

The Great Tide Pool

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

A TAIL-WAGGING TIME



For all the talk about the graceful deer and adorable sea otters that frolic in and around Pacific Grove, nothing quite compares to the dogs – the golden retrievers and border collies and labradoodles and cockapoos that often turn PG sidewalks into leash-tangling social occasions. PG loves its dogs.

Pacific Grove loves a parade, too. So the combination is irresistible.

In the last weekend of July, Pagrovians enjoyed the second year of the Summer Lights festival. There was a Boots & Blazers Barn Dance Friday night in Chautauqua Hall, then a pancake breakfast sponsored by the Kiwanis Club on Saturday morning at Lovers Point Park. This was followed by a full day of face-painting and food vendors and fun and games, including nine hours of stage entertainment – from Monterey Bay Chinese Association dancers to Cambodian singer Dara Sam, from local jazz singer Julie Capili to bluesy guitarist Jim Fucillo, from the New Wave Band to the multi-decade, multi-genre cover stylings of the Money Band. The weekend was capped by a “Light Experience” on Lovers Point Pier.

But it was a *light-hearted* experience on Friday afternoon that most captured my heart. It has been said that the journey of life is sweeter when traveled with a dog. So why not a pet parade along Lighthouse Avenue?

Pacific Grove’s pet parade has been an annual tradition since the 1950s. Pooches and their human parents gathered at Caledonia Park to set up for a stroll along Lighthouse, and as always, the canine costumes were a highlight.

So it was that on an otherwise normal Friday afternoon in PG, a cavalier King Charles spaniel named Sandy was dressed as a mermaid. Teddy, a Yorkie, was a Tootsie Roll. Black-caped Dash, a French bulldog, was



reimagined as Dashy Potter. And Zoe, a dachshund-chihuahua mix, wore both a tutu and a 49ers jersey. "She's a little bit sweet and a little bit sassy," the dog's owner, Lauri, explained.



Butterfly, USA was well-represented. Joy, a long-haired chihuahua, was reimagined as a purple butterfly, while a corgi named Hank the Tank was dressed as a Monarch. But it was an anything-goes environment. A blue heeler named Kona sported sunglasses. Scout, a woodle (Wheaten terrier and poodle), wore a necktie. Winston, a terrier mix, represented his owner's native city with a Chicago Cubs jersey. Other costumes featured everything from bats to bumblebees.



It wasn't only for the dogs, of course. One member of PG's Youth Ambassadors, whose volunteer efforts made the event run smoothly, held a sign welcoming "Feathered, Furry, and Scaly Pets." Although the non-canine contingent amounted to two cats in strollers and one bunny in a backpack this year, over the years the event has drawn everything from roosters to snakes to lizards. Yes, we are an eclectic and eccentric bunch here in Pacific Grove.



But that's just it. There was something so... PG about this pet parade. It was comforting, creative, whimsical, gladly goofy, neighborly, traditional. Most of the ambling creature were adorned, yet the general vibe was rather... unadorned. It reminded me, in many ways, of the annual Butterfly Parade in which we gather every October, dress up some of our favorite people in costumes, and celebrate... well, celebrating.



Christine Gruber, a driving force behind the event as President of the Board of Directors for Youth Ambassadors, assessed the assorted dog handlers and said this: "I love how there are more adults now. It used to be mostly kids." Then she added, with a smile, "Or maybe we just don't grow up."

*The Great
Tidepool*