



# The Bowfin Inquirer

Since 1993



July 2025

*Looking Ahead:*

## Bowfin Block Party, 2025

We are looking forward to hosting a pizza and potluck lunch party in our backyard (at 344), as we've done for several years now.

While we are certain that we want to hold the event at noon on a weekend day in the month of September, we haven't decided when yet.

To help us pick a date that will work for a good fraction of our neighbors, we'd very much like to learn what your preferences and/or limitations are prior to our selecting and announcing a date in the August issue.

If you have an interest in attending and have preferences regarding what date the party is held, please share them with us via

**email** (editor@bowfininquirer.com),

**phone** (650-572-9153), or

**dropping by** to let us know!

Thanks very much!

Jerry and Eve Lerman



## Aaron's Question Column



A picture of Alcatraz as seen aerially

**Question:** The Bay Area's defunct prison, Alcatraz, was in the news recently because it has been proposed to revamp and reopen it. Does Alcatraz have an interesting history you can share with us?

-- Jerry

**Aaron's Answer (A'sA):** Alcatraz Island, in the center of San Francisco Bay, has served multiple functions across centuries: Indigenous landmark, military post, federal prison, protest site, and political symbol. Its known history begins with the Miwok people, who avoided permanent settlement due to the island's exposure, lack of fresh water, and spiritual associations. The Miwok considered the island cursed and avoided venturing too close to it. In 1775 Spanish naval officer Juan Manuel de Ayala mapped the island and named it La Isla de los Alcatrazes or "Island of the Pelicans", for the birds that nested there.

Following U.S. annexation of California in 1846 the military reserved the island for coastal defense. By the 1850s Fort Alcatraz was established with artillery and later used as a military prison. During the Civil War and afterward, it held Confederate sympathizers, military deserters, and Native American prisoners. By 1907 it had become a long-term detention site under the U.S. Army.

*continued on page 3*

## Solution to Last Month's Quiz

### A CROSSWORD FOR MAY



*Thank you for composing this fun puzzle,  
Peyton!*

## This Month's Quiz

### SPHERES FROM SQUARES

Arrange the **GREEN** letters to find related wor(l)ds

J	E	I	U	C	1				
N	T	S		V					
P	E	M	A						
H	U	R		N					
P	Y	L	R						

2

					3				

4

					5				

6

					7				

8

O! ---- I FORGOT ONE! Which one?  
(Just a little mistake)

For each of the 8 patterns, select from the big 5x5 diagram the letters which occupy the corresponding green squares. Then rearrange these sets of letters to form a set of eight familiar worlds.

If an O is combined with 4 of the other red letters, you can anagram those five letters to form a ninth related world. What is it?

## Our Tour of the British Isles, June 2025

Eve and I just took a 23 day trip to the UK, crossing a wide swath of England and Wales on land, cruising to several islands (Man, Mull, Lewis, Orkney) and to Belfast, and staying a few days in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, York, and Manchester. I took more pictures than any sane person might, but please indulge me as I share three of my favorites. --- Jerry (344)

### Yorkshire Sculpture Park



### Skara Brae Prehistoric Village (Orkney)



3000 BC (older than the Pyramids of Giza)

## ***Aaron's Answers*** continued from pg 1

In 1934 the federal government converted Alcatraz into a maximum-security penitentiary. It was designed for prisoners considered especially dangerous or escape-prone. The island's isolation, cold waters, and strong currents made it ideal for containment. High-profile inmates included Al Capone, George "Machine Gun" Kelly, and Robert Stroud. While 36 men attempted to escape in 14 separate incidents, the Bureau of Prisons maintains that no one succeeded. Five men disappeared without a trace, including Frank Morris and the Anglin brothers in 1962, an escape that remains unresolved.

The prison closed in 1963 due to high operating costs and corroding infrastructure. In 1969, Alcatraz was occupied by Native American activists invoking federal surplus land rights. The protest lasted 19 months and helped catalyze reforms in U.S. Indian policy.

Since 1972, Alcatraz has been part of the National Park Service and serves as a public historical site. However, its role in political imagination persists. During his most recent presidency, Donald Trump reportedly discussed reopening Alcatraz as a detention site for "domestic enemies", alongside similar proposals for expanding Guantanamo Bay. These conversations, while unofficial, were documented by senior advisors and reflect Trump's interest in using symbolically powerful detention sites, with Trump stating that Alcatraz is a "symbol of law and order". As of now, no formal plan has been implemented.

Additional fact: The name "Alligator Alcatraz" refers not to the San Francisco site, but to the U.S. Penitentiary Coleman in Florida. Surrounded by wetlands and populated with alligators, it has earned the nickname for its high security and natural barriers to escape, paralleling Alcatraz's isolated design.

Target Date for Next Month's Contributions:

**August 15, 2025**

Please reach us with your articles, news, photos, CHILDREN'S ARTWORK or ideas at

344 Bowfin, (650 572-9153) or email us at our email [EDITOR@BOWFININQUIRER.COM](mailto:EDITOR@BOWFININQUIRER.COM) or by

adding a NOTE on our website: [BOWFININQUIRER.COM](http://BOWFININQUIRER.COM)

## **Enjoying "Storyworth"**

*by Jerry Lerman (344)*

I received a holiday present from my adult children this past December: a subscription to Storyworth. I had not heard of the product before, but now that I have been using it for several weeks – and have really taken to it – I thought I'd share my thoughts about it.

Using Storyworth entails having others (I'll call them 'users') pose questions to YOU (the responder) about your life. The product comes with a repository of questions that are designed to elicit interesting responses. The users usually select from that list – but they can also compose their own questions.

The responder receives one question per week. Storyworth's website has an editor for the responder to use in composing answers.

I've found it isn't always possible to answer each question in a single week, so backlogs can develop. So far, I've answered 12 of 15 posed questions. In doing so, I've been finding it very satisfying to relate stories of my life to my children and grandchildren.

The answers are automatically shared via email with individuals you've selected to see them. At the end of the year, the responder's answers are collected and printed as a book, forming an autobiography. I believe my kids uncovered an excellent gift, one that you might find would be great for members of your family!

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**Congratulations to our neighbors on the arrival of the newest Bowfiner – ENZO!!!**