

# Council Opens City Manager Job to All Applicants

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## Torrance Herald

OFFICE AND PLANT AT 1619 GRAMERCY AVE., TORRANCE

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# LOCAL MAN SOUGHT IN MURDER

## Council Splits On Move

Open competition for the city manager's job in Torrance was ordered by a split vote of the city council Tuesday night as it completed its second week of wrangling over the matter.

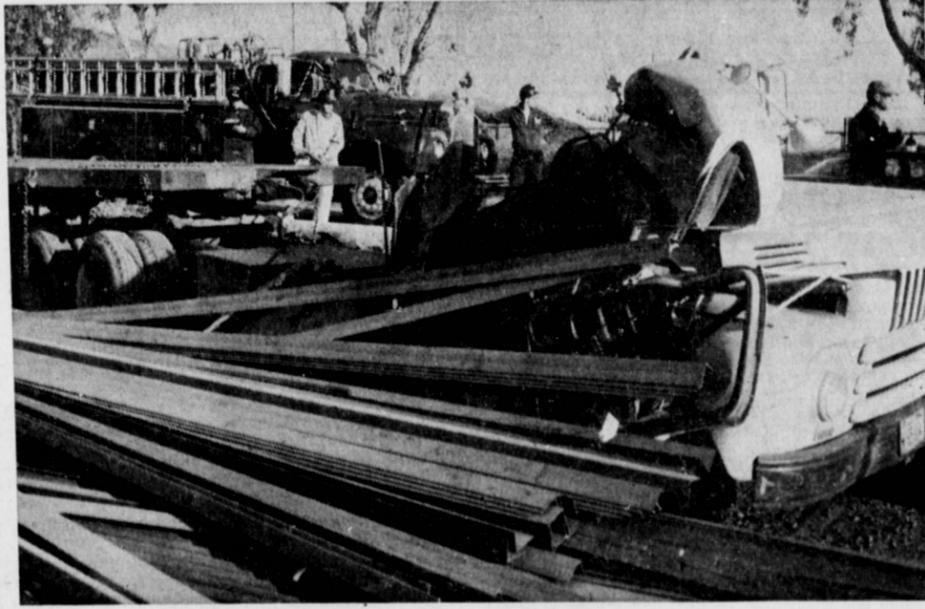
Tuesday's action broke a week-long deadlock. Councilman George Vico, whose refusal to vote last week brought about the deadlock, sided with Nick Draie, J. A. Beasley, and Willys Blount for an open examination for the job Tuesday.

**THE ACTION** was opposed by Mayor Albert Isen, and Councilmen Victor Benstead and George Bradford, who had favored immediate assignment of Director of Public Works Wade Peebles to the job effective on the retirement of City Manager George Stevens on June 30.

A closed-door session of the council preceded the action. Isen had called the closed door meeting, which is permissible under the law to discuss personnel matters only.

"I think we owe it to the people in town to consider everyone," Vico said before casting his vote.

**COUNCILMEN** opposing the appointment of Peebles at this time have all said they were not opposing him on the job, but opposing the idea of not (Continued on Page 3)



**SCRAMBLED STEEL . . .** Truck Driver Harry Frank Brockman, 58, of Redondo Beach was hospitalized with possible serious injuries early Monday after his truck hopped a curb and slanted into the railroad right of way on Torrance Blvd., just west of Western Ave. A heavy load of steel on the truck slid forward, smashing the tractor cab and pinning Brockman for a few minutes. (Herald Photo)

## Police Claim Torrance Man 'Hot' Suspect

An all-points bulletin was issued yesterday afternoon for a Torrance rug cleaner, described by Sheriff's homicide officers as the prime suspect in the brutal slaying of the 29-year-old wife of a Long Beach sailor and dumping her body opposite 1235 E. 223rd St., early Tuesday.

Sought by Torrance police and Sheriff's deputies is James Blackwell, 28, who has been residing at 2011 W. 220th St. He was identified as a logical suspect through witnesses to a struggle in Long Beach Monday night in which the slain woman, Mrs. Helen Margaret Johnson, was said to have been beaten on the sidewalk in front of a tavern.

