

The Great Tide Pool

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

NAME THAT HOUSE



Exactly a quarter-century ago, during what I now consider my long ago 15 minutes of fame, I was sitting in the "hot seat" across from Regis Philbin, trying not to think of the fact that 25 million sets of eyes would be watching me on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire." Regis asked me the fifth question - for \$1000: "According to a popular 1963 song, 'Puff the Magic Dragon lives by the sea' in which town?" The possible answers: Honah-Lee (the obvious correct one), Gallipoli, Honolulu... and, believe it or not, Monterey.

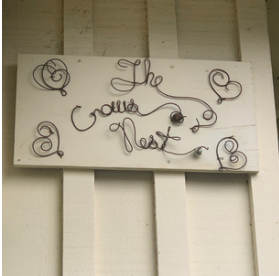
That wasn't the only coincidence involving the question. Only 18 months earlier, I had written a magazine article specifically about how Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul and Mary) came to write... "Puff the Magic Dragon." You can't make this stuff up.

So maybe I should have expected the happenstance that happened not long ago when I found myself wandering along Pacific Grove's evocatively-named Mermaid Avenue, which runs parallel to Ocean View Boulevard for a few blocks, starting at Lovers Point. There, at 777 Mermaid, was a sign above a garage door. It said simply "Honallie." There appear to be myriad ways to spell the land by the sea, but this whimsical abode honors it prominently - with a sculpted dragon along the ridge of its roof.

I strolled further along Mermaid Avenue and, not far from a yellow sign warning of crossing mermaids, I came across "Mermaid Landing" at 731 Mermaid. Right next door, was "Mermaid Retreat." I always crack a smile when I see that houses have been given names. In nearby Carmel-by-the-Sea, this is a more common practice, primarily out of necessity. Because (although this may be changing) most of the houses aren't numbered and don't have mail delivery, the residents give them names like "Dream Catcher" and "Seventh Heaven."



But in Pacific Grove, there's no necessity. Displaying a name is just a product of whimsy. So 307 Park Street is "Robin's Nest." And a little house at 114 9th Street is "The Sardine." And there's the locally famous "Butterfly House" at 309 9th Street. And an intriguing moniker at 224 Congress: "Opposite House." And try not to grin when you walk past 311 6th Street and you see "Clamalot."



There's a seaside trend in many of the names. The home at 951 Crest Avenue is "Beach House." Not to be confused with "Beach Cottage" and "Beach Haven" on 17th Street. In between those latter two, not far from Lovers Point is "Point Break."

More than a century ago, noted zoologist Julia Platt (elected PG's first female mayor in 1931) built a home at 105 Grand Avenue and called it "Roserox." But the "how" and "why" part of most of PG's house names is likely lost to history due to a change in residents over the years. Even in those cases, however, the house names have been maintained - eccentricity passed from owner to owner.



And many of these named houses have a long history of their own, according to the green memorial plaques adorning them. At 602 Lobos Avenue, on the corner of Junipero and Lobos, "Rancho Junipero" once belonged to "Albert Zimmerman 1909." "The Crow's Nest" at 249 Chestnut Street was once the property of "Annie S. Peyton 1909." And at 118 Forest Avenue, a stone's throw from Lovers Point, the house built by Charles and Lea Cox in 1912 is now known as "Sea Mist."



So I'll continue to keep an eye out for house names in Pacific Grove. It makes a daily walk much more interesting, serving as another reason why I love PG. And that's my final answer.

*The Great
Tidepool*