CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

FOUNDING AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT
OF L.A. MAGAZINE 1958-60

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Mass Communication

by

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ABSTRACT

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L.A. was one of the first of the modern city magazines when it began publication in October 1958, though following a tradition dating to the turn of the century locally and nationally. The objects of this study were to collect, sort, set forth, analyze, and interpret data on the founding and early development of this magazine, which, coming at the end of the conformist 1950s, perceived and illuminated the early evolution in Southern California of the conflict between the conservative establishment and the emerging counterculture.

L.A. was founded with a few thousand dollars in pooled capital by four young friends, who edited it at home and found short cuts to have it printed at the lowest possible cost. It achieved a strong local impact and earned recognition during its fourteen-issue publication.
history for a liberal, humanist interpretation of events.

Still the magazine no more than broke even financially, so after the issue of December 1960-January 1961 the subscription list was sold to Harper's and the rest of the enterprise to the Southern California Prompter, which became Los Angeles Magazine in 1961.

This study found that L.A. Magazine's contribution, with its variety of fiction and nonfiction, poetry and criticism, photography and drawings, was to bridge the gap between traditional, establishment publications and the modern city magazines and alternative press which were to flourish in the 1960s.

The study concludes with an appendix listing all masthead entries and changes, plus an annotated table of the contents of each issue, for the entire run of L.A. Magazine.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Objectives

and Background Information

Volume I, Number 1, of L.A. Magazine appeared in October 1958 as what might now be called a counterculture publication in a conformist era.

Appropriately enough, therefore, its lead editorial took off with the expected amount of brashness seasoned with a proper degree of humility. It held out the promise of what the reader might--and might not--expect in succeeding issues. The basic objective of this study will be to document and evaluate how well the promise was fulfilled.

The editorial, entitled "Volume I, Number 1," read as follows:

This is Volume I, Number 1, of L.A., a magazine for Southern California. We are launching this venture because we think an area of the size, importance and potential greatness of Metropolitan Los Angeles requires a periodical which will not only record but illuminate significant ideas, events and persons.
No one's face need freeze up. We have no yen for martyrdom. We happen to think that the time is right for a venture such as this. We believe a good many people have had the era of admiring one another's tail fins, watching commercials and examining their neighbors' consciences for signs of dissent. Such persons will, we believe, welcome a publication that reminds them, as gently as possible, that a city is more than factories surrounded by subdivisions.

There is, of course, another reason for the existence of a magazine here in Los Angeles. We refer to the area generally described under the heading of "culture." The word has acquired a rather unpleasant, snobbish air. But in its true meaning it refers to the way people make living bearable, as opposed to the way they make their living.

By common consent, this is an area where we in Los Angeles are deficient. Individually, many of our citizens are as informed, as cultured and as interesting as any in the world. But collectively we have somehow failed to define the significance of our community, as, say, San Francisco and New York and the meanest little burg in the South or midwest have defined theirs.

A Texan, by God, is a Texan. A resident of a suburb fifty miles from San Francisco calls himself a San Franciscan and takes pride in this identity. Greater Los Angeles, on the other hand, has been called "sixty suburbs in search of a city." It is our hope that L.A. Magazine will help fill this void.

What sort of magazine will L.A. be? Perhaps the best way would be to begin by explaining the sort of magazine L.A. will not be.

We will not be smart and sophisticated, like the New Yorker. The New Yorker already exists.

We will not be an expose-type magazine, since we have but little talent for peeking into people's bedrooms.
We will not celebrate "togetherness" or "the power of a woman," or the virtues of buying now.

We wish Madison Avenue well, but we do not look forward yearningly to the day when the Gray Men shall shower us with blessings. Ours is not and never will be a "mass medium." We choose to regard our readers as readers, not as a market.

We are not a political-evangelical magazine rushing in to save this damned city from hell-fire. The Editors are fully occupied saving their own souls. And we are mindful of the fact that politics, like the poor, we shall always have with us.

And so perhaps we shall leave it at this: somewhere in this sprawling metropolitan giant—destined, they tell us, to be foremost in the world in population, a great market—there ought to be a place and time where people look at each other, at themselves, think and perhaps smile. And in some small corner of that place there should be room for a magazine such as we have proposed.

Therefore we give you L.A. Magazine. We invite you to turn these pages and read. We hope that you will do so with pleasure. And we hope that this in turn will cause you to subscribe and to get your friends to subscribe—which we hope will cause us to go on publishing. But this, too, lies in the laps of the gods.1

Did there, indeed, prove to be "room for a magazine such as we have proposed"? If so, how much room, and how did the magazine fill it? Did it live up to this lead editorial? Did it "not only record but illuminate significant ideas, events and persons"? What were the

1 "Volume 1, Number 1," L.A., October 1958, p. 3.
developing goals of the editors, and were they fulfilled? Did the magazine "define the significance of our community"? Was the time indeed "right for a venture such as this"? To such questions will this study address itself.

In more formal and complete terms, the objectives of the research project encompassed by this thesis are to collect, sort, set forth, analyze, and interpret data on the founding and early development of L.A. Magazine.

In essence the study aims at a historical analysis, from a point of view more descriptive and humanistic than quantitative, of the subject periodical from its beginnings in 1958 to its merger with the Southern California Prompter in 1961 to form the present Los Angeles Magazine. Critical analysis is applied where appropriate to the content of the first years of publication.

It is anticipated that this will represent a contribution to a part of American journalism history which has been largely overlooked to date. L.A. emerged at a turning point for American magazines, as the general national "books" were dying off and publishers were focusing on smaller areas of specialized interest to lure their audience away from television. One of these specialized areas was the city magazine, and L.A. was one
of the first of the modern era. Its early history, viewed in the frame of reference of the times and recording among other things the words of previously untapped first-hand sources while they are still available, should provide a study of significance.

**Review of the Literature**

This study has uncovered no previously published extended treatment dealing with the precise subject at hand--i.e., the founding and early development of *L.A.* Magazine. The author is quite confident that none exists, since the founding editors and publishers of the magazine would have had to be consulted in order to provide material for such research, and they have never been consulted until the present project.

(Since the editors and publishers were for all practical purposes the same people, they will usually be referred to in this study as the "editors.")

Prior publications on the subject have been limited to short newspaper items--news stories, features, column material, photos, and captions--which were submitted or suggested to the press by the magazine's editors in the course of their publicity and promotional functions for the publication. Similarly, the broadcast "literature" of
the 1958-60 period--i.e., the radio and television programs on the air--included references to the magazine and at times extended coverage of its contents, in particular on talk shows featuring one or another of the editors as guest or host. Publications and broadcasts mentioned in this paragraph are considered at greater length later in this study under the topic heading "Publicity and Promotion" in Chapter IV.

There is a relatively small literature on city magazines in general, some of which mention the subject publication's successor in passing. Thus Katz and Gargal in their standard reference work called Los Angeles "one of the five best city magazines."¹

Several Los Angeles magazines published before and just after the turn of the century were described in Mott's classic five-volume chronicc of American magazines.²

The field of the city magazine was touched upon in rather perfunctory fashion by Peterson, like Mott a noted academic


commentator on American magazines, in both his periodical material and his definitive book on modern magazines.

The field of city magazines is not represented in Journalism Monographs, and only twice in Journalism Abstracts, in works by Montague and Moon, the former being irrelevant to this study and the latter to be taken up in its reworked form as an excellent roundup of the city-magazine area. Journalism Quarterly's most recent contribution to the subject is a rather diffuse article by Burd in 1973. No pertinent listings were found in such

1 An example: Theodore Peterson, "Magazines and the Challenge for Change," Quill, November 1965, p. 44.


other journalism bibliographies as *Journalist's Bookshelf*\(^1\) and *Annotated Journalism Bibliography*.\(^2\)

These and other sources in the literature will be cited elsewhere in this study as appropriate.

**Study Sources**

**Methods, and Limitations**

**Sources**

Sources for the study include the extant correspondence of the editors, oral and written documentation by the surviving editors, complete files of the magazine dating back to Volume I, Number 1, and related literature as summarized in the preceding section on "Review of the Literature."

The editors' correspondence still available is fragmentary, and was never very extensive to begin with, since they were also practicing writers, teachers and journalists who preferred to devote their limited time to getting the magazine out rather than writing letters about it. The


operative theory was and is that the magazine speaks for itself, and hence this study relies most heavily on the actual files of the publication.

Supplementing this written documentation is a large amount of oral interviewing of the three surviving (out of four) founding editor-publisher-owners, Myron Roberts, Estelle Roberts, and Lincoln Haynes.

Methodology

The methodology of collection of the material is implicit in the discussion of the sources. It includes combing of indices, card catalogues, and archives for correspondence and other written documentation; classification and analysis of back-number files of L.A. Magazine; study of related literature; tape-recording of oral interviews with the editors touching on numerous facets of their work in planning and publishing; and typewriting, Xeroxing, and otherwise transcribing and recording these varying materials.

Limitations

This research project is delimited, first, in terms of the specific time span covered -- i.e., 1958-60 -- along with necessarily brief background references to preceding
and following years in general, and to what happened then in Los Angeles in particular, where relevant, in order to throw the subject into perspective.

It is also limited, in large part, to a study of L.A. Magazine itself, again amplified where appropriate with background information on other prior and contemporary city magazines, and particularly those of Southern California.