**SEVERAL WITNESSES** described Blackwell, including a partial paralysis of his face, and told officers he had said something about working in Torrance. A shirt patch indicated he was employed by a rug cleaning firm, deputies were told.

Homicide detectives J. G. Lawton and Walt Thornton told the HERALD yesterday that a number of witnesses described the assailant and that the descriptions were nearly all identical.

**A CHECK** of Torrance cleaning firms yesterday turned up Blackwell as the logical suspect. He missed work Tuesday, and appeared before his employer Wednesday morning to request \$50, saying he had to go to court on a civil matter.

He was still being sought late Wednesday afternoon, according to Det. Lt. Donald Hamilton of the Torrance Police Department, who was cooperating with Sheriff's homicide detectives on the case.

**THE JOHNSON** woman's body was discovered by a workman as he reported to his job early Tuesday. She was identified later by fingerprints.

The victim's husband, who was on board ship Monday night, was unaware of her murder until informed by detectives. An auto which Mrs. Johnson had been driving was found Tuesday night in a parking lot near her Long Beach home.

## Smokers' Tax Nets 65 Million

Cigarette tax collections and the value of pre-paid tax stamps and meter impressions amounted to \$65,433,468 for 1960, the first full calendar year of the 3 cent-per-pack tax, Richard Nevins, Fourth District Member of the State Board of Equalization, announced today.

After refunds and discounts to distributors, net revenues in 1960 amounted to \$64,171,834. Nevins explained that licensed distributors pay the tax in advance by purchasing tax stamps and meter impressions. The distributors are given a maximum discount of 2 percent for the cost of affixing stamps or meter indicia on each package of cigarettes. There were 287 distributors at the end of 1960.

**TAXABLE** sales to retailers totaled 43 1/4 billion cigarettes in 1960. Nevins pointed out that California ranked second among the states in both volume of distributions of taxable cigarettes and population.

Californians who smoke cigarettes regularly consumed an average of eight packs a week. Average consumption of cigarettes in 1960 was 3 1/2 per cent greater in California than the national average.

Tax-exempt shipments by manufacturers and distributors amounted to more than 3.3 billion cigarettes in 1960. Post exchanges, commissaries, and ships' stores accounted for more than half of the tax-exempt cigarettes with most of the remainder being shipped out-of-state.

## 2500 at White to Transfer

More than 2500 pupils at Stephen M. White Junior High School have started planning for next semester's classes. A special program is being provided Thursday for pupils and parents at which all elective subject offerings for the next school term will be explained.

Since pupils, with the help of their parents, participate in choosing many of the subjects they will take in junior and senior high school, it is important that they understand what subjects are offered and what requirements must be met.

Parents who attend this assembly will hear each elective subject explained and will have an opportunity to ask questions. Counselors will be available also to discuss with parents the programs for their children.

This meeting will be held from 9:40 to 10:30 a.m. in the school auditorium.

## Conference on City Renewal Set Saturday

Authorities drawn from throughout the Southland will converge on San Pedro Saturday to participate in the Harbor Area Citizens' Urban Renewal Conference sponsored by the Harbor Area Welfare Planning Council.

Attorney Ray Choate of San Pedro will be chairman of the event which opens at 9:30 a.m. Planning Director George Powell of Torrance will head a workshop to discuss the topic, "Revitalization through Planning." He will be assisted by Mrs. Valley Knudsen, chairman of Los Angeles Beautiful; Murray Meld, director of area planning, Welfare Planning Council, Los Angeles Region; and Mrs. Alys Drobnick, Santa Monica councilwoman.

as subjective zoning, whereby older areas of the city might be modernized through zoning which would permit construction of new facilities, such as apartment dwellings or commercial buildings only after the land had been cleared of the existing structures which are considered obsolete.

