

# Civil Defense Officials Interested in New Alarm

Torrance's gadget minded inventive genius, Vic Chatten, has come up with an idea designed to rock the county and perhaps the entire U. S. . . . Chatten, inventor of a 18-ton beach cleaning machine, has dreamed up a simple and inexpensive device for alerting the entire Los Angeles County in case of an air attack.

Disgusted with the futility of installing sirens every other block as a warning method, Chatten, who lives at 1557 W. 215th St., hit upon a method so simple he wonders why someone hasn't thought of it before now.

Chatten's warning device simply consists of shooting a skyrocket-type charge into the air which will let go with a triple blast.

"It can be heard for a radius of 10 miles," inventor Chatten claims.

"On the way up the rocket will give out a high pitched scream—a sound which can not be confused with any other sound we commonly hear," says the 39-year-old inventor.

"When the three blasts boom out across the land from an elevation of 1000 feet every one will hear it. A man cranking a motorboat at the beach, a woman frying bacon in the kitchen, or a machinist bending over a lathe in a noisy factory. If they don't hear it, they'll feel it.

"Anyone who lives within 10 miles of the Los Angeles Coliseum can hear the rockets exploding on the Fourth of July. The rocket-like charge in this alert device will be several times as powerful and will be discharged from a higher and more effective altitude."

Cost of the device, says Chatten, is nominal.

"This system, including the cost of launching rack and powder charge, can save the state at least 75 per cent of what they are now spending for sirens. Only this month the City of Los Angeles is spending \$4100 to relocate four sirens. The state is financing \$61,000 to install sirens every other block in Los Angeles. For that amount of money the rocket method can be installed almost over the entire state," says Chatten.

The inventor proposes the launching tubes be located on the roofs of fire stations throughout the county.

"Fire stations are manned 24 hours a day. They are connected with central points of control by radio, telephone, and in some cases by teletype—three methods of communication. There would be no manning cost.

"Push of a button and the entire county will know it is time to duck—that something or the other is on the way. With the present ineffective sirens, half the people in the county will never hear them. The other half will assume it is another traffic victim enroute to the hospital in an ambulance."

Everyone who has studied Chatten's method is all for it. Everyone, that is, except sirens and whistle manufacturers and the federal government.

One high state Civil Defense official said of Chatten's plan: "Fine! Excellent! Inexpensive too. Only one thing wrong with it. The federal government likes sirens."

The local inventor is willing to take his method back to the government proving grounds in Maryland to demonstrate the effectiveness of the rockets and of the method of launching them.

The rockets are launched from a device that looks like two yard-long pipes standing on end. A battery furnishes the power to fire the rockets. One tube is used for an alerting charge, the other for the "all clear" charge. The entire unit is self-contained and is not dependent upon a central power supply.

"If under the present method of alerting the county, a power failure, develops—power out, and you've got no sirens," says Chatten.

The mechanical-minded inventor was asked, "What's in it for you, Mr. Chatten?"

"Well, since I don't own any stock in a powder company or a pipe company, not much is left for me. The rockets will cost about \$25 and may never be fired. So there isn't much expense there. Topping that, is the simplicity of the launching rack which can be manufactured for less than the bill for a steak dinner and champagne at Ciro's.

"One thing I want. When and if they should ever test this device on a county-wide basis, I want to climb on top of a tall building and say to myself, 'Vic, look at all the ruckus you caused!'"



READY TO GO . . . Inventor Vic Chatten says his new Air Raid Warning System is "ready to go." Here he is shown putting the final cap on his invention preparatory to tests to be made in the near future.

## GEORGE DOWNING REVEALS HIS ELECTION PLATFORM

On April 8 the voters of the City of Torrance will go to the polls to elect three councilmen who with the two holdover councilmen will represent the residents of the city as members of the City Council.

Printed below is an interview with George W. Downing, one of the five independent candidates running for the office. Previously the Herald has run interviews with Ed Karlow, a member of the present council seeking re-election, and Jack White, president of the North Torrance Homeowner's Assn.

Interviews with Mervin Schwab, a past president of the Torrance Council of Churches, and Mayor Bob L. Haggard, also seeking re-election, will be published next week.

In a general statement Downing said:

"I have read with much interest what various candidates want and don't want, what past councils have done, or failed to do. That is not the issue. It's what we are going to do about improving this situation now. That is what has interested me since becoming a resident of Torrance. I was practically raised in Municipal Government from the old mayorality days to the present City Manager plan, which I had a part in forming here. I served under both, also in the police and fire divisions and am conscious of the fact that we need expansion in these departments. I am the senior member of our civil service board and have worked diligently the last six months with full cooperation of the fire and police chiefs, have made very good progress in the steps toward real metropolitan departments. While there is much more to be done, I am grateful at the progress made so far and intend to continue till this is accomplished. For five years I have taken a keen interest in civic affairs, day in and day out, never confining my activities to just before elections to get votes. I love people and never am more happy than when working with or in behalf of them. My Cub Pack of 32 boys, 8 to 11 years old, is an inspiration to me to keep going."

Q. What are your views on the annexation of Alondra Park and El Camino College?

"The annexation question is something that must be answered by a vote of the people. No council can decide this so why kid the public."

Q. Always at election time the threat of gambling interests attempt to get a foot in the door in Torrance. What is your stand on gambling?

"Gambling in any form is not for me. I don't do it myself and if I did I would not have to drive far to satisfy that desire. We don't need gambling in Torrance."

Q. Taxes, up or down?

"Taxes, that is a vicious word.

We all hate to see increases of this nature. I know I do. I would use every sound means to reduce a family budget if possible. You know it is amusing to me to hear an aspiring politician to cry 'Cut Taxes!' I have heard this political slogan for years, and where are we now, paying the largest taxes in the history of our nation. I am not falling for this cry and I know den than any other method, you are not either."

"Every section of Torrance is asking for improvements, and justly so. These things cost money, and must be paid for from no other source than taxation. However, I have advocated, for some time, a sinking fund out of our surplus money to care for emergencies and I think this fund should not be less than \$100,000 at the very least. We are going to be able to use it in the very near future. This method would at least tend to hold taxes in line and save the interest on borrowed money. We should do all in our power to encourage industry to come here and present industry to expand, this will do more to relieve the tax burden."

Q. You advocate some type of a citizens advisory committee. Could you describe this proposal in more detail?

"The Citizens Committee" is something I have been striving for ever since I have been in civic affairs. This committee worked out very well in Ohio where I come from and it will work here if properly formed with any person having the right to attend and voice his or her opinion. This country was founded and predicated on the theory that we could govern ourselves, so let's get back to that theory and get this committee started. My activities have never been confined to any particular group or section but to Torrance as a whole, and my many friends know me as one who cannot be pressured or intimidated into doing anything I think is unfair."

Downing lives with his family at 1511 Crenshaw Blvd. He has two sons and one daughter.

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