



Paul Azevedo

The Reactor

When I first began this column, about eight and a half years ago, I decided I would write mostly about local things, people, happenings. I've stuck to that idea, which is one reason I'm not syndicated as widely as Dear Abby or Art Buchwald.

Besides that no one has showered me with money or begged me to grace, say, the pages of the Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Bugle).

While I enjoy having other people read this piece, I have to confess that I do it for the fun of doing it. When I discovered who Honora Sharp really was, when and where she lived, and what she had really intended to do with the land that is now Sharp Park Golf Course, the one who most enjoyed learning it was me.

Because I write this column, I've had a good excuse to browse through the county historical museum and go through old scrapbooks.

I discovered old news stories written in the early years of the century, including stories of some of the first automobile rides across Montara Mountain. (The route was driven first by a woman who braved what had to be a very rough and twisty mountain road).

I've been able to encourage the resurgence of the Sanchez Library and take pleasure in seeing it in a permanent building. I've been able to help the Pacifica Friends of the Library do its thing. Thanks to the Friends of the Library, and particularly people like Janice Fulford and Clark Natwick and Enid Brand, Pacifica has better library service and hopefully, a bit more literacy and knowledge.

In the course of checking facts and putting columns together, I found out that Pacifica has only five streets.

(all the rest are avenues, boulevards, etc.) That may not set your heart all pitapat, but discovering facts like that makes me feel good.

I have also discovered that if I don't want to provoke a lot of people into writing letters of condemnation, I'd best not write about their motorcycles, their guns or their stop signs.

There are people in this town who love one or the other with a passion.

For some reason, motorcycles are not as much of a problem as they once were. Perhaps the cyclists are a little older. Perhaps the police pressure on the worst of the breed finally paid off. Or perhaps the fad is over for a while.

As for guns, that plague seems likely to be with us for a long time to come. Too many people think it's important to be macho man, or they think they need a gun to defend themselves against macho man.

For every hero who shoots a burglar (and hurray for heroes) a hundred people die because there was a gun in the house.

As for stop signs, I have not changed my belief that the best person to decide their location is a traffic engineer, an expert, rather than every neighbor who thinks stop signs slow down traffic.

I enjoy writing this column, and I also enjoy reading our "guest columnist" who write letters to the editor.

With a little luck, I'll be reading my columns and yours for a long time to come.

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