

The Great Tide Pool

TALES OF PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA
by local award-winning author, [Brad Herzog](#)



(NOT SO) TRIVIAL PG

Twenty-four years ago this month, I was a contestant on “Who Wants to be a Millionaire.” This was at the peak of the phenomenon, when nearly 30 million people were watching several times a week. Although I did pretty well, nothing to be ashamed of, I didn’t win \$1 million. It still haunts me two-dozen years later. Frankly, I don’t want to talk about it.

But here’s one thing I learned from the experience: Trivia isn’t always trivial.

With that in mind, I’ve come across some interesting Pacific Grove morsels over the years, mostly from reading two remarkably comprehensive compendiums published by Patricia Hamilton at Pacific Grove Books—Life in Pacific Grove, Books 1 and 2. Here are 13 of my favorite discoveries:

- The **Gosby House Inn**, built before the turn of the century, was originally the Gosbey House, owned by J.S. Gosbey.
- The 120-year-old **Paul Mortuary**, one of the oldest businesses in continuous operation in Monterey County, also sold furniture in the early days—furniture in the front, caskets in the back.
- While famed architect Julia Morgan was designing 16 original buildings at **Asilomar Conference Grounds**, she designed a single home, which has been renovated and restored—at 104 1st Street.
- The **Sotheby’s International Realty** building at 574 Lighthouse Avenue was originally the Bank of Pacific Grove. Built in 1904 by Watsonville architect W.H. Weeks, it is the Monterey Peninsula’s only example of Romanesque Revival architecture.
- Much of the lumber used to build **The Lodge at Pebble Beach** came from the old **Pacific Grove Hotel**, which was torn down in 1918.



- **The Recreation Trail** in was once the site of tracks for the Southern Pacific railroad, which ran for years through P.G. It's biggest freight customer: a sand plant in Pebble Beach, now the site of Spanish Bay.
- The winning entry in the naming contest of Pacific Grove's conference grounds was by Helen Salisbury, a Stanford student. Her entry created a portmanteau from two Spanish words: Asilo and Mar - "Refuge by the Sea."
- Educator Robert Down, namesake of **PG's beloved elementary school**, was principal of what was then known as Pine Street School from 1914-31. But his first teaching job was at a one-room schoolhouse in Sonoma County.
- A 10 x 150-foot mural depicting the Pacific Grove and Monterey coastline was painted in the PG High School library in 1935... but it was destroyed by a fire in 1946.
- New York City's Grand Central Station used to feature a 60-foot mural depicting a colorful garden of lavender and pink mesembryanthemums planted in Pacific Grove by Hayes Perkins (after whom **Perkins Park** is named).
- Christopher Bell, the sculptor who created two PG landmark statues —"Butterfly Children" (at the post office) and "Life at the Top" (at Berwick Park) once had one of his sculptures displayed on Jacques Cousteau's boat, Calypso.
- The family of Pierre Bain, co-owner of **Fandango** restaurant, has operated the Grand Hôtel Bain at Comp-sur-Artuby in the south of France since 1737.
- When the Tom Hanks movie Turner and Hooch was filmed in Pacific Grove in 1989, three different mastiffs were used to play the role of Hooch.