

Shoplifting Poses Problem for Merchants

By NATALIE HALL
Press-Herald Staff Writer

Fewer shoplifters are stealing less merchandise in Torrance this year compared to last year. At least, this is the impression to be gained from reviewing police statistics on actual shoplifting arrests.

During the first seven months of 1967, police booked 291 persons for shoplifting. Average theft per suspect: \$44 worth of goods.

Only 212 suspects, however, were booked for shoplifting offenses during the same time period this year. And the average theft

amounted to a mere \$34 worth of merchandise.

But Torrance police officials are hesitant to interpret this as an actual downward trend. Detectives Jim Papst and Robert Lydon, who handle the commercial theft detail, point out that stores sometimes hesitate to prosecute, and of course, many shoplifters "get away with it" . . . at least for a while.

"I would hate to even imagine the figure of what they get away with," Lydon said. "Our national debt could probably be paid off."

In fact, the ratio of those who get away to those who get caught is estimated by

one private detective agency to be as high as 10-to-1.

People have been known to walk into local discount or department stores, pick up a television set, and try to walk right out the door with it. Or they'll walk in barefoot and shuffle out again with a pair of shoes on.

Transistor radios are another big item and teenagers usually find records, cosmetics, and jewelry the biggest temptation.

Perhaps the most perplexing aspect of shoplifting is the fact that no one segment of society is guiltless. "Shoplifting is done by

everyone," explained Detective Lydon. He said Torrance policemen boog wealthy people from "up on the hill" with the same forms they use for middle and lower class suspects.

And people rarely steal from "need." Suspects are usually caught with luxury items and frequently have enough cash in their wallets to cover the purchase cost when apprehended.

The private security agency hired to protect many of the large discount chains, including those in Torrance, makes it a practice to photograph every suspect with the goods he has attempted

to steal. Sample photos tacked up on the office bulletin board illustrate the wide variety of people caught in the act; and the wide variety of reactions to being caught. Some suspects beam proudly, some cry, others just stare.

The line-up includes rich and poor, young and old; housewives, engineers, elderly women, businessmen. The desire to get something for nothing seems to transcend class and creed.

Shoplifting arrests seem to be equally divided between men and women, too. Police say it's 50-50. Spokesmen for the discount

security agency, however, says that three out of four suspects they nab are women.

It stands to reason that shoplifting would skyrocket just before the Christmas holidays. The security agency claims that it triples. But Torrance police arrest statistics don't bear this out.

Shoplifting arrests in November and December of 1967 amounted roughly to an average of arrests made in other months. The value of the merchandise taken was also about average. There were considerably more persons arrested for

shoplifting in March, April, June, and July than there were in December.

On a typical day, the Torrance Police Department may expect to book one or two persons for shoplifting. Most of these suspects, of course, were apprehended by store clerks or security men.

While the vast number of shoplifters are ordinary citizens who fall prey to temptation, the police must also deal with the shrewd "professional" shoplifter. These are the people who make a career of removing (See Shoplifting, Page A-2)

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Theft Ring

Trial Slated Nov. 7

Four men accused of participating in a statewide car theft ring must stand trial Nov. 7, following preliminary hearings Thursday in Los Angeles Municipal Court.

The suspects include a Torrance firefighter, Richard Faren, 31, of 2323 W. 230th St., and a former Torrance policeman, John Brady, 38, of 24 Silver Saddle Lane, Rolling Hills Estates.

Also facing car theft charges are Henry Bernard Halicki, 27, of 18511 Mariposa Ave., Gardena, and Lynn Purcell, 33, of 1033 W. 184th St., Gardena. Purcell is a 12-year veteran with the Gardena Police Department. He had achieved the rank of sergeant.

THE FOUR allegedly specialized in stealing late model cars from Los Angeles and San Francisco International Airports, disguising them at a Gardena garage, and reselling them at a used car lot in Inglewood.

The men were arrested in early September after months of investigation by the Torrance and Los Angeles Police Departments and other agencies.

The gang is accused of stealing more than 100 cars during the past 2½ years.

Breakfast Slated by Jaycees

Torrance Jaycees will host prospective members at a special breakfast Saturday at 9:30 a.m. at the Kungsholm Restaurant. Guest speaker will be Mayor Albert Isen.

Jaycees will take the opportunity to tell prospective members how the Junior Chamber of Commerce community service program helps develop leadership ability.

