

The Reactor

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Paul Azevedo

What would they have to pay you?

If Pacifica was in Alaska, it would be the state's second largest city, behind Anchorage and ahead of Fairbanks. In Delaware, it would be second in population to Wilmington. In Idaho, Pacifica would be fourth largest. In New Mexico, Pacifica would be sixth largest, or would have been in 1980.

What's the point you ask. Or perhaps "who cares?" A legitimate question. My point is we live in a not inconsequential city. Even in the state of California Pacifica was in the top 25 percent of incorporated cities in the 1980 census.

We can't operate our city as we used to, with bake sales and car washes. There are still people living in Pacifica who helped the volunteer fire department by tossing in a couple of bucks to buy an old gasoline tanker. Is it any wonder they look at the city manager's salary and perks and long for the old days?

I love to toss the gee whiz numbers around, but let's be realistic. The city of Pacifica is a big business. We have miles of streets that need to be kept paved and swept. We have street lights that cost thousands and thousands to keep lit up. We have a fire department that needs trained professionals and the best equipment we can afford. We have a police department for protection around the clock seven days a week.

Other city departments have to make sense out of our housing, make sure the sewers operate, mow park lawns, and keep storm drains clear.

Are the city managers, and I mean the leaders of police and fire, community development, PB&R and all the rest, underpaid? Overpaid? I don't know.

The Public Safety Director will get the blame if a Pacifica cop gets out of line. The day some rookie acts like cops did in LA, the director will earn his salary, in spades. City managers have a revolving door job. Dan Pincetich has outlasted most of his predecessors. However, he is unlikely to be living in Pacifica when he retires. Odds are he will spend time and money on a job hunt some time in the next five years. Then he will have to move, buy a house, learn the ins and outs of a new city, its peculiarities, which people he has to coddle and which to ignore.

Scapegoats don't come cheap. That's why city managers get their big salaries. Would you put up with Pincetich's aggravations and take a vow of poverty to boot? I think not.