associated walkways had been demolished and replaced with a construction site. The site is to be an upscale grocery store from the Von's chain. As shown in the figure below.

<sup>1</sup> The first two figures in this report are courtesy of Google.



Granted, the architecture is not that of a conventional big box store. Nonetheless, I will miss those two stores that remind me of the past.

This narrative leads to another story I would like to share with you. Several weeks ago, I sent an email to several of my close friends who live on the east coast. I commented about the effect massive immigration had on a culture...any culture. During these exchanges, I expressed my longing for my hometown to somehow hold on to its southwestern heritage. Here is what I wrote:

The *massive and frequent* (my italics for emphasis) immigration into my home town has changed it from a cowboy/country/oil community into a Mexican populace; a populace who cares less about the wonderful heritage of its pioneers. They do not care about the two museums that reflect the legacy of its forebears. Before long, the museums will be closed. After all, why should a Mexicano care for an exploiting Americana?

Most people wish to maintain ties to their past and are sad when that cannot happen. Yet, gradual immigration allows integration. What I had witnessed in my hometown was the impact that “massive and frequent” immigration was having on its culture. I re-read my paragraph; not a word of it is incorrect.

One of my friends sent back a reply stating that I was xenophobic. His accusation took me aback. I was not lamenting immigration. In fact, my last sentence was one of empathy for the Mexican immigrants. I was expressing concern for uncontrolled immigration.

Worse yet, this man had known me since the mid-1960s and knew me to be a social liberal. I referred him to some of my other writings, but to no avail. He responded that my comments were, again, xenophobic. His ignoring years of communications astounded me.

After a while, I said to myself: *Move on, Uyless. Regardless of his decades-long association with you, he has judged you according to his own views.* Little did he know of my befriending of Mexicans living in New Mexico, both in my hometown and in Santa Fe, which I later called home. Indeed, the people of Latino heritage in Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico have more “cowboy” in them than most supposed cowboys. ...And most of them cheer for the Dallas Cowboys.

Liberal prejudice is as onerous as conservative prejudice.

## **The Races**

Today was not ideal for foot races. It had been raining for a while, and the streets were wet and slippery. But these conditions did not diminish the enthusiasm of runners who participated in three races: the 1k, the 2k, and the 6k. Several years ago, I would have been in one or two of the races, but my aging infrastructure kept me on the sidelines, and unfortunately, are beginning to affect my ability to travel.

Avalon’s hotels were packed full of runners. They had come from the mainland. A little water and rain were not going to diminish their determination to run today.

During this weekend, Reporterette and I met several of the runners. Most of those with whom we talked came to Catalina each year for some form of racing for just to run the hills

surrounding Avalon. We told them we would try to snap photos of them as they ran around the courses. They were appreciative, but we lost them in the crowd.

Below are some photos of the races and the racers. I spoke with one of the starters about the number of racers entered this year. He responded that some earlier races on the island had attracted more people, that the wet conditions likely discouraged some potential contestants. I missed not being among the runners, but I had my day in the sun (and rain). I was comfortable standing aside, bearing witness to their discomfort, as seen in the right photo below.

Parts of the racing lanes traversed fairly steep hills. Even when I was running (okay, jogging) a course, I slowed up on wet streets. You think you are in control, then bam!...your butt is on the pavement, and luckily, your head has avoided a hard street.



As for my friend on the east coast: If the paragraph about immigration I wrote had come from a stranger, I might understand your harsh comments, as the material could be subject to misinterpretation. In hindsight, I was too vague about my support of controlled, gradual immigration. But they came from someone with whom you have shared hundreds of thoughts about human rights and the dignity of any race.

You are forgiven, but your inaccurate and tactless characterization of my simply longing for the old times as xenophobic left me thinking what my Mexican friends would say, “visita al leñera.” For the unenlightened, that is Spanish for behind the woodshed, a term likely not familiar with my eastern buddy. Oops, there goes my xenophobic personality again!