

POLICE CAPTAIN COMPLAINS

Courts Too Soft in Gun Law Cases

(Editor's Note: This is the first of a series of articles which the Press-Herald will publish on the adequacy of present gun control laws. Today's article discusses local police complaints that current laws are not being upheld by the courts. Future articles will be devoted to detailed examination of these complaints.)

By NATALIE HALL Press-Herald Staff Writer

What would have happened to Sirhan B. Sirhan if a peace officer had arrested him on concealed weapon charges moments before the death of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy?

He'd have received a small fine or a suspended sentence, according to Torrance Police Capt. Robert E. Hammond, who expressed outspoken views this week on the prosecution of gun law violations in California.

New gun laws are no solution to the firearms problem, Captain Hammond believes, when courts and prosecutors aren't giving current gun laws the attention they deserve.

"We could make new laws with more severe penalties for burglary, robbery, or any crime, but unless these laws are carried out with the intent of the legislature, they're of little value," the captain explained.

Policemen are more concerned with gun enforcement than other citizens, Captain Hammond stated, because they are the ones most likely to get shot. Peace officers frequently shake their heads in disillusionment when they see gun-packers getting off with

suspended sentences or fines, he said.

"If a guy knew he'd get six months in jail, there would be a lot less crimes committed with guns," the police captain asserted. He pointed out that crimes involving guns during the first three months of this year were up 26 per cent over last year.

What the state needs, Captain Hammond said, is mandatory jail sentences for crimes committed with guns. That means a minimum of two years in prison for armed robbery and six

months for concealed weapons cases. Felony concealed weapon convictions deserve an even stiffer penalty, the captain said. (The case becomes a felony if the suspect has been convicted previously of a felony.)

"Criminals aren't dumb. They weigh the factors and penalties, and they know if it's 'worth the risk,'" Captain Hammond stressed. "They know darn well it's worth the risk. Getting caught with a gun is no big deal among the criminal element."

knows of at least one instance in which a concealed weapon case never got to court because deputy district attorneys "substitute their judgment for the court's." DA's and prosecutors have the authority to issue or reject a complaint on a police arrest, he explained.

This trend filters down to the arresting officer, who won't bother to make an arrest if he knows that little action will be taken on a gun violation, the captain believes. The citizen, in turn, will eventually decide

that there is no point in obeying gun laws if he won't be arrested.

As the law stands now, no person is permitted to carry a concealable weapon in his car or on his person without a permit. A loaded firearm, whether concealed or not, is also prohibited outside a private residence.

Misdemeanor offenses may be punished with maximum sentences of six months in jail or a \$500 fine.

Briefly, the law forbids the average citizen to carry (See GUN on Page 2)

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INSIDE TODAY

- Ann Landers . . . 5
Assessments . . . 9-25
Crossword . . . 5
Editorials . . . . 4
Herb Caen . . . . 4
Sports . . . . . 6
Women's News . . 26
Want Ads . . . . 28

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Armstrong To Retire From Bench

Municipal Court Judge Donald Armstrong will retire from the bench effective Friday.

Judge Armstrong, appointed to the South Bay Municipal Court in 1957 by then Gov. Goodwin J.

Employees' Pay Boost Given Nod

A 10 per cent pay increase for top city employees has been approved by an ad hoc committee of the City Council and will be considered by the council as a whole Tuesday night.

The committee, composed of Councilmen Ken Miller, Ross Sciarrotta, and William J. Uerkwitz, voted 2-1 in favor of the 5 per cent general salary increase and the 5 per cent adjustment.

THE SALARY increase will be retroactive to June 30 and the adjustment effective Oct. 6 if the council approves the idea Tuesday.

The committee also recommended that the salaries of the city manager and all executive and supervisory employees, including assistant department heads, should be set by establishing a percentage relationship.

Setting the city manager's salary at 100 per cent, the committee recommended the following percentage relationships for other employees: city attorney, 84 per cent; (See SALARY on Page 2)

Knights, has served as presiding judge for three of his eleven years on the bench.

A native Californian, he was born in Whittier. He was graduated from Santa Monica High School in 1916 and received his degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1921.

He earned his doctor of laws degree from Boalt Hall School of law at UC Berkeley in 1923 after serving in the U. S. Navy.

JUDGE Armstrong was admitted to the State Bar in August, 1923, and served from 1923 to 1925 as deputy commissioner of corporations. From 1925 until 1929, he was an assistant United States attorney.

