

Schools Told to Quit Posting Rewards for Vandals

By HENRY C. MacARTHUR

SACRAMENTO — (CNS) — What may turn out to be a case of grave omission on the part of the California Legislature is seen in a recent opinion of Attorney General Thomas C. Lynch concerning the matter of offering rewards for the apprehension and conviction of vandals who damage and destroy school property.

Lynch ruled that school districts have no powers to offer rewards for such destruction of public property, which the dis-

tricts have bought and paid for.

The question was posed by Milton Goldfinger, county counsel for Solano County, an area which, along with several other counties in the state, has undergone some damage to school property.

But the school districts are out-of-luck as far as using the reward method of helping control vandalism, for authority in the statutes, either explicit or implied, is lacking, as the districts cannot use school funds

to offer rewards for information.

Goldfinger explicitly asked: Does the governing board of the Solano County junior college district have the legal power to offer a \$500 reward for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of the person or persons who committed arson upon a school building?

Lynch's conclusion was: "The governing board of a junior college district does not have authority to offer a re-

ward... There is no express authority empowering the board to commit school funds for this purpose, and in the absence of such express authority, no implied authority may be inferred."

He went on to state that school districts, including junior college districts, are political subdivisions which derive their existence and vitality from statutory enactment, and that their powers and duties are granted and delimited by various provisions of the edu-

cation code.

Power of a governing entity to offer a reward has been characterized as an "extraordinary" power, in the sense it must be expressly provided for and may not be implied or inherent, in a governing entity.

Cases were cited in which there was no power of a city to offer a reward for kidnapers, murderers, robbery and arson, and where courts have not permitted the inference of implied authority to offer rewards by cities and counties, an implied

authority cannot be extended to school districts, the attorney general said.

He pointed out that the Legislature in 1959 expressly granted to counties a limited power to offer rewards for damage to county property. However, as the school district is a separate entity, this power does not extend.

Lynch also stated that amendments to the education code authorizing school districts to establish a security patrol, made as late as 1968,

shows that the Legislature is aware of the problem of protection to school property, "but has not chosen to grant the school districts the power to offer a reward."

Of course, there always is the argument as to whether the offering of rewards would do any good in the apprehension of vandals and arsonists, but there is always the answer that \$500 is a small price to pay for the conviction of a person who has done thousands of dollars worth of damage.

Your Right to Know
Is the Key to All Your Liberties

Comment and Opinion

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More Gobbledygook

We have just talked to a representative of the Franchise Tax Board and discovered some very interesting information.

Recall Proposition 1-A? That's the measure which was to provide some tax relief for the state's taxpayers.

It provides for a \$70 refund this year to owners of owner-occupied property. And, to equalize everything, those people who rent are to get a double standard deduction (that's \$1,000) on their state personal income tax this year.

The property-owner refund isn't so hard to understand (except of course, that you don't get it if you claim a veteran's exemption).

But the relief for renters? Try this for size: If you make more than \$10,000 and you itemize deductions, forget it.

If you make less than \$10,000 and you itemize deductions, forget it.

If you make less than \$10,000 and don't itemize deductions the law says you must use the "tax table" included in the instructions for filing California State income taxes. And, the Franchise Tax Board representative says, the tables are set up to allow for the "double standard deduction."

And if you make less than \$10,000, don't itemize your deductions, and own and occupy your own home—wow!

What it all amounts to is one more deception by government of the average, law-abiding taxpayer. And this one may be just a little too much.

When, we wonder, are the lawmakers going to wake up?

Other Opinions

The jobs facing Mr. Nixon and his administration include ending the war with the communists in Southeast Asia and elsewhere; restoring law and order in American cities; relieving poverty of several millions; reducing the federal payroll by at least one third; restoring the dollar's value; stopping strikes that imperil the nation; make our citizens of all races, color, and creeds to lie down like the lion and the lamb; establish a fair price for farm products; stop the long-hair-and-sideburns craze; restore more visibility to girls' faces and less to their knees, and promote the general pursuit of peace and tranquility—with the fewest possible pills.—Greensburg (Ind.) Times.

In 1956, a young girl in California nearly died after receiving an injection of tetanus antitoxin to which she was allergic. Her father, Dr. Marion Collins, made a bracelet carrying the warning of her allergy for her to wear at all times. This was the first Medic Alert bracelet and the beginning of an organization which has made more secure the lives of tens of thousands of persons with special medical problems who might receive no treatment or the wrong treatment during episodes of shock, delirium, unconsciousness, or coma when they are unable to communicate with those trying to help them.—Mesa Ariz., Tribune.