Overview of Presentation

This presentation covers the early history of L.A. Magazine, from its beginnings in 1958 and prior to its merger with the Southern California Prompter a few years later to form the present Los Angeles Magazine. The total run was fourteen issues, from Volume I, Number 1 (October 1958) through Volume II, Number 2 (December 1960-January 1961).

The publication is studied in its frame of reference of the 1950s: the conformist, gray-flannel, buttoned-down, Eisenhower-Nixon-McCarthy atmosphere; the beatnik artistic and literary movement that had one of its centers in the Venice West section of Los Angeles; the preceding and contemporary magazines of the region, including Rob Wagner's Script, Fortnight, Coastlines, and the Prompter.
and the emerging city magazines in other areas of the country.

Stress is placed on the decision-making processes throughout, beginning with the first informal discussions among four friends from Los Angeles City College--Myron and Estelle Roberts, the late Sasha Gilien, and Lincoln Haynes--about starting a monthly regional literary or "little" magazine in spare time from regular full-time jobs in teaching and journalism. From the first it was a "seat-of-the-pants," "shirt-sleeves," "hunch" operation, "to do what we want, just for the hell of it." Formal pre-testing or marketing research was a bore, and avoided; it was enough to know that relatives and friends thought it was a great idea.

The project embodies description and analysis of the manifold decisions which had to be made before the start of publication and then continually from month to month during publication, including but not limited to such big and little questions as the following:

Whether to seek advertising (the decision was yes, at first, but then, after months of beating the pavements

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1 As identified by Myron and Estelle Roberts in interviews with the author.
none too successfully to try to sell space, this was re-
versed); whether to run fiction (yes, when any could be 
found which met the editors' high standards of quality and 
low standards of pay); whether to pay for contributions 
(the editors found that they could get away with not pay-
ing but always made at least token remuneration); whether 
and when to start paying themselves, either in salaries, 
in contributors' fees, or in corporate dividends (the day 
never arrived); whether to run reprint material (yes, from 
time to time, by authors ranging from John Fante in the 
opening issue to Albert Camus, Lawrence Clark Powell, and 
Lord Bryce); whether to seek financial backing ($2,000 in 
outside capital was raised at the beginning from a rela-
tive who became a founding partner in the corporation, 
known as the D. and R. Publishing Co., Inc., and there 
were subsequent floundering attempts to raise more capi-
tal); where to set up editorial offices (in the Roberts 
home at Claremont); where to print the magazine (a number 
of small print shops were tried, the cheaper the better, 
and sometimes the quality of the work betrayed the price); 
methods of distribution (subscriptions and newsstand 
sales, and even carrier boys were advertised for); how to 
arouse and maintain community interest (literary contests, 
photo contests, and salons were tried); size of press run
(which edged down from twelve thousand in the sellout
first issue to around 5,500); how to solicit and possibly
reject manuscripts, photographs, and art work from rela-
tives and friends; and the never-ending problem of
editorial content and make-up of each succeeding issue.

The culmination of these cumulative decisions is shown
in the final decision to give up the project, to sell out
the subscription list to Harper's and the rest to the
Prompter after several years of efforts had left the enter-
prise still at only a break-even point financially.

The material comprehends description and categoriza-
tion of editorial content, including essays ("Decline and
Fall of the Madonna-Prostitute," "Suburbia--Spiritual
Slum?", "Television--the Light That Failed"; articles
("The Curse of Chavez Ravine," "The Man in the Taxpayer's
Suit," "The Greeks of Westwood"); fiction ("Helen, Thy
Beauty Is to Me--" by John Fante, "The Eulogist" by Robert
Kirsch); satire ("On the Boat," "First Epistle to the
Hollywoodians"); poetry (by Ethel Jacobson, Richard Armour,
Vahan Gregory); photo essays ("L.A. Street-Scene,"
"Pershing Square"); art work (Joseph Mignaini, Ted Gilien,
Interlandi), and reviews of books, theater, movies, and
the broadcast media.
The magazine's editorial policy is surveyed as it developed from the lead editorial in the October 1958 issue (see opening section above), and the thesis embodies an assessment of how well L.A. succeeded in filling perceived needs and achieving its stated goals as delineated in this and succeeding editorials. In fine, it presents a summary of the lessons which may be learned from the editors' experience.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF L.A. MAGAZINE, 1958-60

National Context

As the cold-war decade of the 1950s opened, Richard M. Nixon was fighting his way into the United States Senate in 1950 with his "Pink Lady" smear campaign against Helen Gahagan Douglas. For eight years leading up to and including the time span covered by this study, he was one heartbeat away from the presidency. Viewed in retrospect, these facts perhaps symbolize as well as anything the spirit of the period.

The 1950s were a conformist, buttoned-down, gray-flannel decade, with Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower presiding.¹

Abroad, Americans got bogged down in the Korean War as a hot, bloody intensification of the cold war against communism. At home, this cold war became a crusade

personified by Senator Joseph McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin, who spearheaded a witch-hunting campaign of anti-liberal villification that was finally blunted by the Army-McCarthy hearings and his censure by the Senate in 1954.

While it flourished, however, McCarthyism cast a stultifying, frightening shadow across the nation, particularly in intellectual and academic pursuits, the arts, and mass communication media. The "Hollywood Ten" symbolized the dozens of actors, writers, and other creative people who were blacklisted and for years prevented from earning a livelihood in films and broadcasting because of real or fancied association with left-wing causes, or merely for standing on their constitutional right to refuse to testify about their political affiliations.

The personal life style of many Americans reflected the feeling of conformity, symbolized by the proverbial gray-flannel suit and button-down collar of Madison Avenue. The postwar baby boom brought the flight to the suburbs, where white mid-America settled down in a tract house with white mid-Americans on either side and a tail-fin V-8 gas belcher in the driveway, and opened a six-pack of beer to watch Ed Sullivan on the television set which in this decade became the center--perhaps the altar--of
the house. America seemed to live on TV and TV Dinners.

On the campuses, as students of manners and mores have never ceased reminding us, the spirit of uniformity likewise prevailed. Crew cuts, football games, and fraternity hops were still more the rule than the exception.

In show business, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra were on top, and it was not until mid-decade that young rebel types like Marlon Brando and James Dean achieved major success. At mid-decade, too, a country boy named Presley hip-swiveled out of Tupelo, Mississippi, and Memphis, Tennessee, with a wild, raw delivery that won him the early nickname of Elvis the Pelvis—even though good, gray Ed Sullivan felt compelled (or was publicity-wise enough) to protect mid-America's morals by cutting the singer off at midsection.

Presley and others brought rock-and-roll, an appropriate mixture of black- and white-based music. There were also black and white, along with the gray, elsewhere on the American scene. The 1954 Supreme Court school-desegregation decision ushered in long, hot summers of civil-rights turmoil that started at Little Rock, along with fifteen years of civil-liberties-oriented decisions from the Earl Warren court.
The ice jam of cold-war conformity was beginning to break up. Coffee houses in New York's Greenwich Village, San Francisco's North Beach, and Los Angeles' Venice West were night-blooming with beatniks and bongos. The "in" people were into psychoanalysis, funny furniture, Zen Buddhism, and ethnic health foods. The far-out fringe discovered little foreign cars.

The month that L.A. Magazine began publication, leading issues of the time were summarized in a dispatch by Robert T. Hartmann, Washington bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times, who sixteen years later was to be a top counselor to President Gerald Ford.

... As 1958 began, for instance, Congress met in an atmosphere of panicky sputtering over Sputnik I, which the Russians launched just over a year ago. ... Senate Majority Leader Johnson (D) Tex., in his own "state of the union" message, called for heroic efforts to establish U.S. control of "the ultimate position"—outer space.

... Little Rock, Sputnik, recession, what next? Well, some said, President Eisenhower is lacking in "bold leadership" and cannot make decisions. So the President ordered U.S. marines to land in Lebanon and told Khrushchev to put up or shut up.

Then he ordered a firm stand when the Chinese Communists attacked Quemoy and Matsu. A storm of criticism descended. ...  

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Given this frame of reference in which L.A. was nurtured, it seemed in many ways a decidedly unpropitious time to launch a liberal-minded magazine. But the times, they were a-changing--and for the founders it was the right time.

Local Context

In the early 1950s a Pasadena newspaper editor turned to his new drama critic and gave him his first assignment.

"Do a survey," he ordered, "on why the theater is dead in the San Gabriel Valley."

The young writer spent a good many hours interviewing amateur and professional show folks all over the area, then reported back to his chief.

"Actually things are booming," he said. "The Pasadena Playhouse is running the Mainstage and three side stages, the Pasadena Civic Auditorium is importing road shows, San Gabriel Mission Playhouse is staging one-act play tournaments, up in Altadena they're--"

"All right," the editor cut him off. "There's your angle--why the theater is not dead in the San Gabriel Valley."

Aside from a lesson in journalism, this anecdote from the writer's experience points up the perennial paradox in
surveys of culture in the Pueblo of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels. Does she or doesn't she have any?

"By common consent, this is an area where we in Los Angeles are deficient," said L.A. Magazine's opening editorial as cited in Chapter I above. It was all too easy to accept the stereotyped gibes and criticisms of Eastern, English and continental visitors at face value and lose sight of the fact that a good many of these visitors stayed on as residents, from Schoenberg to Stravinsky to Huxley to Isherwood.

