

Oil Wells Are Attractive Hazard to Children



PRESS EDITOR INSPECTS DANGER

OIL FIELD PROBLEM STILL WITH US

By TONY HABEEB

Some while back an ordinance of the City Council of Torrance providing for the regulation of oil wells was enacted to circumvent what many city officials felt was inadequate and outmoded state statutes governing oil wells.

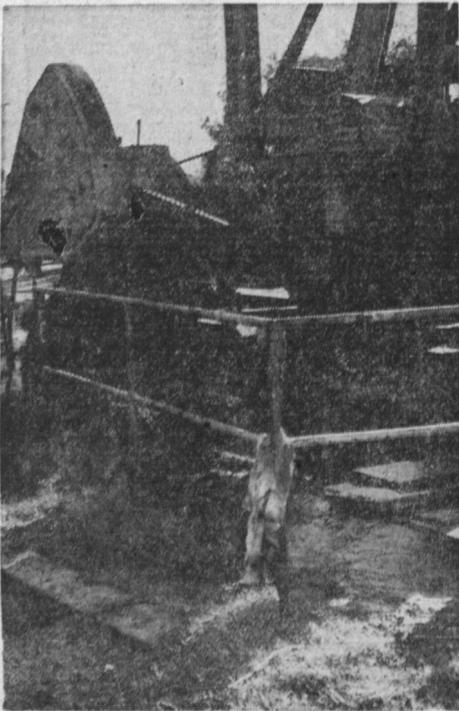
The state statutes were enacted in a day when many oil wells were nowhere near large cities or communities, where they might become a safety hazard. As a matter of fact, some of the wells were in regions so remote, it was almost impossible to maintain them.

And such was the case right here in Torrance. For in 1922, when the oil development first began, no special regulatory measures were needed to guard against dangerous conditions—simply because no one but qualified workmen ever went into the inaccessible areas of the Torrance of yesteryear.

Today, the picture has changed considerably. There are no inaccessible areas so remote to be traversed here in Torrance. As a matter of fact, areas of danger to children are so accessible that a great deal of concern has arisen among citizens. So much so, that besides the calls that the Press has received of obvious violations, the City Manager's office is continually being deluged with calls from irate citizens all complaining about unsafe conditions in the oil fields.

Let's examine the regulation which governs the problem locally. It might emphasize and highlight the crusade for enforcement of these all encompassing ordinances.

Section 2 of Ordinance No. 763 says: "No person owning, having possession of, or in control of any oil well shall maintain, or allow to exist thereon, any moving parts in use at such oil well unless and until such moving parts are securely enclosed



FENCE IS ORDINANCE VIOLATION

by an adequate fence, screen or housing sufficient to prevent the entry of small children to such moving parts. If any fence is erected pursuant hereto, it shall be a chain link type of fence with a minimum wire thickness of 16 gauge, shall not be less than 6 feet in height, and if equipped with gates, such gates shall be securely fastened at all times, except when authorized personnel are in attendance at such well. A single fence, screen or housing may be used to enclose one oil well or more than one well. Provided, however, that such fence, screen or housing shall not be required when such moving parts are attended or guarded by adult human beings."

It is apparent that the law is clear as to what is incumbent upon the well owner or operator to provide. The terms are explicit and certainly not difficult to understand.

But, violations are apparent everywhere. And it is not necessary that a child, attracted by complex machinery, and unaware of the apparent danger, be the seriously injured or dead victim of simple negligence.

George Powell, Director of the Planning Commission, upon whose shoulders the problem falls says that a concerted effort on the part of City Manager George Stevens has been in effect to attempt to make oil well owners comply with the ordinance. And, according to Powell, Stevens drive has made the situation look better now than it has in months.

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CHILD DIES HERE OF INJURIES

Absentee Vote Possible For Lomita Election

"Anyone who is incapacitated or expects to be away from home on October 29th, date of the incorporation election for the proposed new City of Lomita, can and should obtain an absentee ballot," Linden H. Chandler, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Civic Committee For Incorporation, reminded all voters today.

