

# Council Trio Faced By Recall Present Audit for Support

Basing his overdue explanation of why Robert Lessing was summarily dismissed April 8 as city judge on the contents of a voluminous audit report by Logan R. Cotton, city auditor, Councilman George V. Powell Tuesday night made public his and Councilman John V. Murray and Vern Babcock's accusations against the former magistrate. The largest crowd ever to attend a council session in Torrance jammed the halls, overflowed into the hallway, city courtroom and clustered around the windows outside to hear the proceedings broadcast over a public address system.

It was estimated that more than 500 people patiently waited through an extra-long routine session of the council to hear the anticipated "fireworks" when it came time for Powell, Murray and Babcock to break their silence publicly on one of the six issues of the current recall campaign against them.

Auditor Cotton, who was appointed to that position last July on Babcock's motion, was present but his report was read by City Clerk A. H. Bartlett. He was asked three questions by Babcock and one by Murray at the conclusion of the reading but when James J. O'Toole started to address a question to him, Cotton declared:

**Auditor Takes a Walk**

"I will not answer any questions from this audience. I would prefer to have them written and addressed to the mayor. If he then desires I will answer them in writing."

The auditor reiterated his decision not to answer queries when O'Toole pointed out that the meeting had been well publicized as one when full information would be available about the Lessing case and then walked out of the room.

Full text of the auditor's statement as read at the council session is published in another column as is a statement from the Recall committee.

At the close of his prepared statement, Powell declared he intended to find out for what purpose was expended a \$38,000 item listed as "unclassified" since the municipal water system was purchased about eight years ago. He said no satisfactory explanation had ever been given as to why this sum was not classified on the city's records. Scott R. Ludlow was mayor when the city purchased the water system and a major part of the negotiations were conducted by the late Frank R. Leonard, then city engineer.

Councilman Murray produced the first "fireworks" of the session with one of his typical statements similar to his description of the Torrance Herald staff on April 8 as "a bunch of hoodlums." He was asked by O'Toole if he or Powell or both of them "sought the aid of the former county prosecutor (F143) to get a grand jury indictment of Judge Lessing." When Murray attempted to qualify his answer, O'Toole said:

"Just answer 'yes' or 'no'."

"Well, we did," replied Murray, "but you can't answer a question like that 'yes' or 'no' I'll ask you one, Jimmy—have you stopped beating your wife? Answer that 'yes' or 'no'."

Mrs. O'Toole, who was in the audience, came forward and delivered a scathing rebuke to the obviously embarrassed councilman. She told him "I'll thank you to leave me out of this. Your remark was in very poor taste to say the least and I'll have you know, Mr. Murray, that my husband doesn't go around insulting women."

Murray took no further part in the meeting.

**Recalls Grand Jury Report**

Mrs. Emma Gunglin, who had repeatedly urged Powell, Murray and Babcock on April 8 to state their reasons why Lessing was dismissed, read the statement from the secretary of the grand jury, dated June 13, 1940 which said: "After going over

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## Recall Committee Challenges Trio to Answer Issues

The Recall committee in a signed statement by its secretary, G. M. Bumpus, gives its answer to the city auditor's report concerning the former Judge Lessing, as follows:

"To the Editor, Torrance Herald,

"Just to keep the record straight, let us note a few facts about the Tuesday, May 13, meeting of the Torrance city council.

"1. It was obvious to anyone who attended that meeting that the councilmen named in the Notice of Recall have not relaxed their policy of undemocratic procedure. The specially imported bookkeeper who made a supposed 'audit' of the City Court Records was allowed to decline to answer any questions concerning his audit.

"2. The accused councilmen are careful to keep their public remarks within the protection provided by statute for office holders. They scrupulously avoid making their various remarks in any way that would permit the victim of their unfair tactics to call them to account before a court of law.