Leonard Gross wrote of the same period:

Self-contempt pervaded the city in ways it barely suspected. It was accepted that Los Angeles lacked culture, identity, a center. Cities, like people, gain labels that are difficult to remove. I know something now I didn't know then, that few writers are original thinkers; mostly, they restate the conventional wisdom with escalating degrees of craft. So if we didn't ourselves confess the bad taste that surrounded us, we had the indictments of Nathanael West, Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh and New York and San Francisco journalists. We were, as another writer has put it, a barbecue culture held shakily in place by freeways. Los Angeles was not Los Angeles in those days; in the eyes of the world it was Hollywood, a state of mind that turned even death into make-believe."

This feeling of a lack of a center, mentioned by Gross, often was expressed in the "sixty suburbs in search of a city" jokes. That these were sometimes not too wide of the mark is pointed up in Los Angeles' evolving "branch city hall" government, as well as the profusion of suburban incorporated cities.¹

Myron Roberts, founding editor of L.A. Magazine, took a philosophical view of these jokes and criticisms. He said recently:

They had made fun of Forest Lawn and Disneyland and the movies, an eccentric place for retired loonies, and Aimee Semple McPherson and the sixty suburbs in search of a city, and all the usual standard things. That, while it may have been valid when it was first said in the twenties, by the late fifties had ceased to be valid. Yet the stereotype was still there.

They saw it as an absurd comic deviation from the accepted norm of the Eastern U.S. and Western Europe. What they didn't see was that this was really kind of laying the foundation for a whole new way of life. . . . We [the editors] all kind of instinctively felt that, having lived here all our lives. We

could see it all around us, and see guys who were themselves winding up living here, like Huxley. . . . These were all rich men and famous men, who presumably could live anywhere in the world they chose. Why'd they come here if this was such a terrible place?¹

Thus Los Angeles in the 1950s was being shaken—and shaped—by forces that would divide the country at large in the 1960s.

Beatniks drank espresso coffee, listened to flamenco guitar, and worshiped the bust of Marlon Brando atop the counter of the Chez Paulette coffee house on the Sunset Strip. There were dozens of similar places that brightened—or darkened—assorted holes in the wall from Cosmo Alley in Hollywood to the canals of Venice, known for a few years then as Venice West, where writer-teacher Lawrence Lipton reigned as guru. Or they stayed home and listened to KPFK, the brash new far-out radio station on the FM spectrum.

But this was the cultural underground, the counterculture. Above ground things were more square, and the two elements rubbed each other the wrong way. Richard M. Nixon was still Southern California's leading son,

¹ Interview with Myron Roberts, San Dimas, California, 25 June 1974.
politically. As against the pleasure haunts of the beatniks there were the more staid cultural attractions -- the Hollywood Bowl and the Huntington Library, the Pilgrimage Play and the County Museum, duly publicized by the Chamber of Commerce and the All-Year Club of Southern California.

Touring Broadway productions, plus an occasional locally mounted show such as Song of Norway, played the Philharmonic Auditorium and the Biltmore Theater, now-vanished downtown forerunners of the Music Center, and during the decade the Huntington Hartford opened as the Hollywood outpost of the major legitimate theater (though Hollywood was alive with little theaters offering professional productions at a pittance, such as the Circle and the Actors' Lab).

As California flexed its industrial muscles and broke out on its way to becoming the largest state in population by 1964, Los Angeles County was likewise on its way to becoming the nation's second largest metropolitan area, its burgeoning aerospace business given new thrust by launching of the Soviet Sputnik in 1957. The county's population increased between 1950 and 1960 by 45.5
per cent, or over 1,800,000, to 6,038,771.¹

Los Angeles had long been the largest city in square miles. Now the squares lined up for miles for the newest attractions as the region became truly big-league with the arrival during the 1950s of the Dodgers and Disneyland, which quickly became the West’s leading tourist attraction although spurned by the intellectuals.²

The vast freeway system was still getting off the drawing board and on to the ground, since these were still days of innocence when freeways meant progress and not a dirty word to conservationists. ("Ecologist" was still buried in the dictionary.) The state was happily planning how it could expand the freeway system, not cut it down as at present.

Boom was in the air, despite occasional recessions. Aerospace plants, schools, colleges, suburban housing developments -- all were expanding as fast at the network of roads and freeways that pushed out to meet them. It would have been unthinkable to see headlines


like today's "Housing slump called worst since depression"\(^1\) or "Ventura County Approves 'Slow Growth' Plan."\(^2\)

Instead, in the month when L.A. Magazine was started, front-page headlines one morning proudly read "ROCKET TO
MIDON LAUNCHED BY U.S.," "Unemployment Drops to Lowest Mark of 1958," and "Stock Market at New High."\(^3\) The next day they bragged: "Southland Leads in Lunar Probe/Rocket Stages and Most of Equipment Produced Here" and "Desert Fete to Hail New Freeway."\(^4\) And a typical expansionist article of the day began:

"A single massive metropolitan conglomeration extending 250 miles from Santa Barbara to Tijuana."

That is the description in a study by the UCLA Bureau of Governmental Research on the urban regions of Los Angeles and San Diego Counties.

At present, only the vast Camp Pendleton area in San Diego County and the large Irvine and other ranch holdings in Orange County are impeding the joining of the Los Angeles-Orange County metropolitan area with that of San Diego, the study said.\(^6\)

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\(^1\) Long Beach Independent, Press Telegram, 18 August 1974, sec. A, p. 3.

\(^2\) Los Angeles Times, 4 August 1974, sec. 7, p. 17.

\(^3\) Ibid., 11 October 1958, p. 1.

\(^4\) Ibid., 12 October 1958, sec. 1, p. 3.

\(^5\) Ibid., part 1A, p. 19.

\(^6\) Ibid., part 1A, p. 20.
The kind of Los Angeles then in the building, as pointed up in the pages of L.A. Magazine, was put into perspective in the 1970s by a Michigan historian:

Such a distribution of automobiles and freeways gives the Los Angeles employee the widest choice of job opportunities ever possible in an American city. . . . To this economic freedom must be added the social advantages that have accrued to the Los Angeles public. . . . The solution to the disadvantaged position of those without cars is neither difficult nor expensive, but like all our cities Los Angeles remains heedless of the needs and suffering of its poor, its blacks, its Mexican Americans, and its old people.¹

Again:

Finally, Los Angeles should be understood as an outstanding example of regional and national planning. . . . Its war-stimulated growth is of interest precisely because it demonstrates an important but as yet little exercised capability of the federal government to influence the prosperity of a metropolitan region. The Los Angeles experience shows that we have depressed cities and depressed regions only because we have chosen to let them go unattended.²

On the newspaper scene, the town was shaking down from five metropolitan papers in the early 1950s (the Times, Examiner, Herald-Express, Mirror, and Daily News) to two by early 1962. Meanwhile the suburban "shoppers"


²Ibid., p. 147.
and weeklies turned into tri-weeklies and dailies, and the suburban dailies kept growing and merging, as in Long Beach and Pasadena.

The state colleges, which had come to town with Los Angeles State in 1947, continued to grow in and around the metropolis, as did the community colleges, the University of California, the University of Southern California, the California Institute of Technology, and many other private schools. An example began with the founding in 1956 of Los Angeles State College's San Fernando Valley Campus, which in 1958 became San Fernando Valley State College (with 3,300 students) and in 1972 became California State University, Northridge, with just under 25,000 students. "During its first fourteen years the University expanded at a rate probably greater than that experienced by any other major institution of higher education in history."¹

This was a record rivaled in many areas of Los Angeles life in that time of change, ferment, and growth.

Journalistic Context: The City Magazines

City magazines, or those celebrating regions surrounding major cities, have grown into a solid institution

¹Catalog 1974-75 (Northridge: California State University, 1974), p. 25.
in recent years, but they have a history dating back to the 19th century. Some of the first were centered in Los Angeles.

Mott, reviewing the development of American magazines in general in the post-Civil War period, remarked that it came as a surprise and a shock to Easterners (as it has come in each generation since) to find that "the Pacific Coast was already the seat of a vital and challenging civilization."¹ This civilization included a number of magazines, some vigorous and some less so, most of them specialized or trade journals but a few of them with general appeal that might be considered regional or city magazines.

As the California metropolis, San Francisco was of course "a publishing center of real importance in the postwar period," said Mott, describing such comparatively well-known San Francisco-based magazines as the Golden Era, Overland Monthly, California Mail-Bag, and Argonaut.²

In Los Angeles, then as now the center of a strong agricultural economy, nineteenth-century magazines

¹Mott, vol. 3, p. 50.
²Tbid., p. 56.
included the Rural Californian (1877-1914), which was called Semi-Tropic California until 1882. This illustrated monthly was enterprising enough to run a small advertisement in the first issue of the Los Angeles Times, offering subscriptions at $1.50 a year or a sample copy for three three-cent stamps. "Should be in the home of every Orchardist, Vineyardist, Beeman, Poultry-raiser, and general farmer," the advertisement said. ". . . Address Coleman & Dickey, Los Angeles, Cal."  