"Requests for absentee ballots must be made in writing to the office of the County Registrar of Voters, 808 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, California, between October 9th and 24th, both dates inclusive," Chandler explained.

The application for an absentee ballot must be signed by the person requesting it in the exact manner he signed his voter's registration slip, and must also contain these five items of information:

(1) Name and date of the election—"City of Lomita Incorporation, October 29, 1957."

(2) Residence address of the applicant.

(3) Mailing address where absentee ballot should be sent, if different from residence address.

(4) Reason for requesting absentee ballot (sickness, vacation, business trip or other).

(5) Signature of applicant. "Each person must make an individual request on a separate application, Chandler cautioned, November 4th is the last date on which all absentees must be received at the Registrar of Voter's office, so they must be mailed in time to reach Los Angeles on, or before, that date."

Results of the election will be officially canvassed by the Board of Supervisors on the following day, Tuesday, November 5th.

\$700,000 IN BONDS TO BE SOLD

Tuesday, October 29, was the date set today by the Board of Supervisors for the sale of \$700,000 worth of South Bay Union High School bonds, it was announced by Supervisor Burton W. Chace.

Chace stated that school district officials had informed him that money realized from the sale of bonds will be used to enlarge and make new additions to Aviation High School to care for the rapidly-growing school population in that area.

Last 15 Second Win by Tartars

Hit by flu and injuries, Torrance High got off the deck in the final two minutes Friday night and handed El Segundo its first defeat, 13-12, on a last-second pass.

Torrance, trailing 12-7, had little hope of victory with two minutes to go and El Segundo in possession of the ball.

The Eagles were running out the clock on line plays when the ball rolled out of a pileup on the El Segundo 25 and end Harold Davis pounced on it.

The Tartars took seven hurried yards to grind down to the three yard line where, with 15 seconds to go, Bob Cosby fired a pass to Mike Gonta for the score.

Steve Moanera scored both Eagle touchdowns while Butch White put on a dazzling show with a twisting 78 yard kickoff return for the Tartars' first score.

Civic Leaders Get-Together

Invitation has been extended by John G. L. Crain, president of the N.T.C.I.A. to leaders or representatives of all P.T.A. associations, service clubs and district scout supervisors of North Torrance to a get-acquainted meeting at his home October 7, Monday at 7:30 p.m.

Attempts Suicide In City Jail

A despondent prisoner in City Jail yesterday used the glass from a broken light bulb to slash his wrists in an attempted suicide.

The prisoner, Howard Richard Berrera, 23 of 11132 Dale-rose ave., Lenox, was in good condition at Harbor General hospital, following the attempt on his life.

Berrera was being held for Redondo Beach police on a "bad check charge," according to officers.

Eyewitnesses said the suspect pushed in the glass of a sunken light well in his cell, and used the glass to slash his wrists.

Detectives at Redondo Police headquarters said Berrera was arrested cashing fictitious checks in a super food market.

According to arresting officers, Berrera admitted the checks being written were "bad."

Formula For Lots Studied

Lawrence C. Wing of the Planning Commission, presiding in the absence of President Bert M. Lynn with the rest of the Planning Commission, received copies of a proposed new lot formula.

The new plan concerns front and side set backs for lots in single family residence area.

Members of the commission were asked to study the sketch and formula and to report their findings at the Oct 16 meeting in Torrance City Hall council chambers.

Planning Director George Powell announced the monthly meeting of the Southern California Planning Congress at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 10 in South Hills Country Club, West Covina.

Phelan Speaks

Charles A. Phelan Jr., executive director, American Plumbing and Civic Association, will speak on "Value of Citizen Groups and Committees to Planning."

Held over to the next meeting was a petition of Sylvester F. Morning, 8605 Beverly Blvd., for a change of zone from light manufacturing to multiple-family residential on property at the southwest corner of Emerald and Valeria Sts.

Morning requested the zone family residences, providing financing is obtainable.

He indicated, if financing is not obtained, he would construct single-family residences, approximately 2000 square feet in size and of conventional design.

