

TORRANCE POST OFFICE:

A Business or a Service

By GEORGE E. HUNTER

Secretary, National Association of Letter Carriers, Torrance Sunshine Branch No. 2207
(Editor's note: This is the first in a series of provocative articles on the US postal service written by a Torrance Post Office employee. The article does not necessarily reflect the opinions of this newspaper.)

From the time of Benjamin Franklin, the first Postmaster General, to this day, many changes have taken place in our daily lives, in our Government, and in the Post Office.

These changes are a constant problem to all of us, including the Post Office. The classical problem, "The Post Office, a business or a service," is continually being raised as the pivotal point of argument for or against cuts in appropriations.

You may ask, why must Congress vote money, isn't the Post Service a paying operation? The answer is no, for many and varied reasons which should be enumerated.

Most important, the cost of handling the mail today has vastly increased, yet you still pay the three cents for mailing a letter, deemed adequate more than a quarter of a century ago. Now who among us could possibly exist on a depression wage today?

Next, the bulk of mail consists of advertising matter, periodicals, and parcel post.

These have increased beyond the wildest dreams of the original planners. True, rates on these categories have risen a little recently, but they are the mass of today's mail and they don't pay their way.

In many respects they have actually taken precedence over valuable first class mail when it comes to service, contrary to the public belief and in spite of postal regulations.

Cheap Circulars
Take the common circular, with which we are all too well acquainted. This little symbol of our time was too expensive a means of advertising years ago. For a few dollars a day, a bill peddler begged to distribute two or three thousand.

Today for only one and one half cents a piece, every businessman avails himself of this cheap medium of advertising. Actually it is cheaper than that!

You must remember that the cost of advertising is a business expense, and as such is legally deductible at income tax time. It is reasonable then for business to appropriate this means to recoup any income tax losses. Huge deductions can therefore only lower their ultimate tax, at the same time they get first class advertising for practically nothing.

The Postal Service becomes the goat, and your mail service suffers. Our Uncle Sam is a two-time loser. He provides service for cheap advertising and the cost of this service is further used as a deduction to lower income taxes.

Don't you wish you had a deal like that to fall back on around the 1st of April? "Is the Post Office a business or a service?" If it is the Post Office's duty to promote and aid business, all well and good; let's call this spade a spade and understand our action. You are paying for it.

Next, consider the magazine and the newspaper. We would all be lost without them, because they have a particular function in today's life. The Post Office is pledged to aid in the dissemination of culture and learning, a service too few of us stop to consider. If you, the people, wish to subsidize the spread of culture and learning you must pay. You cannot blame the Post Office for the expensive bill.

150 lbs. of Periodicals
On a heavy day the average mailman is plagued with anywhere from 50 to 125 periodicals. Many of these are only a few ounces shy of being two pounds. Rapid calculation can show that the average daily weight of periodicals alone can be between 75 and 150 of dead weight. This can readily account for the high mortality rate among postmen's shoulders, commonly recognized as a distinct slope in the afflicted member.

Upon reflection, one can easily see the problem of handling and transporting such bulky, heavy fare. For approximately the cost of a first class letter an article weighing up to 25 times more is given the same service and sometimes even better.

You the people are the only ones who can decide if rates are equitable, and if subsidization is desirable. Needless, to say, fourth class mail or parcel post also loses money consistently. Again we

Fake Cures Through Mails at Record High

Postmaster Clara A. Conner today urged residents of Torrance to report promptly to their post office any instances of medical frauds involving use of the mails, or offensive advertising material involving apparent medical quackery that enters their homes.

All-Time High
Mrs. Conner said her suggestion was prompted by newest reports she has received from Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield and Chief Inspector David H. Stephens that use of the mails for medical quackery is at an all time high. The local post office, Postmaster Conner explained, under instructions from the Postal Inspection Service, turns complaints of medical fraud, as well as all other complaints of other types of mail fraud—which are also welcomed—over to postal inspectors for prompt investigation.

So far this year, postal inspectors have prepared cases for consideration by the Department's General Counsel which, conservatively, represent an annual loss to the public of \$50 million. "However," Summerfield continued, "rather than attempt to defend the indefensible, 106 persons or firms signed stipulations agreeing to discontinue their questionable enterprise. These phony schemes altogether were known to be taking in at \$225,000 daily. It is any wonder new frauds spring up every day?"

In addition to administrative action in cases involving fraud, postal inspectors also present cases to United States Attorneys for consideration of criminal prosecution.

