



by Paul Azevedo

"The general rule is that the more dependent you are on anything, the more apt you are to become infuriated—spontaneously, impulsively enraged—when it does not work to perfection" says psychiatrist Mel Mandel, quoted in *Psychology Today*.

This is especially true when we have come to expect perfection, when we have relaxed our vigilance, expecting machinery like calculators, computers, automobiles to perform without error.

People depend on the Tribune, and sometimes when an adtaker types a wrong phone number or a 12-year old boy puts the paper in the puddle, they express their dependence with the fury Dr. Mandel noted above.

It is the extreme dependence people have on television these days which boils up when the cable system goes out at some crucial time, like the third quarter of some important football game. Then the frustrated dependence on this system of wires, electronics and people boils up into a rage. Here at the Tribune I've taken random phone calls which turned into half hours listening to frustrated cable subscribers vent their spleens.

I was outraged enough, myself, a number of years ago, to buy a share of TCI stock just to become more knowledgeable about the object of my frustration. It's

interesting to try to look at my own anger objectively. Just how important is that "box," as Dr. L.S.B. Leakey called it? When I am watching "Life on Earth," or "Ascent of Man," or the "Bernstein-Beethoven" series, or "Barney Miller," or "M.A.S.H." it's very important for the pleasure and education it gives me.

Yet, objectively, I got along without TV before 1948, and I could get along without it now. But I wouldn't like to.

Far more serious is the fury against the City of Pacifica for not doing something about mudslides. Why weren't they predicted? Why weren't they prevented? Why aren't they being stopped now? Do something!

And there's the rub. The hills are not eternal. They are continually evolving, seeking sea level.

But Pacifica without hills would not be Pacifica. None of us, conservationist or developer or anyone in between would like a flattened city.

Yet as long as we have hills, they will erode.

We can slow down the erosion with plantings, and check dams, and barriers. We can stop the off-road vehicles, two and four wheelers. We can slow the water down, we can divert it away from homes, we can lay out drainage, but we can not stop the ultimate process, which includes not only the slow erosion that muddies streams, but the rapid erosion of slumping hills and massive earth movement that brings disaster to houses or persons in the way.

And it's not the city's fault. The city is no smarter than its employees, and those employees have varied abilities and knowledge. If a city employee had all the solutions, it is likely he or she would be hired away to help solve the problems infuriating the residents of some other, richer city. Getting angry at the city shows your dependency and your vulnerability, but it doesn't accomplish much else.