

Headlines for the August 12, 1911 issue of the San Francisco Call

"BUSSING BY SPOONING FOLK IS FORBIDDEN AT ROSS

ROSS, Aug. 11. Ross Common, the new park of this aristocratic village, must be as puritanical in spirit as it is in name. Instead of "Do not pick the flowers," or "Keep off the grass," visitors may be horrified by, signs reading, "No spooning allowed." Ross is a dignified hamlet of millionaires. Love making is threatened with extinction. At the last meeting of the city fathers an ordinance was introduced by Trustee C. A. Meussdorffer, which will make it unlawful for persons to engage in oscillatory exercises on the Ross Common. While there is no "ducking stool," town pump nor stocks in which, offenders may be punished, there is a constable ready to clap kissing bugs in the town lockup the moment the ordinance is passed. There will be no more holding hands in the pale moonlight, no more counting of stars. Whether a man will be arrested for kissing his wife on Sunday is not known. The proposed ordinance makes it a misdemeanor to kiss in the park even when "there is no one looking but the owl and the moon." But there must be nothing common about Ross except the name of the new park."

Councilmembers wanted the Town to purchase the Common from Mrs. Ross even though they did not have the funds in reserves. By owning the Common the Council could control the use of the property and most wanted to keep the Town rural. They did not want to see shops, stores and saloons built next to the train station. The Town decided to create a park-like setting that would be used by Town residents. Well, it simply did not turn out that way exactly. As more San Francisco residents discovered weekend hiking on Mount Tamalpais, the Ross Station became a very popular spot to start the hike to the mountain. Campers would arrive on the afternoon train and would commence setting up their tents and cooking facilities on the Common to spend the night. After dinner bottles of wine and musical instruments usually appeared and couples would dance and sing and do what couples usually do. This was not what the Councilmembers had in mind.

The next morning the campers would arise very early and hike up Eldridge Grade to enjoy a first-class breakfast at the Summit Tavern at the top of Mount Tamalpais. Later in the day they would ride the gravity cars back down to Mill Valley on the Crookedest Railroad in the World built by William Kent and his partner Sidney Cushing. It was a short train ride from Mill Valley to Sausalito where the steam-boat ferries brought them home to San Francisco.

The Ban on Kissing on the Common never was brought to a full Council vote and the proposed ordinance was never put into effect.

Written by the Moya Library-Ross Historical Society for the Town of Ross Morning After Town Newsletter