

California

HOMETOWN

FEBRUARY 1965

TAX REVOL

RUBINO CARRIES ON IN L.A.

SAN DIEGO FIGHTS ROOM TAX

ABE LINCOLN & THE REPU

By CLAYTON BAUER

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The Economy in 1965

The U.S. economy will go down in 1965, according to many reports. This may be unpatriotic to repeat, but patriotism does not have much connection with economics.

On the other hand, some crystal ball gazers say the economy will go up, will get better, in 1965. Who's right?

Who knows? Who's on first? Does anyone know?

But one thing is fairly certain, from a reading of newspapers, magazines and books — U.S. businessmen and politicians are nervous about the probability of a western world economic recession in 1965. The recession may become a depression and then a collapse, according to some.

First we should go to the experts. These may not be experts in economics, but they are experts in something. Two of them are Lucius Beebe and Walter Winchell, and they have written recent columns on economics.

Lucius starts by saying one doesn't have to be a student of economics to get a profound sense of uneasiness about the state of American prosperity. Walter helps the idea along by asking, What's wrong with our economy? Reading further, you discover that Walter thinks there's something wrong.

So much for these Broadway-Las Vegas - Virginia City - San Francisco experts. What do the New York - Washington people say?

To start with, they point out France is getting rid of dollars. France prefers gold to U.S. dollars. How many other countries and individuals will eventually prefer gold — or even silver — to U.S. dollar bills? The U.S. dollar may depreciate in value.

The mood indicated, as the astute Beebe says, is uneasiness. Nobody knows what will happen, but many fear catastrophe, don't like the cut of the jib of the U.S. dollar.

But all in all, for publication, economists and business leaders are predicting a pretty good year, but with "serious problems." This is described as "cautiously optimistic."

An economic growth rate of 5 per cent is predicted in the Lionel D. Edie survey, but the *New Republic* school of thought regards this "as falling sadly short of any reasonable mark if it entailed a continuation of unemployment at 5 per cent of the labor force." Apparently it is just what it does entail, with both U.S. Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz and AFL-CIO President George Meany fearing that the U.S. does not yet know how to lick unemployment.

The economy is said to have gone up steadily for 46 months, "and the pessimists simply can't believe it can continue to rise for another 12," according to one reporter. But the same writer says "the optimists seem to have the best of the pessimists," and as he

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TAX REVOLT: Mike Rubino Carries On With County Meeting

By TOM FAGAN

No one has stopped Mike Rubino yet. As a matter of fact Mike is due to talk to California Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh and a few other legislative bigwigs in February. Jesse talks only to the comers, not the has-beens, see.

Mike is the guy who organized the Alhambra Tax Protest Committee last November, and marched a Coxey's Army on the Los Angeles County supervisors. He and his people were angry over tax increases on their homes.

Quite a few city councilmen, supervisors, school board members and state legislators are alarmed over Rubino's tactics. He gets the people out. After his first Alhambra meeting and subsequent publicity in November, the word was passed — "it will blow over." But man, it didn't.

Next he brought a thousand followers to the Los Angeles County supervisors, and that shook up all the officials in southern California and Sacramento. He scheduled another Alhambra meeting in December which missed fire, and again the word was passed — "it will blow over." Mike didn't get the word.

On January 10 he whipped together an organizing group for the "Los Angeles County Committee to Reduce Taxes," and on January 12 he produced, in the words of the Los Angeles Times, "900irate Taxpayers," at a meeting in San Gabriel High School. For an annoying property tax protester who is sup-

posed to disappear, Mike is strangely non-cooperative.

The Rubino movement escalates. On January 17 he persisted with a further organizing get-together of the "Committee to Reduce Taxes," and then for early in February scheduled a countywide meeting of as many local groups as he could round up. This meeting was for the purpose of forming a hard-core nucleus to battle Los Angeles County supervisors, councilmen and school trustees over taxes and other matters of concern to homeowners.

Ten groups of various numbers and levels of influence have already listened to the Rubino siren song, and have said, "tell us more." In the February meeting Rubino wants at least 30 more groups to show up, and is hoping the county organization will eventually be composed of at least 50 associations.

At the January 12 meeting, attended by "900 Irate Taxpayers," Rubino produced both ex-Governor Goody Knight and a long telegram from Unruh. And three Alhambra councilmen, one Alhambra school superintendent, and one school official from the city of Los Angeles.

One thing operating for overburdened taxpayers and against officials is that Rubino is willing to listen and take advice. If he were egotistical and had a closed mind, he would already be the captive of elected officials wanting to use him. But

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Alhambra Mayor Gives Views On Taxation

Mrs. Norma Yocum is mayor of Alhambra where homeowner tax protester Make Rubino lives. Mrs. Yocum has been elected three times to the city council, and she and Rubino do not agree on how to reduce taxes for homeowners. Mayor Yocum made her views known to the CALIFORNIA HOMEOWNER.

Rubino's group is circulating a petition on taxes and Mrs. Yocum says she will not sign it, although four Los Angeles County supervisors have signed it. She does not agree with its demands and is working to improve the strength and stability of Alhambra, she says.

The mayor says she favors reform and revision of present taxing policies "to the end that injustices and inequities are corrected." But she says citizens are demanding services that result in higher tax bills, and that "ability to pay" may be a better taxation method than the property tax (which is based on benefits received).