Others of specialized interest were Pacific Advertising (1897-1907), Western Empire/California Farmer (1898-1924), Pacific Poultrycraft (1895-1939), and Public Ownership Review (1897-1900). Just after the turn of the century came the Los Angeles Socialist, which began in 1902, had its name changed to Common Sense in 1904, and lasted until 1909, and the agnostic Humanitarian Review

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1 Ibid., p. 153.
2 Los Angeles Times, 4 December 1881, p. 4.
3 Mott, vol. 4, p. 247.
4 Ibid., p. 341.
5 Ibid., p. 345.
6 Ibid., p. 178.
7 Ibid., p. 176.
(1903-11).\(^1\)

Of more general interest among early Los Angeles magazines were the *Pacific Monthly* (1889-91), edited by Charlotte Perkins Stetson, and *Out West*, which began in June 1894 under the title *Land of Sunshine: An Illustrated Monthly of Southern California*, edited by Charles F. Lummis, who also was Los Angeles city librarian and city editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. Of *Out West*, Mott wrote:

> Among the contributors were David Starr Jordan, Joaquin Miller, Ina Coolbrith, C. H. Shinn, Edwin Markham, Grace Ellery Channing, and Charlotte Perkins Stetson. Benavides' "Narrative," articles on Indian and Mexican art, stories of the old Wild West, and Los Angeles promotional pieces distinguished the magazine. . . . It was eventually merged with the *Overland*.\(^2\)

Mott continued:

> Los Angeles had several weeklies in the period, including Horace Bell's *Porcupine* (1882-1898); George Rice's *Western Graphic* (1893-1918), merged with the *Capital* in 1901-1903 but later resumed as the *Graphic*; and the *Capital* (1895-1903). . . . The *Pacific Outlook* was begun in Los Angeles in 1895 by A. M. Dunn as a five-cent weekly of political opinion, the theater, music, and society. Later it was to become a notable leader of the Progressives in California.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 277.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 107.

\(^3\)Ibid.
In the first decade of the twentieth century came the most enduring of Los Angeles-based regional magazines. This was the Automobile Club of Southern California publication *Touring Topics*, begun in February 1909, which changed its name to the present *Westways* in 1934. The opening editorial promised that "the pages of *Touring Topics* will be kept clean and will be conducted along modern lines in both the reading and advertising pages,"¹ and its early issues were heavy with accounts of "happy auto caravans" and "gay motor parties" to the mountains and seashore. Under editors Bill Henry and Phil Townsend Hanna, and later under Davis Dutton and Larry L. Meyer, it broadened its coverage to become a leading literary showcase of the West. It has attracted such noted writers through the years as Carey McWilliams, Lawrence Clark Powell, Ring Lardner, John Steven McGroarty, Paul Jordan-Smith, Norman Corwin, Ray Bradbury, William Saroyan, John W. Carghey, and Jack Smith.

Magazines having the same sort of regional and/or city interests were springing up elsewhere around the turn of the century in such divergent places as Hawaii and New York. One magazine scholar writes that "Paradise of the

Pacific was founded in Hawaii in 1892,"\(^1\) while Moon suggested: "The first American publication of magazine format that concentrated its editorial content primarily on a city was perhaps Town Topics, founded by Colonel William Mann in New York City before 1900."\(^2\)

Moon wrote that "other cities rushed to share in the success of the New Yorker" after the establishment of that landmark publication in 1925. Among these "emulators" he included a short-lived magazine called Los Angeles, which featured muckraking and aimed "to rid the city of such persons as Mayor Porter and Rev. Robert ('Fighting Bob') Shuler," and Script.\(^3\)

The history of the latter publication was summarized in lively fashion by Peterson in one of his few notices of city magazines:

One of the most enduring of the derivations of the New Yorker was Script, which in its own fashion tried to do on the West Coast what the New Yorker was doing in the East. Rob Wagner founded Script in 1929, produced it at a small plant in Hollywood, and kept down editorial expenses by getting his friends who were celebrities


\(^2\) Moon, p. 711.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 712.
to contribute to it without pay. Wagner built a following of a few thousand readers, but circulation began to fall off after his death in 1942 and had dwindled to about a thousand in 1947.

In 1947 Wagner's widow sold Script for $25,000 to Robert L. Smith, general manager of the Los Angeles Daily News; Ralph K. Davies, an independent oil operator; and Samuel B. Mosher, president of the Signal Oil Company. Smith said that they hoped within a few years to earn for Script a national position similar to that of the New Yorker.

The new owners changed Script from a bi-weekly to a monthly and appointed James Felton, a former city editor of the Los Angeles Daily News, as editor. Despite a low budget, Felton got the work of widely-known authors and cartoonists, and put Salvador Dali under contract to produce a series of original paintings for the magazine. In about a year circulation rose to 53,000, although Script continued to lose between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars an issue.

Ik Shuman, who had once been executive editor of the New Yorker, was brought in as publisher of Script in 1948. At the same time the magazine got additional financial backing from Samuel Goldwyn, the motion picture producer, and William Zeckendorf, a New York real estate operator.

Seven months later, however, all of the backers withdrew, and Ik Shuman bought title to the magazine for a dollar. He kept Script alive until March, 1949, when he finally suspended publication because of high production costs and low revenue.¹

Other Southern California magazines of more or less general interest came and went in the 1940s and 1950s, in addition to numerous trade journals and special-interest publications. They ranged from literary or "little" magazines like Copy, Poetry Los Angeles, and Coastlines, to journals of news, like Fortnight, or opinion, like Frontier. (Fortnight shifted emphasis after eleven years from news to regional features in February 1957 and went out of business eight months later, despite the fact that its publisher, O. D. Keep, was a former promotion manager for Time and Fortune.)

Still by the late 1950s there was no true city magazine for Los Angeles in the sense of a publication that, as Moon put it above, "concentrated its editorial content primarily on a city." There were two, however, about one hundred miles away in much smaller communities, both of which are fat and enduring to the present.

One was Palm Springs Life, dating from 1946, which was mostly devoted to chronicling country-club living in lead stories like "Palm Springs Writes Finis to a Glamorous Season" and photos with captions like "Kay and

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1 Peterson, rev. ed., p. 335.
Clark Gable settle a family 'score' at Bermuda Dunes Country Club. ¹ The contents were much like those of any other country-club magazine in the nation, except that the people portrayed were such world celebrities as Gable, William Holden, and Kirk Douglas, as well as the perennial retired Ford dealer.

The other magazine was San Diego, of which Business Week has written:

Many in the business trace the beginnings of the new city magazine to 1948, when Edwin Self and a partner started San Diego Magazine on a $2,000 shoestring. Three years later Self merged with Point Newsweekly, owned by John Victor. The combined magazine became an ever stronger liberal voice in a community left with only the conservative views of the Copley Press after the demise, in 1950, of the Democrat-oriented San Diego Journal.

"We wouldn't let them sweep news under the rug," says Self. In a predominately Republican town, Self feels his Democratic voice is heard, and needed. Self frankly explains why: "We've been right so often, have acted responsibly, and have good vision. We fight for quality and high standards in all phases of life—that's what this magazine is about."²

San Diego has adroitly balanced its politics and public service with fashion layouts; its campaign against


²"City Magazines Are the Talk of the Town," Business Week, 18 February 1967, p. 188.
high-rise buildings in La Jolla with real estate and savings-and-loan advertisements; a lead photo layout on "The Nine Most Beautiful Views in San Diego" with a cover story on "Chessman: An Interview"; and another cover story on "The Promise and Reality of Tijuana" with full-page advertisements inside for Tijuana's Agua Caliente race track, Mexicali Beer, Plaza Monumental bull ring, and Playas de Tijuana real-estate development.

This, then, was the arena that the young editor-publishers of L.A. Magazine entered with their new publication. The field of the city magazine had a long history across the nation, dating back at least to the turn of the century, and including some publications of approximately this genre in and around Los Angeles. But by the late 1950s there was no specific Los Angeles city magazine. Myron Roberts and his associates perceived a need for one -- and believed that they could fill it.

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1 San Diego, January 1960, p. 39.
2 Ibid., April 1960.
3 Ibid., July 1960.
Summary

The historical context for the arrival of *L.A.* Magazine was the conformist decade of the 1950s, with Dwight D. Eisenhower and Richard M. Nixon heading the government for the eight years leading up to and including the publication's time span. Locally, the Los Angeles scene was beginning to be shaken and shaped by forces that would divide the country at large in the 1960s--the emerging conflict between the conservative establishment and the counterculture.

In a journalistic context, the new entry in the field of the city magazine was joining a tradition dating back at least to the turn of the century, in communities across the nation from New York to Hawaii, as well as in previous Southern California publications.
CHAPTER III

FOUNDING OF L.A. MAGAZINE

Background of Editor-Publishers

The first three entries in the "About Ourselves" column of L.A. Magazine's Volume I, Number 1, summarized the background of the men at the top of the masthead -- Myron Roberts, Editor; Sasha Gilien, Executive Editor, and Lincoln Haynes, Managing Editor. The entries read:

SASHA GILIEN ("An Evening Downtown") is a teacher and author of several TV and radio scripts, recently returned from a year in Europe. Born in New York, he is a 33-year-old U.C.L.A. graduate who lives in a rambling house in the Hollywood Hills.

LINCOLN HAYNES ("World's End in Five Years?"), 34-year-old L.A. native, has been a newspaper and magazine writer since 1944. His byline has been carried by such varied media as the United Press, Theatre Arts, Mexico City News, Turf and Sport Digest and Pasadena Independent Star-News.