**POWELL SAID** yesterday he planned to discuss such items

## Step Made To Accept Navy Site

Approval of a resolution accepting 26.06 acres of surplus Navy property for use in expanding Torrance High School was voted by the board of education Tuesday night. The transfer of title will be made as soon as approval is received from Washington.

Only cost to the district for the property will be \$1,500 in appraisal fees, the board was told. Value of the property on the open market was estimated at between \$500,000 and \$600,000.

The Navy property was acquired by the school district after two years of negotiations. After being turned down once, school officials appealed the decision, with aid from many local citizens, newspapers, Chamber of Commerce, and city officials.

## Student Here

Jerry Reynolds, who spent the Easter vacation here with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Reynolds, 22302 Redbeam, left Sunday for the University of California at Berkeley.

## Research and Education on TEAC Agenda

"Research and Education" will be the topic for discussion next Monday noon when the Torrance Educational Advisory Committee meets at the Masonic Temple, Cabrille and Plaza Del Amo.

In addition to the principal discussion topic, members of the committee will get an up-to-date construction report, and will be entertained by instrumental selections by Seaside students, according to the Rev. H. Milton Sippel, moderator.

## Street Job On Berendo Rescheduled

The improvement of Berendo Ave., between 204th St. and Milton St., Torrance, has been rescheduled by the Los Angeles County Road Department to begin this week, according to Supervisor Burton W. Chace.

Work will consist of extending the pavement to join curb and gutter recently constructed under permit by adjoining property owners.

The improvement will provide better drainage, better traffic facilities, and will generally result in increased property values, Chace said.



**LAUNCH CRUSADE . . .** District Chairman James Weigel (second from left), who will supervise the American Cancer Society's annual Crusade for the Torrance, South Bay, and Centinela Valley areas, goes over plans during kick-off breakfast here with William Kurtz (left), Gardena city chairman; Ed Gregory (right), Torrance city chairman; and Robert Frahm (standing), city chairman for Redondo Beach. Weigel is manager of the Torrance branch of the Security First National Bank.

## A Penny for your Thoughts

"With the automotive public's buying interest leaning toward smaller cars, do you think this trend will ever return to the larger design of the 1950's?"

Five people answered this question for today's column as follows:

Frank Clark, 6048 John Ave. Long Beach, aircraft employee:

"I like the smaller cars for their economy and ease of handling but I like the larger ones for driving, especially on long trips. As long as most of us are two car owners I think one of each type solves the problem."

Kim Kovata, 1425 W. 138th St., Gardena, retired salesman:

"Give me the big cars for comfort, but that is all. It costs too much for repairs and replacements such as tires and they eat the gas, too. I don't think small cars are a trend, but something that is here to stay."

Mrs. James Schofield, 2118 El Segundo, housewife:

"I like the comfort of riding in a big car especially on trips, but I like the small ones for shopping and when I am driving. Parking a big car is too much for me after I have driven one of the compacts."

Ray Cook, 7309 Woodman Ave., Van Nuys, automobile salesman:

"I think the Buick Special is the car. It has both comfort and economy. I drove the big 'troop carriers' all of my life . . . at least after I got out of the Model A class. I'll never go back to anything else now."

Al Charles, 10836 Wagner, Culver City, automobile salesman:

"I've been driving and demonstrating cars most of my life. As we car salesmen change jobs a lot this has included most of the makes, big and small. I'm spoiled now and would hate to go back to some of the big ones I have owned and driven."

## Fire Causes \$1500 Damage to House

Youngsters who were playing with matches were found to be the cause of a fire which did \$1500 damage to the home of James Meyers, 126 W. 235th St., Tuesday.



**EAGER 'COWPOKES' . . .** Eighty-eight members of Cub Pack 761C and friends drifted down the dusty trail at the Flying 'W' Ranch in Paramount recently on their monthly outing. A hay rack was provided by the trail boss for brothers and sisters of members who were to young to ride, and for the mothers. After galloping down the dry river bed, all hands enjoyed a Hot Dog and Pop luncheon served by the Flying 'W' cook.