

# Assessed Values Greater Than Projected

By JERRY REYNOLDS  
Press-Herald Staff Writer  
Some unexpected — but welcome — news for taxpayers was announced yesterday by County Assessor Phil Watson.

Watson, releasing preliminary assessed valuation figures for 1966-67, reported a 10.4 per cent increase throughout the county — an increase which also holds true for Torrance.

Land, improvements, and personal property in Torrance is valued at \$297,258,760, Watson said, an increase of about \$31 million over the 1965-66 values. The assessed valuation of the Torrance Unified School District was set at \$296,750,660, compared to \$264.8 million last year.

(The difference occurs because boundaries of the city and the school district vary slightly in some areas.)

The reported increases are some \$10 million higher than the most optimistic estimates and will provide both the city and the school district with additional tax base—and additional revenues.

City Manager Edward J. Ferraro had estimated an increase of about \$20 million in his preliminary city budget. School officials, however, were less optimistic and had estimated an increase of only \$15 million — half the actual figure reported by Watson.

Ferraro told the Press-Herald yesterday the added tax base will produce about

\$159,000 in additional revenues for the city — despite a property tax rate reduction of two cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

"This money is going to come in handy," Ferraro remarked, "for parks and recreation, public works projects, and traffic work." Ferraro said he expected the City Council would allocate most of the "extra" revenues to a capital improvements budget, which will be presented to the council about Sept. 1.

Mayor Albert Isen echoed similar sentiments.

"I feel it is more important to get a lot of these needed things," Isen commented. He said traffic signals and other traffic projects,

improved parks, libraries, and similar municipal projects would probably be financed with the additional revenues.

"We need so many things," Isen said.

At school district offices, however, the picture is more complicated. School officials have been struggling with a budget of nearly \$20 million for next year which initially recommended tax increases of about eight cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

The Board of Education, however, expressed doubts about any tax increase at a meeting July 1. At that time, trustees ordered additional cuts in the school budget—with the implication they

wanted to hold the line on taxes.

Frank Mattox, assistant superintendent of schools for business, said the state equalization formula also complicates his work. "We lose state funds because we are now a wealthier district," Mattox explained, "but we gain local funds because of the higher assessed valuation."

Mattox told the Press-Herald that the district would show a net gain of about \$183,000 in revenues, assuming that the current tax rate — \$3.0633 per \$100 assessed valuation — remains unchanged and a health insurance tax of slightly more than four cents is not imposed.

If, however, the board decides to increase the tax rate, nearly \$600,000 in additional revenues could be expected.

Mattox said his office is in the process of revising the school budget to reflect Watson's figures, as well as other changes, and will present it to the board at the trustees' next session.

"There is no question," he said, "but that the increase

Watson, in issuing his report, said the figures are preliminary and are subject to modification once Tax Appeals Boards begin hearing complaints and appeals. The figures do not include the valuation of public utilities in the county.

"This year's roll reflects the increasing value of land in Los Angeles County," Watson said, "Particularly, vacant land and in transitional areas where the land is converting to a higher use."

The 1966 report reflects his staff's efforts to assess property at the 25 per cent ratio," he added, to achieve "maximum equity for all property owners."

Watson said individual notices of any assessment change will be mailed late this month and all assessment changes, along with a listing of complete assessment information for one-fifth of the county, will be published in community newspapers in early August.

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## Minister's Logic Sways Councilmen

Torrance's civic center is about to be completed, following action by the City Council last night.

The council, rejecting a recommendation from the city's Planning Commission, approved a variance to permit construction of a church near the civic center on land zoned for industrial uses.

The variance was approved at the request of the Torrance First Church of the Nazarene, which will build on a two-acre parcel on the northeast corner of Maricopa Street and Maple Avenue.

The Rev. R. Wallis Kornegay, pastor of the church, asked the council to grant the variance. He told councilmen the arrangement of the civic center made the land ideal for a church.

City hall, he noted, is representative of democratic government, the new court building of justice, a proposed library of knowledge, industrial plants in the area of free enterprise, and homes across the street of the "foundation of America."

"I'd be an idiot to vote against it," quipped Ken Miller.

His colleagues apparently agreed. The vote was unanimous.

## Renewal Bid Ready to Go

Formal submission of an application for \$6 million in federal funds to carry out the Meadow Park Urban Renewal Project is expected early next week.

City Manager Edward J. Ferraro, who serves as executive director of the Redevelopment Agency of Torrance, said last night the application will be turned over to the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs before next Wednesday.

The application was approved last night by the City Council, which acts as the Redevelopment Agency.

"WE EXPECT to be buying property by the first of the year," Lawrence Irwin, deputy executive director of the agency, said. Irwin told the council the federal government has earmarked the funds for the city and is holding the \$6 million "in reserve."

Approval of the application may come as early as September, with public hearings on the proposed development due to begin as soon as approval is granted. Preliminary plans call for the development of an industrial park in the area.

The urban renewal project involves some 50 acres at the west end of the Torrance Municipal Airport. The land is bounded by Pacific Coast Highway, Hawthorne Boulevard, and roughly 236th Street.

FERRARO, Irwin, and the city council will attend a special

conference on the plan in San Francisco July 29.

The loan and grant application seeks \$6,178,245 as a loan. Funds will be used for acquisition of property in the urban renewal area.

The funds will be given to the city at the conclusion of public hearings and presentation of a final plan to the federal government. That approval could be granted in late November, according to timetables established by the city.

## Eternal Rome

## Home of 'La Dolce Vita'

(Press-Herald staff writer Jerry Reynolds returned to his desk recently after a 30-day tour of principle European cities. This is the third of a series of reports planned for Press-Herald readers. Today's report deals with his visit to Rome.)