MYRON ROBERTS ("Decline and Fall of the Madonna-Prostitute") lives in Claremont with his wife and two daughters. L.A.-born, he has published weekly newspapers in Manhattan Beach and West Covina and currently is associate professor of English at Chaffey College.1

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1L.A., October 1958, p. 4.
These three were the founding editor-publishers of L.A., along with Roberts's wife, Estelle Caloia Roberts, who was a Contributing Editor on the first seven numbers and then became General Manager, as a fourth partner. All four had met as journalism students at Los Angeles City College in the 1940s and had been friends and associates in various projects since then.

Myron Roberts

After leaving City College, where he was introduced to his future wife by Sasha Gilien, Roberts joined the Army Air Corps during World War II. He served in the continental United States, where he moonlighted on the Savannah (Ga.) Morning News, and Hawaii, where he also was a sports writer for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

After the war he obtained his bachelor's degree in social sciences and his teaching credential from newly organized Los Angeles State College (now California State University, Los Angeles) and began teaching, first in San Diego, then in El Segundo and Torrance. Later he earned his master's degree in education, also from Los Angeles State College. Since 1956 he has taught English and journalism at Chaffey College.
The Robertses, always the partners with the business bent, had launched the Tide of Manhattan as a weekly newspaper from their Manhattan Beach home in 1954. Roberts was editor and publisher of the paper for several years before selling it at a profit to the South Bay Publishing Co.

In some ways the Tide anticipated L.A. Magazine. More than the usual weekly "shopper," it featured political and cultural commentary along with the local news items and the supermarket and appliance-store ads. Lincoln Haynes contributed drama and film criticism to the paper, and jazz musician Howard Rumsey (of Howard Rumsey's Lighthouse All-Stars) contributed knowledgeable columns on jazz. Roberts wrote a column of commentary on national affairs. This column, signed "Timon," was continued in the Hawthorne Press and several other community newspapers after he sold the Tide. (Roberts was editorial consultant to the Hawthorne Press before, during and after the L.A. Magazine period.)

Roberts moved from the South Bay area to Claremont after being appointed associate professor of English at Chaffey College, which was then located in Ontario, California. In 1957 he founded the West Covina News in
partnership with Sidney W. Brossman, a fellow instructor and now chancellor of the California Community Colleges, who also became a contributor to L.A. Magazine. Roberts sold his share in the West Covina News in 1958.

Sasha Gilien

Sasha Gilien left City College in 1943 as a 17-year-old enlistee in the Marine Corps. After in-service training at the University of Redlands, California, and in the South, he landed in Japan as a corporal in the Military Police just after the Japanese surrender and was stationed in Nagasaki and then in Saga.

Discharged in 1946, Gilien enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he was graduated two years later as a major in theater arts. He appeared in departmental productions, both on campus and on early-day television, along with such later Hollywood figures as Robert Horton, Lynn Stalmaster, Billy Barnes, and Joyce Jameson.

Like Roberts, Gilien received his teaching credential from Los Angeles State College. "I've had only one full-time job in my life," he often said, and that job was with the Los Angeles city schools, teaching in the San Fernando Valley, first at Canterbury Avenue Elementary School in
Pacoima and then as an English and journalism instructor at James Monroe High School in Sepulveda.

Gilien married and continued spare-time work in the theater, appearing on stage at the Circle Theater in Hollywood. He and Haynes collaborated in the 1940s and 1950s on several comedy and dramatic scripts aimed at radio and television (but not sold). Some of their joint early work was published in *Humorama* and *Caper* magazines.

Gilien spent a year's sabbatical leave traveling in Europe and Israel shortly before the launching of *L.A. Magazine*.

**Lincoln Haynes**

Lincoln Haynes was city editor, war editor, and columnist for the *Collegian*, the City College newspaper, and also was editor of the off-campus humor magazine *Point*. After graduation in 1943 he worked briefly as a comedy writer for the *Duffy's Tavern* series on the NBC radio network.

Haynes began professional newspaper work as a frequently fired cub reporter in downtown Los Angeles for City News Service, the old *Herald-Express*, and the old *Daily News*. In 1945, after stints as telegraph editor of the *San Pedro News-Pilot* and at the United Press
Associations, he entered the University of California, Los Angeles, and was graduated as a bachelor of arts in English two years later. He contributed to the Daily Bruin and was an editor of Scoop, the campus literary magazine. He spent the next three years as a newsman and overnight bureau manager in Los Angeles for the United Press, for which he had also worked during the summer of 1946 in San Diego.


Returning to the Los Angeles area in 1952, Haynes worked briefly as a Teletype operator for the United Press, then joined the Pasadena Independent as a copy editor. He stayed on that paper's editorial staff for seven years, before and after its purchase by Ridder Publications and merger with the Star-News. He worked there variously as court, City Hall, and general-assignment reporter, feature writer, make-up editor, country-music critic, entertainment editor, and columnist.
On the side he continued free-lance writing as a contributor to *Judge*, *8-Ball Final*, etc., and completed a novel.

**The Decision to Publish**

From both a personal and a social standpoint, the time seemed ripe in 1958 for the Robertses, Gilien, and Haynes to publish a city magazine.

All in their mid-thirties, ambitious and creative, they found themselves increasingly frustrated with the daily routines of teaching (in the cases of Myron Roberts and Gilien), keeping house (Estelle Roberts), and newspaper work (Haynes). They wanted to spread their wings over new territory, try to build an enterprise for themselves rather than continue indefinitely working for other people, and build it in the form of a medium of mass communication that would satisfy their creative urges and at the same time represent a positive contribution to society.

Myron Roberts recently recalled:

> For myself, the decision to publish the magazine was not too difficult to arrive at. It seemed to evolve naturally out of the things I had been doing. I had been in the weekly-newspaper business, reasonably successfully, and I wanted to get into the magazine business, and I felt that a regional magazine about Southern California would have an
audience and give me an outlet for some of the things I wanted to say, some of the comments I wanted to make about events. So I approached Gilien and Haynes about helping me, and they made their decision that they wanted to get in on it, too.

All of us went into this in our spare time without quitting our regular jobs, but of course the hope was that it would catch on commercially and allow us to go into it full-time.1

In the Los Angeles of that time, it seemed to the editors that a city magazine would fill both their own needs and those of the community. They envisioned a publication that would not be a precious "little" or literary magazine but would preserve some elements of that genre; one that would not be a Chamber of Commerce-type "touristy" publication, either, but that nevertheless would recognize the good things as well as the bad in Southern California. Los Angeles had always been a town on the move, constantly changing and growing, and, as suggested above, the changes were coming ever-faster in the 1950s. The editors wanted to illuminate some of those changes.

Roberts believed there are two basic motivations behind decisions to start publication of magazines. He said:

1Interview with Myron Roberts, 25 June 1974.
One reason is because somebody sees a market, an opportunity to make money in a field that has been overlooked. There have been many magazines in that tradition. I would say the most conspicuous recent ones have been magazines like *Playboy* or *Penthouse*. I understand that the guy who started *Penthouse* noticed that *Playboy* had a circulation of five million, or some such large figure, and the runner-up in the field had a circulation of like 100,000, and he thought the gap was too wide -- there was room for a competitor in between. So he just obviously copied *Playboy* and went a little further than they did, and now he has a big total -- and I don't think with any great editorial urge behind it. Hugh Hefner with *Playboy* at least probably had some ideas about pornography and the esthetics of beautiful women, but I don't think this other guy had anything in mind but that he saw an opening and moved in on it.

So that's one way to start. The other is if you have something you want to say, and you start a magazine to create a vehicle in which to say it, and hope that it achieves commercial success. And I think that was the motive for our decision to start *L.A. Magazine*.¹

Roberts believed that one of the magazine's basic ideas was to expand on the "whole suburban Los Angeles syndrome" as an important historical development. He went on:

There was something important happening here -- which, incidentally, since our magazine was published has now become widely discussed, and there have been dozens of books on this, about Los Angeles' being on the cutting edge of history,

¹ Ibid.
of the new way of life. This has been said over and over and over again now, till it's replaced the old clichés of the 1920s and '30s, that this was the City of Dreadful Joy, the sixty suburbs in search of a city. So maybe what we did was get rid of one cliché and substitute another. To some extent I think we did plant that idea, which has now become widely accepted.

What we were saying was that the whole L.A. experience or experiment was the development of a new idea in history. Basically, the Chamber of Commerce had always pushed L.A. as a fun city, pleasant climate, recreational, retirement, sort of touristy thing: You could be at the beach or the desert and look up through the orange trees at the mountains and the snow.

But we were saying no, you don't come to L.A. to retire; you come to create a whole new world. People come here and start new religions and movie studios and industries and defense plants. This isn't a place to come to get away from it all; it's a place to plunge into and get in the forefront. In a sense the destiny of the whole country is being shaped here, to some extent, for good and ill. Nixon was a product of L.A., for example, and that whole Watergate bunch were part of the Southern California way of life.

Every era has its city, supposedly. Rome had its day, and London, and New York was probably the big city of the world in the 1930s and '40s. But we thought that in the '50s it would be L.A., and we were right.1

Two conflicting trends in American society were on a collision course in the 1950s, as Roberts saw it, with the cutting edge of the conflict being honed, as usual, in

1 Ibid.
Southern California. He believed there was need for a magazine to chronicle and comment upon this evolving conflict, and he recalled:

You had, first, the Goldwater-Nixon military-industrial complex, which Los Angeles was the heart of, with burgeoning aerospace out in Orange County and the San Fernando Valley, and engineers and executives and the RAND Corp., and that whole mentality. The John Birch Society had been born, although most people thought it was kind of kooky.

