

Legal Restrictions on Arrest Records Studied

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District
"Innocent until proven guilty" is the traditional theory behind our American system of criminal justice. All of us support it vigorously as a basic bulwark of our civil liberties, but there are difficulties in carrying the theory completely to its logical conclusion which produce legislative problems.

Some of these problems involve official records of the arrests of individuals against whom all charges are dismissed, or who are later acquitted in court. Many people argue that preservation of such records and public access to them penalizes innocent persons, especially with respect to employment opportunities. Law enforcement officials generally take the opposite viewpoint, and maintain that restrictions on such records would hamper their work.

Several attempts have previously been made to enact legal restrictions on such records, but none were successful. In our 1963 session, four measures on the subject were introduced, but all of them were referred to interim study. They related variously to erasure or to "sealing" of arrest records under certain circumstances.

THE ASSEMBLY Committee on Criminal Procedure recently held a two-day hearing on these measures. Spokesmen for both sides of the argument appeared to present their views.

The committee was reminded that the situation as to arrest records is complicated by the fact that two or more agencies are involved in every case: the city police department or the county sheriff's office, and the state division of criminal law enforcement.

Under existing law and procedures, this state agency automatically receives records of all arrests made by local officials. Therefore, to be effective a law on these records would need to apply to both the local and the state agency. In this connection, the committee was told that the state would have to destroy about 400,000 fingerprints annually, at a cost of about \$1.5 million.

EXISTING law requires treatment of the records of

Class Open For Reading Improvement

Enrollments are still being accepted for a special summer class in speed reading at Marymount College on the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The course is conducted by the Dan/Ro System of Rapid and Remedial Reading and produces from 300 to 1,000 per cent increase in reading speed without loss of comprehension, reports reading counselor Dan Rosenwasser.

The Dan/Ro System has been recognized by leading educators and business firms throughout Southern California.

Additional information about the class may be obtained by calling OL 5-4770 or FR 7-5501.

New Traffic Measures on 220th Voted

Traffic on 220th Street will be required to stop from now on at Moneta Avenue before proceeding, advises Supervisor Kenneth Hahn.

Boulevard stop regulations were adopted this week for the intersection by the Board of Supervisors.

The County Highway Safety Commission has recommended the posting of stop signs at 220th Street's approaches to the intersection.

The signs will be posted within five days by the County Road Department.

"The new stopping restrictions are needed in order to control potential vehicle-pedestrian conflict at this intersection," Supervisor Hahn explained.

"The Stephen M. White Junior High School is situated nearby, resulting in a considerable amount of pedestrian traffic at the intersection," he added.

juveniles differently from those of adults. The committee was told that records in cases where juveniles are convicted are sealed, but that those in acquittal cases are public records open to inspection. Under certain circumstances, juvenile records may be completely expunged.

Testifying in opposition to proposals to erase arrest records, the spokesman for the state newspaper publishers association said that while publishers are sympathetic to the view that innocent people should be protected against unfavorable publicity, a real problem under libel law could arise. "How could a newspaper defend itself against a libel suit for carrying a story about an arrest and trial, if after an acquittal, there were no record of there

ever having been such an arrest and trial?"

A SUPERIOR Court judge favored the sealing of all juvenile arrests in which there is an acquittal, saying there is a real need for such legislation. Another spokesman said employers check arrest records, and will not hire youths who have been arrested, even if they were later acquitted. It was obvious that further study of the problem is needed.

The March of Dimes reports that of the 12 million Americans afflicted with arthritis or rheumatism, about one-fourth are either unable to carry on major activities or are limited in the amount or type of major or outside activities.



A WINNER . . . Susan Brown, 9, of Gardena, was the winner of the Torrance Pacific State Bank's "friendliest smile" contest. The new winner, shown here with her mother, Mrs. Barbara Brown, and Robert A. Ruth, vice president of the bank, received a Mattel gift set and a \$5 savings account at the bank. The contest, open only to nine-year-olds, was the highlight of the bank's "Decade Minus One" celebration.

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IN HI-SHEAR POST . . . Michael M. Schuster has been named technical manager: fasteners, electrical products, and patents for Hi-Shear Corp. He will act as a consultant to management and be responsible for initiating research and development programs originating through sales contacts or within the Hi-Shear organization. He is a recent appointee to the 10-man fastener advisory committee of the Department of Defense.

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182nd AND CRENSHAW—TORRANCE

Auxiliary Gets New Donations

Donations from the Gardena Honors Kenneth Hahn Committee and the Rolling Hills Women's Club have been received by the United Auxiliary for the Garden Valley Training Center for Mentally Retarded Children.

to defray costs of the adequate for the rapidly growing enrollments, say auxiliary officials. It now serves children in 14 southwest cities, including Torrance, Long Beach, and the Rolling Hills Palos Verdes areas.

The donations were designated for the operating expenses of the training center, now located at 1119 W. Redondo Beach Blvd. Other donations have been designated for the building fund, reports the auxiliary.

The Kenneth Hahn Committee donation will be used

Holiday Picnic Planned by GOP

Free watermelon, games for children and adults and patriotic music at Torrance Park are planned for the Fourth of July family picnic honoring Robert Muncaster, GOP Congressional candidate, 17th District. The affair is scheduled to begin at noon. "Everybody is welcome," said Gil Archuletta, program chairman. "Bring the kids, your lunch, your flag, and a big appetite for watermelon."

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