Mrs. Yocum declared that all suggestions for tax reform should be considered. Her own suggestions follow:

1. When the state mandates local

cluding another appearance before the supervisors on January 12 before his meeting at San Gabriel High School.

Rubino has several advisers, including Jerry Candelaria, Jack Daniels, and attorney Lawrence Moreno. A few others, such as Jim Christo, Archie Meinf and Bob Brown are also inside consultants. What both Rubino and Moreno need are expert advice in economics and politics.

Rubino is a long way from being stopped. He has not produced

services it must provide how the local revenue is to be raised.

2. All governmental agencies and departments to be placed under budget limitations.

3. Spread property tax payments over 10 or 12 months, instead of 2 or 3 as at present.

4. Study the idea of making all who enter California post a bond, the bond to be returned to short-term tourists only.

5. Study the problem of property tax payment by hard-pressed homeowners over 65.

6. Higher tuition for students in the state-supported colleges, with adequate scholarships. Cut budgets of state-supported colleges, and use money saved for elementary and secondary schools.

7. Study a possible ceiling for property tax rate and a limitation on increase in assessments.

"Public finance is complicated and sweeping changes cannot be made at once. Proposals should be carefully examined. Capable voluntary organizations are making studies and considering re-

an earthquake, but he has shaken the seismographs and the tremors have been felt in Sacramento. He is determined to go ahead, and he hopes the Los Angeles County groups join him. He wants to hear from them and learn from them about economics, taxation and politics. He says he knows one thing:

"I started as one man protesting taxes, and we now have ten groups and 50,000 persons backing us. If we continue we will have a thousand groups and ten million persons asking for tax reform.

forms. At groups shot "Ill-infor ask questio are often 'i practical a fo Mayor Y

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On the PRESS

Last month a correspondent concerned about the apathy of many citizens to public affairs suggested that one remedy might be: Improve the quality of newspapers. The probability is that newspapers in general continue to improve in quality—that is, the Los Angeles Times of today is better than the Los Angeles Times of 25 years ago, and today's Philadelphia Bulletin surpasses the Bulletin of 1910. Newspaper historians have opinions on this, no doubt.

The assumed improvement of newspapers does not mean attention cannot be called to their defects. Perhaps this kind of criticism has been somewhat responsible for their improvement. Many in the newspaper business tend to believe that any discussion of alleged newspaper failings is unpatriotic and perhaps un-American.

As great as radio and television are, newspapers—daily and weekly—provide the best channel of information for the average citizen. In the long run books may be the best teachers, but the kind and amount of information provided by the daily and weekly press cannot be matched by any other medium. All the more reason to keep newspapers—and radio and TV and magazines—on their toes.

As long as Americans continue to strive for a better nation and world they will need sound and accurate information from reporters, writers, broadcasters and editors. And in the light of that need it is our contention that anyone is free to praise and criticize the performance of the Fourth Estate.

In the opinion of this department and of many other persons, the Los Angeles Times is one of the better newspapers in the U.S. This is merely one of those objective facts which ought to be given recognition, whether one approves

of the Chandler paper or not. And it does not admit that the Times has already reached perfection, because there is plenty of room for improvement.

This leads into a description of how the Times reported a story concerning U.S. Senator George Murphy and how the San Diego Union handled it. We saw the story first in the Union on the morning of January 15. The Union said:

"... newly elected Republican senators, George Murphy of California and Paul Fannin of Arizona, yesterday were placed on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee. Murphy, in addition, was assigned to the Public Works Committee . . ."

"The selection of Murphy for the Labor Committee seems appropriate since he is, in fact, an ex-labor leader.

"The committee has partial jurisdiction over one of the most serious problems confronting California — finding a new source of farm labor to replace the Mexican braceros.

"Murphy's other committee assignment — Public Works — will give California a voice on committees handling both authorizations and appropriations for federally financed works projects."

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LAND and Lib

Land, labor and capital are the elements of an economic system, but in modern economic discussion the factor of land is almost totally ignored. Homeowners should become aware of land and land use, and should know there are two kinds of property — land, and the products of land — and they are as different as day from night, and should be used and taxed differently. Men create houses, buildings, automobiles, shoes, but we did not create the land, although we mistakenly go on taxing land as we tax houses, automobiles and shoes. In each issue the CALIFORNIA HOMEOWNER will present an article on land so readers can become conscious of land use and taxation.

LAND & LIBERTY is an excellent British publication dealing with those subjects. It is published by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, at 177 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W. 1. The magazine was established in 1894, and the present editor is V. H. Blundell.

In each issue LAND & LIBERTY publishes its Statement of Principles, and because this is a sound, well-written declaration which has stood the test of years, we are reprinting it here. The economic and social principles involved apply to North and South America as well as to Britain, and indeed they apply to the entire world.

Here is a brief, cogent lesson in economics. Read it, digest it. You will learn why prices go higher, and why your wages are not high enough and why you may not be as wealthy as you should be. And if you want to do something about it, join Statewide Homeowners Association and help correct the situation.

The collection of the rent of
February, 1965

land for the community by the Taxation of Land Values is not the only reform necessary, but it is the first reform and it would make all other reforms easier. The social and economic effects of raising public revenues by land-value taxation could be threefold.

In the first place taxes that now fall upon wages and production could be abolished. No one need be taxed for building a house or improving a farm, for bringing things in from other countries or for adding in any way to the general stock of wealth. Everyone could be free to make and save wealth; to buy, sell, give, or exchange, without hindrance, any article of human production the use of which did not involve any public injury, infringe in any way the freedom of others or result in their exploitation. All those taxes which increase prices as things pass from hand to hand, falling finally upon the consumer, could be dispensed with.