Then in Hollywood and Venice, and here and there elsewhere on the west side of L.A., you had this counterculture -- although I guess we weren't calling it that then. We could see the beginnings of it. Sasha Gilien on our staff, perhaps more than the rest of us, knew a lot of these people who were ultimately getting into the beat or the hip or the alternative life styles. A lot of them were his friends, or friends of his older brother Ted, who was sort of a bohemian painter from New York -- and yet some of the guys who worked at RAND were also friends of Sasha's. And he managed to work the feel of that mix into his writing for the magazine.

So these were the two forces that were happening here, and neither one of them was widely perceived or understood in the '50s. It was just about that time that the two dominant cultures in American life were both coming to fruition in L.A. If they weren't literally born here, this is where they took hold and found support, people who would rally around.1

One further element in the decision to publish a magazine -- or, for that matter, to go into any.

1 Ibid.
new business -- suggests itself here. That is a round of consumer surveys, or marketing research, as scientific and extensive as possible, to determine the potential audience and, in the case of a periodical, advertiser acceptance of the product.

This is the standard commercial way to do things, but it was not the way of these editors. A passage from the opening issue's editorial, as quoted in Chapter I above--

"We choose to regard our readers as readers, not as a market"--is perhaps the keynote to their thinking on this score. From the first, putting out the magazine was a "seat-of-the-pants," "hunch" operation, a matter of doing what they wanted to do, "just for the hell of it."

Pressed for reasons for the decision to bypass marketing research, Roberts observed:

It just wasn't our way of doing things. We had faith in our own judgment and felt we understood the situation -- perhaps wrongly, as it turned out. But to research and pre-test has just never been our way of doing things, at the time or before or since. Among us we had a good deal of newspaper experience, including publishing, and we had confidence in our background and our abilities. We thought we knew what we were doing, so we just started.

For another thing, market pre-testing and all that, to do it scientifically, would have probably used up all our capital, with nothing left to publish what we were testing. We preferred
to spend the few thousand dollars on really doing it, sink or swim.¹

Peterson cited similar objections to audience research among some national magazine editors. After describing Curtis Publishing Company's extensive readership operations for its ill-fated magazines, he noted:

On the other hand, some staff members at Time Inc. thought such studies a threat to the experimentation that was essential if a magazine were to have vitality. Their protest was a familiar one: that the reader is incapable of imagining what he would like and therefore must vote for "what is." One staff member, in a conversation with the author, put the objection this way: "If anyone had asked the average person of a century ago what sort of home lighting he wanted, he probably would have said that he wanted a lamp that would be cleaner and that would burn less fuel and things like that. It never would have occurred to him to say that he wanted electric lights that he could click on with a switch. The same sort of thing holds true in the magazine field. It just never occurs to the average person that he might like some kinds of features or magazines until an editor with imagination tries them out on him."

Not even editors using editorial research claimed it to be a substitute for editorial judgment. Commenting on the trend toward editing by mathematical formula, Ben Hibbs of the much researched Saturday Evening Post said in 1950: "Despite all the help we get from readership surveys, I think the greatest folly an editor could commit would be to follow such indices too slavishly. . . . There are times--

¹Ibid., 8 September 1974.
and these times come almost every week—when the editor must fly in the face of known popular appeal if he is to maintain the character and responsibility of his publication."

Although some editors found research useful in starting new magazines or in keeping old ones in tune with readers' interests, perhaps the great majority found little use for it.¹

Funding of the new enterprise, and its formal organization as a California corporation, although carefully thought out, were accomplished on a limited, person-to-person basis. Total initial capital was $4,000, half invested by the Robertses and half by Estelle Roberts's brother-in-law, George Dighera, an Inglewood, California, builder and contractor. From the initials of their last names came the corporate title, D & R Publishing Co., Inc.

Roberts recalled:

I mentioned to George Dighera that we were thinking of doing it, and he seemed interested. He knew about the newspapers I'd published, and knew that they had worked out all right, and seemed to feel that this was a good risk. He felt he could afford to take a flier. He understood that it was a longshot but that if it worked it would pay off rather handsomely. So I think it interested him as a businessman to be involved in something creative, something exciting and different. As it turned out, he never got his money back; none of us did.²

¹Peterson, rev. ed., p. 117. His citation for the Hibbs quotation was: Ben Hibbs, "You Can't Edit a Magazine by Arithmetic," Journalism Quarterly 27 (Fall 1950): 371.

Gilien and Haynes contributed only their spare time and efforts and received a five per cent share each in the corporation, while Dighera got ten per cent and the Robertses forty per cent each, according to the agreement among the partners. Corporate papers were drawn up and registered with the state. 1

The First Issue

With the decision to publish made and the necessary capital raised, the partners sat down in the living room of the Roberts home in suburban Clarement--which became and remained their publishing headquarters--to plan the first issue of the magazine. It was in the spring of 1953 that their planning began, and they worked through the summer to get Volume I, Number 1, on the newsstands by early in September. During that summer Myron Roberts and Gilien were on vacation from their teaching jobs, while Haynes took his annual vacation from editorial duties on the Pasadena Independent, Star-News at the same time, in order that they might coordinate their efforts on the new publication.

1 Ibid., 14 September 1974.
The only editorial correspondence found from that summer consists of a few letters from Haynes, mostly to Myron (Mike) Roberts. Parts of this correspondence may be useful in shedding light on decisions reached as the editors correlated their activities in putting the new publication together. The first letter follows:

1815 Griffith Park Blvd.
Los Angeles 26, Cal.
June 26, 1958

Dear Mike:

Herewith the tearsheets we talked about today. I think the Pickering profile could be picked up just about verbatim and would make you a strong piece. If it wasn't too controversial for Ridder I don't see why it should be for you...

Your idea of my doing the research and interviewing on the newspaper's time and prestige (with a story for them, too) sounds like a winner, the more I think of it, and I believe I'll approach my editor on that re the country music roundup. Unfortunately, though, they've had me back on the night copy desk in recent weeks and I don't know if they'll be willing to spring me.

Call you in a few days. Meanwhile, sell and promote.

Regards to E. and the family,

Linc

1 Lincoln Haynes, personal letter. The "Pickering profile" was a feature article by Haynes ("Missileman Pickering of JPL," Pasadena Independent, Star-News, 20 April 1958, Scene sec., p. 6), which was rewritten as "World's End in Five Years?" in L.A., October 1958, p. 13. The "country music roundup" never materialized.)
On July 14 Haynes addressed a letter to his New York literary agent, Mrs. Ad Schulberg. An excerpt shows one editor's opinion of what the style of the new magazine was to be:

... A friend this summer is publishing the first issue of a literary magazine, aimed at being a sort of L.A. New Yorker. This is something often attempted but never done so far--but I'm with him, with some contributions and some editing help. If it catches fire, I have the promise of a job. 

That same day Haynes wrote Myron Roberts a letter further amplifying the editorial problems of getting the first issue together:

Dear Mike:

No doubt Gilien has brought you up to date on my travails with the lowly mumps, which hit July 1 and will still keep me off work and off my feet for another week. Will have to fill you in with the hilarious details later.

Sasha tells me you are proceeding apace with the magazine, and herewith is my promised fiction contribution. I want you to know this is no dog off the back shelf but a sparkling yarn which rated a personal letter of rejection from the Saturday Evening Post. They said, "The story is very light and, from our viewpoint, the fact that it more or less condones gambling is a handicap." I'm gratified that those eastern taboos don't bother us.

1 Lincoln Haynes, personal letter.

2 Roberts, too, rejected the story.
I also scouted two of my best writer friends for material. One is frequent Holiday contributor Ray Duncan,¹ who promised to scour his files for any new material that might be suitable. He also gave you his permission to reprint his smog article from that all-L.A. issue for a minimal sum. The rest is up to Holiday. He doesn't know their policy on magazine reprints but says they've previously given free permission to reprint his stuff in books. The man to write would be his friend Harry Sions, Editorial Director, Holiday Magazine, Independence Square, Philadelphia 5, Pa. The article was "Pollution in Paradise" in the October 1957 issue, and it's an excellent tongue-in-cheek job.

The other man I approached was my boss, Bill Sumner, a very funny columnist.² He promised to get together four or five of his best pieces and see if you would be interested.

My illness has of course postponed work on a couple of articles which I hoped to drum up -- in fact, I had my boss' assignment for one and had made the initial phone contacts. Now, with you doubtless pretty much in shape for the first issue, in re contributions, I guess I'll let it go till after my vacation. . . .

My vacation, by the way, is Aug. 3-23. I figure this should be just about the time you're getting the first issue to bed, and I hope to take an active part with you in the final editing and production then. Okay?

Fill me in, Mike, and hello to Estelle, et al.,

Linc³

¹ Currently a television news-feature broadcaster for KNBC, Channel 4, Los Angeles. L.A. never used his material.
² Then as now an editor and columnist for the Ridder newspapers. L.A. never used his material.
³ Lincoln Haynes, personal letter.
Later that month another Haynes-to-Roberts letter indicated consideration of a possible broadening of the magazine's appeal to embrace Northern, as well as Southern, California -- a consideration which was dropped, although some later issues of the magazine were on sale in San Francisco. The letter read:

July 25, 1958

Dear Mike:

Hope this finds you folks returning from a nice refreshing weekend at Big Sur. I'm awaiting your call for the get-together with Russ Burton, an occasion that may well rival the first meeting of Harold Ross and E. B. White.

