



the reactor

by Paul Azevedo

Before moving to Pacifica I lived in a number of different towns on several different streets. I lived on Oak Street, Main Street, Elm Street, and Fifth Street, among others. I wasn't surprised to learn, in the best-selling "Book of Lists No. 2", that these street names are among the 32 most common in the nation.

Since this kind of trivia interests me, I checked to see which Pacifica streets are among these most unimaginative avenues.

Turns out that we have nine of the most common 30, but that is deceiving, because in those are First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth, all in the mobile home park.

CEDAR, an unpaved sandy little block in Sharp Park, carries the 12th most common name.

Lincoln Place in Park Pacifica has the fifth most common, and Elm Court in Sun Valley is seventh.

Willow is the 16th most common name, but while you'll find Willow Drive on a Pacifica map, it isn't really there. Willow is only a paper street.

THOSE WHO named Pacifica's streets managed to avoid the common cliché names, for the most part. We don't have the most common, Park Street, though we do have Park Pacifica Avenue, and Parkview Circle.

We don't have Maple, Oak, Walnut, Pine, Willow, Laurel, Chestnut, Linden, Cherry, or Rose.

We also have never had a subdivider who felt impelled to name a lot of streets after great men, so we don't have Washington (no. 2 in popularity), Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Franklin, Wilson, or Adams.

IT'S TRULY surprising that we don't have Sunset, which is 13th on the list, since Pacifica's sunsets are often among the most spectacular in the nation.

Neither do we have Highland (ninth) or Woodland (27th), both surprising omissions.

The names of streets contribute a great deal to the "feel" of a community. One reason why the common names are so common is that they gave emigrants a feeling of continuity with the towns they left behind.

PACIFICA, in its original subdivisions carved up as summer home sites in the early 1900s, and in the later tracts built after World War II, often sought a different kind of identification. We have names of early Spaniards and Mexicans, showing up in Crespi, Duran, Palou, Peralta, Perez, Avila, Fernandez, Flores, Ortega, Oviedo, Valdez, Tapis, Vallejo, Pico, Serra, and Zamora.

We have what might be called "Spanish" names including Hermosa, Marina, Monte Verde, Serena, and Conchita court.

There are some unimaginative contributions to the Pacifica list. Hillside, Bayview, Foothill, Garden, Grand, Hill, Short, Spring, and View are dull examples.

There are a few streets in town that send my imagination soaring. Moongate is such a romantic name, as are Celestial, Paradise, and Olympian.

A lot of different cultures, themes and patterns have contributed to our street names. The result is eclectic, but I like it.