In the second place, a large and constantly increasing fund would be provided for the community's use as the labour, enterprise and

industry (the value

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Protests Over Freeway Producing An Eff

Further evidence that protests by local groups over freeway routes are producing an effect was seen last month in the introduction of a bill by State Senator Randolph Collier. Collier's bill calls for independent hearing officers to preside over freeway route hearings. This is not authorized now.

Collier has been chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee and is the author of much highway legislation. In December he appeared as a champion of the new "Californians for Modern Highways," an administration-sponsored group designed to support freeway construction. But Collier now seems to recognize that many groups are becoming irritated by actions of the State Highway Commission. In introducing his bill for independent hearing officers, Collier said:

"Courtroom tactics and ordinary rules of evidence have no place in these hearings. I'll do everything in my power to make certain that the people have every opportunity to be heard."

How much the new Southern California Freeway Conference is responsible for what may be a more reasonable attitude on the part of the Highway Commission is not known. In any event 13 organizations, including Statewide Homeowners Association, have formed the conference, with Dr. John H. French as chairman. It was Dr. French who made a presentation on freeways to the Interim Subcommittee on Highway Funds of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee in December. Dr. French is vice president of Tract No. 7260 Association of Los Angeles.

Other groups which attended the Freeway Conference are PRIME Foundation of Los Angeles, Greater Santa Monica Business Association, West Side (L.A.) Taxpayers Association, California Organization for Sane Transportation, Freeway Action Committee for Thorough Study, Pasadena, West Los Angeles Improvement Association, Homeowners of South Westwood, Beverly-Santa Monica Homeowners Association, Alamos Heights Improvement Association, Tract No. 6193 Association, and the Malibu Community Organi-

zation. Assemblyman Arthur Hills attended the organization.

The conference approved for remedial legislation, a committee to seek an audit. The seven areas which will

1. Immediately enact freeway route selection eas, until master plan and alternate transportation formulated.

2. Immediately enact State Highway Commission Highways under some State Legislature, which control over specific highway.

3. Enact legislation to Commission to adopt transportation ways, such as is used in Louis.

4. Enact legislation to Commission to thorough of one-way streets and urban areas.

5. Enact legislation to development of modes

6. Enact legislation to review in each State Highway of elected public officials property owner association State Highway must forward the review boards of review along way routing.

7. Enact legislation to Commission, which will all forms of transportation for community values.

Those who took part in Dr. French, Assemblyman

NOTES FROM ALL OV

Former Representative Tom Gill of Hawaii, who served in Congress last year and was defeated in a race for the U.S. Senate, has been named coordinator of the U.S. anti-poverty program in Hawaii by Governor Burns. Before going to Congress, Gill was in the Hawaii Legislature and took a leading part in pushing legislation which reduced taxes on homes and buildings and increased taxes on land values.

* * *

Miss Louise McLean of San Diego, member of the advisory board of Statewide Homeowners, spent two weeks in Washington, D.C., as the guest of Congressman and Mrs. Van Deerling of San Diego, and also received an invitation to the Presidential inauguration from Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and old friend.

* * *

A Statewide Homeowners Association has recently been formed in Florida; others are organizing in Missouri and Michigan; the Tax

Reform Association of Louisiana is getting started, and a state organization to study assessments and land value taxation has been established in New York. The Taxpayers Digest group in Oregon and the Graded Tax League in Pennsylvania have been fixtures for years.

* * *

That's What The Man Said
Dept. — Mr. Ross T. Jolly of South Gate, Calif., wrote a letter to the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner which was headed, "Likes Paying Taxes." Mr. Jolly said in his letter: "I do not mind paying my tax. I regret that I have only one property tax to pay."

* * *

Prof. LeGrand J. Weller of Northwestern State College of Louisiana has completed a study titled, "Projected Effects of Site Value Taxation if Applied to the City of Natchitoches, Louisiana." The study will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of CALIFORNIA HOMEOWNER.

Los Angeles and friendly owners / ularly e lunch at 6556 Hollywood Blvd. Diego gro day noon en Castle,

Land v studied in Economic lege, Naire Kul B. Sh charge.

Donald Statewide fornia, a Seal Beach bly, was viewed by perversors Orange C is consider sor next y

FREEWAYS

son Price and Willard Stone; Dr. Neil Jacoby, UCLA; Kurt Hirsch, Dr. Alexander Bratenahl, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena; R. H. Richmond, Edward Davies, Mrs. Faye Hove and Michele Hamilton.

Stone told the conference the Division of Highways is the only administrative agency in the state not subject to budget control and judicial review. He said this political body is guilty of empire building and has lost contact with the will of the people. He urged political action to make the Highway Division responsive to the electorate.

Dr. Jacoby said the Highway Division has become a community planning agency through its

power to split a community highway engineers are not nity planners.

Dr. Bratenahl indicated the tion Commission to develop transportation with full app values.

Dr. French, in his present subcommittee in December, se agree to government by exper ways, and said that state a through elected representative people. He asked for legislati the Highway Commission.

Reading Room

Of the total population of the world, not many persons understand that communism arose as a protest against the social injustices of the industrial revolution, and that continuing injustices are instrumental in fostering the growth of communism today. If the world had paid more attention to the teachings of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and the physiocrats 200 years ago, steps could have been taken to bring about an orderly solution as to how land should be used and who should get the profits (rent) from the use of land.

