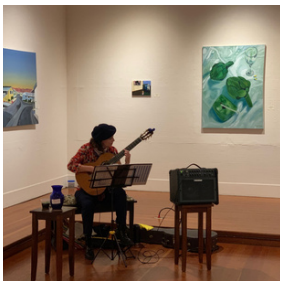


The Great Tidepool

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



TGIFF

I had always thought the initialism TGIF might have originated with the restaurant chain T.G.I. Friday's, which launched way back in 1965. But with a little research, I discovered that "Thank God It's Friday" is at least a generation older than that, probably more. Which makes sense, right? Relief at the end of a work week is an age-old phenomenon.

In downtown Pacific Grove, once a month, it's more of a TGIFF—Thank God it's First Friday. Since 2015, on the first Friday every month, downtown P.G. transforms into a sort of music and art festival, a stroll through the sights and sounds of a creative community. Establishments, whether it's the Artisana Gallery (which started it all) or Seasons By-the-Sea or the Museum of Natural History, announce their participation by placing a green flag outside their doors. Which makes sense, too. Green means go.

So I went. On the first Friday in April, I spent an evening meandering around America's Last Hometown.

I began at The Monarch Pub, which was already brimming with customers enjoying fish and chips and the sounds of a four-person band led by precocious singer-songwriter Katherine Lavine, all of 15 years young (her smiling mom backed her on drums). But Katherine is clearly an old soul, channeling Alanis Morissette ("What it all comes down to... is that everything's gonna be fine, fine, fine...") while also offering her own original tunes.

Then I moseyed across the street to Phill's Barber Shop, where electric guitarists, a drummer and a one-man brass section, turned up the volume. At the other end of Lighthouse Avenue (and the other end of the musical spectrum) Wild Fish restaurant hosted a jazz quartet featuring band leader Bob Phillips on the keyboards, Mike Shannon on drums, Zach Westfall on bass, and saxophonist Paul Contos.



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& TOURIST CENTERS



And upstairs at the Pacific Grove Art Center, I sipped a chardonnay, savored the artwork and soaked in the acoustic sounds of Spanish guitarist Catherine Broz.



As dusk arrived and the festive lights lit up Lighthouse Avenue, I mused about why an event like First Friday is so appealing. I was reminded of other magical places around the country—like Asheville, North Carolina, where talented street musicians seem to appear on every corner, and Memphis, where the live blues classics waft from the bars during an amble along Beale Street.

But this is Pacific Grove—and that’s the appeal: It’s a celebration of local businesses and local artistry. After all, the jazz musicians are named the Lighthouse Jazz Quartet. The rockers at Phill’s Barber Shop literally call themselves PG-13 and “Pacific Grove’s Most Notorious Band.” And the wonderful singer-songwriter at The Monarch Pub? She’s a freshman at Pacific Grove High School.

In fact, it was one of Katherine’s cover tunes, a Beatles classic, that crystallized the whole communal, creative experience for me—“Come Together.” Every First Friday. TGIFF.

*The Great
Tidepool*



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& TOURIST CENTERS