

My background and interest in Investigative reporting--draft

- 1) At three I often wandered away from my home to investigate the neighborhood--had curiosity.
- 2) My father was always asking questions and discussing things with me.
- 3) I remember my uncles gathering around the TV in the 1950's watching Meet the Press, and them having a vast interest in politics, even more amazing to me since 5 of the 6 uncles and my father did not have a college education.
- 4) I delivered the San Mateo Times from when I was 9 to 13. I read the front pages as much as the comics or sports, and was very much interested in The Washington Merry go Round by Jack Anderson. I was very moved by reading about Yugoslav teens jumping with molotov cocktails on to Russian tanks in 1956. I was just 9 at the time and was not much of a reader, preferring sports to books. Still do.
- 5) Spending 8 years (1961-1969) in the minor and major seminary (St. Joe's and St Pat's) during the changing years before and after Vatican II influenced my thinking.
- 6) Father Pierre Calegari started us reading Time magazine when we were sophomores in high school. For many, this was our first contact with the outside world. I still subscribe, but am getting disappointed in the number of ads as well as the watering down of the important news to the pandering to personal opinion and pop culture.
- 7) Grateful for philosophy classes which departed from the answer-driven St. Thomas Aquinas (heretofore taught in Latin) to the more question-driven Existentialists of the twentieth and twenty-first century, and being able to question the very dogma of the church which was educating us was tremendous influence.
- 8) Having teachers who promoted Socratic questioning, doubt, humility, and healthy skepticism-- which sometimes got them in trouble with the archbishop--inspired, informed, and encouraged me to follow this modus operandi.
- 9) I brought my questioning mind to the my teacher's training classes and post grad work, to the delight of some of my teachers who thought I should publish that which would only merit a B- in Father Choccol's philosophy class at St. Pat's.
- 10) I brought my skills into the classroom, where I encouraged my students (5-6 grades) to question anything they wanted, including why such a topic or subject was worth spending time on, to develop [a sense of curiosity, excitement and love of learning](#).
- 11) I used many of my writing and investigative skills in our teachers' association where I was two time president, and very involved in bargaining, writing the first collective bargaining contract in 1976, and leading and winning a fact-finding decision from a state-appointed mediator from UCLA. (We settle peacefully without a strike, but made Time for our unique rolling strike tactic.)
- 12) At the middle school, teaching math, computers, and journalism, I was able to focus on logic, reasoning, and investigative techniques. Our 8 page tabloid sized school newspaper won county awards and was sent to feeder elementary schools, parents, retired school teachers, and our local high school and library.
- 13) In my retirement, I continue to tutor four days a week, and it is the honest questioning which motivates both students, parents, and teacher. I am part of the learning process.
- 14) I also put out a [little online newsletter](#) attempting to ask the right questions if not come up with all the answers.
- 15) Yet I do not have much in formal training in either journalism or investigative reporting. What I have learned was in the process of living, learning, and/or life experiences. I am so grateful for that, and am putting myself through informal classes online such as [The Skeptic's Dictionary](#).
- 16) I have been following COJ Explorers through my wife and online, and am grateful for such a meeting of minds. I see myself not as an expert but as an interested facilitator of our quest.