As it was, the industrial revolution made land enormously valuable and created huge fortunes for some and miserable poverty for others. Karl Marx saw this and believed the remedy was for the state to own all land and capital. Politicians and businessmen of the period were not paying much attention to what Smith and Ricardo had said about landlords, which was a pity then and is a pity now. So Russia, where the landlord-tenant and the employer-employee relationships were extreme in terms of good living conditions for one class and poverty for the other, was where the communist experiment was first tried on a national scale, following a short bloody revolution in the midst of World War I.

Since then other countries have gone over to communism — China, Poland, Hungary, Cuba, etc. The U.S. and Europe anxiously watch Latin America, which could be the next big area to fall to communism. The land problem in Latin America is bad. A small number of landlords own most of the land and pay little or no taxes on it, while the government squeezes the tax revenues out of the workers with direct levies and high prices. Because of this the communists try to stir the people to revolt, as Castro did in Cuba. Then what happens? The communists take over, seize all the land and factories and business places, and try to build on their economic system.

Russia, China and Cuba could have avoided their communist revolutions with a sensible policy of taxing land values. Latin America can avoid a communist uprising if it begins to tax land. But since the big landlords control the governments, for the most part, it will be difficult to tax land in Latin America. Nevertheless, in the long run only land value taxation can stave off communism in Latin America. The Alliance for Progress and other foreign aid schemes merely postpone for some years the issue that must be faced — are the landlords to keep all the rent and profits on land, or should some be used to finance government and thus stop the tax-price squeeze on the workers? Has even one Washington or Latin American reporter looked into this?

Arthur E. Meyerhoff would like to see communism defeated, but

BOOKS AND THING

philosopher of free enterprise and land value taxation.

But while we fight communism with words, as a secondary task, we had better make the free market system work as a primary duty. Are we trying to do that, or have we given up and decided to emulate the communists by letting the state do everything? How would Meyerhoff have U.S. propaganda handle the war on poverty? By telling the world we are using gov-

ernment spending to combat poverty? The Russians can say they have been doing that for 45 years. Would Meyerhoff have us boast the federal government is tearing down old buildings and building new ones, and also providing housing, at the same time feathering the nests of landlords? The Russians have been putting up government buildings and government housing for 45 years, *without* making any new millionaire landlords.

Freedom and a free market economy are either possible, or they are not possible. If they are possible it will not be accomplished through persuasive propaganda or just by attacking communism with words. It will be accomplished scientifically — by discovering what a free market economy is, how it works, and then constructing it.

You're Wrong!

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I'm Right!

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YES!

NO!

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CONTROVERSY and clash of ideas lead to doubt, and doubt is the beginning of wisdom. Is there more than one side to a question? Are there two sides? Or three sides? Is there a right side, a wrong side and a third side too?

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NEW

ABE LINCOLN And the Republicans

By CLAYTON C. BAUER

The crushing defeat of Barry Goldwater and the Republican Party in the November, 1964, presidential elections raises grave questions for every thinking American homeowner.

Can the GOP come back? Are we headed for the Soviet-type one-party system? Why, since Hoover's time, has the GOP lost favor with a preponderance of voters?

Do we hear jeers? Who cares about the GOP? All of us must care who want progress for ourselves and our neighbors. Ours is a two-party system. When one party forgets that the whole people is the boss of this country, we have the choice of tossing the wayward politicians out on their ear, where they belong.

When we elect representatives, and know what we're doing, we expect them to serve us, not themselves or any party before us. It is not the representative that is sovereign, nor his party, but "we, the people." For, in that spirit, in town meeting, behind the hedge rows of Lexington and Concord, did the fathers set up this democracy.

The American way of life, in a nutshell, is just all of us governing ourselves.

"As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master," said Abe Lincoln, the first Republican president. "This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

There's been a spate of probing of the GOP since November to try to discover what killed it. It isn't really dead yet; it doesn't ever have to be; but it's been dying a long time now.

You can look almost anywhere at the GOP and find signs of rigor mortis. The GOP brass from a nearby metropolis picked a young fellow to run in place of a congressman retiring. This method of foisting a party hack on the people is itself a reason why the party is more dead than alive. But the chap faced an audience at a nearby college, and admitted he knew next to nothing about international affairs, and hardly any more of national problems. Where has this guy been all his life? They teach such things even in the primary grades.

No doubt, the candid self as knowing something tacked property taxes, will land and man's improver basis for taxation, the lat be taxed. Then, for good sales and income taxes. The hope of progress through on all levels.

Why did not this chap back to Lincoln, and be presidential aspirant to it

Fremont surveyed the Carson, enabled thousand to find the safest paths

Lincoln, in his turn homesteading, and boot grants to schools and the best possible source of ices was in the nation

With the party grow levels, at the top it has duties to the people. During the President's administration, the President let persons execute the responsibility on the links like drove rectorate, mostly appointment from brink to brink

What's wrong, you responsibility? Well, we substitution, and we never pitell us what to do. When want him on the job, cap to the best of his abilities.

We decidedly don't wish his responsibilities to us decisions who are not an interests are inimical to owner to expect from a whose firm handles the Rockefeller and Morgan owner to expect from a director of 30 corporations squeeze you in the matter, and the like? What fence secretary, the form producer of raw material.