School Bond Bids to be Opened Here

Bids on \$2,000,000 par value Torrance Unified School District bonds will be opened by the Board of Supervisors at next Thursday's meeting (October 8), Supervisor Kenneth Hahn announced today.

For New West High

Funds derived from the sale will be used in constructing the new West high school and a number of other pending school projects in Torrance.

At the time the bids are opened, County Treasurer Howard L. Byram will be standing by to immediately analyze all bids with officials of the school district so that sale of the bonds to the bidder offering the lowest interest rate can be consummated that same day, Supervisor Hahn said.

Dated November 1

Bonds will be issued under the date of November 1, in accordance with the request of the Torrance Board of Education, relayed to the Board of Supervisors by Dr. J. H. Hull, Torrance Superintendent of Schools.



HOWARD RICHARD BERRERA

VICO LATEST MEMBER TO QUIT COMMISSION

Former baseball slugger George Vico, took a few swings yesterday at Mayor Albert Isen as he resigned his post as Recreation Commissioner.

The former Pacific Coast League baseball star said the whole commission was "a joke," and he was quitting.

Vico blamed lack of attention by City Council to recommendations of the commission as the reason for his decision to resign.

His resignation will make the fourth Recreation Commission casualty in recent months.

Others quit Three other commissioners, Mrs. Herman Tillim, Mrs. William Boswell, and J. H. Paget, dropped from the group for similar reasons.

When Mrs. Boswell quit, she said: "Our decisions were ignored by the City Council."

Torrance councilmen sliced \$2,000,000 from a proposed \$5,000,000 recreation bond issue to go before voters Oct. 29. Vico said, "The commission's advice had not been seriously sought."

Arrest Gee On Grand Jury Embezzlement Indictment

Former Police Bail Bond Officer Jack Gee was arrested by the Sheriff's office late yesterday on a County Grand Jury indictment charging six counts of embezzlement of bail money.

The secret Grand Jury indictment was returned Wednesday, but the announcement was withheld pending the issuing of a warrant for the arrest.

Gee was taken into custody at his home in Beverly Hills yesterday afternoon by Deputy Sheriff H. W. (Dusty) Trail and lodged in County Jail under \$2500 bail, which he furnished this morning.

His arraignment in Superior Court here was set for Monday morning in Department 41.

The Grand Jury indictment accused him of six counts of embezzlement involving approximately \$350 he allegedly collected from defendants.

Gee was to turn in the money to the courts but pocketed it instead, according to Fred Henderson, legal adviser to the Grand Jury.

Probe Started

Investigation of Gee's activities began when he was called before South Bay Municipal Judge Otto B. Willett last February to explain why receipts for bail money allegedly paid him reached the court from five to 200 days late.

A traffic violator, Eugene Auilcino, Los Angeles, testified at the informal hearing and told Judge Willett he paid Gee \$91 in bail money. He said he later was hauled into court for failing to answer the same warrant on which the bail was paid.

William B. Keene, then deputy district attorney for the South Bay Judicial District, initiated a probe of Torrance police department accounting system. Tom Harris, accounting officer from the district attorney's office, reported 100 warrants missing from the Torrance police department's files.

Suspension Also uncovered by Harris was that approximately \$4000 in bail money was unaccounted for, it was reported.

Of the 100 missing warrants, 63 originally were turned over to Gee, said Keene. Gee was suspended from his job as a Torrance warrant officer Feb. 29, following unfavorable results of the account investigation.

Car Kills Boy, Seven

A 7-year-old boy was injured fatally late Friday when he ran in front of a car across the street from his home here.

Joseph G. Varley Jr., 3013 Carson St., died of head injuries in Harbor General Hospital less than an hour after the accident.

Police said the child ran in front of the car of Harold Lewis, 46, of 21323 Lynton Ave. Lewis said he was unable to stop in time to avoid the boy. No citation was issued.

3 Injured In Accidents Here

Three persons suffered serious injuries in two separate traffic accidents here yesterday, police said.

