

Prosecutor Answers Complaints

How Do the Courts Handle Gun Violations?

(Editor's note: In the wake of police charges last week that courts and prosecutors are mollycoddling gun law violators, the Press-Herald has researched court action on gun arrests in Torrance during the past year for this second in a series of articles on the current firearms controversy. Today, City Prosecutor Tom McNary will explain his views on gun legislation and defend his policy on prosecutions. A summary of the year's concealed and loaded weapons cases also appears, in response

to police comments that courts are too lenient.)

By NATALIE HALL
Press-Herald Staff Writer

City Prosecutor Tom McNary said this week that he never fails to prosecute a concealed weapon case unless it involves what he termed a "good citizen" with no apparent "nefarious purpose" for carrying the firearm.

Many citizens, McNary said, are unaware of laws concerning guns, particularly new residents from out of the state. Recent legislation involving loaded weapons may also prove to be a

source of confusion, he added.

(McNary, as the city's prosecutor, handles only the misdemeanor violations. Felony cases go through the district attorney's office.)

A number of concealed weapon cases were turned over to the local district attorney's office for prosecution because they were part and parcel of felony arrests, combined with such offenses as burglary and forgery.

In this type of case, McNary explained, it is customary for the district attorney to prosecute only the felony aspect of the case to avoid combining felony and misde-

meanor charges in one trial. This accounts for the fact that not all gun arrests are prosecuted in court.

However, McNary said he has not rejected any substantial concealed or loaded weapon case in the past seven months.

McNary noted that the district attorney uses the presence of a gun as evidence in a felony case, even though the gun violation itself is not prosecuted.

The city prosecutor added that he opposes more stringent gun laws because they would only tend to "restrict the people who are amenable to laws."

"The people who shouldn't have guns are the very ones who will get hold of them," he stated.

However, McNary said he believes in strong laws to curb the narcotics traffic.

Are courts too lenient in meting out justice to gun law violators? Selected violations, tried in local courts during the past year, are summarized below to present a general picture of current policies in regard to sentencing.

• Three teenage Gardena boys were stopped by Torrance police while cruising through town at 10:15 p.m. Patrolmen report they heard

a loud scream from someone in the car and stopped the vehicle to investigate. A search of the car turned up a zipgun in the glove compartment. The weapon was a cap gun modified to fire .22-caliber cartridges, police said. Under the seat, police found a 14-inch screwdriver, a sickle, and a 3½-inch knife. Two of the youths stood trial and were found innocent because the weapon was ruled not dangerous. Judge Raymond Croate presided.

• After receiving a tipoff, Torrance police stopped a Lomita man and found a revolver under the front

seat of the car and six live rounds of ammunition on the floorboards. The suspect, wearing a holster belt, confessed he unloaded the weapon when he saw police. He said he was following his wife's boyfriend to discover her whereabouts. The man was found guilty and sentenced to five days or \$60.50. Judge George R. Perkovich Jr. presided.

• Police stopped a car for running a red light at 3:15 a.m. and noticed a passenger stuffing something under the front seat, which turned out to be a .22-caliber revolver and eight shells. Also found were a black mask

and a pint of whiskey under the seat. The suspect was found guilty and given a 90-day suspended sentence by Judge Perkovich.

• A Wilmington man, 22, arrested on traffic offenses, was taken into custody wearing a holster on his belt. The matching gun was found under the car seat along with a 9¼-inch club, a switchblade knife, and a kitchen knife. Police said the youth had slurred speech and was "barely able to stand." The man had a prior record which included possession of narcotics and marijuana, as well as several (See GUN, Page A-3)

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UP, UP, AND AWAY . . . Torrance police officer Paul Nowatka displays a 4-foot marijuana plant found growing in the backyard garden of Albert Benjestorf, 2103 Arlington Ave., yesterday. Benjestorf discovered the plant, which police said probably sprang up when someone dropped seeds over the fence into the yard, and notified authorities. Nowatka and officers from the Police Department vice detail uprooted the plant and destroyed it. Several limbs had been broken off, officers reported. (Press-Herald Photo)

Petitions Will Oppose Freeway Route in City

Southwood Area Main Target of Petition Drive

Residents in the West Torrance area of the city began circulating petitions this week opposing proposed routes for the Torrance Freeway (Route 1-107).

The anti-freeway petitions appeared as the State Division of Highways announced a formal hearing on the proposed routes will be held Oct. 10 at 10 a.m. at Torrance High School. The proposed freeway will connect the San Diego Freeway with the Route 1 freeway in Harbor City.

THREE MAJOR routes are under study and nine alternative and combinations of the three major routes are included in the study.

Mrs. Joseph Dumont, of 5103 Lenore St., initiated the petition drive here this week. Mrs. Dumont is opposed to the "green freeway."

A second petition, opposing the "blue freeway," is being circulated by Harvey Horwich, of 5537 Michelle Drive.

BOTH THE green and blue routes come off the San Diego Freeway in the vicinity of Compton Boulevard. They are roughly the same to 190th Street.

At 190th Street, however, the green route swings slightly east, running west of Henrietta Street. It crosses Torrance Boulevard and swings east to run along the eastern side of Palos Verdes Boulevard. The green route then crosses Sepulveda Boulevard and connects with right-of-way now reserved for the extension of Lomita Boulevard.

The blue route turns to the west after crossing 190th Street and runs along the Torrance-Redondo Beach boundary to Pacific Coast Highway then east and runs south of Pacific Coast Highway to connect with a previously adopted route at Vermont Avenue.

STATE OFFICIALS estimate the 10.6-mile green route will cost \$92.5 million for construction, against \$88.9 million for the 11.7-mile blue route.

Both routes would affect some 1,250 single-family homes. Another 348 apartment units would be affected by the blue route, while 364 apartment units would be involved along the green route.

