

Citizens Ask: Is That Trip Necessary?

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Recruiting posters for the Navy used to summon volunteers with the slogan "Join the Navy and See the World." A paraphrase of that slogan, applicable to the City of Torrance today, might read, "Get Elected to the City Council and See the United States—At Taxpayers Expense."

Torrance has been represented at national and state conventions to the tune of \$30,000 during the past 18 months, and the city's taxpayers have footed the bills for every convention.

That \$30,000—give or take a few dollars—is what the city has paid out to attend conferences and conventions ranging from the U.S. Conference of Mayors to the Western chapter meeting of the International Shade Tree Conference. The meetings have been held in virtually every corner of the nation, and the string of dollars has led even to old Mexico.

What are the reasons for these trips? Does the city and the taxpayers who foot the bills—receive any benefits? Must every official elected

or appointed—get a free ride to some remote convention? Are expenditures for such trips held to a minimum? Does the city have any real controls on the amount of tax monies spent?

These are but a few of the many questions raised in recent weeks, questions prompted for the most part by a mounting concern on the part of individual taxpayers to find some way to halt the upward flight of property taxes. Answers to these questions may provide some hints on even larger questions being raised in this, The Year of the Taxpayer.

An investigation of travel expenses filed with the city's Director of Finance has revealed some significant, and sometimes startling, facts about the city's annual travel bill, which every taxpayer helps to pay.

Take, for example, the October meeting of the League of California Cities in Los Angeles. Sessions for the three-day convention were barely 20 miles from the city hall. No less than 17 city officials, including all six councilmen and the mayor, drew advances to attend the sessions.

Mayor Albert Isen and the six councilmen were handed city checks for \$100, and the remaining 10 city officials drew advances of \$50 each. Not all the money was spent, but one might ask if it really was necessary to hand out \$100 advances for a trip to Los Angeles.

Mayor Isen reported expenses of \$60.45 for that jaunt, lowest of the vouchers submitted by council members. Councilman H. Ted Olson reported his one meal on his monthly expense account and returned the \$100 check to the city.

Other councilmen, however, were not so frugal: George Vico reported expenses of \$100.70 (he paid the 70 cents), while Ross A. Sciarrotta spent \$98 in Los Angeles. Ken Miller spent \$78.27 and returned the balance of his \$100 to the city. David K. Lyman and J. A. Beasley have, as yet, not submitted expense vouchers, but city records do not show that their checks were returned.

Other city officials attending the conference reported expenses ranging from \$7 to \$47, depending largely on the number of sessions which they attended. Most, however, drove city cars to Los Angeles, and mileage expenses are reported on different accounts.

Virtually the same situation existed in October, 1963, when the League of California Cities convened in San Francisco. A total of 18 city officials collected advances of \$250—most of which was spent on the trip to the City by the Bay.

Most of the vouchers are not accompanied by receipts or other supporting materials, and in some cases, councilmen failed even to return the short forms listing the expenditures by broad categories. A councilman, in fact, is not required to do anything more than say the money was spent on city business in order to be reimbursed.

Following the most recent meeting of the League of California Cities, several councilmen boarded a plane for Mexico City. City taxpayers paid close to \$2,000 for an official mission of the League of California Cities to Mexico. A check for \$1,110 was turned over to the Don-Em Travel Center for the four first-class plane tickets.

Three councilmen drew advances of \$322.50 for "out-of-pocket" expenses: Beasley, Vico, and

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WHERE BLAZE STARTED . . . Fire inspector Charles Brennen checks over burned out area of Nativity Catholic Church parish hall at Arlington and Engracia as Bn. Chief Frank Tuttle looks on from above. The blaze, spotted about midnight Sunday by a passerby, threatened the entire structure before firemen under the command of Bn. Chief Charles Riensma were called to the scene. Cause of the blaze was still under investigation this morning. Damage to the building was extensive. (Press-Herald Photo)

Local Police Capture Bank Robbery Suspect

Arrest Here Just Minutes After Holdup

Quick moving Torrance police officers captured a suspected armed robber here yesterday within minutes of the robbery he is believed to have committed in Long Beach. Police recovered \$840 allegedly taken in the Long Beach robbery, and found a 32-caliber gun in the glove compartment of the car the suspect was driving. The bandit had written a note with a felt pen saying "I have a gun on you, put \$5,000 in the envelope and keep smiling." After his arrest here, Helfgott was turned over to the FBI and Long Beach police.

Stop Trade, City Urges

City councilmen joined forces with the Riviera Homeowners Association last night in opposition to a proposed beach land swap between the Board of Supervisors and Sovereign Development Co. The council voted to adopt a resolution recommending that the proposed land exchange, involving land in Torrance and Redondo Beach, be scuttled. Formal adoption of the resolution is expected at next week's session. A public hearing on the land deal is scheduled before the Board of Supervisors Thursday, Jan. 21, at 9:30 a.m.

