



# the reactor

by Paul Azevedo

You may live on Manor Drive, Sheila Lane, Oddstad Blvd. or Short Street. Normally everyone calls your street by the same name, and no one is confused.

Francisco Boulevard is never Francisco Street, and if you heard somebody call it San Francisco Avenue, you would just think they were ignorant.

In contrast, you'll search in vain for an unambiguous designation for our main artery. The one roadway that everyone uses also carries the heavy burden of too many names.

It's called Coast Highway, Highway One, Cabrillo Highway, Coast One, "The" freeway, the main highway, State Sign Route One, and California Route One. The city of Pacifica just calls it "State highway" on its own maps.

Originally it paralleled the coast, sweeping down to Thornton beach and traveling south past Mussel Rock below the bluffs of Westlake.

The 1957 earthquake caused a lot of damage to the old highway, and the section between Thornton beach and Pacific Manor was closed. The scenic masterpiece which it traversed was re-designated as a garbage dump. The new Edgemar freeway became our highway link.

On AAA maps it is the Coast highway. On H.M. Gousha (oil company) maps it is sometimes called Coast Highway, sometimes Cabrillo Highway, sometimes Cabrillo Freeway.

Rand McNally, which has consistently shortchanged Pacifica on its maps, calls it Cabrillo Highway.

Pacifica's street signs use Coast Highway.

I don't know which one is the "true" official name. I suspect it's Cabrillo Highway. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was a Portuguese sea captain in the service of the king of Spain. His name (in Portuguese it's "Cabrillo"), means little goat. So we could call our highway the "Little Goat highway." Let's not.

Cabrillo left not only his name but his bones. He died on a remote island near southern California after his broken arm got infected. The year was 1542, only 50 years after Columbus sailed.

Highway One, by whatever name, is one of the world's most scenic seacoast highways. It begins, (or ends, it all depends on your point of view) at Leggett, a small community in Mendocino county near the Humboldt county line. Leggett is at the intersection of state route One and U.S. 101, northeast of Fort Bragg. The highway sweeps southwest to the coast, then south through second growth Redwoods. It goes past some of the most scenic coastline in the world, past parks, lumber mills, sheep ranches, dunes and rocks, the villages of Mendocino, Elk, Manchester, Point Arena, Gualala, Timber Cove, Fort Ross, (where the Russians had an outpost) Valley Ford in Sonoma county. Also along the route are Tomales Bay and Bolinas before it goes east to join the 101 across the Golden Gate Bridge, down 19th avenue. It comes back to the coast again at Pacifica, running through Half Moon Bay, Santa Cruz, Watsonville, the Monterey Peninsula, down through the Big Sur, past Hearst's San Simeon, through San Luis Obispo, past Lompoc, where it joins U.S. 101 through Santa Barbara, splitting again at Oxnard. It then runs south along the coast through Los Angeles and Long Beach to a spot near Mission San Juan Capistrano, where it ends. For six or seven hundred miles it gives visual access to our magnificent coastline. No wonder it's Number One.

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