



the reactor

by Paul Azevedo

When I arrived in Pacifica 17 years ago, wife, tiny baby and brand new mortgage in tow, this town was still pretty raw and new. It had telephones, true, and the streets were paved, mostly, but it was still growing rapidly, and the sound of hammers and saws was still very common.

We found it a great place in which to be newcomers. Few others had been around much longer. The clubs and organizations were new and growing.

A man came knocking on our door, looking for voters to register. We found some common interests, and with his friendly information, I soon got to know something about local politics, in a town whose name I had not known six months before. His name was Ken Strom. Now he's the postmaster.

NOT LONG AFTER, my wife got a phone call from a woman who introduced herself as Mary Henderson.

That serendipitous call from the wife of Laguna Salada school board member Bill Henderson, by a chain of events too complicated to detail here, got my wife involved in several community groups, including the co-op nursery school, which later spun off the Laguna Salada Alternative Class. The co-op nursery school has served as a training ground for civic activists over the years, including a number of school board members.

The original reason for Mary Henderson's call

turned out to be of no interest to my wife, but Mary's friendly help we have remembered for many years.

We found Pacifica a great place to get involved in. We still do. We found it rewarding to be a part of this community. We found Pacifica a place where someone who wants to be can be on a first name basis with the mayor, members of the school board, the City Council.

WE HAVE found Pacifica a place where you can get your gas tank filled, your prescription filled, or your stomach filled and have a dialogue with a City Council member at the same time.

We found Pacifica a great place for women who want to be involved in government. We've admired Pacifica's fine, civic activist women, like Grace McCarthy and Jean Fassler and Janice Fulford among others.

We've found Pacifica a place where officials are willing to listen. Sometimes they are also willing to tell you that you are unreasonable, mistaken, too demanding. That, too, is part of the dialogue.

BEING HUMAN, our city officials are sometimes wrong, but they are seldom unavailable. Mayor Ellie Clark, for example, has set aside time to talk to citizens on a regular, publicly announced schedule. Sometimes, I hear, she's found it lonely.

Some who haven't taken advantage of the opportunity to talk have then criticized her and the rest of the council for not listening. Don Warden, FOP head, is quoted as saying, "They're not going to listen to anyone except their old cronies."

I don't qualify as a council crony. I voted for only a minority of the present council. However, they do represent a majority of Pacificans. They were elected, and defeated other candidates. No FOP has been elected.

Perhaps one of these days we'll learn the whole story behind FOP and its \$50,000 albatross of an election.

12-24-80