Alternate routes would involve the blue and green (See FREEWAY, Page A-3)



AGAINST FREEWAY . . . A petition "To Abolish the Green Freeway" is now being circulated in the Southwood area in West Torrance in an effort to halt the construction of the proposed Torrance Freeway. Mrs. Joseph Dumont (at right) is heading the drive against the freeway from her home at 5103 Lenore St. Others who are aiding Mrs. Dumont in her efforts to secure some 2,000 signatures are (from left) Mrs. Lawrence Miller Jr., Mrs. Donald Lideen, and Mrs. Robert Kendrick. (Press-Herald Photo)

For City's Executives Pay Boosts Voted

Seven executive employees of the city of Torrance were granted 10 per cent pay increases by a hairbreadth margin of 4-3 at Tuesday's City Council meeting.

Those executives affected by the increases (and their new annual salaries) are the City Manager Edward J. Ferraro (\$27,948), City At-

torney Stanley Remelmeyer, City Manager Jerome I. Scharfman (\$24,492), Senior Administrative Assistant Lloyd DeLlamas (\$13,668), Administrative Assistant William Cibrowski (\$9,240), City Clerk Vernon Coil (\$14,712), and City Treasurer Thomas Rupert (\$13,896). Councilmen voting for the

pay boost were Jay Beasley, Ken Miller, Ross Sciarrotta, and Donald E. Wilson.

IN APPROVING the measure, councilmen concurred with the recommendation of an adhoc committee composed of Councilmen William J. Uerkwitz, Miller, and Sciarrotta. Uerkwitz was the (See SALARY, Page A-3)

THOMAS GRUBB WINS TOP CARRIER HONORS

Eleven-year-old Thomas L. Grubb today was named Press-Herald Carrier-of-the-Month by Darrell Westcott, Press-Herald circulation manager.

Young Grubb is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Grubb Sr. of 1035 W. 204th St. His father is an advance sales representative for the Pepsi Cola Bottling Co. of Los Angeles.

A student at Van Deene Avenue School, Thomas enjoys all sports but lists boating, boxing, and bowling as his favorites. He and his brother won first place in a bantam bowling league last year and plan to bowl in the league again this year.

"In addition to being a sports enthusiast, Tommy is developing into a highly successful young businessman," Westcott said.



THOMAS L. GRUBB JR.
Top Carrier

West Torrance Tract Wins Council Approval

City Councilmen wheedled \$27,500 out of a land subdivision company Tuesday night for development of a park site donated to the city by the company—and then eased building requirements in granting a zone change favorable to the subdivision.

A representative of the R. A. Watt Co. agreed to furnish the money to develop a five-acre park site, provided the city would have the park ready for use by time the first occupants move into homes in the proposed tract.

The company was granted a zone change from agricultural to residential, and from neighborhood commer-

cial to public use for the 51-acre tract located between Del Amo Boulevard and Beryl Street from the end of Halson Street to the westerly city limits.

Because of extensive grading problems in the area, the Watt Co. asked that the minimum size of the lot be reduced from 5,600 square feet to 5,000 square feet. This request was also granted, against Planning Commission recommendations. The council ruled that the average size lot be 5,600 square feet.

Because the "blue route" of the proposed Torrance Freeway slices through the tract area, councilmen voted

approval of two tentative tract maps. One of the alternative maps takes the freeway into consideration, charting roads and houses around the proposed thoroughfare.

The subdivider promised not to build anything on the freeway area of the tract for the next six months until hearings on the route have been held. If the state selects one of the other 12 possible freeway routes, the Watt Co. may go ahead with complete plans for the area's development.

The Watt Co. spokesman said that smaller tract lots would not influence the quality of the homes to be built on the site.

Redondo Man Burns To Death

A Redondo Beach man died Sunday after he apparently poured gasoline on himself and struck a match.

Jack L. Oades, of 2219 Huntington Lane, died at South Bay Hospital about 1:20 a.m. Sunday. He suffered third degree burns over 90 per cent of his body, doctors reported.

Redondo Beach police gave this account of the incident:

OFFICER Alexander Varas had gone to the Huntington Lane address to take a petty theft report from Oades' sister, Mrs. Lela M. Mathews of Northridge. Varas and Mrs. Mathews were in front of the house when another sister came out of the house and told the officer she had been thrown out.

At about the same time, a neighbor came up to the trio and told them the back (See DEATH, Page A-3)

Burglars Ransack Home - - -

The home of Hammond Bray, 45, at 22805 Cerise Ave., was ransacked sometime Monday by burglars who took clothing, jewelry, and other items valued at more than \$2,300. Bray told police someone apparently forced open a sliding glass door while he was away from the house Monday. Guns and a color television set were left behind. Police also said burglars broke into the home of Floyd Spindle, 61, at 22201 Redbeam Ave., Tuesday during the daylight hours and took a television set, an M-1 rifle, and jewelry worth about \$1,200.

Median to Be Repaired - - -

A contractor working under a county contract in the Riviera section will be required to restore the median on Calle Mayor, it was announced here last night. Residents along the street told Torrance councilmen the contractor had damaged the median landscaping while installing a storm drain.

High-Rise Plan Abandoned - - -

Plans to construct a high-rise apartment building in Redondo Beach adjacent to the Torrance city line apparently have been abandoned. Robert L. Smith, acting city manager, told Redondo Beach councilmen Monday that Sovereign Development Co. has put a sign on the property offering it for sale. A permit to maintain an office on the site, located at 1807 Esplanade, expires Aug. 31. On motion of David Hayward, the council refused to renew the permit. Sovereign Development Co. acquired the Redondo Beach site for a high-rise complex after Torrance Councilmen rejected plans to locate the building on an adjacent parcel in the city of Torrance.