

MANHATTAN CITY ENGINEER PRAISED FOR AWAKENING PUBLIC TO WATER PROBLEM

If a single individual could be called the Paul Revere of the move to solve the water shortage in the West Basin he would be O. A. Gierlich, Manhattan Beach city engineer. It was he who originally spread the alarm.

That was more than three years ago and Gierlich's warning cry then was a voice in the wilderness. Today thousands of laymen in the West Basin are familiar with the rudimentary and vital factors in our water situation because Gierlich kept at it. Further, he has helped see to it that their information has come from unbiased and authoritative sources.

Now Gierlich laughs it off and says that "no one man could get anywhere." But facts show that from the first, against a background of changing personality and discouraging apathy, there was one man who was always in there pitching. That was Gierlich.

"Get the public the facts but make sure they are the facts," he says. "Keep repeating them and in the long run the public has an uncanny way of making wise decisions."

"Nowadays the business of government is a very complex matter and, with the cities of the West Basin growing as they are, one of the most vital prerequisites of those in charge is to look ahead. All the cities of the West Basin have to learn to look ahead. If the facts show we are running out of water, which they assuredly do, then an informed public will do something about it before the worst happens."

The discovery that salt water was intruding into the West Basin because our fresh water levels had sunk below sea level came during the first half of the war. It was important to our gigantic war industry in this area that the exact truth be known.

As one of the district co-ordinators of Civilian Defense, Engineer Gierlich had a ringside seat as the picture unfolded. The underground water courses drawn by hydraulic engineers of the County Flood Control in behalf of the war effort were alarming. There was salt water seepage and hitherto reliable wells on the coastal plain were being contaminated.

In spite of the same kind of hush-hush attitude that abetted the complete break-down of our metropolitan sewerage system, with potential victims in the West Basin sitting idly by, Gierlich went to work.

Two or three preliminary organizations made faltering steps forward. But what was needed was an authoritative and unprejudiced survey of the entire West Basin and the turning point in the story came with the organization of the West Basin Ground Water Association, a group of water engineers, and the decision of the United States Geological Survey to assign J. F. Poland and his associates, who were completing the Orange County-Long Beach study, to the West Basin.

It was the preliminary Poland report which not only confirmed the shortage but showed water levels were dropping dangerously throughout the West Basin. In effect the Southwest Water Fact Finding Committee, ap-



SAW DANGER . . . O. A. Gierlich, city engineer of Manhattan Beach, who saw danger of West Basin water shortage and proceeded to inform public of the need for action.

Supervisor Raymond V. Darby, concurred in these findings.

In all the steps Engineer Gierlich was a prime mover and he is today vice-president of the West Basin Water Association which had devoted itself to a campaign of educating the citizens of the West Basin to the water situation with which they are confronted.

"I was certain from the beginning," says Gierlich, "that if the public could get the unbiased facts in the matter, a way would be found to effect a cure before the damage was irreparable. I still think the same."

City Hall 'Vacant' As Official Group Attends Parley

Torrance City Hall was abandoned by its official family this week as its members journeyed to San Diego to attend the convention of the California League of Cities.

Councilman and Mrs. W. H. Tolson left Monday and are returning to Torrance today. City Clerk A. H. Bartlett left Tuesday morning for the parley.

Also planning to attend were Mayor J. Hugh Sherfy Jr., Councilman C. M. Gilbert and City Attorney J. E. McCall.

McTEE ON TRIP
Adolph B. (Ike) McTee, local General Petroleum Products dealer, left this week for Shawnee, Okla., where he will visit his parents.

Man Dies Following Car Accident Here

Angelo Payne, 43, 1647 W. 216th st., was fatally injured early Saturday morning when his car collided with a station wagon loaded with a family of seven at Main st. and East Rd. He died at the Southwest Emergency hospital, a report said.

Fermin Serrano, 42, driver of the station wagon, who suffered an arm fracture, told highway patrolmen that Payne failed to make a boulevard stop. His wife Nellie, 36, received a pelvis fracture.

