

the reactor

By Paul Azevedo



If you're tired of hearing "Where the Hell's Pacifica," next time you're asked, just say: 37 degrees, 38 minutes north latitude, 122 degrees, 29 minutes west longitude.

That will probably stop the conversation cold. If it doesn't tell them Pacifica is due west of Modesto, due south of Bellingham, Washington.

IF THIS IDEA is so fascinating to you that you decide to take a trip around the world in the latitude of Pacifica — and you charter a long distance helicopter to do it—your route due east will take you just south of the Devil's Postpile (south of Yosemite), past Goldfield Nev., across Bryce Canyon, Utah.

You'll pass near Alamosa, Colo., slightly south of Dodge City, Kan., (hi, there, Marshal) and over the southern suburbs of Wichita.

On the way, you'll pass Ulysses, the county seat of Grant County. Somewhere nearby is Greeley County, with its two cities, Horace and Tribune.

SHAWNEETOWN, Ill., Williamson, W. Va., Middlesex, Va., rapidly pass in review, and there is Richmond, ahead.

A few miles more and you're over the Atlantic, and a long hop to Ponta Delgada, Island of Sao Miguel, in the Azores. Another third of the Atlantic, and you cross the southern tip of Portugal, and on to Spain.

Still on your course due east from Pacifica, you find yourself a few miles north of Seville. A little later you are south of Cartagena on your way to Sciacca, Sicily.

Catania, Sicily passes below, then Pirgos, Greece, on past the island of Samos, on through Turkey, past Pahlavi in Iran, and a stop at our sister city, Bejnurd, Iran, also known as Bojnurd or Bujnurd, depending on your

choice of atlas.

CROSSING the Atrak river, you head into the Kara-kum desert of southern Russia, proceeding south of Ashkabad, and plunging fearlessly over some of the wildest mountains on earth.

Across wild western China, then into north China you go, then the northern portion of south Korea, and on to Sanjo, Japan, an area northeast of Tokyo.

At the water's edge in eastern Japan, you load your helicopter onto a chartered freighter pointed due east across the Pacific. No islands or continents come into sight as 6,000 miles of ocean pass under the ship, until at last, the Farallone Islands are on your northern horizon.

THAT'S YOUR sign to take off in your helicopter for a landing on the fishing pier.

After congratulating you on your success, the pier warden arrests you for bringing a vehicle on the pier.

In spite of that, the exhilarating experience thrills you so much that you decide to immediately leave on another trip, this time due north over the pole, then south, around the world.

PASSING OVER San Rafael, then Boyes Hot Springs,

you continue on east of Clear Lake, then pass between Yreka and Weed, cross Oregon, fly just west of Tacoma, directly over Bellingham, west of Seattle and into British Columbia.

Rest at Fort Nelson, press on into the Northwest Territory, fly over Big Bear Lake and stop near Lands' End, Prince Patrick Island. After your rest, you fly on. The pole behind you, you scoot over Russia to avoid being shot down, and land again at Bejnurd, the city that was the half way point on your east-west trip around the world.

Completely bored by now, you make a fast beeline for the spot on the globe farthest away from Pacifica, the spot you would arrive at if you drilled a shaft straight through the center of the earth.

YOU FIND yourself over the southern Indian Ocean, in an area southeast of Cape-town, South Africa, just north of the northerly boundary of drift ice from Antarctica, 1100 or 1200 miles due west of St. Paul's island, and several hundred miles northeast of the Crozet islands.

Your weary trip continues across Antarctica. You start again over ocean at Carney Island. Pacifica is due north, 8,000 miles at a rough guess, without one land mass to break your boredom.

At last, land comes into sight, and you recognize Pillar Point, the first time you've been over land since Antarctica.

As you land at Linda, Mar shopping center, staggering from lack of rest, an old friend comes up, and says casually: "Have you been gone? The City Council has made it illegal to land helicopters at shopping centers."