

May 14, 2007

Dear Editor,

San Pedro is a wonderful place. There are many of us who would rather be here than just about anyplace else. My family has been here for a century and we haven't left yet. The ethnic and political diversity, the intense community pride and our incredible setting are just some of the reasons that our town is so loved.

But we have a problem. My late father often said, "If San Pedro ever got organized it would be dangerous". This was not a criticism of any of the outstanding organizations in the community. In fact, he participated wholeheartedly in many of them. These clubs, committees, service organizations are a wonderful part of the heartbeat of this town. They have served us in support of the myriad of good causes which San Pedrans take to heart.

Then what ails us? It seems clear to me that San Pedro has been dragged from pillar to post by a variety of individuals and agencies that show up, look around for an hour or a day or even a year and then, without having a real feel for this town, make pronouncements and decisions with far reaching consequences. To add some perspective to my thoughts please consider the following abbreviated history lesson:

San Pedro was gerrymandered into the City of Los Angeles at the turn of the 1900's with promises of infrastructure and all good things flowing from downtown. The politicians who pulled off this land grab understood, even in those early times, that this was an extraordinary economic boon to Los Angeles. (It reminds me of how the California Lottery was sold as the financial salvation of education in this state. Nice idea. Fun to play. (GOODS NOT DELIVERED.)

Skip forward a hundred years. Here we are with all the changes to the face of our town and our waterfront. We are one of the world's largest economic engines pumping billions of dollars into the local, state and national economies. That's right little old San Pedro having a powerful effect even to the far reaches of the Pacific Rim and the entire globe.

All of this begs the question: WHY HAVEN'T THE GOODS BEEN DELIVERED? If this was the Westside or the Valley or one of our well planned suburbs to the county south of us would this "short end of the stick" abuse continue? Absolutely not!

It's all a matter of one of the most rudimentary tactics ever employed by invading armies. IT'S CALLED DIVIDE AND CONQUER! We sincerely toil over how many townhouses will fit on the head of a pin and fight carpetbagging developers. We earnestly search for a place for our kids to play ball. Good people implore an apparently motionless agency to tie the waterfront to downtown and the community in a creative way with a plan that goes far beyond the good waterfront jobs that already exist. While all of these bright, sincere and diligent people work toward solving our local issues we continue the hemorrhage of dollars that seem to just float up the freeway like so much

flotsam and jetsam to be spent somewhere else, by someone else, for someone else. We also lose massive quantities of positive energy and ideas as the bickering continues.

It is the perfect storm for those who would continue to pillage our community. They must sit around the club rooms and toast the little town that has made them wealthy. They must laugh in their boardrooms at the poor little indentured servant who continue to squabble, but meanwhile keep shoveling coal into what has become “their” engine.

Yes, we must work with the old infrastructure and the lack of foresight that was used to layout our north-south traffic corridors. Yes, changes need to be made to create a better flow between harbor and town. Yes, we need an excellent youth sports complex. But myriad options and possibilities are still in front of us. When I see visitors get off the red car at 22nd Street and turn in a circle and get back on because they feel that there is no place else to go I become saddened. If only the cars ran out to the beach and marine aquarium, and to 6th and 7th Streets, and to Angels Gate Park. Many dreams have already been dreamt. Thousand of gallons of ink have been used to print up reports and renderings. The cure is simple: We need action,

I love the fact that we are identified with burliness and hard work. I do not write these words to criticize or discount any of the opinions being brought to the table regarding all the various matters mentioned. I bring these thoughts only to point out that consensus and a united front must be presented for the big picture or San Pedro will continue to be the engine that drives an enormous economy but who works for less than union wages. We deserve better. We have a unique opportunity and the time is now. Let’s pull together San Pedro. We could be dangerous.

Sincerely,

Frank Canetti, Jr.
A Proud San Pedran