

SLOGAN'S RUN

by Award-Winning Local Author, Brad Herzog

Throughout my travels around the country, my favorite thing to collect has been this: town slogans. It's a tall order to describe your community in a few words, place it on a sign, and make it memorable. These slogans run from hysterical (Hooker, Oklahoma: "It's a Location, not a Vocation") to hyperbolic (Boswell, Indiana: "Hub of the Universe") They can offer a wink (Newton Falls, Ohio: "The Town with Zip"), a warm feeling (Spring Lake, Michigan: "Where Nature Smiles for Seven Miles"), or a way-impressed nod (Peculiar, Missouri: "Where the Odds are With You"). But they all have one thing in common: A slogan identifies a community as a place of some significance. It's as if the town is saying, "I boast, therefore I am."

Pacific Grove has tested out its fair share of these. In the 1930s, we were apparently the "City of Smiles." True, but rather generic, don't you think? It reminds me of Wasco, California: "A nice place to live." In the 1940s and 1950s, we called ourselves the "City of Homes," which seems like it should be accompanied by a shrug emoji. That one calls to mind Little Valley, New York: "A Municipal Electric Community."

In the late 1960s, Pacific Grove finally got it right. "Butterfly Town USA" had legs, in a manner of speaking. It's still on the sign because it's descriptive, comforting, unique to the town. But I also appreciate the slogan that arrived about a decade later: "America's Last Hometown." I'm assuming there's an intentional double meaning—as both a quaint, historic place and a community at continent's end. Actually, the serenity-and-geography double is also evident in Pacific Grove's latest iteration: "Sanctuary by the Sea." So, I quite enjoy our town's sloganizing over the past half-century.

Then again, we could opt for a bit more cheekiness. We could offer a play on our location, sort of the way that Moscow, Maine is "Best Town by a Dam Site." So how about Pacific Grove: "Life on the Edge." Or we could try out a play on words, kind of how Drumright, Oklahoma is "Town of Oil Repute." Maybe... Pacific Grove: "You Otter See It." Yes, I'm cringing, too. There's also the occasional nod to potential name confusion, my all-time favorite being Gettysburg, South Dakota: "Where the Battle Wasn't." So... "Not Pacific Palisades. Not Pacifica. Pacific Grove."

We could give Steinbeck's *East of Eden* a shout-out while conveying a sense of paradise: "That Makes Us Eden." Or how about a clever take on the city's friendliness and its miles-long coastline: "Where Everyone Waves, and the Waves are Everywhere." Or we could trumpet the opportunity to watch the sun rise at Lovers Point and set at Asilomar: "Follow the Sun in Pacific Grove."

Alright, it isn't an easy task. And anyway, I think I most prefer the simplest self-reference of all—the one that saves energy and concludes with a sense of wonder in a "golly gee" kind of way.

So, I'll stick with PG.