Jaycees is a civic service organization for men between 21 and 35. Jaycees offers its members a voice in community affairs and a chance to improve their community. The club develops leadership ability through delegating responsibility for various club projects.

Members will also gain public speaking training and meet new friends from among the community's civic and business leaders.

Any young man interested in attending the membership breakfast may contact Dick Smart, director, 1023 Cranbrook Ave., or Jerry Markwell, breakfast chairman, 22225 Redbeam Ave.



HONOR JUDGE . . . Retiring Municipal Court Judge Donald Armstrong (second from right) was honored Monday at a testimonial luncheon. Judge Armstrong, who served 11 years on the South Bay Municipal Court bench, accepts a resolution honoring his service from Supervisor Burton W. Chace. With the two are John P. Foley (left), a Torrance attorney who served as master of ceremonies, and Don Hyde of U. S. Steel, general chairman of the event. (Press-Herald Photo)

Wells-Fargo Bank Buys Library Bonds

The city of Torrance sold \$1,550,000 in library bonds Tuesday night to Wells-Fargo—Bank at 4.2628 per cent interest rate—the lowest rate for any bonds sold Tuesday in the entire state.

The city will repay the sum at a gross interest of \$790,922.50 over a 20-year period. The funds will be used toward building the new main branch of the Torrance city library system.

The decision to award the bids to Wells-Fargo was made jointly by city officials and the city's financial consultant, Jim Rafferty of Rafferty and Co. Rafferty termed the 4.2628 rate "a most excellent bid" considering that the state is experiencing hard times for bond sellers.

RAFFERTY said the market is currently glutted with four times the usual number of bonds offered for sale. He blamed the condition on the prospect that Proposition 9 (Watson Initiative) might be approved by voters in November. The proposition would make it impossible for many municipalities to sell their bonds, he said.

The consultant said he expected the library bonds to be sold at an interest rate of 4.35 per cent.

The fact that Torrance received such a favorable bid, Rafferty said, reflected the "integrity and security" of

city government here. He also credited City Treasurer Tom Rupert and other city officials for their work in obtaining the low rate.

OTHER BANKS submitting bids and their respective interest rates were First Western Bank, 4.3937 per cent; Weeden and Co., 4.3552 per cent; Security Pacific National Bank, 4.3354; Bank of

America, 4.3073 per cent; United California Bank, 4.4021; and Crocker-Citizens Bank, 4.2965.

City Librarian Russell West stated that work on the new main library branch was progressing satisfactorily. Blueprints, he said, should be completed in January or February. Construction is expected to begin in March or April.

'Unproductive Wells'

City Seeks State Help To End Oil Well Leases

City Councilmen have requested the state legislature to take action on the problems presented by unproductive oil wells.

At Tuesday night's regular meeting, councilmen voted 6-0 in favor of a resolution from Councilman Orin P. Johnson suggesting a plan to terminate unproductive oil leases so that property owners may develop their land.

Councilman Donald E. Wilson was not present due to illness.

Johnson said in his state-

ment that land speculators who have leases on unproductive oil wells are "retarding the orderly development of the area."

The problem, he said, stems from the fact that oil leases now remain in force even after wells become unproductive. Land owners must continue to pay property taxes and weed abatement costs even when they are receiving only a few dollars per year from the lease.

Land speculators, Johnson said, use the lease to force the land owner to pay exhor-

Freeway Hearing Slated Tomorrow

Crime Rate Is Up

Crime in the United States—and in Torrance—showed an upsurge during the first six months of 1968, according to figures released by the FBI. Nationwide, the increase was figured at 21 per cent.

In Torrance, there were two murders during the first six months of this year, while none were recorded during the same time period last year.

Forcible rapes jumped from 13 in the first half of 1967 to 14 in the first half of this year.

OTHER CRIME statistics for the two comparative time periods were:

- Robbery, 57 in 1967, 66 in 1968;
- Aggravated assault, 46 in 1967, 49 in 1968;
- Burglary, 910 in 1967, 1,135 in 1968;
- Larceny (\$50 and over), 1,074 in 1967, 1,087 in 1968;
- Auto theft, 395 in 1967, 350 in 1968.

All categories showed an increase with the exception of auto theft.

Nationwide, violent crimes increased 21 per cent with robbery up 29 per cent, murder up 17 per cent, and forcible rape up 15 per cent. Aggravated assault rose 14 per cent.

