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The Reactor

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Rugged hills, raging ocean! What a life!

There are a few people who manage to look down on us for what we haven't got. I prefer to look up to us for what we do have.

We are Pacificans. We're coastal beings. Most of us see the ocean often. Almost all of us see waves break at least several times a month. Spindrift is a part of our lives. Cool dampness surrounds us. Dry heat is something we do without. So are tans. We have the advantage of being close to a major cosmopolitan center, San Francisco. We have access, should we choose to pay for San Francisco parking and aggravation, to world class facilities for the theater and dining.

Pacifica's best restaurants are better than any given restaurant in 95 percent of the counties in the United States, but our restaurants don't get compared to those restaurants. They get compared to the best restaurants in San Francisco. There are only a few

restaurants in the western states with a view of untamed ocean waves beating on an open shore. The Cliff House has one. The Chart House in Montara another. Nick's and the Moonraker are members of this very select company.

Pacifica is one of the largest cities in California that faces open ocean. San Francisco, though it does have oceanfront, is a bayside community that faces away from the ocean, and for the most part, ignores it. The ocean is San Francisco's back door. It is our front door. Pacifica Community Pier juts its jaw into waves that travel unhindered for thousands upon thousands of miles.

As we face the ocean, we are backed by rugged ridges and mountains. Montara Mountain is only the westernmost and highest of a series of ridges that trend northwest and southeast. Sweeney Ridge, Whiting Ridge, Fifield Ridge, Spring Valley Ridge,

Sawyer Ridge, Cahill Ridge and Buri Ridge, all of them roughly parallel, all of them rugged and wild. This is where we live.

There are drawbacks to living in hilly territory, so close to the ocean. Our cars corrode worse in five years than they might elsewhere in 500. Only a salt mine takes a harder toll. Our clutches die at an early age, as mine did the other day. Our transmissions take a lot of abuse.

Though we have some wealthy citizens, we are not a posh community of artists and aesthetes. We don't have a lot of crime primarily because criminals like escape routes, and it's no easier for them to get out of town than it is for honest citizens to accomplish that feat. We have gone on endlessly about getting a tax base, but we haven't found one yet. It looks like we'll have to find a different way to raise revenue or do without. We don't have the air of Los Angeles, the flatness or the trees of Sacramento, the heat of Modesto or the parking squeeze of San Francisco. We don't have the chemical clouds of Contra Costa, the pesticide sprays of the San Joaquin Valley, or the movie stars of Malibu. Some things we got, we'd trade. Some things we haven't got, we'd like.

That's life.