Fake Cures
Under Federal statutes, postal inspectors are charged with investigating any fraudulent activity in which the US Mails are used. The most prominent fraudulent activity conducted through the mails today is in the field of fake medical cures. "Summerfield has reported the promoters and quacks are so persistent that a unit of inspector specialists is maintained in Washington, D.C. to coordinate investigations of these rackets," Mrs. Conner noted.

City Costs, Then and Now...
At a time when various levels of government are discussing budgets and taxes, a look at Torrance twenty and thirty years ago is revealing. The city's estimated population in 1921 was 1800 and in 1938 was 9500. At present, the population estimate exceeds \$5,000.

In 1921-22, the assessed valuation was estimated at \$2,270,985. School officials have estimated the coming fiscal year's assessed valuation at \$136,000,000. Torrance's general tax rate in 1937-38 was 82 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. This year it will probably be \$1.

Other figures which cannot be equalled anymore nowadays include such items as: fire house and jail site (1922), \$8000; city park (1934), \$800; municipal park (1934), \$15,000; civic auditorium site (1936), \$6000. Buildings were purchased as follows: civic auditorium (1936), \$62,566; library (1936), \$32,113.09; (old) city hall and jail (1936), \$60,106.72. These projects were paid for through bonds, PWA, and the city's general fund.

They make tests and examinations to determine whether medical materials and devices offered through the mails are misrepresented. If the evidence indicates that formal action should be undertaken, a complaint setting forth charges of fraudulent misrepresentation is filed with the Chief Hearing Examiner.

The promoter is named respondent, and arrangements made for him to appear with his attorneys at a formal hearing at which both sides of the

case are heard on record. If fraudulent use of the mails is proven, a fraud order is issued for the Postmaster General by Post Office Department General Counsel Abe Goff.

When a fraud order is issued, a promoter can receive no funds through the mail, and for all practical purposes his operations are shut off. All mail sent to him is returned to sender marked "Fraudulent," except that which on its face is clearly not connected with the unlawful enterprise.

In the past 12 months, 46 fraud orders have been issued in medical fraud cases. "Typical of the ingenuity of these promoters," Chief Inspector Stephens relates, "a scheme operated today from outside the United States is making a lot of money advertising in mail circulars a section of dry tree root about the size of a pencil, for \$15. An inch of this root soaked in a bottle of liquor for 7 days is said to provide a sure cure for impotency."

Big money makers for the quacks are so-called cures for baldness. These usually are a liquid, cream or tonic. Postal inspectors find not only are such preparations useless for growing hair, but they are often laden with bacteria and can cause infection. Inspectors have noted a strange coincidence. Almost all promoters of cures for baldness are, themselves, extremely bald.

Reducing Schemes
Reducing schemes are perhaps the most lucrative of medical frauds today. Products are sold at high prices through representations making outlandish claims of weight reducing. Material that swells in the stomach, medicated chewing gum, or pills are offered with the implication that proper diet, the only known remedy, is unnecessary. The pills offered in a current promotion are guaranteed to curb appetite. Massive doses of the pills given in tests have had no reaction whatsoever. Nonetheless, a gullible public buys them in quantity.

Several weight reducing promotions currently under investigation are grossing between \$2 million and \$3 million a year. In addition to the actual loss involved in medical frauds, and the untimely deaths of persons with serious illness who pinned their hopes on useless quackery, Postmaster General Summerfield pointed out that the medical quacks are flooding homes and offices with offensive advertising relating to their products.

First class letters under seal are not subject to postal inspection and the Post Office Department is limited in what it can do to prevent such mail going into homes, until the mail quacks are discovered and put out of business, Mr. Summerfield pointed out.

Report Frauds
"However," he added, "the citizen can help protect himself and others by reporting suspected mail frauds and turning the matter received in the mails over to the postmaster or postal inspector. Such reports are welcome and are promptly investigated."

JC Teacher Assn. Head
El Camino math instructor, Richard T. Haley is the new president of the southern section of the California Teachers Assn., following elections conducted on local campuses throughout the month of April.

SWIM SCHEDULE TOLD AT EL CAMINO COLLEGE
Swimming instruction, recreation swimming, and an outdoor recreational program for boys and girls will be featured in the summer program outlined today by Merl F. Sloan, director of student personnel at El Camino college.

In a similar program offered for the first time last summer, more than 1000 persons utilized the college swimming pools daily, Sloan announced. Five two-week instructional periods will open on June 17, July 1, July 15, July 29, and August 12. Instruction tickets for the first three periods will be available June 15 from 8-10 a.m. in the Campus Center. Tickets not sold at this time may be purchased thereafter in the Business Office at the college. Prospective enrollees are cautioned, however, that enrollment for instruction is generally heavy.