Press-Herald Will Launch Friday Edition

Publication of the new Friday edition of the Press-Herald will begin here this Friday.

The new edition replaces the Sunday edition, Reid L. Bundy, co-publisher and editor, said.

Features of the Friday Press-Herald will include an expanded Church News Page, as well as restaurant and entertainment news.

"Our new Friday edition is designed to serve the needs of Press-Herald readers and advertisers in a growing city," Bundy said.

News deadlines for the Friday Press-Herald will be 5 p.m. Wednesday for community groups. Advertising deadlines have been established at noon Thursday.

Torrance High Site of City's Public Hearing

Torrance Councilmen will convene at 7 p.m. tomorrow to hold a public hearing on the routes for the proposed Torrance Freeway.

The session has been scheduled for the Torrance High School Auditorium, 2200 W. Carson St.

Before the council is a recommendation by the city's Planning Commission that Torrance endorse the "blue" route for the freeway—a route which skirts the western and southern edges of the city.

THE STATE Division of Highways will hold a public hearing on the freeway route Thursday, Oct. 10, beginning at 10 a.m. That meeting also is scheduled for the Torrance High School Auditorium.

The blue route favored by the Planning Commission comes off the San Diego Freeway near Compton Boulevard and travels south

to enter the city at Beryl and 190th streets, passing east of the Towers Elementary School.

CONTINUING in its southerly direction, the route crosses Sepulveda Boulevard following the general line of Redbeam Avenue, then passes through the Seaside area to Pacific Coast Highway. At Pacific Coast Highway, the route passes through the lower part of the Riviera section, turning east to parallel Newton Street.

At Hawthorne Boulevard, the route turns to the south to parallel the city boundary and then enters the city of Rolling Hills Estates near Crenshaw Boulevard. It then turns east again to reach the project limit at Anaheim Street and Vermont Avenue.

Opposition to the route has come from several quarters of the city, as well as (See FREEWAY, Page A-2)

Ask Voters To Extend School Tax

"Torrance schools are tops. And Torrance voters can keep them that way if they endorse Proposition T at the November election."

So said Dr. J. H. Hull, superintendent of schools, at a PTA open council meeting at the Torrance Recreation Center this morning.

Explaining that Proposition T calls for maintaining the existing general purpose tax ceiling of \$3.30 for another five years, Dr. Hull emphasized that passage of the measure would not raise taxes.

"On the contrary," he said, "it would merely keep the current lid on taxes for five more years. The Board of Education has never collected the maximum tax permissible. This year's tax rate is only \$3.02. During the next five years, the board will only levy that tax rate necessary to maintain current educational standards."

If Proposition T doesn't pass, the superintendent pointed out, then the current tax ceiling would drop 90 cents next June to \$2.40, resulting in drastic cutbacks in school programs.

Dr. Hull also urged PTA members to oppose Proposition 9—which would impair the district's building program by keeping the school district from selling bonds and over a five years would eliminate operating income from local taxes.

63,342 Eligible to Vote

A total of 63,342 persons will be eligible to vote in Torrance at the Nov. 5 general election, according to figures just released by Secretary of State Frank M. Jordan. The latest figures show the city has 31,569 registered Democrats, 27,815 Republicans, 1,240 members of the American Independent Party, and 146 voters who registered as members of the Peace and Freedom Party. In the 17th Congressional District, total registration is 185,033.

Proposition 9 Debate

The merits of Proposition 9, the Watson Initiative, will be debated Monday evening at a public meeting of the Riviera Homeowners Association. Bob Compton, taxation chairman of the California Real Estate Association, and a representative of the Citizens Committee for Property Tax Limitation will argue for the proposition. William Dundore, finance director of the city of Torrance, and a spokesman for the Torrance Unified School District will argue against the measure. The meeting will be held at the Parkway Elementary School, 220 Via Riviera, at 8 p.m.

Symphony Concert Set

Ten-year-old piano prodigy Melody Howe of Torrance will be guest soloist Thursday morning at two concerts given by the Torrance Symphony Orchestra. The "pop" concerts, free to the public, will be held at 9:30 and 11 a.m. in the South High School gymnasium. Melody won first place cash awards for the last four years at the Southwestern Youth Music Festival and many other music honors. She was also a district winner in the Torrance Science Fair. Elyse Able will conduct.