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## **Walt Wiley: Old grocery stores never die, they just come in for remarketing**

**By Walt Wiley -- Bee Columnist - (Published July 22, 2004)**

**'Did you bring bottles?':** David Gwynn remembers when the checker at the market asked that question before starting to ring up groceries. It's such a fond memory that he has a Web site under that headline devoted to old grocery stores.

That was in the days when beer and soda bottles were refilled, and the companies wanted them back to refill, even charged a deposit so the customers would bring them back.

David remembers going with his mother to the old A&P store in Greensboro, N.C., where he grew up. "It was always cool and dark and mysterious," he said. "My mother didn't like it, but I found it fascinating."

Now he's scouring historical records to find the sites of the old markets, then visiting to see what's there today, posting his findings on his Web site, [www.groceteria.com](http://www.groceteria.com).

In Carmichael, there was an old Safeway at 4040 Manzanita Ave., built in 1965. Today there's a modern, 24-hour Safeway there.

On Watt Avenue since 1960, there was a Raley's at 3431, between Marconi and Whitney avenues. Today, it's a Grocery Outlet.

Then there is the big, showy '60s-era Safeway at 2509 Fulton Ave., now Tognotti's auto parts emporium.

"These things are always changing," David said. "That's what's fascinating about tracing the history." ...

**Opera star:** Piper Schwartz of the Wilhaggin neighborhood is back for Year 27 of hosting trips to the San Francisco Opera, arranging a chartered bus and connecting patrons with their tickets.

This year's season runs from September into June and includes five operas. Schwartz's trips are for Sunday matinees.

"We always get very good seats doing it this way. It's a very comfortable trip, too," said Schwartz, a retired junior high teacher and lifelong opera buff who organizes the trips as a labor of love.

Call her at (916) 488-2159. ...

**Worldwide winner:** Amber Durrell just graduated from Loretto High School. Now she's off to Murray Hill, N.J., and the old Bell Labs, where she will join 54 other recent grads from 13 states and 14 nations for the Global Science Scholars Summit.

Amber will be a biology major at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. ...

Fairly certain: It's about a month until fair time, and there were a few sure signs the other day

that the 151st annual California State Fair is nearly upon us.

First, there was the absolute calm of the Cal Expo grounds. Even the racetrack area seemed serene in the balmy late-morning air.

Then there were the workers, hard at tasks all over the grounds, such as the guys with big cherry-picker trucks painting the light standards, making them look new.

There were also the men and women with hoses and leaf blowers, cleaning up one of the livestock areas.

And how about the corn and other crops growing to maturity in the area where the fair farm will be come opening day? Those plants have to have the time to grow somewhere. Why not where they will be on display?

All the foliage was looking absolutely parklike, as it always does.

One thing, though. The grounds look amazingly smaller without the crowds and the carnies and all the hoopla and clutter. Even a car dealer's sprawling sales effort with what must have been hundreds of cars looked minuscule in the area where the midway will be beginning Aug. 20. ...

**Flying dragons:** Tim Manolis is an expert on dragonflies, damselflies and such related creatures as black meadow hawks and sedge sprites.

He'll be talking about them, showing a video and autographing his book at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park. The American River Natural History Association is hosting the event. Call (916) 489-4918.

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#### About the Writer

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Reach Walt Wiley at (916) 321-1063 or [wwiley@sacbee.com](mailto:wwiley@sacbee.com). Back columns: [www.sacbee.com/wiley](http://www.sacbee.com/wiley)

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The Sacramento Bee, 2100 Q St., P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852

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