"Expert at a Price

"3. Very few persons have any real knowledge relative to the alleged discrepancies of the Court Records. Opinions pro and con are largely reflections of factional emotion. A few facts, however, are available to all who care to take note of them. (a) The audit of bookkeeper Charles W. Vance with previous audits; (b) His report admittedly based on incomplete records; (c) Missing records taken from the office of the City Judge by previous official auditors on

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## Auditor's Report As Read at City Council Tuesday

Text of the special audit report as prepared by City Auditor Logan R. Cotton and read by City Clerk A. H. Bartlett at Tuesday night's city council sessions follows:

**SCOPE OF AUDIT**

In making the audit of the City Judge's records, it was necessary for me to take the official Court Dockets as my source of information in connection with all matters pertaining to the City Court. The various dockets should reflect the case number, names of the parties involved, dates, and the disposition of the case. If fines were paid, the amount should be entered in the Court Dockets. The amount of money received should be transmitted to the City Clerk and in turn from records to the City Treasurer to be credited to the proper funds. This detailed audit included a thorough analysis of all cases appearing in the Dockets also the complaints available were checked and compared with the cases in the Dockets. All moneys collected from fines and bail forfeitures, as shown by the Court Dockets, were checked against the amount of money that was turned over to the City Clerk.

It was impossible for me to make a detailed analysis of all records for the period of October 16, 1934, to March 31, 1941, due to the fact that various records were not available for auditing purposes. The following records were not submitted to me during the course of the audit: Dockets prior to July 1, 1938, complaints prior to January 10, 1939 and receipt books from October 16, 1934 to February 1, 1938. The writer, together with other officials, has made a diligent search for the above records but they could not be found. I found that thirty-six cases filed in April 1939 were not to be found in any of the dockets, also six complaints were found to substantiate the information regarding each case.

In making the audit of the various dockets, I found that no information stating whether or

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# HUGE HOUSING PROJECT PLANNED

## \$17,000 Addition To Hospital Told

Expansion of the Jared Sidney Torrance Memorial Hospital building by the addition of a new west wing and enlargement of the present nursery will get under way as soon as detailed plans can be drawn and contracts let, it was announced today by Grover C. Whyte, chairman of the building committee. Funds for the much needed improvement to relieve the crowded conditions at the hospital have been secured, Whyte said. It is expected that the additions, together with improvements and remodeling of the present building will total \$17,000.

The new wing will extend both ways from the west end of the present hospital building and will provide nine additional beds which will be utilized for surgical and medical cases, segregating them from rooms used by maternity cases.

The addition includes: a four-bed ward, three semi-private rooms suitable for either one or two beds, and one deluxe private room with full bath. All rooms in the new wing will have separate toilets, lavatories, and closets, and these improvements will also be added to a number of the present rooms.

**Bequest Provided \$2,500**

The present nursery will be greatly enlarged, providing room for nearly four times as many cribs as can be accommodated at present.

Plans for the expansion of the hospital were initiated by the late Mrs. J. S. Torrance over a year ago at the time she was president of the board of directors. A \$2,500 bequest to the hospital provided by Mrs. Torrance in her will is to be used to help pay for the additions.

The work of planning and financing the expansions has been in charge of the building committee appointed by Mrs. Torrance and includes: Grover C. Whyte, chairman; Dr. Roy E. Fleisher and Mrs. N. F. Jamieson, M. L. Barker and G. Lawrence Ott, of Los Angeles, are the architects.

## Play Equipment for Alondra Park

Allocation of \$10,000 for playground activities at Alondra Park near Torrance and \$10,000 for the purchase of land for a playground at Montrose were ordered by Los Angeles County Supervisors in regular session Tuesday. These funds were among a number of appropriations which the Board of Supervisors ordered placed in the 1941-42 budget.

The Alondra Park improvement is the first major step taken to make that area a recreational center in this district. The equipment will be installed sometime during the fiscal year.

It is presumed that the work of installation will be done by workers from the camp for indigents which the county board last week decided to establish temporarily at the park, using the old SRA headquarters there as base of operations.

With the refunding proceedings expected to be completed on June 17, the scheduled date for recording the new assessment map, an FHA housing program is expected to get under way in the vicinity of Alondra Park, bringing hundreds of new families here and necessitating a well equipped recreation center, according to Secretary Pat MacDonnell of the Gardena Valley Chamber of Commerce.