Welfare costs to taxpayers could be drastically reduced, some quarters claim, if names of those who receive public charity were made public.—Loyalton (Calif.) Booster.

Two of our pet peeves are those drivers who wait until the last possible moment at dusk or dawn to turn their headlights on and those drivers who drive with their parking lights on. There is an extra margin of safety in turning your lights on early. One of the hardest times to see an approaching vehicle is at dusk or dawn and by turning your headlights on early it may not help your visibility but it sure helps the other guy in seeing you.—Torrington (Wyo.) Telegram.

For removing postmaster and rural mail carrier appointments from the patronage system, we applaud President Nixon. He has slapped a tight lid on a basket of political plums historically coveted by both parties but which ought to be distributed in the interest of the people as a whole. — Aiken (S.C.) Standard and Review.

The One He Disturbs Most



SACRAMENTO REPORT

Statewide Property Tax For Schools Shows Gain

By RALPH C. DILLS
Senator, 32nd District

Tax reform always ranks high among those issues frequently discussed and dissected in Sacramento, and this legislative year is certainly no exception. School tax reform, specifically, is one of the hottest issues this session, with a variety of corresponding measures being considered by lawmakers.

Perhaps the most vocal of these ideas is one to "equalize" education by financing neighborhood schools through a statewide property tax. Although the idea is admittedly nothing new, it is for the first time starting to gain wide support. The new-found support is indicative of the sometimes desperate situations in small school districts with a lot of children and no industries to

tax. It is the homeowner, of course, who takes the brunt of the shortage.

Under such a system, a basic tax for schools would be levied against all property in California. The money would be collected by the counties and sent to the state treasury. Funds would then be returned to the school districts according to their enrollment. Under today's laws, of course, the state is in no way involved in either collection or disbursement of school district funds.

Proponents of the statewide tax argue that it would take tax money from districts according to their ability to pay and return it according to their need. It would appear to be a blessing of those districts which stand to gain income

and incur the ire of districts which would lose funds. Supporters of the idea claim that more than 90 per cent of California's school children attend districts which would gain.

On another tax reform front, one of my colleagues has introduced legislation designed to protect the right of the people to control payment of property taxes in school districts.

Under present law, the people of a school district have the right to approve by an election any tax override imposed by the governing boards of the school districts. The right presently extends until July 1, 1971.

After that date, the boards may arbitrarily fix a higher rate on some property than the limit allowed by law, and the taxpayers would be forced to pay the additional tax without their approval.

My colleague's bill removed the cut-off date from the education code, thereby extending indefinitely controls the electorate have over this single form of additional property taxes.

Still another proposal is an admitted "middle-of-the-road" school finance bill combining reforms with \$150 million in new money to local school districts. It is claimed by the author that the legislation would eliminate a double standard in state guarantees and reduce the mandatory tax rates in poor school districts.

The measure is designed to allow districts to keep pace with inflation and reduce school taxes by 45 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation in the hardest hit areas. The state would raise its basic guarantee from \$337 to \$397 per elementary school pupil and from \$472 to \$512 for high school students.

In any case, the Legislature will move with caution in exploring all possibilities for school finance reform.

HERB CAEN SAYS:

Window-Washing, Clerk Jobs Replace Rock Piles

We keep reading that the Presidio's so-called "mutineers" were sentenced to a number of years "at hard labor" — and what does that phrase mean exactly? It conjures up a comic strip picture of a convict with a ball and chain clamped to an ankle, wielding a heavy sledgehammer at the bottom of a quarry, but a Sixth Army spokesman assured me "So-called 'hard labor' is just another example of archaic army jargon. It has nothing to do with making little ones out of big ones. It simply means work of one kind or another — maybe washing windows or learning a trade or even working as a clerk." All you file clerks who've been complaining for years that your labors are too hard may have a point, at that.

Questions without answers: Why do they call that TV program "Mission: Impossible" when the group never fails at its mission? ... What kind of wild foresight was Ernest Gann displaying when he selected Humphrey Agnew as the name of a Bad Guy in his decade-old novel, "The High and The Mighty?" (The film is running again on the telly, which brought this oddment back to mind) ... Do Volkswagen drivers jump signals more often than the drivers of other

makes, or does it just seem that way? ... What was "Portnoy's Complaint," anyway? ... Why does Melvin Laird make me nervous? You too? ... What famous baseball figure went to bat only once in the majors, struck out, and

Report from Our Man in San Francisco

made an effort on his only chance in the field? The answer is supplied by Mel Covin, undisputed Trivia Champ of the Templebar: Walter Alston, mgr. of the Dodgers. The Redwood Empire's slogan: "What you like to do most you can do best in the Redwood Empire!" But only God can make a tree?