Ionian Jan Barker, 34, of 4909 Via E. Sereno, Torrance; and Wellington W. Wilkinson, 74, of 602 S. Catalina ave., Redondo Beach; were seriously injured in an auto crash last night.

The accident occurred at Hawthorne ave. and Lomia Blvd., when one vehicle was making a left turn.

Both injury victims were taken to Harbor General hospital for treatment.

Evelyn Alpha Smith, 38, of 621 Pine Drive, Torrance, was injured when her car collided with one driven by John R. Battle, 61, of Pacific Palisades.

The traffic accident happened at noon yesterday, at Pacific Coast Hwy. and Crenshaw Blvd.

The woman injury victim was unconscious when police arrived on the scene. She was taken to Seaside Hospital, in Long Beach, for treatment.

Battle was cited by police for failing to stop for a red light at the intersection.

Bus Inspection Law Urged by Kenneth Hahn

Acting on the recommendation of Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, the County Board of Supervisors this week agreed to sponsor a law requiring all private school buses to be regularly inspected by the California Highway Patrol.

All public school buses are now inspected yearly by the Highway Patrol, Supervisor Hahn said, but private buses are exempted.

Supervisors Hahn's motion, which was adopted unanimously, instructed the County Counsel to prepare the necessary legislation and introduce it at the next regular session of the California State Legislature.

Safety Checks

"I believe that safety checks should be made regularly on all buses used to transport children," he stated, "to insure against such tragic events as the recent accident in which three children were killed and 25 injured."

Safety checks on all school buses should include inspection of motors, transmissions, brakes, tires, lights and windshields, to make certain that all

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Via Del Monte Resurfacing

An appropriation of \$10,000 from County Gas Tax Funds to the City of Palos Verdes to resurface Via Del Monte was approved Tuesday by Supervisor Burton W. Chace.

The resurfacing project will be from Via Chico to Montemalaga Drive, Chace said.

Construction work will be done by the City and should start in the very near future, according to the Supervisor.

PUC Grants Rate Increase TO Southern Calif. Edison

The California Public Utilities Commission has authorized the Southern California Gas Company to increase its rates to yield additional gross revenue of \$18,240,000 a year.

The amount is \$1,747,000 less than the \$19,987,000 asked by the company to offset higher wages, property taxes, increased cost of gas and other items.

The company will pay increased state, federal and franchise taxes amounting to \$9,949,000 a year, leaving a net increase of only \$8,291,000, it was pointed out.

The new rates, effective Nov. 1, will raise general service rates, including domestic service, by approximately 11 per cent, compared with 11.26 per cent sought by the company.

In authorizing the increase, the Commission said: "No advantage is to be gained for either the ratepayers or the general economy of the State of California by restricting applicant to so low a return as to hamper it in the attraction of capital funds needed to meet its extraordinary obligations arising out of the rapid expansion of its facilities to meet the demands for service of a growing number of customers."

The Commission declared that the company is faced with a continuing construction program to meet the needs of its more than 1,600,000 customers in Los Angeles, Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Riverside, San Bernardino and Tulare Counties.

Items to be discussed at the Monday night affair are all vital issues effecting the future growth and prosperity of Torrance, Mayor Isen said, in urging a large turnout. Reservations for the "No-Host" dinner may be secured by calling the City Hall (FA 8-5310).

The decision followed 10 days

of public hearings before Commissioners C. Lyn Fox and Examiner Manley W. Edwards.

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Sundin Wins Promotion

Reginald E. Sundin, Chairman of the Division of Applied Technology at Harbor Junior College and instructor of printing there since 1951, has been promoted to the position of Apprentice Training Specialist, Printing and Service Trades, Los Angeles City schools, according to an announcement made today by Hazel M. Whedon, Administrative Dean, Harbor Junior College.

Sundin left Harbor yesterday to begin his work, although he will continue as an instructor of extended-day classes at the local college on Tuesday evenings.

He has recently achieved national recognition for his development of printing course outlines, which are now being used to set up programs of printing in the San Francisco public schools and in various school systems in New Jersey and Michigan.

Prominently identified with the International Graphic Arts