On July 27, from 8-10 a.m., tickets for the final two periods will be available. The sixth week of the swimming program will be devoted to a swim carnival. Hours of instruction are included in a program outlining recreational activities of the college, where the sheet may be obtained. Recreational hours for summer swimming, Monday through

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public Notices	1
Announcements	2
Funeral Homes	3
Cemeteries	6
Card of Thanks	7
Home and Business	8
Improvement Services	10
Lost and Found	12
Personals	15
Transportation	18
Sanitariums and Rest Homes	21
Restaurants	23
Health Aids	25
Do-It-Yourself	35

LEGAL NOTICES

1
NOT RESPONSIBLE for bills contracted for or by anyone other than myself.
CHARLOTTE L. PORTER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2
THE FAMILY STORE
1673 CRAVENS AVE.
FA. 8-7775
TERRIFIC BUYS
FATHER'S DAY SPECIAL
HAMPTON SPORT SHIRTS.
Washable & require no ironing. Small, medium, large & extra large — \$1.75 or \$ for \$4.95. Reg. \$2.95 each.
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Any kind of men's work clothes at the right price.
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SMALL EXPENSES
SMALL PRICES
THE FAMILY STORE
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Service from
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FINANCIAL

Business Opportunities	76
Insurance	78
Real Estate Loans	80
Money Wanted	81
Mortgages	83
Trust Deeds	83
Stocks and Bonds	85

REAL ESTATE

Homes for Sale	86
Real Estate Trades	87
Summer Cottages and Resorts	88
Lots for Sale (Business Residential)	92
Income Property	92
For Sale	94
Business Properties For Sale or Lease	96
Industrial Properties	99
For Sale	102
Ranches to Be Moved	108
Property Management	108
Acres Wanted	113
Real Estate Wanted	114

RENTALS

Houses for Rent	116
Houses for Rent (Furnished)	117
Apartments for Rent (Unfurnished)	119
Apartments for Rent (Furnished)	120
Rooms for Rent	123
Room and Board	125
Commercial	129
Miscellaneous	131
Wanted to Rent	133

MISCELLANEOUS

Furniture	138
Mattresses	138
Rugs, Carpets, Floor Covering	139
Appliances	142
Radio, Television	144
Equipment (Stores and Offices)	147
Sewing Machines	150
Musical Instruments (Sales and Service)	152
Photo Supplies	154
Pets, Poultry and Supply	157
Boats	160
Sales and Services	167
Trailers for Sale	167
Trailer Service	168
Trailer Rentals	169
Trailer Parks	170
Miscellaneous for Sale	173
Swaps	174
Miscellaneous Wanted	175

AUTOMOTIVE

Trucks for Sale	178
Trucks for Rent	179
Trucks Wanted	180
Motorcycles for Sale	185
Motorcycles Wanted	187
Auto Repairing	193
Auto Parts	195
Automobiles Wanted	198
Automobiles for Sale	200

NOTICE

TO PLACE A WANT AD DIAL
FA. 8-2345
SAY: "I want to place a want ad."
All ads taken before our Tuesday deadline of 5 p.m. will appear in Thursday's paper.

Cancellations

Ad must appear in paper one time before it can be cancelled.

Errors

The Torrance Press will not be responsible for more than one incorrect insertion of any advertisement and reserves the right to rectify all errors by a corrected insertion of the advertisement the following Thursday.

RESTAURANTS

23 • RESTAURANTS 23
DON'T Cook This Week-End!
ENJOY THE BEST MEALS IN TOWN. SERVED BY OUR FRIENDLY, EFFICIENT WAITRESSES. TRY OUR CHICKEN, FRIED TO A GOLDEN BROWN WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS.
DANIEL'S CAFE
1625 CARRILLO

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

36
PUBLIC STENO.
Typing of all kinds
Ditto & mimeograph
PACIFIC SECRETARIAL SERVICES
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FR. 5-3247
INSTRUCTION in Stenographic
DOM. DOUG SIMCOB
FA 8-8838 eves.

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We will store a piano in your home FREE.
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1746 W. Adams Blvd. RE 1-7819
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LOST AND FOUND

12
LOST CHILD'S PET Cocker Spaniel, 4 months old pup. Black, white feet and chest. Has rabies tag. Brown leather & silver chain collar. Reward for return to 3512 W. 187th Pl. Torrance.

LOST OR STOLEN—Female English pointer dog. Brown head, white body with brown specks. Answers to name of "Kit." Reward. Call DA. 6-7192 or DA. 6-0818
FOUND—Boy's brown leather jacket left at library around Xmas, 1406 Cravens.

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