Enclosed is a column by my boss, which I mentioned to you. I think it has just the right tongue-in-cheek approach to gracious California living.

A key point mentioned by Russ Burton which I must pass on to you is this:

Aside from the possible miffing of Pasadena, etc., by the title "LA," he brings up a new vista I hadn't considered and wonder if you have: the San Francisco market.

He says he handled promotion for a couple of publishers once and learned that there are more books sold in SF than in LA, even with one-quarter the population, and feels the same would hold true with a magazine like ours. He thinks if properly promoted up there it would have as wide a circulation there as here--but of course the "LA" title

1A California playwright and film writer.
would make that very tough. I know it's late to make a major shift in emphasis, but he thinks it would be worthwhile to seriously consider broadening the accent to California or the West rather than strictly LA area.

Also, how about the story I showed you blasting the California teacher-credential setup? You took one glance, said it was good and handed it back. There are some big names in there, backing this petition, and it might make a strong story...

Thus, in person, by telephone, and by correspondence, the partners compared views, argued, accepted, rejected, and hammered out the editorial and publishing decisions involved in getting out the first issue.

The idea that this might be "a sort of L.A. New Yorker," as hazarded in the Haynes-to-Schulberg letter above, was quickly scotched by Myron Roberts. In the lead editorial of Volume I, Number 1, he wrote specifically: "We will not be smart and sophisticated, like the New Yorker. The New Yorker already exists." And he repeated recently:

We were very--I was, at least--very much aware that the New Yorker image would not do for us.

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1 By Gustav Albrecht, teacher-musician who later became music critic for L.A., although the story here referred to was not used.

2 Lincoln Haynes, personal letter.
Everybody would say, "Oh, you're trying to do a West Coast version of the New Yorker." And I would say, "No, no, that's not what we're doing." But nevertheless it was the standard against which, maybe, you had to be measured.¹

The decision on how much to pay for contributions out of the magazine's meager capital was an agonizing one. The editors decided early to take nothing for themselves until the profits started rolling in -- a day which never arrived. But they agreed that, in the interests of professionalism, some payment should be made for all free-lance contributions.

Roberts recalled:

For the first few issues, we paid perhaps $25 or $50 each for stories and art, but toward the end we were paying only $5 or $10. We had quite a lot of discussion on this at first. We all agreed we wanted to pay what we could, but I was for holding the line, and Haynes, as I recall, wanted to pay going commercial rates. Not New Yorker rates, but maybe $100 or $200, which was more than I felt we could afford and still keep above water. I don't think he was very hip to the business part of it.²

As the partners got the magazine's contents together, their work seemed to divide itself naturally along the lines of their individual interests. As Editor and Publisher, Myron Roberts made the final decisions, handled

¹Interview with Myron Roberts, 25 June 1974.
²Ibid.
most of the production, advertising, circulation, and business problems, and specialized in writing and editing the editorials, essays, political articles, and "think" pieces. Estelle Roberts did much of the graphics and lay-out work (she designed the L.A. nameplate), wrote the Calendar section and occasionally other editorial contributions, and supervised the office routine. Gilien and Haynes concentrated on fiction and coverage of the arts, and Haynes handled most of the copy editing.

"Probably, had I run it all by myself, I would not have had fiction at all," Roberts said. "But I wasn't against it, and the others seemed to want it, so we ran the best we could find."¹

As the editorial content took shape, a few advertisements were sold—most of them by Myron Roberts to contacts he had made as a newspaper publisher and through George Dighera. The complete advertising schedule in the first issue of forty pages (including covers) was: Cover 2, Modern Trend Construction Co.; Cover 3, house promotion; Cover 4, Merit Homes; Page 1, Pen and Quill Restaurant, full page; Page 4, Sterling Liquor, 1 column by 5 inches;

¹ Ibid.
When the time came to make a decision on production facilities for the magazine, the partners cast about for a print shop that would give them the optimum combination of low price and high quality. They finally decided on an obscure offset shop, specializing in small magazines, which the surviving partners recall only as being located on Washington Boulevard near downtown Los Angeles. They do not remember the name of the shop or its proprietor, but only that they dealt most closely there with an Oriental printer named John, who helped them with the paste-up process, then still relatively unfamiliar to newspapermen acquainted primarily with "hot type."

What Myron Roberts does remember is that the cost for composing, printing, and stapling the first issue—printed, as were all the subsequent numbers, on slick-paper stock—was approximately $2,000, or half their original working capital. (A few more dollars had filtered in from advance subscriptions and advertising.)

"That printing job was way overpriced by our standards," Roberts said.1

1 Ibid.
Volume I, Number 1, as it was finally dummied by the partners in the Roberts living room and delivered to the printer, reflected a division of labor typical of the first few issues.¹

Myron Roberts topped the masthead as Editor. (He expanded the title to "Editor and Publisher" on Numbers 2 through 7, then dropped back to "Editor" alone, but could not in 1974 recall any particular reasons for, or significance in, the changes.²)

In order to avoid scattering too many of their own bylines through the pages, the editors signed not only their own names but also their initials and various pen names to different contributions through the months, as well as writing some unsigned pieces.

Thus in Volume I, Number 1, Myron Roberts wrote the unsigned lead editorial (as he did all subsequent editorials), "The Democrat Faces Life" by "Stewart Sargent," "Decline and Fall of the Madonna-Prostitute" (signed by Roberts), "Rebel Without a Mind" by "Paul R. Dewey," "First Epistle to the Hollywoodians" by "M.R.," and "Damn the Commuters--Full Speed Ahead" by "Ed Portland."

¹See Appendix for complete listings.
Executive Editor Sasha Gilien wrote the dining-out column under his own name and in subsequent issues contributed the "L.A. Notebook" columns, under both his own name and that of "Junipero."

And Managing Editor Lincoln Haynes wrote "World's End in Five Years?" under his own name and "Short, Cool Summer," a column of theater notes, under the by-line "Archer Curtis."

Contributing Editors for October 1958 were Estelle Roberts; her sister, Jean Parham, who wrote fashion notes; the late Bob Reuben, former Reuter's and National Broadcasting Co. war correspondent, who wrote the first "Around Town" column and whose Manhattan Beach restaurant, the Pen and Quill, ran a full-page advertisement; and Joe Rothstein, publicist and newsman associated with Myron Roberts on the Hawthorne Press, who contributed feature articles, including "The Curse of Chavez Ravine," on the city's controversial land deal with the Dodgers, in the first issue.

The Art Director was Joseph Mignaini, noted Altadena artist who was a lifelong friend of backer George Dighera. Mignaini also did the cover for the first issue, a helicopter's-eye view of a well-to-do Southland neighborhood in black and white plus the dramatic blues of the
backyard swimming pools.

Staff Artist Saul Bernstein, in turn, was a friend of Mugnaini. The work of many other contributing artists was obtained by Sasha Gilien, who had wide contacts in Los Angeles art circles through his own interests and through his older brother, the late Ted Gilien, a nationally known painter who contributed covers and much other art work during the run of the magazine.

Jean Pascal was the first of several advertising managers and salespersons during the months that the magazine carried advertisements.

"They'd float in from Beverly Hills or wherever, with a 'great idea' for selling ads, or a tie-in promotion, or something," Roberts explained. "We'd tell them to give it a try--on commission, of course--and they'd float away and, likely as not, never be heard from again."¹

Poet Bert Meyers, whose work was featured on a full page in the first issue, was an old City College friend of the editors.

The most "commercial," popular, and publicized piece in the first issue, and the one that put L.A. on the map

¹ Interview with Myron Roberts, 7 September 1974.
immediately, was the article "A Plague on TV Critics" by the late Tom Duggan. The editors featured it on the cover with the "teaser" line "Tom Duggan Blasts T.V. Critics," and their emphasis was not misplaced. The city's television critics, "blasted" by the handsome broadcaster in the article (which was illustrated by a smiling photo of him captioned "Duggan tees off"), struck back in their newspaper columns. The resulting publicity for the magazine seems to have been the major factor in its initial sales success.

Myron Roberts recalled:

Duggan conducted one of the first and most controversial of the TV talk shows, and, although I didn't agree with his politically conservative views, I thought he and his show had charm, style and wit. I'd written an article along this line for the Hawthorne Press, and Duggan got a lot of letters and favorable publicity from it. He felt that he owed me a favor, so when I called and asked him to do this piece for us, he said, "Sure."

It was apparently Duggan's article, and the press reaction which it provoked, that made the first issue a sellout. Indeed, as Roberts recalled it, the Duggan story was what won the magazine acceptance on the newsstands.

He said:

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1 Interview with Myron Roberts, 15 September 1974.
Before the magazine was printed, we went to Arthur Kates at Sunset News Co. and asked if he wanted to distribute it to the stands around town. He said: "I'll tell you what, boys. Take your money and go to Las Vegas. You'll have a much better chance." He wouldn't take the magazine at all, and we finally went out and got it on a few stands ourselves, along with the subscription and promotional copies we sent out.

