Guess the Traveler:

› Who ran with the bulls in Spain?

› Who visited ‘anime central’ in Japan?

› Who hiked the Matterhorn (not the Disney ride)?
When you wonder where life will take you, sometimes the answer is to far-away places.

In this special travel edition of the CAO Weekly Report, County employees share some amazing adventures in locations around the globe. Enjoy their travelogue and photos!

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**Supervisor Luis Alejo: Running with the Bulls in Spain**

This past summer was memorable as I fulfilled a ‘bucket-list’ trip at the infamous Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, Spain.

I joined dozens of friends during the 8-day festival in honor of the local patron saint, San Fermín. The festival origins date back to 1592 and was made famous in writings by Ernest Hemingway. I was in the actual run with 12 other friends. It takes place only once every morning at 8:00 a.m. each day during the festival.

We also spend time in the coastal city of San Sebastián. The northern Basque region is amazingly beautiful along with exceptional food, wine and generous...
hospitality by its people. This is something everyone should experience at least once in life.

I also experienced two Michelin star restaurants and thought I was in a Spanish heaven! The paellas, tapas and grilled fresh sardines were excellent with good Rioja and Tempranillo wines.

**Luis’s Travel Tip:** Talk with the locals to really get the feel of the people and get the best food and wine recommendations.

**Did You Know:** There is a statue of Ernest Hemingway at the bar in the historic Care Iruña in Pamplona.

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**Carl Holm, RMA Director: The Alps and More in Switzerland**

My wife Lee Ann and I visited Switzerland this summer from June 27th to July 13th. There were two parts to the trip: the first week involved hiking the Swiss-French-Italian Alps with a group of friends from Monterey through Backroads; the second week my wife and I toured around the country.

When we first started planning the trip, it was a trip with friends to celebrate some significant successes for my wife, among them, her hard work as the co-chair of the U.S. Amateur at Pebble Beach (Aug 2018) and being part of the executive committee for the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach (June 2019).
However, the purpose became more personal when my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer last year. The additional time in Switzerland included things that she really wanted to do while we were there including: cheese tasting, a private sitting with a chocolatier, toboggan rides and, of course, shopping!

We arrived about three weeks after the mountain trails opened up from the snow pack, so the mountain fields were very green with lots of wild flowers and dairy cattle grazing with large bells (the hills were alive...). Our travel, besides lots of hiking, included planes, trains (regular and cog trains), vernaculars, gondolas, automobiles, trams and boats. We hiked around the Matterhorn, over a couple glaciers and toured a WWII bunker built into a mountain.

The trip really showed us the rich history of Switzerland and how it developed to be what it is today. While we loved the experience enough to go back, there is a lot to see in the world and it’s time for a new adventure.

**Carl’s Travel Tip:** Learn basic words in the language of the country where you are traveling. It shows residents your respect and interest in their country.

**Did You Know:** In Gstaad, renowned for its chalets, there is design control to maintain the traditional ‘chalet style’ iconic look of these Swiss homes.
Lubna Mohammad, Emergency Services Planner: My Trip to Japan

I went on a week-long trip to Japan to visit my cousin, who moved there to teach English to children. The intention was to visit and bond with my cousin, but I also got the opportunity to see a gorgeous country filled with kind people, amazing food and an astonishingly beautiful landscape.

My adventure began in Hamamatsu, were I saw my cousin’s home, walked around the town, explored caves, hiked mountains and listened to cicadas and birds sing over each other. The next day we went to Tokyo. I was delighted by the lush, green mountains we drove through to get there and enjoyed listening to my cousin describe his experiences in Japan and all he’s learned about its culture, language and history.

In Tokyo, we explored several temples and shrines, the emperor’s palace grounds, the Tokyo Sky-tree, Akihabara (also known as ‘anime central’), Shibuya crossing (the busiest crosswalk in the world), a sword museum, Tokyo Budo-Kan (Marital arts hall of fame) and a maid café.

Tokyo amazed me; it is a place where traditional culture and technological innovation live side by side in harmony. It is a huge city with many people, yet the politeness and orderliness of the people makes it seem rather peaceful and quiet.

After three days in Tokyo, we went south to Nara and Kyoto. Both cities have elegance and natural beauty, but Nara is truly magical. The city has a reserve filled with deer who bow to you when you bow! It has beautiful parks and farms where nature is preserved, right next to a thriving city with bazaars and businesses. I ended my trip with a sunset hike up the Torii Gates in Kyoto.
My time in Japan was short, but memorable, I hope to visit again someday and explore the southern end of the island, especially Okinawa.

**Lubna’s Travel Tip:** Keep an open mind throughout your travels. Look for the beauty in the places you go and people you meet. Always be respectful.

**Did You Know:** Visitors to the Nara Deer Park feed the animals *shika-senbei*, a special deer rice cracker sold by vendors.

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**Do you have a travel experience you’d like to share?** Contact Maia Carroll, carrollm@co.monterey.ca.us, to be included in our next Travel Edition newsletter.

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