By JERRY REYNOLDS  
Press-Herald Staff Writer

For more than 2,000 years it has stood on the banks of the Tiber, a monument to man's changing world. It is no longer the center of the Western world, but neither is it just another city.

Rome, in Italian, Roma. The very mention of its name is enough to send the mind wandering through the his-

tory of Western culture, for only one other city in Europe — Athens — can trace an unbroken link to the beginnings of modern Europe.

In this city, grown more beautiful with age, one lives the history of Western man from the tomb of Romulus—legendary founder of the city — to the Da Vinci Airport, terminal for jet age travelers come in search of the sweet life.

It has been called the Eternal City and the City of Fountains. It is the home of popes. Some of the world's greatest architects have helped to build her. And the world's greatest artists have added their contributions. Her museums are full of the

great and the small works of the ages. Great men of history — Julius Caesar and Saint Peter, for instance—lie buried beneath her sands.

But Rome is no museum city. She is not something of the past preserved for tourists to marvel at in the 20th Century.

Rome is a living city, full of life, full of change, thrusting herself forward with all the energy which she commands. The monuments are there, but those who see only Rome's past miss the most beautiful — the most inspiring — part of this city.

The sweet life is a product of the Italian zest for living and it is nowhere more evident than in Rome. But the

prosperity of Rome can be deceiving if one sees no more of Italy than her capital.

The Italian nation has the largest Communist Party organization in the Free World. It is a product of the desolation which pervaded the land following the Second World War, and until this year it has scored solid gains in virtually every Italian election.

In Rome during the municipal election campaign, I saw many posters, stood in squares for political rallies, and tried to understand something of what was happening. (I do not speak or understand Italian). Even in Politics, Italians are full of zest.

(Continued on page A-9)

# Weekend Traffic Accidents Kill Cyclist, Vacationer

## On Cemetery

## Zoning Battle To End

A decision on the fate of a 100-acre parcel of land near 235th Street and Crenshaw Boulevard may be made by City Councilmen at a meeting July 26.

Councilmen last night set July 26 for a public hearing on possible rezoning of the land, now zoned for industrial uses. What to do about the land has been plaguing councilmen for several months.

The public hearing was set after a report on the matter was submitted to the council by Richard L. Knickerbocker, deputy city attorney. The report was requested by the council last week.

Knickerbocker told the council no further hearings were necessary on the zone case, which involves some 50 acres now owned by Don Wilson. Further hearings would be required for a cemetery proposed for the adjoining 54 acres, owned (Continued on A-3)



QUEENHUNT OPENS... The search for a Ranchero Queen to succeed Debra Risler (foreground) is now under way throughout the Torrance area. Candidates are shown here with co-chairmen Art Harkness of the Torrance Mounted Police and Bob Lydon of the Torrance Elks. From left are Gayle Hegarty, 16; Peggy Martin, 17; Janice Lasseigne, 17; and Debra Muench, 18. The queen will reign over the annual rodeo scheduled here Aug. 13 and 14. (Press-Herald Photo)

## Two Crashes In Mountains Fatal to Pair

Two Torrance men were killed and three others injured in two resort area accidents over the weekend.

Killed in the accidents were:

Gary G. Phillips, 22, 16923 Yukon.

Gerald J. Neppel, 43, 22516 S. Normandie Ave.

Phillips was fatally injured in a head-on collision on General Highway south of the Stony Creek Campground in Sequoia National Park early Sunday as he and four companions were enroute to the Sierras on a fishing trip.

He was a passenger in a vehicle driven by Mike Mansfield, 23, of 2009 W. 182nd St., who was admitted to Eater Memorial Hospital with leg injuries.

Also treated was John Rappier, 19, of 16914 Faysmith Ave. Slightly injured but hospitalized was Joe Silva, 21, of 17012 Casimir Ave. The fifth youth, Pat McGuire of Gardena, was not injured.

The vehicle carrying the five youths collided with one

driven by a Sanger man, who was not injured.

Neppel died in a Palmdale (Continued on A-3)

## Future of Libraries Up in Air

Debate on a proposal to establish an independent library system in Torrance will be continued next Tuesday at a special 4 p.m. meeting of the City Council.

Councilmen set the special meeting last night, following an hour long pre-council meeting which was devoted to discussion of the proposal.

The city's Library Commission, reporting on a study completed last January by the office of City Manager Edward J. Ferraro, has recommended that a municipal library system be established (Continued on A-3)

## Chace Wants Taxes Cut---

The possibility of a slight cut in the current county tax rate was hinted yesterday by Supervisor Burton W. Chace after he reviewed the property value assessment figures released by County Assessor Philip E. Watson. Chace said the Board had missed a good opportunity to pass a substantial tax rate cut when they failed to hold the economy line he advocated earlier this year. "The Board went overboard on employee benefits and pay raises," he said.

## El Camino Tax Election---

A ballot proposal that the 20-cent tax override which has been used to finance construction at El Camino College be continued for another five years will be presented to voters of Torrance and other cities in the college district at the November general election. The additional tax measure has been used to finance the pay-as-you-go building program. Approval of the ballot measure was voted by the Board of Trustees Monday night.

## Young Housewife Attacked---

A young Torrance housewife was robbed and raped by a knife-wielding man as she walked home from a nearby grocery store Monday night. Accused by a man who asked her about the time as she walked along Victor Street north of Torrance Boulevard, the victim was forced to walk around a nearby building. After taking \$9 from her, the assailant walked a short distance away, and then returned, bound her hands with electrical wire, and raped her, she told police.