

the reactor

By Paul Azevedo



In past months, I've used this corner to discuss such objects of beauty as Montara mountain, the view from Sweeney Ridge on a bright winter day, the rugged jut of San Pedro rock, the trees, the water, and the hills which make our area so uniquely beautiful.

Today my subject is ... dog dirt.

There are two sources of dog dirt. The first, uncontrolled dogs. The second, controlled dogs. Controlled dogs are the ones on a leash, or under voice control. (By the way, voice control is fine, but illegal. The leash law makes no provision for voice control, probably because it's not foolproof.)

It takes a rude neighbor to stand there, his eyes off in the middle distance, as his dog squats on his neighbor's lawn or prize petunias.

The same kind of unconcerned apartment owner in Pacific Manor shopping center watches his prize pet leave his load in the middle of the sidewalk for someone else to slip in or clean up. (Did you ever try to clean your shoe after you had the misfortune of putting it in the wrong place? Yes, of course you have. We all have.)

Those are the "controlled" dogs. The uncontrolled dogs are worse. They run in packs, or individually. Some are strays, rummaging in garbage cans. Some are roamers, who show up at home when they get hungry.

When one of the Irish Setters in my neighborhood had eleven pups, they were given away all over the block. Half of them seem to

The SPCA, of course, is a classic case of conflict of interest. They depend for their income on animal lovers and government contracts for animal control. Their volunteers are often persons who think that animals have a constitutional right to run loose.

My informal survey tells me that most dogs in Pacifica are unlicensed. How do I know? As the Tribune's Classified Ad manager, I've taken many reports of lost dogs. In only a small percentage of the reports was the animal wearing a license, and only a few said that the animal had a license he wasn't wearing.

My survey gives me no statistics, but you can be sure that most local purebreds and even fewer mutts are registered with the county.

The animal control situation is chaotic. The police have more important things to do, so gladly turn it over to the SPCA. The SPCA is understaffed, and riven with conflicts.

Should there be a leash law? Should it be enforced? Yes! That's my answer when I see so many sidewalk messes, when I see strays raiding garbage cans, when I see animals dead on the Freeway, when I see uncontrolled breeding of loose animals. Yes!

Some people feel that their animal deserves his "freedom." That's why they moved to the "country." A city like Pacifica with 4000 persons to the square mile is not "country." If these persons were in real rural territory, they would find out that uncontrolled dogs are often shot. Sheepmen will not

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When one of the Irish Setters in my neighborhood had eleven pups, they were given away all over the block. Half of them seem to be loose any given night.

Most dogs on the loose seem to have a direct line to the SPCA. As soon as 5 o'clock comes and the SPCA truck goes home, out come the pooches, looking pleased with themselves.

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In sheep country, a loose dog is a dead dog.

Sheepmen can't afford the price of dogs running loose. Can we?