Most of the fifty-however Administration

GOP Congressman Curtis Backs Pro

By JACK MOTLEY

Rep. Tom Curtis of Missouri, ranking Republican on the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, and a member of the committee which wrote the 1964 Republican platform, told me that of all taxes, the property tax is "best."

The property tax is ideally suited to raising revenue for local governments and schools, Congressman Curtis said, but to make it work as it should, assessment inequities and other faults of administration should be corrected.

Cities, counties and schools can raise their local revenue from a well-administered property tax, and should have little necessity of seeking state or federal funds, Curtis

said. This applies to urban renewal as well as other programs, he said.

The underassessment of underimproved land and slums is one of the main reasons the property tax fails to produce all the public revenue it can produce. This situation should be improved at the local level, according to the Missouri congressman, who is known in Washington as a champion of the property tax and an authority on government fiscal matters.

The public needs more education on the functions and advantages of the property tax, Curtis said.

Newspaper reporters, editors and

columnist with the property tax, and write about mentioned magazine newspaper about new pop economic tax is said.

Many property tax assessment said, and serve as communities.

"When (C.

were up to their necks in Big Business, either as part owners or hirelings. No restraints bound them. When they acted for their own interests, they must often have been acting against yours and mine.

In a free market, supply and demand rules. But the big corporations tend to try to make ours a slave market, monopolizing iron ore, coal fields, power sources, transportation, others. They try secretly to rig prices against the consumer. Then the government, acting for all homeowners, must intervene.

Will it intervene, if the top official in charge happens to be a presidential appointee, very much on his own and strongly tied by former job or investment in the offending industry?

"The bitter, uncompromising strike in 1959" in the steel industry, recalls Thomas H. Uzzell, in his "The Twilight of Self-Government,"* lasted over 100 days. It cost steel workers more than ten millions a day. Our government lost in taxes another 45 million. A million workers idled, and homeowners the nation over bore the losses in new debt and taxation.

The government, having the authority, failed to act.

This wasn't the first time. Over 15 years steel workers won increases in wages ten times. In the same

period Steel upped prices 2 of extra pay a steel worker creased its prices and took

So long as homeowners is likely to be left out abandons its image as ma once again gets back to Mr. Lincoln. Said he; "I independent of capital." forest and field with scar ax, who had helped raise build his mother's coffin, his economics.

Were Lincoln living today the first to ask for the freed through taxing land. The dozen miles to restore six ce would certainly support a be through the equalized tax improved lands.

Republicans ought not to ought merely to learn from licanism drew its power.

* "The Twilight of Self-G. Uzzell, Bruce Humphries, Be

Westside Civic Group Affiliated With Statewide Homeowners Association

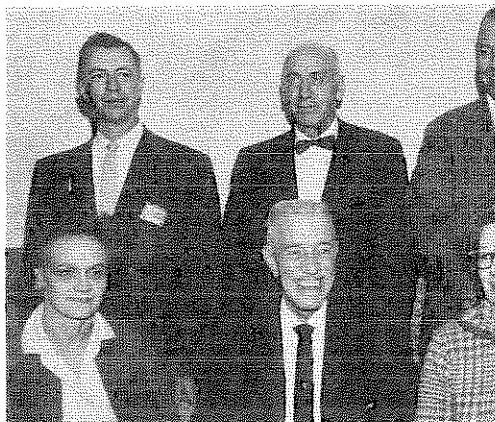
The Westside Village Civic Association, a four-year-old group of 300 homeowners in West Los Angeles, has affiliated with Statewide Homeowners Association.

Westside Civic, organized by real estate broker Bob Bowen in 1961 and led by him for three years, is now headed by President George Blair, elected last month. Bowen is now vice president and member of the board of directors.

Other vice presidents are Paul Cramer and Everett Wallace. John Sheehan is corresponding secretary, Mike Root is treasurer, and Bob Weir is sergeant-at-arms.

Bowen, of 3455 Military Ave., said Westside Civic voted to affiliate with Statewide Homeowners for mutual advantage, and because of the realistic program of Statewide Homeowners in respect to property taxes, industrial expansion and employment, and planning and zoning.

In May, 1961, Bowen said, the Los Angeles Public Works Department announced new sidewalk assessments and removal of trees in the area now covered by Westside Civic. Homeowners objected, and Bowen called a meeting to discuss the matter. A committee was appointed to meet with Councilman Karl Rundberg of the district, and as a result of Rundberg's militant attitude, Bowen said, and the "non-cooperative" attitude of the Public Works Department, a second



Original leadership group of Westside Village Civic Association. Front row, from left: Marge Baerthlein, director; Bob Bowen, secretary; Helen Bloomer, director. Standing, left, George Blair, president; Chuck Stahl, Byron Milligan, directors.



First meeting of directors in 1961. Front center, Paul Cramer, then treasurer, now vice president.

meeting of homeowners was called to organize the Westside Village Civic Association which was born on March 29, 1961, with Bowen as president.

The new group decided to fight in city hall. The members drew up their case, put it in the hands of four speakers, hired a bus and des-

cended result of city council was opposition to the growing Council West out of

ing all trees and eliminating many proposed sidewalks where Westside Civic said they were not needed. It was not a complete victory but it was Success No. 1 for the fledgling Westside Civic Association, and convinced members they were on the right track in taking a hand in public affairs.

