

SHALL LOOK at my next bill with more tolerance!

voters
Chuck



Paul Azevedo

The Reactor

Kids, Dollars and History

Kids, and the money it takes to educate them, are still an important community problem, as they were 11 decades ago.

Today the problem is one of declining enrollment and tight dollars, with Laguna Salada School District budget of \$11 million serving a few more than 4000 kids.

In 1876 what is now Pacifica was served by one school. It was called San Pedro, and it was located somewhere in the vicinity of Fairmont.

In the 1878 History of San Mateo County, the total number of school age children reported in this area, 78, included 56 boys and only 22 girls, a proportion that is hard to believe.

Of those 78 kids between 5 and 16, only 46 went to school at all. Of those, only 20 actually were in regular attendance, so that what looks at first glance like an

impossible load on the one male teacher becomes more reasonable.

The county superintendent of schools made one visit in 1876, the board of trustees made four, which must have been big occasions for those students and their lonely teacher stuck out in the distant boonies of the county, hours from the county seat by buggy or horseback.

Budget for the year 1876 was \$90 monthly for teacher salary, tied with two other teachers for tops in the county. (By contrast, two teachers in other schools, received only \$50 a month.)

Rent, repairs, fuel and "contingent expenses" came to \$93.79 for the year, and school library expense came to \$50, pretty high in comparison to other schools. Most spent less. Redwood City spent \$50 for their library, though they had an average daily attendance of 280, 14 times that of San Pedro.

The total San Pedro School budget for 1876, \$1000, wouldn't buy garbage service for one school in 1983.

The land, building, and furniture were valued at \$750, the library was valued at \$75, and the value of school apparatus, whatever that is, was \$20.

The total school budget for the entire county would not support two teachers today.

More kids get educated today. More dollars are spent. And I don't think we would allow four out of five kids to skip school.

Editor
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