

The Reactor

APR 10 1991

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It's been fun

Today, April 10, is a personal landmark ... 25 years with the *Tribune*. Perhaps the most amazing part of those years is that we have each week, without fail, gotten out a newspaper. With the exception of Oct. 18, 1989, we got it out on the day planned. (Earthquakes create a lot of exceptions, and even the quake delayed us only one day, and only because it had the bad grace to shake on a Tuesday afternoon).

Except for Bill and Peggy Drake, who bought the paper almost seven years before I arrived, I seem to have stuck around longer than anyone else. I have to attribute that to the Drakes, who were consistently a pleasure to work with.

Bill's honesty, character and concern for the community, and his love of newspapering, make him the outstanding publisher among those I have known. Some publishers, highly successful ones, would do just as well selling fertilizer. I think it was back in the 1960s I heard Bill quote newsman E. W. Scripps: "A newspaper must make a profit so that it may be of public service."

The best newspapers don't forget the bottom line, but they also don't forget service to their community. When they do it right, they can be uniquely valuable to those they serve.

I've dealt with hundreds of Pacifica business people

through the years. Businesses change. Businesses fail, especially in tough times.

Those who were in business when I arrived at the *Tribune*, and still are there at the same old stand, have my respect for staying power and business skills.

Savemore Meat's George Lee has been selling meat (USDA Choice beef, he'll tell you) since 1955. People keep coming back because they like George's old fashioned personal service. Where else would you go to get beef sliced your way, as you watch? And the cooking advice is free.

Last week Frank Nash cut my hair, as he has off and on for the last 25 years. He's been in Pacific Manor since 1956. Though he's my junior in age by only a couple of months, (wish him a happy birthday on May 30) Frank is as steady as a rock. He's not a "hair stylist." He's not open on Mondays. He's not pretentious. He runs a barber shop.

The Gust family had already been selling hot dogs and fancier foods on Rockaway Beach for 39 years when I arrived at the *Tribune*. With Rick Romano up the street they are a community anchor, a stable force in a notoriously changeable business. This July 4th the Gusts will celebrate 64 years on Rockaway Beach.

I've had the good luck to work for and with a lot of good people. My wife and I have had the good luck to raise our kids in a city that wasn't too much older than they were. We had the good luck to participate in the Alternative class from the beginning, meeting a lot of great people along the way.

I've had the good luck to be able to participate in Pacifica's political mix. I've had the good luck to be able to express my opinions in this forum for 16 years. If Herb Caen can do it for 50 years, maybe I can too. It's been fun.