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## Proposed Civil Service Law Introduced

Following a brief explanation of the proposed civil service ordinance which will include all city employees and appointive officers, the city council approved the measure on its first reading Tuesday night. City Attorney John E. McCall said the ordinance puts all employees and appointees under Civil Service status if they have been continuously employed by the city for at least six months. Other points in the measure are:

Those workers who desire to come under civil service later must take examinations under the personnel or civil service board which is to be increased by two to make five members. Board members are to be appointed by the council for six-year terms.

Discharged employees or appointees may demand public hearings and, if not found guilty of charges will have all pay made up. If a position is abolished and then re-created in two years, the last holder of the position has first opportunity of resuming it.

**Benefits for Trainees**

Regarding appointive officers, the city judge must be a qualified attorney who has practiced for at least two years; the city attorney must have five years legal experience, two in municipal law; the city engineer must be a registered engineer and will have jurisdiction over the street, park and electric departments.

No elective officer will be qualified to hold a civil service position and all employees must have been Torrance residents for one year prior to employment and be registered voters. Those who move out of Torrance will lose civil service status.

Employees who may be inducted into the Army or volunteer for the nation's armed services will retain their civil service rating and their successors will have only temporary standing. On their discharge from armed service, employees must apply for reinstatement to city position within 40 days of leaving governmental service, be qualified to continue their work and file a certificate of their military service.

**SEKS PERMIT**

A permit to operate a service station at 1548 El Prado, across from the high school, was sought from the city council Tuesday night by William H. Bittle. His request was referred to the zoning commission.

**NEW ORDINANCE**

A new ordinance giving the city additional health and sanitary regulations was adopted by the city council Tuesday night without comment.

## Hospital Board Names Mrs. Shidler Successor of Late Mrs. Torrance

Mrs. Mina A. Shidler, widow of the late Dr. George P. Shidler, was appointed a director of the Torrance Hospital Association at a meeting of the hospital board last Friday. Mrs. Shidler will fill a vacancy on the board caused by the death of Mrs. J. S. Torrance, whose office as president was left vacant as a token of respect for the balance of the term.

Officers for the coming year, as chosen by the board at its meeting last week include: R. E. Smith, president; Grover C. Whyte, vice-president; Donald Finley, secretary; and Dr. John W. Beeman, treasurer.

Other directors include: Dr. Roy E. Fleisher, Mrs. N. F. Jamieson, Mrs. Willis M. Brooks and O. A. Kresse.

## Co. Reimburses City on Purchase of Cabrillo Strip

Appropriation of \$8,055 of gas-pipeline tax funds for acquisition of right of way for the improvement of Cabrillo avenue, between Torrance boulevard and Plaza del Amo, was voted by the board of supervisors Tuesday on motion of Supervisor Oscar W. Hauge.

The sum is part of the city's appropriation of gasoline tax funds which the county receives from the state.

Now it will be up to the city council to decide how the removal of the tracks on Cabrillo is to be done—by the city, the P.E. or under a W.P.A. project if one can be obtained. The city must pay the railway company approximately \$2,500 for the removal and replacement of the power lines to Border ave. The tracks will remain the property of the P.E. but the city is to obtain one-half of the ties, according to the agreement executed more than a year ago.

## PLAYGROUND OPEN

The playground at the city park will be open until 10 p. m., with supervision Tuesday and Friday nights starting next Tuesday, May 20, according to Dale Riley, recreation director. Volleyball, badminton, horseshoes and other games will be offered.

## Harbor Chambers to Push Opening of Carson St. and Western Ave.

A plan of having sub-committee chairmen assigned to certain highway projects to be stressed by the Harbor District Chambers of Commerce this year will be put into effect at once, it was decided at a meeting of the organization last Thursday night at the Potrero Country Club in Inglewood. Secretary L. J. Gilmeister of the Torrance chamber will head the sub-committee assigned to promote the opening of Carson st. from Dominguez thru Long Beach and improvement of the highway thruout its length.

Dick Grow, San Pedro, heads a sub-committee assigned to formulate plans for expediting the opening of Western ave. thru Torrance to the harbor.

