



the reactor

by Paul Azevedo

The Tribune is officially closed on Saturdays, but being inefficient, sometimes I don't get all my work done in the hours between 9 and 5, Mondays through Fridays.

I was here a Saturday or two ago when this harried looking woman in her thirties came through the door that was supposed to be locked. Her question: where can a family with children rent a place to live?

I knew the sad answer. So did she. But she was from out of town, with a new job in the area, and desperate.

So I went through the motions. I gave her a Pacifica map. I told her where the apartments were. I told her where the real estate offices were, so she could ask the same questions, and get the same sad answers. She and her family are human beings in desperate need of affordable housing, or even unaffordable housing.

I suppose it's not my business if she gets a place or not. I bought my house 17 years ago. I've got my house, and my loan, so I suppose my attitude should be: I've got mine, the hell with you.

There's a petition going around town. It talks about slowing growth in Pacifica. There are some hypocritical words in there about fairness and preferring single family residences.

The bottom line in this petition drive, though, is that this initiative will aggravate, not solve, housing problems.

The early warning signal is that the county supervisors are already pulling back some affordable housing planned on Roberts Road that would have helped some people find a place to live.

The petitions aren't even turned in, and housing is already being turned off like a spigot.

The housing supply for everyone is really crunching, and the local "I've got mine" types are slamming the door still tighter.

Meanwhile, Speaker Pro Tempore Leo McCarthy of the California Assembly wants to legislate a stop to discrimination against families with children.

AB 256 extends the protection which now exists forbidding discrimination against persons on the basis of race, sex, religion or national origin to stop discrimination against families with children.

I hope you write Assemblyman McCarthy and support his bill, but if you do, it would be contradictory to turn around and support the stop-growth initiative.

Meanwhile you can help your fellow human beings right here in town by encouraging housing. A good place to start is right now with a phone call.

If it's between 9 and 5 when you read this, reach for your phone. Dial 873-1800, (it's toll free from Pacifica) and ask for Redwood City extensions 2414 (Supervisor Bill Schumacher), ext. 2676 (Supervisor Jackie Speier), ext. 2674 (Supervisor John Ward), ext. 2593 (Supervisor Ed Bacciocco) or 2416 (Supervisor Arlen Gregorio).

Ask them not to delay the purchase of the seven acre tract on Roberts Road which is supposed to be used for affordable housing. They are good people. They'll do the right thing if we ask them.

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