Other projects followed over the years as membership grew from a handful to the present 300. Now Westside Civic is allied with Statewide Homeowners and its thousands of members all over the state and its many affiliated organizations.

Westside Civic publishes a bulletin, and its most recent issue told of the group's accomplishments: Defeating a zone change to allow high rise apartments; preventing Board of Education using school play area to build another school; working with Los Angeles Taxpayers Association to keep taxes down; helping development of Palms Library and Palms Park, cooperating with Palms Park Advisory Council; helping abate noise and nuisance of hot rods and motor scooters in area; persuading city to spray infested trees; cleaning up neighborhood eyesores.

Westside Civic has kept itself in the news with stories in local newspapers and TV stations, and its regular bulletin. All this has brought more members each year, and this month and next another major membership drive will be held. Westside Civic general publicity and its membership drive activities will be assisted by staff members of Statewide Homeowners Association.

The next general membership meeting will be held in the

spring. Last month's meeting heard from Jose Norman, Cuban musician and newspaper columnist who suffered at the hands of both Battista and Castro.

Westside directors meet the second Tuesday of each month in the California Federal Savings & Loan Building, 10682 West Pico, at 7:30 p.m. All members are welcome to attend, and copies of the association regulations may be obtained.

Directors are: District 1, Helen Bloomer, Marge Baerthlein, Eleanor DeVan, Roy Wise; District 2, Victor Sell, Selma Berleley, Robert Woolfe, Arthur Yates; District 3, George Fischer, Al Mancuso, James Chaney, Joseph Silverman.

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SAN DIEGO FACES ROOM T

San Diego is getting set for an election battle over taxes on February 16. On that day voters will decide if they want a new room tax and tax policies designed by City Manager Tom Fletcher, or whether they will try to operate in the present framework.

The city manager, at the instigation of the League of California Cities, persuaded the city council and Mayor Frank Curran to approve the hotel-motel room tax last year, over the opposition of the Hotel-Motel Association, Statewide Homeowners Association, and other organizations. At a council hearing on the room tax the mayor refused to hear the views of Statewide Homeowners.

The tax went into effect—4 cents on the dollar—and hotelman Charles Brown promptly secured enough signatures to qualify the matter for a referendum election, which the city opposed. After a legal fight the court ruled the city was wrong and must hold an election.

The city, miffed over the setback, set the election for Feb. 16, but threw in two other propositions designed to weaken the power of citizens in the tax field. The Council wrote Proposition "A" forbidding citizens to challenge tax matters by referendum, and Proposition "B" to force any initiative election within six months.

In addition Proposition "C" on the room tax itself allows the revenue to be used for "promotion" of San Diego without defining the extent of that promotion. Oppon-

ents say it will create a promotional "slush fund" to permit wasteful and frivolous spending of tax money by mayor and council. Some of the tax money is earmarked for the Convention and Tourist Bureau, a private organization.

Battle lines have been drawn. The city persuaded defeated mayor candidate Dave Casey to head the campaign for the room tax, while the opposition under Brown set up a "Protection of Taxpayers" committee.

Casey and Mayor Curran are pulling the usual stops, and both being Democrats, are seeking partisan support on the issue. Brown, a Republican, is fighting back by attempting to get some GOP backing. But Brown is also opposed by the San Diego Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Association, who resent his independent development of hotels in Mission Valley, away from downtown San Diego. On the other hand, several small business groups support Brown.

Both sides are raising funds, putting up billboards, using advertising, making speeches. But the two San Diego Copley newspapers are favoring the room tax side with major publicity and headlines, so much so that Brown was forced to make a personal protest to the publishers. Polls taken so far show that the room tax is likely to be defeated by a narrow margin.

The Protection of Taxpayers Committee says it is more concerned with Propositions A and B, than with the room tax itself. A and B, it says, are greater threats

to the tax is. and B a clear ordinance

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San Diego Room Should Be Defeat

Propositions A, B, C Harmful to

The San Diego room tax and Propositions A, B and C should be defeated on February 16. The proposals are the mark of an arrogant, tax-hungry San Diego city manager. If the room tax and these propositions are approved, San Diegans will be taxed to death even more than they are now.

San Diego city hall, like most other cities and counties in California, is spending more money. Economy in government is out of fashion. The waste is more spending, and to hell with taxpaying tenants, homeowners, women and men. This attitude will begin to catch up with lawmakers in San Diego. Catching up with lawmakers in Los Angeles County, where the tax-hungry State legislators in Sacramento from Los Angeles County are plainly the cause of tax protests, still growing.

San Diego city hall, not content with trying to impose a harmful room tax, will drive visitors from the city, is also trying to restrict the right to vote on tax matters. Further, room tax revenues, if the tax is approved, will be used for any kind of "promotion" including airplane and sea cruises.

Thus there are five important reasons for defeating Proposition A, B and C on February 16:

1. Don't tax yourself to death to foster a big spending program. If the room tax is approved, other taxes will follow.
2. Don't give up your right to fight tax ordinances by referendum.
3. Don't give up your right to repeal tax ordinances.
4. Don't keep visitors and industry away from San Diego with taxes.
5. Don't give city government the unlimited power to impose taxes. Unlimited power to spend tax funds.

