FOR CAMPAIGN . . . Republican candidate in the 67th Assembly District, Fred Fredericks, stands beneath a huge campaign sign donated and decorated by the "Friends of Fred." The 10-by-84-foot sign, which stands 20 feet tall, is located at the corner of Western Avenue and 158th Street in Gardena. The 67th District includes portions of North Torrance, Redondo Beach, Hawthorne, and Gardena.

Official's Letter to Editor Labeled Political Herring

To the Editor:

As a former staff writer for the Los Angeles Examiner, Columbia Broadcasting System and the Copley Newspapers prior to my ten years' experience as chief deputy to the Hon. Burton W. Chace, Supervisor, Fourth District, County of Los Angeles, I have, over the years, observed a number of hapless minor municipal officials fall dupe to some zealous campaign committee by signing a letter to the editor without first checking the facts.

Such letters, which flow in great volume across an editor's desk in the course of political campaigns, are designed to affect the opinion of the unsophisticated reader either for or against an incumbent or political candidate without the necessity of paying for a political advertisement. Most discerning editors read such letters with painstaking care with an eye to the laws of defamation and libel and the "red herrings," as they are known in the trade, usually are deposited un-ceremoniously in the waste paper basket where they merely add to the solid waste problem.

Today's readers, however, are far more alert and will recognize that these poison pen missiles are usually prepared by professionals for the signature of some believing and unsuspecting local official . . . and they follow a traditional pattern or format.

The first ingredient is a series of seemingly connected dates and documents which are correctly annotated to give the letter to the Editor credulity and an aura of authenticity. This, however, is usually the author's last attempt at accuracy. The typical "red herring" then proceeds to take prosaic license by weaving a pattern of lies, half truths and quotations out of context. The "build-up," as it is known, is always followed by a series of questions designed to intimidate, or by innuendo, to embarrass the persons about whom the letter is written.

The easiest way to spot a "red herring" is in the "closer" wherein the bidder for free publicity via the letter to the editor routine always concludes with a magnanimous declaration of his sanctity as a disinterested party motivated solely by an overpowering desire to be of service to the good of the community.

It is a cheap trick not usually employed by honorable persons and not normally deserving of dignification by retort.

However, since the scurrilous attack printed by your newspaper and signed by Torrance City Planning Commissioner Mrs. B. Shelbourn could possibly have some effect upon my livelihood, I feel bound and determined to answer. I will not, however, attempt to answer for the public official about whom she has written. He will, I am certain, be quite capable of answering Mrs. Shelbourn in his own way.

You're darn right I'm a free enterpriser, Mrs. Shelbourn. That's what this country is all about. You take us free enterprisers and the small property owners and the guy with the lunch bucket out of the picture and have the government run everything as you propose, Mrs. Shelbourn and know what you've got? Ask any Czech and he'll tell you.

Among my clients is the B.K.K. Company which is wholly owned by a father and son, Ben K. Kazarian Sr. and Ben K. Kazarian Jr., and their families. They are honorable people, Mrs. Shelbourne, and not deserving of your petty political maneuvering. They survived years of persecution by the Turks and I am sure they will survive your tempest in a teacup.

The elder Kazarian was hauling rubbish in Pasadena via horse and wagon in 1923 after emigrating from Armenia because the government confiscated all of his parents' worldly goods. I don't know what you have against Armenians, Mrs. Shelbourne, but H.R. No. 25 which you begrudge the elder Kazarian is a tribute to a man nearing seventy years of age who made a success in this country against almost insurmountable odds.

California Solid Waste Research Institute is a non profit corporation, which has spent nearly a quarter of a million dollars with Salzgitter Industries of West Germany to develop engineering and financial feasibility reports to develop a calorific conversion system whereby we will no longer have to bury our solid waste the way our house pets do.

As planning commissioner, Mrs. Shelbourn, you must be aware that the entire portion of Los Angeles County south of Artesia Blvd. will be without close-in disposal sites in a few short years and will be facing a $3.00 per ton increase in hauling costs to use the government-provided dump in the distant Santa Monica Mountains.

The B.K.K. Company intends to establish an alternate and cheaper disposal method to serve the southern geographic area, and they will probably realize a profit doing so. That, too, is private enterprise, Mrs. Shelbourn. It's inovative, but not criminal.

And, Mrs. Shelbourn, the Los Angeles County Golf Course was sold by Dominguez Estates Co., a Spanish land grant company which had vast holdings in the southern regions of Los Angeles and not by my clients, as you imply.

Lastly, Mrs. Shelbourn, the Joint Committee on Solid Waste Disposal Problems is a child of the Water Districts and Water Replenishment Districts, and its sole avowed purpose is to prevent pollution of our invaluable underground water supplies.

It is comprised of more than 35 public officials. Mr. Kazarian Jr. and I are the only two private enterprise repesentatives. Let's face it, Ms. Shelbourn, we are outvoted.

In closing, Mrs. Shelbourn, the office which you hold in the City of Torrance is not political nor is it legislative. The exercise of the police powers over the right of use and enjoyment of property is quasi judicial in nature and I question the propriety of a person in this position espousing the cause of a realtor-candidate for public office.

I have chosen to run this answer to your letter in the Torrance Pess-Herald as paid advertisement and to run in its entirety the Resolution which you seemingly begrudge the elder Kazarian.

Ernie Winter
1010 Van Ness Ave.
Torrance, Calif.

Assembly, California Legislature, 1968 Regular Session

Resolution

Relating to commending Ben K. Kazarian

By Honorable K. E. Stevenson of the Sixty-seventh District

WHEREAS, In the shadow of Mount Ararat, in the year 1901, there was born to Kazar, a cattleman, and his wife, a son, Ben K. Kazarian; and

WHEREAS, Like his ancestor, Haik, great-grandson of Noah, who fled to escape the tyranny of Belus, Babylonian king, Ben Kazarian emigrated to the United States of America to escape the confiscatory practices of his state; and

WHEREAS, After overcoming difficulties of language and custom, Ben K. Kazarian scaled the towering walls of the depression of the early thirties with bare fingernails and ingenuity; and

WHEREAS, Exercising the highest moral judgments in the business community of Los Angeles County he founded the B.K.K. Company, achieving great success in the reclamation of many hundreds of acres of land; and

WHEREAS, Together with his wife, Pearl, he reared a son, Ben, Jr., and is the proud grandfather of four grandsons; and

WHEREAS, He is fondly hailed as "Uncle Ben" by numerous members of the community to whom he has extended advice as well as financial sustenance to establish themselves in independent business enterprises; and

WHEREAS, His presence is thought-provoking and his ready anecdotes for any given situation as well as his outspoken commentary on right from wrong in the pattern of our daily lives have caused many a strong man with a weak conscience to avoid his path, now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, That the Members do hereby memorialize Ben K. Kazarian, Sr., as a shining example that hope is eternal in this Great Land for the oppressed and the hungry of other lands; and be it further

Resolved, That Ben K. Kazarian be hereby commended for his generous underwriting of many civic and scholastic projects benefiting his community; and be it further

Resolved, That we recognize Ben K. Kazarian as a great American citizen and for his famous quote, "I am a citizen of this great country by choice, you just happen to have been born here"; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit a suitably prepared copy of this resolution to Mr. Ben K. Kazarian.

House Resolution No. 25 read and adopted unanimously January 25, 1968.

Signed:

Jesse M. Unruh
Speaker of the Assembly

Attest:

James D. Driscoll
Chief Clerk of the Assembly