

The Reactor

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Celebrate Our Birthday

San Jose dates back to Spanish days. Pacifica is one of the newer cities in the state. Today, November 22, is Pacifica's 32nd birthday. The two cities have something in common. They get no respect. The year Pacifica was incorporated, San Jose had a population of about 125,000 and depended heavily on San Jose State College, thousands of acres of orchards and rich farms, and several large canneries for its livelihood. Today the canneries are mostly gone, the orchards are housing tracts, and San Jose is bigger than San Francisco in population. Pacifica brought several small villages and subdivisions into one city, a sizable one by most standards. Pacifica is larger than any city in the coastal counties between Santa Rosa and the Oregon border, including Eureka.

The voters of San Francisco, over the objections of most civic leaders, the radio and TV stations, the editorial writers and most columnists in the Chronicle and Examiner, have told the Giants to get out of town. The voters recognized what should have been obvious to everyone. San Francisco is too crowded, not with people, but with cars, for a major league baseball team. San Jose has grown, enormously, because it had room to grow. There is room in or near San Jose for a major league ball park that could serve the entire Bay Area.

The logical location is near the junctions of the 101 and

Interstates 280 and 680. It is less than an hour from almost the whole Bay Area, except perhaps, Marin.

San Franciscans are much too used to thinking of their city as the hub of the Bay Area universe. Just as many don't know where the hell Pacifica is, they still think San Jose is that quaint pueblo at the south end of the bay where they grow peaches and can fruit cocktail.

That kind of thinking should have gone out with World War II, but mental constructs are hard to overcome. It was about the time Pacifica incorporated that I discovered something I found hard to believe. I could drive from Walnut Creek to San Jose in about 45 minutes. This was before the 680 freeway. However, it took me more than an hour to cross San Jose from Alum Rock to west of Stevens Creek. The mileage was not as great, but the highways weren't as convenient. Just as it is more convenient for a resident of the Sunset to shop in Serramonte or Tanforan than in downtown San Francisco, it is almost as convenient for Pacificans to go to the ball game in southeast San Jose as it is in Candlestick, and it would be more convenient than in China Basin. Pacificans can't easily use public transportation and save time. Driving to San Jose would be faster for us than taking the bus to China Basin, so long as the San Jose destination is close to the freeway.

Let's get our ideas out of the early 1950's, when Pacifica didn't exist and San Jose was the Valley of Heart's Delight. The San Francisco Bay Giants would serve the whole area best in a stadium built by a regional stadium district composed of Santa Clara, Alameda, San Mateo, Contra Costa and San Francisco counties. I know it would be more inconvenient for the Chronicle sports writers. After all, they can walk over to China Basin. But a stadium in San Jose would serve more people more conveniently. Shouldn't that be the bottom line?

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