Proposition C, the room tax ordinance sponsored by the city manager, taxes most every hotel-motel visitor to the city to pay a fine of four per cent of coming to San Diego. We invite them here and then tax them, no matter how many other taxes, but now with a room tax. In addition to being an unnecessary tax, it will soon reduce the number of visitors, thereby hurting business. Cities advertise "Come to our town where there is no room tax," San Diego. Besides, when the visitor pays a hotel bill he is paying part of the cost for schools, parks, fire, police, etc. Why should he pay an extra tax just to stay in a hotel?

Tax Funds Sought for Private Industry

The San Diego Convention and Tourist Buteau, according to the San Diego Evening Tribune (Jan. 19, 1965, page B-2 is a "private organization of nearly 700 business members."

Yet some revenues from the room tax which the city of San Diego wishes to impose on taxpayers will go to this private organization of "700 business members." In other words, taxpayer funds will be used to help the business members of this private organization.

It is very nice to be able to live off tax funds. Surely all of us would enjoy it. But General Dynamics and Convair and Ryan do

not get help from San Diego city tax funds, nor do Walker-Scott, Marston's, Broadway, Fed-Mart, UniMart or the Bank of America. Why should the "visitor industry," as the Tribune calls it, be supported by tax money, when no other local industry or business is supported that way?

To help stop tax money going to a private organization and to private business, vote NO on Propositions A-B-C February 16.

I have made this letter longer than usual, because I lack the time to make it short.

—Blaise Pascal (1657)

SAN DIEGO ROOM TAX SHOULD BE

city hall more money to spend? San Diegans don't like paying ho do they?

The city manager and his tax-hungry group say a four per for San Diego. If four per cent is good, why isn't five per cent per cent or ten per cent? If a hotel tax is good and the tourists d lot more than four per cent.

Instead of taxing tourists, which will be followed by more why doesn't the city manager do something about the low propert and on large areas of unimproved land? Here is where the city structive, instead of introducing taxes which will help destroy S create more unemployment. The city manager knows where the is, and he has only to walk over there and take a look at the th of low assessments on which the city is losing money.

The city manager is quite content with high property assessn homeowners and businessmen, and high rents for tenants, but he lowing slumlords and land speculators to escape paying 50 to 75 erty taxes. If this situation were corrected San Diego would not any other special taxes. The city manager is always advising coun advise them about taxes the city is losing through low assessments.

If you want a better San Diego, a progressive and prosperou try and jobs and reduced property taxes, then vote NO on Prop the room tax is approved, other special taxes will follow. Why death?

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ORGANIZATIONS

Erie Land Tax Assn., (ELTA) 2217 Peninsula Dr., Erie, Pa. Send for free information on what Erie citizens are doing to get land value taxation.

Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) Box 6403, Nashville, Tenn. Working on political and social issues. Send for free information.

Incentive for, 110 San Diego business and to eliminate machinery property to the Califor San Francisco assessment of O'Farrell St Graded Tax Bakewell & for, "Pitts Taxation."

Erie, Pa., Group Conducts Own Anti-Poverty War In Appalachia Region

Appalachia is that region of the eastern U.S. associated with the Appalachian mountain chain stretching from northern Alabama through parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, ending on the shores of Lake Erie.

Project Appalachia has been in the news several years because it is said by the federal government that economic conditions in Appalachia are worse than in many other regions of the U.S. and the government has to act, which means spending a billion dollars in the area, to start. Whether this means a billion a year, or more, is not known.

The familiar symbols of poverty in Appalachia are destitute hill-billies in Tennessee and Kentucky and unemployed coal miners in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. According to Washington, nothing can be done about economic conditions in Appalachia except hand out federal funds. President Johnson is said to be championing at the bit for Congress to pass the billion dollar Appalachia project.

Meanwhile, at Appalachia's northern terminus on Lake Erie, a citizens' group in Erie, Pennsylvania, a city of 140,000, is trying to revive the Erie economy without recourse to state or federal money. Erie city and county officials will not reject government grants, but members of the Erie Land Tax Association believe Erie can increase whatever prosperity it has by improving its property tax structure — at no cost to the government or taxpayers.

It all goes back to a 1959 Pennsylvania law which allows 48 cities of the third class to change the local property tax structure by taking taxes OFF houses and buildings and

all improvements, and putting the entire local property tax ON improved and vacant city land. At present both land and buildings are taxed, but these 48 cities have authority from the Pennsylvania Legislature to collect the property tax from land alone. This is what the group in Erie wants done.

The theory behind this law



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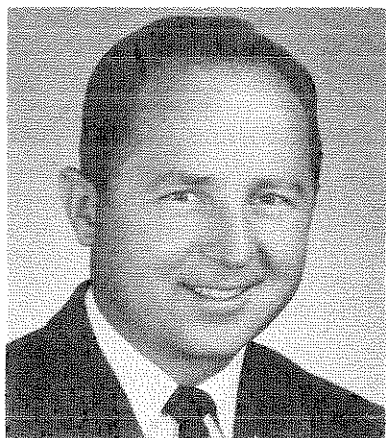
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tion was started by a group of Erie Junior Chamber of Commerce men who had heard talks by Wylie Young. The Junior Chamber itself has endorsed the new tax idea.

ELTA, as the Erie group calls itself, is working under President Bert Wilson and secretary Bill Walker, local businessmen, in a door-to-door effort to acquaint Erie homeowners with advantages of the tax switch. Wylie Young is now executive director of the group. Newspaper ads, newspaper stories, speeches and radio and television talks are also used. The city coun-



WILSON



WALKER



YOUNG

cil is making a study of proposals by former ELTA member Gerald Weber, now a federal judge in Pittsburgh.