Detailed plans will be worked out by subcommittee chairmen and a report made at the next meeting of the harbor group. Opening and improvement of Carson st. has been one of Gilmeister's "pets" for years, and he announced that he would tackle the problem just as soon as he completed work of getting the new city bus system in operation.

## Delay Flood Control

Opening of Western ave. from East Road, Torrance, through to Long Beach boulevard, to connect with Governor ave. and on to the harbor, is also an important project for Torrance and Gilmeister

## Million \$ Home Tract to Include 575 Dwellings

Plans for a million dollar housing project, providing 575 rental residential units to be built on property facing Western avenue opposite the Torrance plant of Columbia Steel Company, were announced today by J. V. Maynes, president of the Pioneer Discount Corporation, Los Angeles. The project is the first to be announced for the Torrance area under the Federal government's plan of "mass housing" in defense areas. Ownership and management, as well as construction work will remain with the Pioneer Discount Corporation, however.

## 11 Draftees to Leave Monday for Training

Names of all but one of the 11 young men who will make up the eighth draft contingent to leave Torrance Monday morning, May 19, at 7:30 o'clock were announced yesterday by Selective Service Board No. 280. The 11th member of the group will not be known until Friday or Saturday.

A farewell program in front of the Torrance Civic Auditorium is planned for the contingent which will leave on a special bus for a Los Angeles induction station to begin a year's training in the Army. The 10 members of the group are:

- Noburo Nakamoto, 28, farm laborer, Rt. 1 Box 159, Redondo Beach.
- Herbert Adolf Lohman, 34, refrigeration fitter, 1422 West 186th st. Gardena.
- Harry Tosio Yamamoto, 24, farm laborer, Rt. 1 Box 195, Torrance.
- Kazuhiko Yamada, 25, farm laborer, Rt. 2 Box 357 D, Gardena.
- John Bartley Kilgore, 26, laborer, 4628 182nd st. Redondo Beach.
- Lloyd Amel McKees, 24, reinforcing iron worker, 1007 Cota ave. Torrance.
- Robert Cecil Justice, 31, rubber moulder, 1221 El Prado, Torrance.
- Pete Joe Salinas, 24, truck driver, Rt. 2 Box 58, Gardena.
- Tadao Shimokaji, 24, farmer, Rt. 2 Box 357 G, Gardena.
- Nicholas Earl Riley, 21, planer operator, Highway 101, Lomita, a transfer from Kirkwood, Mo.

He received the award "in absentia" over a west coast radio hookup Sunday. A radio actor took his part in a dramatization of his harrowing experience last April.

## L.A. Opposes City's Buses

Public hearing on the city of Torrance's application to the Los Angeles Board of Public Utilities to operate municipal buses on Los Angeles city streets will be resumed May 21, City Attorney John E. McCall informed the city council Tuesday night in a lengthy written report of the hearing to date.

The Torrance application is being opposed by the Los Angeles Municipal Railway and bus systems which want to prevent Torrance municipal buses from offering transportation north of 116th street or south-bound to that street, contending competition. McCall said the hearing may result in a "long drawn out legal battle" but he would continue to press the city's case for an unlimited franchise to operate between Torrance and Los Angeles terminal at 945 South Hill st. He has informed the Los Angeles board that Torrance does not concede that body has jurisdiction in the matter but this city does desire to cooperate with Los Angeles.

## Collision Near City Limits Injures Two

Sherman Houston, 39, of 1443 West Carson st., was working on his car at the side of Carson near Denker ave., when he and the machine were struck by the automobile of Berton Jordan, 19, of 1410 West 218th st., last Sunday, according to Los Angeles police reports.

Officers said Houston suffered a compound fracture of the right leg and Jordan suffered chest injuries.

The development will consist of 125 single-family homes and 450 residential units in multiple dwelling buildings of 10 to 16 units each. All buildings will be well built, in individual modern designs, and attractively landscaped. Even the lower priced rental houses will all have fireplaces, tile kitchens, tile baths, and other characteristics of better grade homes, Maynes said.

Approximately 100 single-family houses will be built in the northern part of the tract along 203rd street. They will each contain about 860 square feet of floor space with two bedrooms and will rent at \$40 a month.