"THE ISSUE before you transcends any consideration of high rise," Stanley Dunn of the homeowners association told the council. "It concerns the very well being of the City of Torrance," he added. Dunn said the exchange, in which the county would trade land it owns on the Redondo

Beach side of the old Riviera Clubhouse site to Sovereign Development Co. for beach area in Torrance, would benefit only the City of Redondo Beach and Sovereign Development Co. Dunn also said he had done some legal research on the question of ownership of artificial accretions along the beach, then added, "There is no doubt at all that such land will become the property of the state or the county." Dunn had reference to a state-county project that will increase the width of the beach by nearly 150 feet when completed.

HOMEOWNERS in the Riviera are prepared to mail 10,000 letters with post cards to be mailed to the Board of Supervisors, Dunn declared. He also asked for an official city representative to accompany homeowners to the hearing. Mayor Albert Isen declared that the mailing was "going (Answer on Page A-3)

Kiwanis Install Olson

City Councilman H. Ted Olson was installed as president of the Torrance Kiwanis Club Saturday evening in ceremonies at the Palos Verdes Country Club. More than 150 members of the club and their guests attended the ceremonies. Stary Gange, past lieutenant governor of the Kiwanis and consultant for the Southern California Gas Co., spoke to the club on the subject "There'll be Some Changes Made." William Dunlap, governor of the Kiwanis California-Nevada-Hawai district and a member of the Palos Verdes club, spoke on the 50th anniversary of the Kiwanis Club. Kiwanis International is observing its golden anniversary this year.

OTHER OFFICERS of the Torrance club installed with Olson include: Dr. Phil Haloran, first vice president; Dudley Cook, second vice president; Paul Shinoda, immediate past president; Clyde Baumgardner, secretary, and Ken Anderson, treasurer.

New members of the board of directors include J. A. Barrington, N. E. Campbell, G. L. Fladland, W. H. Hadley, W. E. King, M. T. Meier, A. B. Nilsen, D. W. Strand, and T. G. Wilkes. The Rev. R. W. Kornegay, a past lieutenant governor of the Kiwanis Texas and Missouri district and now a member of the Torrance club, was the installing officer. Kiwanians and their guests danced to the music of the Les Transier orchestra after the installation.

New Zoning Recommended

Regional Planning commissioners have recommended approval of a change of zone from A-1 to R-3 for property located at West 223rd Street and S. Figueroa Street in the Carson Area. John D. South of Gardena asked for the new zone, which must now be approved by the Board of Supervisors.



UP THE CREEK . . . George Post, manager of the United California Bank accepts, unwillingly, a genuine birch bark Indian canoe from Hi-Y members N. E. Large and Mike Purviance. Post won the canoe in a "raffle" which Lou Schlanger, owner of the Torrance Men's Shop, arranged. The canoe will be on display at the bank for the rest of the week.

Paleface Findum Big War Canoe in Tepee

"Ugh! Ugh!" With those words, George Post, manager of the United California Bank, accepted delivery of a genuine birch-bark Indian war canoe late yesterday afternoon. The history of the canoe really began on New Year's Day when Lou Schlanger, owner of the Torrance Men's Shop, found it tied to a tree in his front lawn. Schlanger and a friend have traded gifts each New Year's Day for several years — competing to see who can give the worst present. When Schlanger recovered from the initial shock, he created a "Downtown Merchants Raffle" with only one ticket — which he then sold to Post. Post, naturally, won first prize. The canoe, for the record, is made of genuine

birch bark and was used in a movie by Alan Ladd. It's complete with a paddle and a sizeable hole in the side. The Torrance Family YMCA was called in to deliver the canoe — which Post thought was a desk moment. Nick Large and Mike Purviance carried the canoe over to the bank late yesterday and were greeted by that loud "Ugh." Members of the YMCA have agreed to help Post solve the storage problem. Some of the YMCA boys are anxious to repair the vessel and add it to the fleet of four canoes and one sailboat which the "Y" maintains. Post said the canoe would be on display in the lobby of the bank for the rest of the week "because there isn't anyone here strong enough to carry it out!"

Two Oppose Gibson . . .

Councilman John S. Gibson, who has represented the 15th Council District, including the Shoe-string Strip adjacent to Torrance, for many years will have two opponents in the April 6 municipal primary. Beating the filing deadline Monday to oppose the veteran councilman were John Leslie Straight, 30, and John Aguirre, 40, both of San Pedro. Gibson has served as president of the Los Angeles City Council for eight years during his 14-year tenure.

Card Club Shooting . . .

Ten victims of Tuesday's terror shooting in three card clubs were still in Harbor General Hospital early today, none in serious condition. One victim, Arthur A. Archbold, 74, of Burbank, was in critical condition at Gardena Hospital, where he was under treatment for abdominal wounds inflicted when 70-year-old Louis Koullapis of Gardena fired shots into three of the city's gambling clubs. More than 30 persons were injured as flying glass and shotgun pellets splattered the plush card clubs.

Wilmington Bank Hit . . .

An undisclosed amount of money was taken from the teller of a Security First National Bank in Wilmington Tuesday by a bandit who shoved a paper sack at teller Kurt Patt and said "fill it up." The bandit did not display a gun but told Patt he had friends waiting outside. He left the bank by a rear door and then ran up an alley, witnesses said.