



Paul Azevedo

The Reactor

Confessions of a News Junkie

The most important news any newspaper can carry is about families, because families are (a cliché) the backbone of the country.

As a 20-year resident of Pacifica, I can look back on a lot of local friends and acquaintances who I first knew as married couples but who have since dissolved their marriage with various degrees of amicability ranging from "civilized," "adult" and "mature" to verbal and physical warfare.

What could have kept those marriages together? Or were the bulk of these marriages so doomed from the start that the only "cure" would have been marriage prevention.

The problem is nothing new, of course. Before I ever moved to Pacifica there was a wife-swapping go-around that got us a lot of unwanted publicity, of the kind that caused one former Pacifica police officer to refer to "Peyton Place-by-the-sea."

Which is only to say that Pacifica is not immune to the kind of problems that have made the Lederer sisters of Iowa, Chicago, Hillsborough and Los Angeles (better known as Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren) nationally famous.

I read the Lederer twins religiously, but then I read the Chronicle, the Examiner, the San Mateo Times, the Oakland Tribune when I can get it, and I'll scan almost any paper I have time for. I guess I'm a newspaper "junkie" and why not?

You can absorb a lot more information faster from a newspaper than you can from radio or TV. With practice, you can read three or four times as fast as you can listen. That's efficiency. What's more, you can pick the time and place you want to read, and you can select only those articles and features that interest you.

I'm like a lot of other Pacifica Tribune readers. The Tribune is the only paper I read all the way through. But with a daily, each person can and should develop his own custom-designed reading plan. That's the wonderful thing about a newspaper, what you don't have to read.

On TV, you either take it all in or you may miss something important. KCBS newsradio drives some people crazy with its teasers about a story it may finally tell hours down the road.

With a newspaper, you can pick it up, read part of the most interesting story (interesting to you) and put it down, then return later to finish.

I never read the shipping news in the Chronicle. A mariner or dockworker might turn to that first. Some don't read the obits. I do. Some wouldn't miss Herb Caen or Guy Wright. That's me all over.

To know what's going on in Pacifica, you need the Tribune. But to know what's going on in the Bay Area, the state and the country, you need a good daily paper. The Chron, the Ex and the San Mateo Times could each be a lot better at what they do, but they are the only games in town. I could give you a whole column on their faults, but I wouldn't want to be without 'em. Any of 'em.

2-8-84