He entered private practice in 1929 and practiced continuously in Los Angeles and Torrance until he was named to the bench in 1957.

Judge Armstrong served from 1952 to 1954 as a trustee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association and was president of the Torrance Rotary Club in 1952-53. He also served as a director of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce and Torrance Memorial Hospital.

THE JUDGE also served as city attorney for Palos Verdes Estates from 1944 to 1955 and was attorney for the Palos Verdes Homes Association.

He is a member of the legal fraternity Phi Delta Phi and a member of the Chancery Club.

Judge Armstrong and his wife, Grace, live in Palos Verdes Estates. A son, James E. Armstrong, lives with his family on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and a daughter, Mrs. E. B. Hall, lives with her family in Palos Verdes Estates.

Upon retirement, Judge Armstrong plans to resume his private law practice with the firm of McCabe, George, and Fritz of Torrance.



DONALD ARMSTRONG Jurist to Retire

Forehead Injured In Mishap

With a lacerated forehead and knees, a 19-year-old Lomita girl was rushed to Bay Harbor Hospital Thursday, after the car in which she was riding collided with another vehicle on Pacific Coast Hwy. near Crenshaw Boulevard.

Johnnie Ruth Trujillo, of 26027 Narbonne Ave., Lomita, was travelling in a car driven by Gregory J. Trujillo, 20, of the same address, when the accident happened.

Driver of the other vehicle was Susan S. Danielson, 22 of 1300 Esplanade, Redondo Beach.

Both cars sustained major damage.

Sister City Ceremonies Set Aug. 22

The city of Redondo Beach will honor its sister cities, La Paz and Ensenada, Mex., at the Mardi Gras de Mex'co currently appearing at Universal Studios Entertainment Center. Special ceremonies for the two cities are scheduled for Aug. 22.

Tickets for the Redondo Beach night and all performances are available at the Redondo Beach Chamber of

City Sets Four-Year Mark in New Building

Nollac Files Answer, Asks For Hearing

Ownership of a boat in partnership with a land developer has been admitted by Torrance's city engineer but the relationship does not constitute misconduct, according to a brief filed with the Civil Service Commission Thursday afternoon.

Walter M. Nollac, who was suspended from his post on July 29 by City Manager Edward J. Ferraro on a charge of misconduct, said in the brief that the boat in question was used entirely for pleasure fishing and entertainment and that he and his wife, Dorothea, "pay all of their own expenses, upkeep, maintenance and expenses in connection with said boat."

PREPARED for him by Attorney Walter H. Young of Los Angeles, the answer to Ferraro's charges asks for a hearing and reinstatement to the \$25,000 a year post.

The Commission is scheduled to meet Monday and the question of the hearing

has been placed on their agenda.

Nollac has freely acknowledged ownership of the 30-year-old boat with Kenneth Battrum, and said it was common knowledge around the city. He said City Manager Ferraro knew of the matter and had not offered any objections before the July 29 suspension.

NOLLAC and Battrum purchased the boat about three years ago for a total price of \$1,950. Nollac and his wife, Dorothea, put up half the money, or \$975.

In his answer to the charges, Nollac denied that he had any interests with Battrum beyond the boat. He said he had no interest or ownership in any of the Battrum development companies or in a series of tracts in which Battrum had an interest. He added that he had no financial interests in any other agreements in connection with developments nor had he received any gifts or favors from any of the companies.

Surfboard Race Top Feature in Festival

A one mile surfboard race will be a feature event of the Sixth International

Surf Festival next Thursday through Sunday, according to general chairman Dwight Crum. The Southland's top paddlers will enter the water at 8:35 p.m., officials said.

The race will precede the Los Angeles County Life-guard Medley Relay Race for the Perpetual Intercrew trophy scheduled for 9 p.m. Thursday.

The race will be held on surfboards meeting Western Surfing Association standards, the type of board seen in use by surfers throughout the world. The surf board used in the race is limited to a maximum length of 11 feet and must be at least 40 pounds in weight. A weight-length ratio is applied to smaller boards whereby a (See RACES on Page 2)



LT. JAMES R. POPP Chosen

Officer Given Grant

Lt. James R. Popp is the first Torrance police officer to receive a scholarship to attend the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville, Ky.

Lieutenant Popp will study police science and administration during the fall term, Aug. 26 through Nov. 15.