Erie political candidates are now becoming aware of untaxing buildings as an issue and are being asked to declare themselves. Wilson and Walker say a similar tax shift helped Pittsburgh, and they are backed up by a former Pittsburgh assessor, Percy Williams.

Since the law does not apply to counties or schools, just city taxes, it will be able to improve the Erie situation only slightly. But the hope is, according to

Wilson and Walker, that if removing city taxes from buildings proves beneficial, the Legislature will then allow county and school taxes to be shifted also.

Untaxing buildings in Erie will not produce economic revival or prosperity overnight, but taxing land instead of buildings provides a built-in measure of stability, according to Dr. Rolland O'Regan of New Zealand, where the plan is used. It was also started last month in cities of Hawaii under state law.

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February, 1965

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Letters

NEWSPAPER QUALITY

Your correspondent John Parrish of Van Nuys made a good point in his letter published in the January issue, when he mentioned newspapers.

Mr. Parrish wants to attack apathy in public affairs and he mentions several things he believes should be done, starting with improving the quality of newspapers. He does not explain how, but I would like to join him in seeking a solution.

Of course he has made a logical start by merely suggesting that the quality of newspapers need improving. It is my opinion that once this is recognized, ways and means can be found to produce better newspapers. Regardless of the technical and legal forms of ownership, newspapers really belong to the public, and if the public wants better papers it will get them. But first the readers have to know they need better papers.

If the public is content with a certain kind of low quality in both local news and press association reports, in bad headlines and sloppy makeup, in light-headed columnists who furnish more entertainment than information, in editorials written by people who can neither think nor write, in a proliferation of advertising, sports pages, gossip, photos and advice to the lovelorn, then that's the kind of newspapers we will have.

Newspapers are like any other product — if the public demands a quality product, a quality product will be produced. If the public settles for junk, the newspaper owners will give us junk.

Mr. Parrish mentions other topics — revision of income tax, profit sharing, and financing candidates. No doubt all of them affect the problem of apathy, but I believe Mr. Parrish will have to select one project and do something about it, unless he has great financial resources,

Letters to the Editor are welcome. Please keep them short and sign name and address, although names will be withheld on request. This magazine is not responsible for and does not necessarily agree with views expressed in letters.

es, in which case he can do something about a number of things.

In the first place I believe he has, in his reference to newspapers, hit on a most important matter, more important than the others he has taken up. As far as I know there is no public group concerned with newspapers, as the Legion of Decency, for example, is concerned with films. There are all kinds of other watchdog committees in various fields.

My suggestion to Mr. Parrish, and I will be willing to join forces with him on this subject and no other, is to organize a group that will study Los Angeles County newspapers, since Mr. Parrish lives in that county. Later the group should be expanded to study newspapers in southern California, then the entire state. If the idea catches on in other states a national organization can be formed.

This citizen group will recruit members, hold meetings, hear speakers from the press, make studies, publicize findings, correspond with editors and publishers, and make recommendations. Only as a full scale project can anything be done to improve the quality of newspapers, outside of the general normal improvement which occurs gradually, if it does. That is to say, newspapers are either better or worse today than they were 100 years ago, depending on a point of view. Perhaps the news was less adequately reported 100 years ago, but perhaps editorials better written. I

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THE OPENING SPEECHES

Do governors and presidents, as they make inaugural speeches and address convening legislatures, talk about the real problems of nation or state? It does not seem so. Assuming presidents and governors are honest enough, then it must be they are deficient in understanding the forces which are shaping destiny, or they do not want to grapple with major questions.

This is not strange, if one believes Goethe. Presidents and governors are usually creatures of the majority, and the majority seldom knows what is going on. Said Goethe, the great poet-philosopher: "I find more and more that it is well to be on the side of the minority, since it is always the more intelligent."

President Lyndon Johnson and California Governor Pat Brown gave their spiels as new legislative years opened. Johnson said we can solve many problems by creating more wealth. The wealth will be taxed and the revenue applied to "improving schools and colleges, reducing poverty, rebuilding slums." (Quotes from Walter Lippmann, Los Angeles, Jan. 12, 1965). A Great Society is a laudable end if it includes laudable means, but taxing wealth is not exactly laudable.

Most of Brown's talk was about new state taxes that must be imposed to meet increased school aid, and to help the "overburdened" homeowner.

Both Johnson and Brown assume

local communities and schools need federal and state aid because they cannot be self-supporting. This is erroneous thinking, but the kind the majority indulges in and likes to hear. The fact is, of course, local communities have failed to pay for all their services, including education, for 40 or 50 years, and the problem has become acute in the past 20 years as communities and schools seek more federal aid.

The shoe is not on the other foot, as many persons maintain. The federal government is not forcing financial help on communities and schools. Communities and schools are failing to solve their financial problems and have been sending to Congress men who will vote to have the federal government pay local bills. Since the federal government has no money of its own, and since most persons have an established local residence, the federal government gets the money from the local citizen one way or another — either in U.S. taxes, or by a borrowing program which aids inflation and forces the local resident to pay higher prices.

It should be of interest to examine what President Johnson and Governor Brown did not say, in order to discover the problems they are running from. Johnson, for example, did not offer to stop the 27½ per cent income tax depletion allowance for oil producers, and Brown did not propose a severance

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Johnson about more tax structure gains, or improve items. Brown about attraction California reform and rapid trans

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