

Police Maintain Low Crime Rate

Torrance Police Department with its splendid record of discouraging crime will move along its progress, paced by Police Chief Percy G. Bennett.

Recently the City Council presented a plaque to him for maintaining a low crime rate with minimum personnel.

One reason for the efficient functioning of the department is that Bennett knows all phases of his work and therefore can "speak the language of every member of each department. He started as a patrolman in 1932 and went up the ladder the hard way.

Bennett is the first to tell of any corrections to be made by his department.

"The force is doing a fine job but there still is one major unsolved crime. It is the only blot on our record: The Lucky Grocery Market—we still are working on it."

Discussing the future of Torrance and its expansion, he admitted that, with the increased problems that will arise, his present staff may not be able to cope with it. Along this line he said: "Even if we had the most efficient staff in Southern California we couldn't function well undisciplined."

"With more industries, there will be more persons driving to work. This creates a traffic snarl, if we don't have manpower in our traffic department to handle it."

"Then there is the commercial area aspect. At the rate Del Amo Shopping center is growing, immediate problems will pop up. One will be the traffic hazard and others burglary, holdups, larceny, and petty thefts."

Personnel of the police department is 103 members. Besides Bennett, there is the assistant chief, M. H. Porter, who in the absence of Bennett assumes all of the duties, responsibilities, and authority of the latter's office.

Under the supervision of those men, come four divisions: Uniform Division, under Capt. J. W. Mastris; Special Service, of which Lt. Douglas C. Cook is the head; Detective Bureau, commanded by Sgt. D. S. Hamilton; and Juvenile Bureau, with Lt. Gus Rethwisch in charge.

The uniform division is composed of two sections, patrol and traffic. In the patrol bracket, various watches in the 24-hour period are under the eyes of Lts. S. A. Johnson, A. S. Thompson, Robert Wright, and J. B. Miles. Director of the traffic group is Lt. Donald Nash.

The remainder of the personnel includes 69 police officers, two police women, 13 police matrons and file clerks, two women parking meterettes and an administrative secretary, Jan Betha, who is the secretary to the police chief, assistant chief and captain.

One of the new improvements of the traffic department is the radar car. It records the speed of any car. It also determines the safe speed, so speed limits can be reduced or increased for better traffic flow.

Despite heavy duties of the officers at times, they find opportunities to indulge in activities that create good will for the department. Many trophies have been won in contests they enter.

Thirty members have formed the mounted police group which participates in all major parades and are on call for emergencies. They buy and maintain their equipment, horses, trailers and trucks.

A supplementary unit of the police department is the Police Reserves, composed of 19 members who are on duty with regular police officers. They ride in patrol cars, walk beats and have the same duties as patrol officers. They also buy their own uniforms and equipment.

Another project of the department is the Torrance Police Officers Association, which sponsors five car clubs known as Tyrants, Road Troglots, Villains, Thunder Jugs and Charloters.

Still another achievement is the pistol team, which competes with groups from other cities. It is mandatory for each officer to qualify each month. Lt. A. Thompson is in charge.

An innovation by the Chief is

Republicans Win Mock Elections at School Here

The Republicans won mock elections at Parkway School last week, with Bill Lennon and Cynthia Vico named president and vice president.

The elections followed political procedures modeled after the national election system.

Students registered, prepared credentials, and held political conventions of Republicans and Democrats to nominate the candidates. As part of social studies, the students prepared the program to follow the lines of adult parties.

Rickie Gilbert and Jim Hall made movies and recordings of the sessions. Democrats gained some solace in electing Carol Rockey as student-activities director and Paddy Benson as girls' athletic director. Susan Stevens was named secretary and John Vaughn boys' athletic director.

Torrance received \$2,586.57 in dog-license fees for 1959, according to Finance Director Jerome T. Scharfman.

publication of the annual report in brochure form. Among the crime highlights for 1959 are the following:

Month of December showed the most traffic accidents with 200. There were 247 complaints of disturbing the peace in July to lead the other months.

October revealed 171 checks and counterfeiting cases. In November, there were 110 cases of burglary.

Most traffic accidents in one day totaled 36, which occurred on Saturday in February. The same number occurred in December on Wednesdays.

Most speeding violations occurred in the month of October with 489. Next highest violations

in traffic involved signs and signals with 475.

There were 49 residential burglaries each in January and December. Two persons were arrested and nine cases cleared were arrested and 22 cases cleared.

March disclosed 86 cases of curfew violations. Next highest category was runaway, in which there were 27 cases during January. Two cases each of narcotics-law violations occurred in July and December.

Most traffic accidents took place between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. There were 29 cases in January and the same number in October. Biggest number of traffic accident citations were issued in De-

cember, with 1524 against adults. The same month saw the highest number against juveniles with 149.

Most property was stolen in July with a value of \$33,339.84, which included currency, jewelry, clothing, auto and miscellaneous. Automobile thefts led with \$14,380.

Most arrests of persons were made in March when 38 males between the ages of 20 and 24

were taken into custody. Most arrests for females occurred were six. Months of January and April each registered that number. In January the ages were between 25 and 29 and in April, the ages were 30 to 34. "From the horse and buggy to the jet age brings about some startling changes, but the basic responsibility for protection of life and limb remains the same," Bennett observed.

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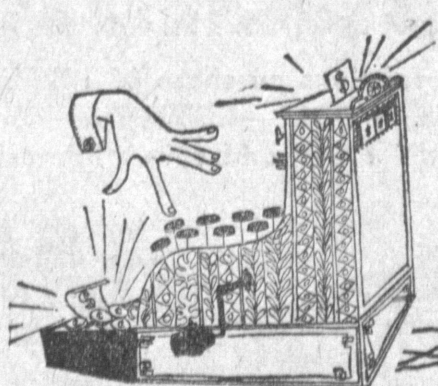
Tommy Simpkin at Vandenberg

Airman Tommy L. Simpkin, 24442 Winlock Dr., has completed technical training in the Air Force Supply School at Amarillo AFB, Tex.

The opportunities for educational advancement at Vandenberg are unlimited, according to Tech. Sgt. Duane K. Hedler, Torrance Air Force recruiter whose office is at 1319 1/2 Sartori St.

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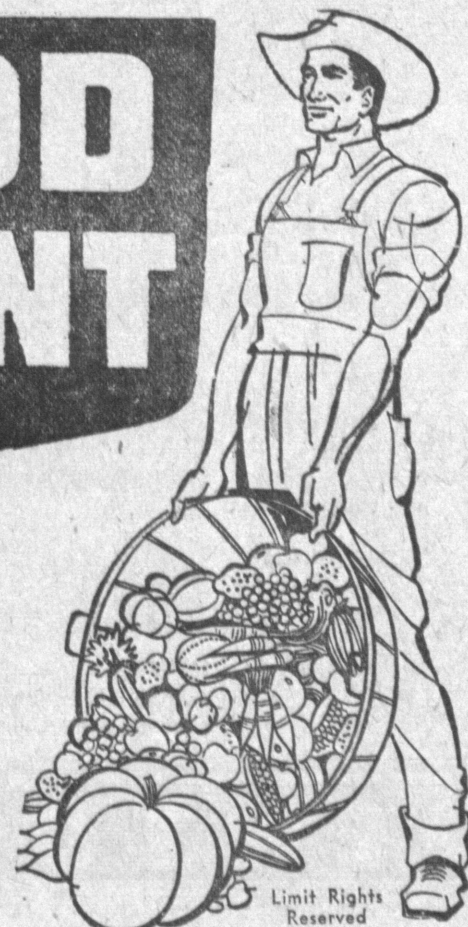


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