



One of the things I enjoyed as a teen-ager was reading 100-year-old newspapers in the files of the Santa Rosa Press Democrat. Those ancient and crumbling files told me more about history than any history book could.

In those days there were no wire services, telephone, or teletype. Newspapers would copy stories from other newspapers. Often these "exchanges" would be months old, but the philosophy was: it's new until the reader has heard it.

The Tribune gets exchange copies, but we don't often copy from them. It's always worthwhile, though to read through high-quality newspapers like the Vacaville Reporter and the Sonoma Index-Tribune. They tell you a lot about what is interesting readers in other parts of northern California.

I WAS fascinated by a story several months ago from the Sanger Herald. A fireman was trying to get his job back. He had committed the crime of mustache cultivation. Not as bad as marijuana cultivation, I guess, but it cost him his job. I never did hear the end of the story, but if you want to fight fires in Sanger, you had best use your razor.

In Vacaville not long ago the feature story was about

a high school star athlete, a senior who is also a new husband (about three or four months ago) and a new father. His daughter is now six or seven weeks old. This situation is not uncommon these days, but it usually doesn't get feature news coverage. The young man, who is 17, is accepting his new responsibilities in an adult manner.

In Sonoma they were talking about the possibility of a teacher strike. (Where have I heard that word before?)

ANOTHER PROBLEM troubling Sonoma was a pair of peacocks, running loose and destroying gardens. The story went on to invite anyone who could catch the pair to do so before they had to be collared by the SPCA and destroyed.

The Index-Tribune also featured a young athlete. Sonoman Dan Shelley is a recent high school graduate. He is a horseback rider, skier, excellent student...and blind since age two.

Down in Selma, a small town in the San Joaquin Valley, the readers are writing furious letters to the Selma Enterprise about P.G.&E. bills. But then all over California people are looking in horror at their power bills, and responding with surges of fury.

P.G.&E. has been actively currying favor with community leaders. Speakers at service clubs all over northern California have been telling influential businessmen and civic leaders why power costs are up, and also how much we need the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. This is the facility that has been fought almost to a standstill by environmentalists.

A group of civic leaders in South San Francisco were so impressed by a P.G.&E. spokesman they were enthusiastically suggesting a nuclear plant be located on Oyster Point, east of the Bayshore Freeway. What do you suppose the Sierra club would say about that one?

9-24-80