

# Herb Caen's record is safe

Though the editor claims I've been writing this column longer than anyone can remember, I remember its beginnings vividly.

In fact, it was March 1975, 22 years ago, when I started this column of *opinions and ideas*. I have to repeat that point every so often, because some get very angry when I express an opinion that disagrees with theirs.

Some folks think this piece should be "balanced," meaning it should express what they see as the truth. That's not what a column of opinion is all about.

The Reactor is the truth as I see it. In the early days of the Reactor, one Tribune editor, with all good will, would change my words and opinions because he couldn't believe someone so reasonable verbally could write something so "wrong." I would open the paper to find that where I had written "black" he had changed it to "white."

No one of us, liberal or conservative, radical or reactionary, is immune from the belief our opinions are more rational and correct than those of the folks who disagree with us. My wife's opinion on the tunnel controversy comes to mind.

As a faithful reader of the Tribune's letters column, I often find opinions I can agree with, and some I disagree with. For example, last week, John Goodwin took the words out of my

mouth. A city as financially troubled as this one needs all the sales tax it can generate. If "A" frame advertising signs can help a few local businesses survive, cheer them on. Don't complain about business that leaves town to enrich Colma, Daly City and San Bruno, then stop hardworking business operators from using advertising.

Leo Cusenza's fulminations against cigarette littering are welcome and right on. Unfortunately, I can't imagine a smoker carrying his butts around in his pocket until he or she finds a suitable trash container. Soldiers were taught to "field strip" their butts during wartime, because enemy observers could gather crucial intelligence from butts left behind. Unfortunately the poor addicted smokers can't help themselves. I hope Leo will forgive them. My daughter used to complain because my coat, hung near my desk, reeked of a fellow employee's cigarettes. If second hand smoke affected my coat, what was it doing to my lungs?

Since I helped my wife raise our

## The Reactor

Paul Azevedo



four children to adulthood, I feel qualified to speak on abortion, in spite of Lisa McIntyre's wish to silence any man who dares disagree with her position. I assure her, not all pro-lifers bomb abortion clinics or cheer at the news. Many of us just want the mass killing to stop. If we believe every child, before or after birth, is a unique, precious human being, how can we feel any other way?

Lisa McIntyre was and is a precious human life. I congratulate her on her narrow escape from the abortionist's tools. She is a survivor. Those who did not escape can't write letters to the editor, or, for that matter, columns of opinion. I feel I must speak for those could-have-been men and women who died in the name of choice, since they can't speak for themselves.

**Editor's Note:** Paul Azevedo has been writing his column in the Tribune for 22 years. He staffs the Pacifica Visitors Center in Rockaway Beach on the weekends.