Serrano's five children sustained minor injuries as a result of the mishap, police said. Since both parents were hospitalized, their children were lodged in juvenile hall as temporary wards of the county. Reports indicated the Serranos were transient fruit pickers.

Garden Club To Present Flower Show in Spring

A flower show for amateur gardeners is to be sponsored by the Torrance Torrance Garden Club in the spring and amateur gardeners will be invited to enter flowers. Gardeners from the professional field will be appointed to act as judges and will award blue ribbons. Plans as to the selection of a suitable place in which to conduct the show are under discussion.

A permit for the planting of Magnolia trees on 214th st. has been issued to the club by the Los Angeles park board. The Magnolia trees will be planted in place of the Canary Island pine trees, previously chosen by the club. Mrs. J. Fritz, president of the club, has appointed Mesdames Romilda Scholl and Albert Ewald to contact the residents in preparation for the tree planting ceremonies to be held on Arbor day.

At the last meeting of the club held at Torrance park, the members were conducted on a tour of the park and they heard a lecture on the planting and cultivation of the many varieties of flowers, shrubs and trees at the park.

The next meeting will be at the home of Mrs. Spitz, 1450 E. 214th st., on September 24. Amateur gardeners wishing to take part in the club's activities here have been asked to contact Mrs. J. Fritz, 1508 W. 214th st.

Lt. A. M. Coast With Inspection Unit in Tokyo

Lieut. Albert M. Coast of Torrance has been assigned to the inspection section of the construction branch of General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo. Having arrived in Japan in August to assume his duties in the occupational forces, Lieutenant Coast is now engaged in the mammoth job of aiding in the reconstruction of buildings that were damaged or destroyed during the war.

Prior to entering the service at Fort MacArthur, in March, 1945, Lieutenant Coast was an electric welder at the Felker Manufacturing Company. He received his basic training in the Infantry at Camp Wolters, Texas, and after a tour of duty at the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Ga., and Infantry Replacement Center at Fort McClellan, Ala., the lieutenant sailed in July this year for overseas duty.

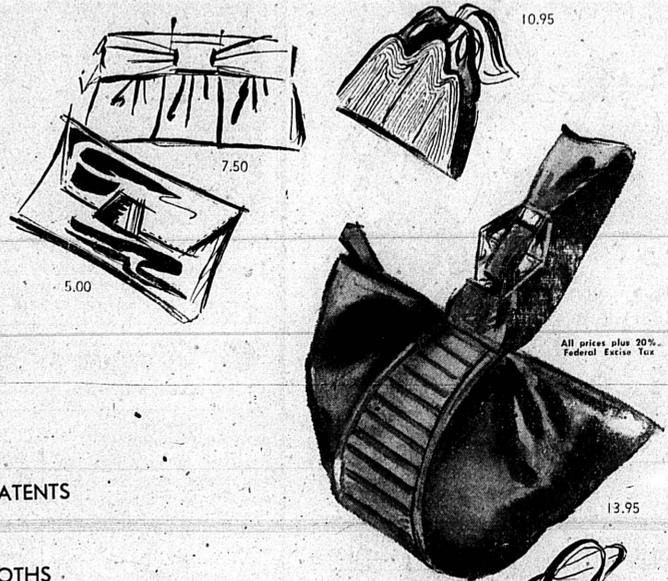
He graduated from the Hoover high school in Glendale in 1932.

Lieutenant Coast's wife, Annabel, lives at 1449 216th st., and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Coast, reside at 736 Border ave. in Torrance.

TIRES TIRED?

Drivers are reminded that hot weather and friction heat from fast driving are frequently the cause of blowouts. Keeping the speed of the vehicle within reasonable limits will not only conserve the tires and possibly prevent an accident, but also means the driver will be able to control the car in event of a blow-out, which is possible on the "tired tires" on so many cars today.

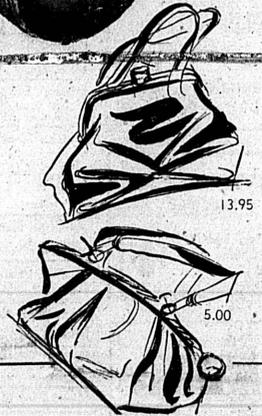
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