

Deputy District Attorney Speaks

No Simple Solution Seen for Gun Controls

(Editor's note: In its continuing series on gun law enforcement in Torrance, the Press-Herald today presents the views of Deputy District Attorney Robert L. Burnett, whose offices are located at the new Torrance Courthouse. The series stems from police comments that courts and prosecutors are soft-pedaling punishment of firearms violators.)

By NATALIE HALL
Press-Herald Staff Writer
Why are gun law violations not prosecuted when a more serious offense, such

as forgery or grand theft, is linked to a criminal suspect?

It's in the best interest of justice to pursue only those crimes of central significance, according to Deputy District Attorney Robert L. Burnett. The jury's attention, Burnett said, should be directed at those facts which point to the defendant's guilt or innocence on the primary charge, such as forgery.

Introducing the fact that the suspect was totting a gun at the time of an alleged incident may only serve to prejudice his case before the jury. The 12 jurors may

be led to convict him because he's a "bad guy" with a gun, Burnett explained.

He went on to assert that the presence of a firearm is only introduced with cases in which the gun is related to the crime. Robbery, burglary, and assault are examples, Burnett stated.

In any case, Burnett continued, the fact of the firearm is called to the attention of the judge who gives it consideration in handing down the sentence. "The effect of this is to give the defendant a stiffer penalty," Burnett noted.

Discussing the gun law controversy, the deputy district attorney said the pub-

lic is seeking a simple hysterical answer to a complex problem." Most of the gun control measures proposed recently, he said, are the result of this hysteria.

Burnett reasoned that perhaps registration and licensing of guns may ultimately prove to be the solution. But these proposals should be thoroughly studied before hasty action is taken.

A major obstacle in the path of gun control, Burnett underlined, is what he calls "the early-West syndrome." "We're not that far from frontier days. That's why westerns are so popular!"

In the days of the '40ers,

Burnett pointed out, people lived miles from their nearest neighbor and were forced to accept the idea of defending the old homestead. We've never gotten away from it!" he said.

"But now we're an urban society and laws must be geared to fit a complex era in which we live in close proximity with our neighbors.

"The idea that the police can't protect the public is totally without foundation," he stated, pointing out that people are beginning to think they must arm themselves to protect their homes and families. Burnett described this as a "tragic

situation," in which family members accidentally "blow each others heads off."

"We've allowed this situation to get so bad that people have no faith in the system to protect them."

The primary problem in gun control is to keep firearms out of the hands of the criminal element, Burnett agreed. The question is how to dry up their source of supply.

"Criminals don't just walk into Sears to buy guns," he said. "They steal them from pawn shops or homes or buy them on the black market."

Burnett says he doesn't see how to keep firearms

out of the hands of the criminal except to prohibit gun ownership for the general public. But he doesn't believe this will happen and he's not sure he favors such drastic action.

In England, he said, there are fewer crimes because the government has cut off the supply of guns so thoroughly for so many years.

Burnett says he rejects the argument that the public might need firearms some day to defend this country, terming it a "paranoid outlook."

"We ought to get guns out of the hands of people untrained in using them," Burnett concluded.

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USE YOUR VOTE . . . Mrs. William Birdsall, voters' service chairman for the Torrance League of Women Voters, pins a "Use Your Vote" pin on Mrs. Donald F. Meade, first vice president of the League, as the pair prepare to register new voters in the city. Deputy registrars will be on duty at two Torrance post offices—2510 Monterey St. and 1433 Marcelina Ave.—beginning tomorrow to register voters. Registrars will be available from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday until Sept. 12, the deadline for registration in order to be eligible to vote in the Nov. 5 general election. (Press-Herald Photo)

'Attitude' Top Factor In Location of Freeway

Costs, Mileage Virtually Same For 12 Routes

Community attitude may be the most important factor in determining the final route of the proposed Torrance Freeway, members of the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce were told Friday.

Actual effect of the final route on the communities through which it passes will be one of the most important considerations, spokesmen for the State Division of Highways said, because costs and mileage over the 12 alternate routes are not significantly different.

Sid Elicks and Vern Hall made the information presentation at Friday's Chamber luncheon.

HALL SAID the 12 alternate routes range in length from 9.3 to 11.7 miles and will cost between \$84.5 and \$93.2 million to acquire rights-of-way and construct the freeway.

He also said each of the routes would affect between 1,600 and 2,150 living units.

"All routes (under study) are being given equal consideration," Hall declared.

Three major north-south alignments and four major east-west routes are being studied, the highway officials

said. The major routes provide 12 alternative routes, he added.

ELICKS ALSO assured Chamber members that homeowners and businessmen in the city will have an opportunity to express their views.

A public hearing on the proposed freeway route has been scheduled for 10 a.m. Oct. 10 at Torrance High School. The State Division of Highways will make its recommendations to the State Highway Commission following that hearing.

Final adoption of a route is expected early next year, unless controversy develops over the route. In that event, a final decision could be delayed 6 to 12 months, they said.

IT APPEARED here this week that controversy might well be developing. Residents in the Southwood area of West Torrance are circulating petitions which oppose all three north-south routes.

Newest petition—against (See FREEWAY, Page A-2)

On the Beach

High-Rise Parcel To Be Auctioned

More than 75,000 square feet of land which has been at the center of a beach-front controversy over high-rise will be put on the auction block, it was announced here Friday.

Marsh Dozar Real Estate Auctioneers of Beverly Hills will auction off the land, located astride the Torrance-Redondo Beach boundary, Wednesday, Aug. 28.

