

# The Reactor

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## How do you get to Carmel?

Pacificans for years have been talking (endlessly) about how Pacifica should capitalize on its seaside location and go after the tourist trade. After all the talk, the Chamber of Commerce has been doing something about it with its visitor center in Rockaway Beach. Several months ago Chamber Manager Loyle Mueller suggested I might like to fill in on weekends.

It's been both a pleasure and an eye-opener. Pacifica gets visitors and they come from all over. Germans, a French lady married to a French-Canadian, Dutch, Swedes, Norwegians looking for Solvang, lots of travelers looking for Redwoods, or Carmel, or Santa Cruz, or Half Moon Bay, people coming from the south looking for the wine country, a few lighthouse fans, they all show up and they want to know. I don't necessarily have all the answers, but it's fun to try and answer their questions.

The best part is that while I'm telling them the distance to Carmel (111

miles from Rockaway) and the time it will take them (2-1/2 hours) I can also work in a low key pitch for Pacifica accommodations, Pacifica restaurants, Pacifica gift shops in Rockaway or Sharp Park, etc. and the numerous shops and services that even we locals sometimes don't appreciate.

I like to tell those heading south along the coast about the Elephant Seals 45 miles south at Año Nuevo ("The largest animals which spend any part of their lives on the North American Continent"), but I also tell them about Sanchez Adobe and San Pedro Valley Park. I often wonder if the visitors are getting more out of Pacifica, with its history, its hills and its beaches, than many of the residents who take their town for granted.

Unfortunately, I don't know it all. Everybody is more knowledgeable than anybody. If you have a suggestion that would help a stranger passing through town, drop me a note at the Tribune.

Though I have not been a Tribune employee for some time, I check my mail regularly.

For instance, how would you help someone who wants to visit "Silicon Valley?" Where would you suggest they go to learn something about the inventive genius that has brought us transistors, computers, and the rest of the dawning electronic age? Is there a museum catering to this special culture? If so, I don't know about it.

For those who want to know more about California Missions, I can suggest eight within 115 miles. The ones I remember are Carmel, San Francisco Solano in Sonoma, San Rafael, Santa Cruz, Mission San Jose, Mission Santa Clara, Mission San Juan Bautista, and Mission Dolores. Have I overlooked any?

Though Big Basin is almost in San Mateo County, the nearest Redwoods with reasonable access are Muir Woods, 27 miles north of Rockaway across the Golden Gate Bridge.

Of course I also tell about the Redwood giants, 300 miles north of us in the Redwood Empire. I show visitors how to get to San Diego, Los Angeles, even Las Vegas. I think "why would anyone want to visit Las Vegas?" but I keep those questions to myself.

I can only assure you that Pacifica gets visitors daily from around the world. Treat them kindly, and with respect. They are our future.