A member of the Torrance Department since 1959, Lieutenant Popp is currently watch commander in the field services bureau. He is an honor graduate of El Camino College and is currently studying criminology at Cal State Long Beach.

Lieutenant Popp served on the board of directors of the Torrance Police Officers Association for four years and is a past president of the organization. He names sports as his hobby and has been assistant coach for the Torrance Central National Little League for two years.

A native of Aurora, Ill., Lieutenant Popp now lives in Torrance with his wife Patricia and three sons.

Complete Fire Science Course

Four Torrance firefighters graduated in June from Harbor College's Fire Science program. They are Bernie Allen, Tracy Dale, Bob Meyers and Richard Nanney.

Torrance firemen have compiled a total of 3,400 college credit hours in the field of firefighting techniques.

New Hospital Hikes Totals

The city's most vigorous new construction program in four years, spurred by permits for construction of the new Torrance Memorial Hospital, was logged during July, according to John McKinnon, head of the city's building department.

A building permit for the new hospital priced out at \$5.5 million, raised the July total to \$9,810,875, McKinnon reported. It was the best month since permits valued at \$12.3 were issued just four years ago—July 1964.

In addition to the hospital permit, new construction was authorized for six single family homes and 10 apartment complexes with a total of 237 new dwelling units. Total value of the new dwelling units neared \$2.5 million.

ALSO INCLUDED in the July totals were permits for the new Imperial Bank at Hawthorne and Torrance boulevards, a new Amigo's restaurant adjacent to the bank, a major retail toy store to cost \$319,000 near the Del Amo Center, and a new redemption center for Blue Chip Stamps near 228th and Hawthorne.

Other permits were issued for industrial and commercial improvements and facilities and for improvements to existing homes.

Thirty-four permits were

issued to the city for the demolition of houses, sheds, and garages in the Meadowpark Urban Renewal area west of Torrance airport.

The July spurt brought the 1968 total of new construction in the city to \$26,672,820, McKinnon said.

Assessment Changes in Paper Today

Changes in assessments for a large part of the city of Torrance are published today in the Press-Herald.

Prepared at the direction of County Assessor Phillip E. Watson, the more than 16 pages of changes cover a large part of the city from the Riviera to El Camino College.

For the convenience of those seeking to find their assessment, a map of the areas covered is published today on Page 25. It will give the key to finding your property.

Extra copies of today's Press-Herald will be available at the newspaper's main office and plant at 3238 W. Sepulveda Blvd.

Marijuana Charges Lodged

An unemployed Torrance youth has been arrested on marijuana charges after Torrance police found a partially burned cigarette, three plastic bags of green leafy substance, and cigarette papers in his possession. Taken into custody at 2 a.m. at the corner of Via Riviera and Paseo de la Playa was 21-year-old William H. Sutherland, 941 Calle Miramar. When told by police that the marijuana appeared to be a poor grade with seeds and stems, Sutherland replied, "No wonder it burned so bad!" The suspect was also quoted as saying, "The only thing wrong with marijuana is the laws governing it."

City Holds Sales Mark

Torrance continues to hold fifth place in California for general retail sales, the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce reported Friday. Quoting information compiled by Sales Management Magazine, Chamber President George Ebert pointed out that Torrance is led only by Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and Oakland. The city was eighth in food sales, 13th in drug sales, and 11th in furniture and household appliances. Auto sales, while totaling more than \$34 million, put Torrance in 42nd place in California.

Park Needs Meeting Set

The Torrance Park and Recreation Commission will hold the last in a series of open commission meetings Wednesday at which Torrance residents will be able to assess the city's recreational needs.

Howard Wood Elementary School, 2250 W. 235th St., will be the site for the final meeting, scheduled for 8 p.m.

Discussion at this meeting will center on Hickory and Torrance Parks, Pueblo

Community Center, the El Dorado Street Sump, and the recently acquired areas of Sur La Brea and Alta Loma. The proposed Columbia Park at Hawthorne Boulevard and 190th Street also will be discussed.

Although the meeting is centered on the Southeast areas, information will be available on all of the Torrance facilities.

Recreation Department personnel will be present to present some of the depart-

ment's recommendations on park development and to answer questions. Methods of financing the suggested improvements and community recreation needs will also be discussed.

Torrance residents who wish to express their views on what recreation facilities they would like to see improved or added in the city should attend this meeting.

Recreational activities will be conducted for children while parents attend the meeting.