The site, once the site of

Diamond Earrings, Cash Taken

Diamond earrings worth \$900 and \$860 in cash were stolen sometime Wednesday from the home of Phyllis Crawford, 375 Paseo de Gracias.

The money stolen included 300 silver dollars and a \$20 gold piece. A yellow Masonic ring also was missing.

Police said burglars apparently forced a kitchen window screen and the relocked it after making entry. Many valuables were not touched, reports indicate.

the famed Hollywood Riviera Club, most recently has figured in high-rise battles in Torrance and Redondo Beach.

IT HAS been described by the auction firm as "the last important ocean front property available in Southern California."

The property was first developed by Clifford Reid, developer of the Riviera section of Torrance. Reid had envisioned the Hollywood Riviera Club as an exclusive beach club, but it was built at the height of the depression in the 1930s and never attained that status.

Fire swept through the clubhouse several years ago, reducing it to ashes and rubble and ending forever Reid's dream of an exclusive club.

THE SITE was then acquired by Sovereign Development Co. and plans were drawn for a high-rise apartment and commercial complex, to be located on the Torrance side of the property.

The Torrance City Council, however, denied permits

for the construction after residents of the Riviera section protested the proposal—a plan which they said would deprive them of a scenic view and add to traffic congestion in the area.

Sovereign Development (See SALE, Page A-2)

Teen Trio Jailed On Dope Charge

An 18-year-old Torrance girl and two male companions have been arrested for possession of marijuana for sale after the girl's mother became suspicious and called police.

Taken into custody at the girl's home were Maureen Cockrell, 4631 Sepulveda Blvd.; Phillip C. Dwight, 18, 3030 Merrill Ave.; and Mark Edwards, 19, of San Francisco.

Maureen's mother, Mrs. Helen Cockrell, said the three had arrived at the home carrying a large yellow bag. They entered Maureen's bedroom and emerged min-

utes later without the bag and left the house.

Mrs. Cockrell said she called police after finding plastic bags full of a green leafy substance inside the yellow bag.

Police said the bag contained 10 sacks of what appeared to be marijuana, packaged for sale. A further search of Maureen's bedroom turned up another plastic bag of the substance and cigarette wrapping papers, police said.

The girl told police she had purchased the marijuana to send to her boyfriend at Ft. Gordon, Ga.



WAITING FOR DADDY . . . Weary, but watchful, 2-year-old Mary Fuller waits patiently for familiar faces of parents during her stay at Orthopaedic Hospital in Los Angeles. Mary is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Fullmer of 2750 W. 225th St. During 1967, Orthopaedic Hospital treated more than 13,000 patients, including 11,000 children like Mary. The specialized center, only one of its kind in Southwest, accepts all handicapped children under 21 years of age for treatment regardless of cost or parents' ability to pay.

Women Deputies Assigned

Three female deputies have been assigned to Lennox Sheriff's Station and will report there for duty on Monday, it was announced by Capt. Luther Lanier, commander of the Lennox facility.

Assignment of the three female deputies— one of them the wife of Torrance's City Attorney— was made by Sheriff Peter Pitchess in keeping with his policy of broadening the experience of his personnel, Captain Lanier said.

It also is in keeping with the Sheriff's policy of providing the best service possible to the citizens of Los Angeles County, the captain said.

Assigned to Lennox were Rebekah Remelmeier, wife of City Attorney Stanley Remelmeier, who has been assigned to Norwalk, and Mildred Campbell and Carol Jacobs, both of Los Angeles, and both reassigned from the Sybil Brand Institute for Women.

Shoppers' Bus Route Announced

The exact route of the new "Shoppers' Special" bus line, which will begin Sept. 1, was announced this week by Bus Superintendent Marshall A. Chamberlain.

Beginning at a point on 235th Street, the bus will continue along Maple Avenue, turning west on Sepulveda Boulevard to Del Amo Circle East (at the Del Amo Shopping Center).

The bus will then wheel west on Carson Street to Anza Avenue, turning north to 190th Street. It will continue on 190th to Inglewood Avenue and then to Grant Avenue (to the South Bay Shopping Center).

The bus will travel the same route in returning to its starting point.

Nollac Hearing Slated - - -

Members of the Torrance Civil Service Commission will meet next Thursday at 7:30 p.m. to hear testimony in the case of Walter M. Nollac, who was suspended July 29 for alleged misconduct. The date was set Thursday by the commission in response to a request by Nollac for a hearing. City Manager Edward F. Ferraro has charged that Nollac is guilty of misconduct because of his joint ownership of a boat with a Torrance land developer. Nollac, in an answer to the charges filed with the Civil Service Commission, said he did own the boat, but denied the misconduct charges and asked for a hearing.

School Board to Meet - - -

The Torrance Board of Education is scheduled to hold a regular meeting tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. The session will be held in the district's administrative offices, 2335 Plaza del Amo, Dr. Owen Griffith, president, said. Copies of the board's agenda are available for public inspection in all five Torrance City Library branches.

Men's Store Robbed - - -

Two would-be customers whipped out guns and held up the owner of Schwartz Men's Store, 1505 Cabrillo Ave., Friday afternoon, escaping with six suits; armloads of sweaters, pants, and shoes; and about \$60 cash. Owner John Schwartz of San Pedro said the suspects entered the store at 4:30 p.m. and began selecting clothes. The two pulled guns on Schwartz and a 19-year-old bystander, tying them up with adhesive tape and forcing them to lie on the floor. The suspects took a \$60 gold watch, \$50 from the cash register, and about \$10 from the victims' wallets.