

the reactor

By Paul Azevedo

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A two and a half hour stroll from the Adobe shopping center to the top of old Pedro mountain road was the special something we did for son Marty's ninth birthday.

He and I, with older son Mike and daughter Rena put on our hiking boots, warm clothes, a backpack with sandwiches and camera, and took off into the drippy fog.

The kids were well-behaved, and I recommend the idea, but not on Montara mountain. It was not the blissful afternoon it could have been. This report, instead, is going to be about man's inhumanity to mountain.

MONTARA MOUNTAIN is 1900 feet high, its toes in the ocean, its back to the San Francisco watershed. From Pedro Valley it is a magnificent view.

From the valley it still looks much as it did to the Costanoan Indian tribelet of 300 years ago, with the exception of some power poles and the ugly open wound left some years ago by the Pacifica Sportsmen's club.

Close up, the mountain ain't so pretty. The buckbrush, blackberry vines, ferns and poison oak are doing their best to repair the damage, but it's a losing battle.

Motorcyclist's gullies, old junk cars, (the kids counted ten), other junk, as well as ugly power poles three-to-the-bunch, and shell casings by the thousand, all litter the mountain.

WHERE WE SAT to eat lunch, the kids counted 100 "22" shell casings, in one small area.

It may have been a sacred mountain to the Indians but nothing is sacred to some people in 1975.

My observations show that their favorite noise-maker is the whining Yamaha, their favorite beer Coors, with Miller a close second.



Ghosts on the Trail

I don't know the cyclist's favorite brand of bullet. I was too concerned the bullets might find me or one of my kids. The shooters did not impress me with the care they took to avoid accidents.

I WAS FAVORABLY impressed with two users of the mountain, a jogger in a blue Adidas T-shirt, and a jogger without (shiver) a T-shirt. I talked to "Adidas." He assured me that walkers could be seen by the gunmen, but joggers had to shout to warn of their coming or be in danger. I wasn't reassured.

The old car bodies and beer cans serve a useful purpose. They take the pressure off the trees as targets for the gunmen. Even so, plenty of trees were shot up, remnants of targets dangling.

I judge that the shooters and the cyclists are the same people, for the most part. It seems unlikely that many people would walk in with all that hardware, and the road is now very difficult for an automobile to get over.

THE CYCLISTS are gashing open wounds in the mountain. When my kids get to be my age, these will be eroded badlands, unless something is done.

The gunmen could shoot into earth banks. It's obvious that they don't, and that stray bullets are a danger to persons out of sight.

The guntoters, beerswiggers, and motorcyclists, who I think are one group, are making the mountain their own.

Their noise, their trash and their weapons will drive out other users. Only a concentrated effort will rid us of them, clean up their droppings, and bind up the mountain's terrible wounds.

The mountain should be left for those who enjoy it for the birds, the buckbrush, the view and the tranquility, those who take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints, and realize the luxury of being able to visit this gift of time and the San Andreas fault.