

3/19/75

the reactor

By Paul Azevedo



This is the start of what may turn into a regular weekly feature. I hope to discuss any subject I find interesting. Hopefully it will usually be local, sometimes it will be helpful. Given my personality, it will probably be opinionated, and the management of the Tribune has pointed out to me that it doesn't necessarily expect to agree with me always. That's probably true, since over the years I've been working here there have been plenty of times we disagreed. I also reserve the right to agree with the publisher from time to time.

PET PEEVE: City ordinances that are overwritten and underenforced. There are a number of examples, and not taken from the dim past. (Pacifica ordinances have no dim past). The garage sale ordinance is one.

Then there's the ordinance which requires you to keep your garbage can in purdah to offending neighbors and passersby. A 24-hour amnesty is permitted each week to allow the Scavengers to fulfill their function. But if your garbage is picked up at 6 a.m., and

you neglect to hide your car by 6 that night, you can (theoretically) be arrested handcuffed, taken to jail, fingerprinted and booked, taken before the judge, and eventually go to jail for six months while being fined \$500. If this sounds like a pretty heavy penalty, don't worry. It hasn't happened, probably won't ever happen. It was an ordinance designed, I suppose, to impress some unhappy people with the diligence of the city in stomping on their careless neighbors. A \$2.85 fine and 15 minutes in jail wouldn't be sufficient to impress the neighbors, though it would be enough to do the job of punishing the guilty party.

INSTEAD OF adding more six months terms and \$500 fines to our city penal code, why don't we prune and simplify and winnow out our ordinances, then enforce the devil out of what's left.

Respect for the law comes from enforcement. Disrespect is a direct result of ordinances created to satisfy people that, by golly, the city is doing something.