Success story of sorts: Two years ago, four chesty young ladies — Robin Sherwood, Marcelle Laux, Rosita Aguilar, and Deborah Briar — were earning \$13 a night as topless waitresses in North Beach. Then they formed the Ladybirds, the world's first topless band, starting at Off-Broadway and moving over to Topsy's — even though not one of the four could play an instrument (they synchronized their motions to taped music). Now they have learned to play, after a fashion, and last week made further history as the first topless

act to appear in Mexico City. The Ladybirds are now headlined at the big Terraza Casino — at \$4,000 a week. Does this make you feel good all over?

Item: Walter Fehr, owner of a Sacramento outdoor advertising company, was fined recently for poisoning trees which blocked the view of his billboards. Angle: Mr. Fehr has also been named by Governor Reagan to an advisory group charged with preserving and enhancing the beauty of the State Capital area. End of item.

Now aren't you sorry you don't subscribe to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists? Current issue contains this editorial note: "In the months ahead, Bulletin readers will be enjoying such stimulating articles as 'Radiation and Increasing Infant Mortality' — a horrifying assessment of a little-noticed phenomenon." Thanks, but I'll wait for the movie.

More and more restaurants, bars and clubs are being bought here and in Sausalito by corporations looking for tax losses. Laments Neil Davis of the no name bar: "How can I make money competing with people who WANT to lose money? It isn't fair!"

THE MONEY TREE

World of Toys Provides A Rich Soil for Ulcers

By Milton Moskowitz

Americans have a love affair with toys. We buy \$2.5 billion worth of them a year, so many that discount stores are popping up all over the country.

These stores sell nothing but toys. They sell them all year long, not just at Christmas time. Result: They are rapidly displacing department stores as the traditional No. One outlet for fun and games.

Feeding and prompting our fixation are the jolly old toy manufacturers, who propagandize our children as they sit before the television screen. With every commercial goes the desperate hope that the company is guessing correctly about what the public will buy.

This is no game for kids; it's an ulcer-producer. Transogram Company, one of the leaders, miscalculated a few years ago and saw its sales fall off by \$3 million, producing an impressive tax loss of \$1.6 million for the year.

Ideal Toy Company, another of the industry's big guns, also messed up a couple of years ago, failing to detect what it called a "trend away from higher to lower priced toys." For the three-year period, 1964 through 1966, Ideal's sales stuck at \$43 million. Profits were something else. They skidded from \$1.2 million in 1964 to \$750,000 in 1965 and in 1966 they sank from sight as the company posted a loss of \$1.6 million.

You make it or fail in this business on a few items. Ideal, for example, has a line of more than 500 different items. But in 1968 it did more than half of its

business in eight widely advertised products.

California's Mattel Inc. is an example of what can happen when you're on target. Prior to 1945, there was no such company. There was also no "Bar-

A Look at the World of Finance

bie" doll, nor a line of fashionable clothes for dolls.

With these new ideas, Mattel spreadeagled the field. Today it's No. One in the industry by a wide margin, doing \$200 million a year and accounting for about ten per cent of the U.S. toy market.

The No. Two slot in the industry belongs now to the old-line game manufacturer, Milton Bradley Company of Massachusetts. Bradley pumped up its volume to more than \$70 million last year by acquiring Chicago's Playskool Mfg. Company, a leading maker of educational toys.

Educational toys are on the upswing today; rifles, tanks and other weaponry are losing their salespower. Creative Playthings, which started out in the school market, will have a big commercial push this year, backed by its rich parent, the Columbia Broadcasting System.

One of the latest entries in this market is Little Learners Inc., a Chicago company started by Edward J. Drumm, a businessman who carries with him a great disdain for the educational job being performed by the nation's schools.

A fan of the Montessori teaching methods, Mr. Drumm

has channeled his discontent with the educational establishment into a new line of \$3.98 play-work kits which have self-learning built into them. Each comes with a phonograph record, under whose spell children are led into such tasks as buttoning a jacket, lacing a shoe or buckling a belt. "Children are ready for a great deal more learning than American culture demands of them," insists Mr. Drumm.

How this will go over with toy buyers remains to be seen. For the record, it might be noted that the top-selling toy of 1968, in terms of number of units, was "Instant Insanity," a set of four plastic blocks which you have to put together, on top of each other, so that only one of the four different colors — red, white, green and blue — shows on each side of the stack. With "Instant Insanity," a bright child can make his elders look like a gaggle of dunces.

Parker Brothers, which is now part of General Mills, marketed "Instant Insanity" at a retail price of \$1. By the time the year was over, it had sold seven million. And that had a very "educational" effect on profits.

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