

# The Reactor

Paul Azevedo



## Being 10, Back Then

Ten-year-olds give the world a way to start fresh. They're naive, hopeful, full of life, not afraid to make wild guesses if they don't know the facts. (Adults don't know the facts most of the time, either, but they've learned how to hide that from themselves and from each other).

When I was invited to tell some fourth graders at Linda Mar school a bit of Pacifica history, I tried to put myself in the place of a 10-year-old of 1990, then a 10-year-old of 1980, and so on. When today's 10-year-olds were two, in January 1982, Pacifica had a big flood. Water was three or four feet deep in parts of the shopping center. Terrible things happened that made nationwide headlines.

The 10-year-olds of 1980 were about a year old when two ships collided in San Francisco Bay. Oil soaked our beaches. Many Pacifica teen-agers, and some 10-year olds as well, tried valiantly to save the birds. The kids who were 10 or 11 in 1971 are now about 30 years old, many raising families of their own. When that 1960 crop of kids was about 13 they may have helped celebrate the opening of the fishing pier. It was a big event. Lots of people marched in the parade.

The kids who were born around 1950 were 10 years old in a town that was raw and new. It had been incorporated just three years. There were no zip codes. Some people were still getting mail addressed to Pedro Valley, Calif., and Sharp Park, Calif. The phones had prefixes like ELMwood 9, (that's 359), and FLanders 5 (355). There was no Park Pacifica. There was no Terra Nova High School. There was no San Pedro Valley Park, but where the park is now there was a trout farm where you could catch trout and pay for it at 10 cents an ounce, or was it 10 cents in inch?

Most of the kids who were 10 years old in 1960 weren't born in Pacifica. In 1950 most of Linda Mar hadn't been built.

In the early 50s a man named Andres Oddstad started a company to build houses to sell to veterans. He bought cheap farm land that had been used to grow artichokes. He bought some of the land from Victor Magrin, who still lives in Pacifica.

Andy Oddstad had an idea. Build houses in bunches. It's more efficient. That way Andy could sell the houses cheaper. In fact some of the houses sold for about \$9,000.

Today some of those same houses sell for a quarter million.

There weren't very many 10-year-olds in San Pedro Valley in 1950, because there weren't very many people here in 1950. There were few phones. There was absolutely no TV, of course.

Probably the most famous person ever to live here spent only one year in Pacifica, in 1883. This seven year-old later wrote of the area and some of the people. Jack London also wrote books like *Call Of The Wild*, and the *Sea Wolf*. I wonder which Pacifica 10-year-old of 1990 will be as famous as London, 100 years from now?