In the central portion of the tract, along 204th street, it is planned to erect 40 multiple dwellings, each containing 10 to 16 units, and renting at \$25 to \$40 per unit.

Larger single-family homes will be built in the southern portion of the tract, and will contain approximately 1200 square feet of floor space. These will rent at \$50 a month.

The major portion of the housing development will be on property being acquired from the Shoe String Land Company, whose president, Grover C. Whyte, this week signed an option to sell the company's holdings to the Pioneer Discount Corporation.

It is expected that all details concerning the project, which will cost nearly \$1,000,000, will be completed so that actual ground breaking may begin within 60 days.

Whyte, publisher of the Torrance Herald and the Lomita News, is actively co-operating with Maynes in expediting the much needed development as an important factor in relieving the acute housing shortage in this district.

## Torrance Man Wins Valor Award Medal

Tom Juett would never qualify for a hero role in a movie—he looks too much like you and me—but he met the test in real life on the night of April 12 and now has a medal to prove his valor.

He received the award "in absentia" over a west coast radio hookup Sunday. A radio actor took his part in a dramatization of his harrowing experience last April.

His "selfless courage" in rescuing Mrs. Nita Blanton and Mrs. Leah Aldeman, twin sisters residing in Los Angeles after an automobile in which all three were riding hurled into Nigger Slough and submerged, won for him the Wellman Valor Award.

**Trio Trapped in Car**

Juett's actions were thoroughly investigated by the award committee, which is composed of W. B. Wellman, president of Wellman, Peck and Co., Marshall Hale, Sr., president of Hale Bros., Inc., State Senator Edward Tickle of Monterey county, and Frank Wright, producer of the radio show, "Hero of the Week."

The car in which Juett and the two Los Angeles women were riding, struck an obstruction on Main street near the intersection of Broadway and dived into the slough near Main and Moneta avenue. The machine was in water five or six feet deep.

The three were trapped in the car and Juett broke the door glass, crawled thru the window as the water poured in and helped Mrs. Aldeman thru the window. Then he looked for Mrs. Blanton but she had disappeared. In the pitch black murk,

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Photo by Bill Heywood  
THOMAS H. JUETT,  
awarded for selfless courage

## Our Searchlights Find 'Em

Which merchant never went to school one second? What business woman has three one-thousand dollar bills? Keep up with our "People You Should Know" stories and we'll reveal, for we are running the soles off our shoes today on Donald Findley, John H. King, Charles Curtiss, Ernie E. Murchison, Walter C. Bradford, S. A. Myers and Virgil H. Rogers.

If you simply adore "horror" stories about people "don't" read our stories. We try to write plain, accurate, happy, factual accounts of local folk as we see them through our eyes and "show up nobody" only in their best side of life, making life happier and better for "all."

In one of the season's outstanding races Mrs. Ramona Dougherty flashed across the tape in front of Lucille Stroh to win last week's race.

## MARCH OF RIMES

—PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT—  
—By H. F. NOAKE—

How well do I remember of hearing mother say, "You'd better do your practicing, Miss Souder comes today." Miss Souder taught piano, much talent she possessed, twice weekly came around to see just how much I'd progressed. I didn't like to practice, had other things in mind, those scales and exercises, to me were sure a grind. In spite of my indifference, Miss Souder came and came, but noted no improvement, my playing was the same. At last my father called halt, said he, "It now appears, that kid won't learn to play one piece in seven hundred years." Thus ended scales, and bars, and rests; farewell to flat and sharp; but who knows, when I'm in heaven, I may wow 'em,—with a harp.

NOAKE

## Building Permits Total \$10,400 Here

Building permits totaling \$10,400 were issued from the city engineer's office during the past week: Joe Miyauchi for a three-room residence at 18386 Western ave. \$1,800; Wood-Calaban for erecting a steel oil derrick at Beryl and 190th sts., \$5,000; Stanley Valdivia for a two-room residence at 20619 Amie st. \$1,000; John E. McCall for a one-room addition to his present residence at 2114 Arlington ave. \$800, and Matteo Ambrosi for a four-room frame residence at 2060 17th st. \$2,000.