Then the TV critics read the Duggan piece and counterattacked, with columns in every major metropolitan newspaper, and we got a tremendous deluge of publicity. As I recall, we had printed 7,500 or so of the first issue. Then Kates called us and said: "I'm getting a tremendous demand for the magazine from all over the city. Can you get me another 5,000 or so?" So we printed another 5,000, or something like that.

Meanwhile Duggan counterattacked on his television program, so there was this war going on between Duggan and the TV critics, and taking place in our magazine. As a result, it was the hottest-selling magazine in L.A. for about two weeks. We sold out completely, and the first issue was a big hit, basically because of that.

Oh, people liked the magazine in general—their response was very good—it got good reviews from Bob Kirsch\(^1\) and from people who generally liked it. But because of that Tom Duggan's cover story we were kind of an instant success.\(^2\)

And L.A. was on its way.

Summary

The founding editors of L.A. Magazine in 1958 were

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\(^1\) Book critic of the Los Angeles Times.

\(^2\) Interview with Myron Roberts, 15 September 1974.
four friends who had met as Los Angeles City College journalism students: Myron Roberts, Editor and Publisher; his wife, Estelle Caloia Roberts, Contributing Editor and later General Manager; Sasha Gilien, Executive Editor, and Lincoln Haynes, Managing Editor. Their decision to publish the magazine was based on perceived needs, both for personal fulfillment and for a magazine which would illuminate the clash between conservative and counter-culture life styles which was then beginning in Southern California.

With $4,000 of pooled capital the partners set to work writing, buying, and editing their material, developing policy, arranging for printing, and, with the help of an exploitable cover article by popular broadcaster Tom Duggan, securing distribution and a sellout of Volume I, Number 1. This seemed to indicate that their analyses and major decisions to that point had been correct and their initial publication successful.
CHAPTER IV

PUBLISHING PROBLEMS AND DECISIONS

Once L.A. Magazine was launched with a sellout first issue, the editors faced a multitude of continuing problems and decisions as they published the second and succeeding numbers. Many of these involved their efforts to find and conserve the time and money needed to put the magazine on a permanent, paying basis.

After full involvement with the first three issues (through December 1958), Lincoln Haynes dropped active participation in the venture and moved to Japan as a copy editor on the Pacific Stars and Stripes in Tokyo. Before leaving California he wrote to Myron Roberts:

Jan. 17, 1959

Dear Mike:

Enclosed is something I found under the seat of my car when I went to clean it out to put in seat covers. Probably something I was supposed to take to the printer's six months ago.

Also found, same place, Irv Fang's funny poem, which I returned to him.¹

¹Irving Fang, then on the editorial staff of the Pasadena Independent, Star-News, is now a professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota.
Am reading the fourth issue, which shall be monthless, and it looks mighty smooth so far—all except my name on the masthead. Hate to take credit for something I didn't do. Sasha assures me you'll take it down next time. I'll be happy to stay on as contributing editor, as I told you, if you wish, since I do hope to contribute more if you'll have me, if you wish to maintain a continuity of names on the masthead. But not M.E.²

In a letter to Haynes in Tokyo a few months later, Sasha Gilien summarized in colorful style the ongoing challenges faced by the editors back home. It read:

6-12-59

Dear Lincoln--

...We're still in business... In fact, things look pretty fair. Our last issue (#6) is being very well received—subs coming in from all over, lots of nice mail—though we had one bitchy one which ended off "...and the vilest of all is Sasha Gilien," I hope you're getting them—we mail one to you each time.

Notice the large amount of ads—all paid ones, too. Our back cover is quite a coup—Mike seems to have charmed Alice Tanner, the boss lady at Tanner Gray Line—and she'll possibly be our back cover for years to come.³ Still, as you'll notice, certain roughness about the printing—but we think next time we'll have beaten that huckaboo. We've really cut expenses to the bare bone and we feel that we are very close to breaking thru to profit-land (we break even now). A-TV show for us in the offfing—but I won't say any more about that until more concrete developments arise.

¹Volume I, Number 4, was undated.
²Lincoln Haynes, personal letter.
³The arrangement lasted for just two issues.
The rest of the time I'm so tired that I conk out or I'm chasing ads and in several [ways] doing the Lord's work. . . . This summer . . . Mike has a rigorous campaign of ad-selling (ugh!) mapped out for us. . . . 1

This letter pointed up the various departments of the publishing enterprise which needed constant attention, in addition to the editorial operation, whose attendant decisions are treated elsewhere in this study. These other pressure points included advertising, production, circulation, and promotion, which will now be considered in turn.

Advertising

The failure of the promise of the Tanner Gray Line advertising arrangement to develop into a long-range deal, as mentioned in the Gilien letter and footnote below, was perhaps typical of this facet of the L.A. operation. The fact is that the partners considered themselves basically writers and editors, not salespersons or advertising people or promoters, and they tended to resent and/or resist the necessity to pursue "a rigorous campaign of ad-selling (ugh!)," as graphically put in Gilien's letter.

1Sasha Gilien, personal letter.
Haynes refused outright to solicit advertising and made this a condition of his participation; Gilien obviously agreed only reluctantly to do so. Myron Roberts was the only real salesman among them, having successfully drummed up advertising for the weekly newspapers which he had published in Manhattan Beach and West Covina, and before that having had extensive experience in retail sales. But he hated it, always hoping that, as he put it in the interview quoted in Chapter III, somebody new would "float in from Beverly Hills or wherever, with a 'great idea' for selling ads" which would prove to be a successful formula and take the burden off his shoulders. But this never happened.

Therefore the enterprise struggled on from month to month with only a modest schedule of advertising, almost all of it obtained by Myron Roberts, and some of it obviously tied in with editorial copy or constituting part of an exchange agreement.

Roberts estimated that, even with the low rate of (as he remembers it) five dollars a column inch—and lower by the page—advertising never covered more than 25 percent of expenses.

1 Interview with Myron Roberts, 25 September 1974.
The following table shows the magazine's advertising schedule for its first ten issues, with the page totals including the four covers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue No.</th>
<th>Total Pages</th>
<th>Pages of Ads</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3 1/3</td>
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<td>10</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus it may be seen that, after the initial expenditure of time and effort to sell advertising for the first issue, the lineage total dropped off for the next several numbers. Another determined drive was mounted for the period covering issues 5 through 8 (March through October 1959), which included the "rigorous campaign of ad-selling" during the summer referred to in Gilien's letter above.

It will be noted that it was in these four issues that the advertising total hit its peak, averaging around $5\frac{1}{2}$ pages per thirty-two-page issue, for an average of
approximately 17 percent advertising. It then began to trail off again in succeeding numbers.

As an indication of how deficient this advertising program was, the total may be compared with the advertising volume of the present Los Angeles Magazine. The September 1974 issue of Los Angeles carried seventy-six pages of advertising in its 136 total pages, for a 56 percent advertising total. Thus, during its peak advertising months, L.A. carried less than one-third the advertising volume which Los Angeles ran in a typical recent issue. And, while the present Los Angeles advertising schedule includes full-color pages from prestige accounts such as Lincoln Continental, Tiffany & Co., Jaguar, and Van Cleef & Arpels, L.A. Magazine boasted Tanner Gray Line, briefly, as perhaps its most prestigious advertiser.

Full-page advertisers in L.A. during this ten-issue period (mostly in black and white, but occasionally with one more color) were Modern Trend Construction Co., Pen and Quill Restaurant, Merit Homes, International Cafe, Nutone Products, Wendt Publications, Tectron Records, Property Management Corp., Tanner Gray Line, California

1 Los Angeles, September 1974.
Legal Publishers, KPFK-FM, and Diners' Club.

Some of the advertisements were trade-offs and exchanges, particularly those of other media, such as radio station KPFK-FM and San Francisco and Coastlines magazines. The advertising was reciprocal.

Finally, after a losing battle of a year and a half to build advertising volume to a profitable level, the editors announced in Volume I, Number 11, that they would henceforth attempt to publish without advertising. The declaration read in part:

With this issue L.A. Magazine launches an experiment which, quite frankly, we have been considering for a long time. We are going to try to dispense with advertising. The few ads which appear on these pages are the results of commitments made before this policy was resolved.

Advertising is not inherently wicked. There is a place for it in contemporary America. But we are not convinced that L.A. Magazine is that place. And we should like to begin our explanation by acknowledging our appreciation for those loyal, even courageous, business firms which helped keep this magazine alive during its first months of publication by risking their money in an uncertain medium.

For the fact is that if you are going to have advertising, there is probably no way to avoid a tendency to turn the volume up for emphasis, a certain light-hearted attitude toward the strict truth and a certain passionate dedication to the cliche—all of which, we feel, distract from our impeccable editorial content.

A long time ago the American people were sold on the simple proposition that their
newspapers, magazines, radio and t.v. stations could be made larger, more attractive and less costly to the consumer through the gracious subsidy of advertising. For a considerable period of time—so long as the media and client were dealing face to face—this was true. Enter then the advertising agency with a need to justify its own existence through "scientific selection of media" and the race for the mass audience was on. At this point advertising ceased to be a simple pronouncement of certain kinds of goods and services currently available, and developed a mystique all its own. A mystique which inevitably drove the media competing for agency blessing to a child-like simplicity of mind and language, a tendency to panic at the slightest hint of a controversial or original idea, coupled with a yen for Big Dealing and loud colors.

And so we have decided to find out for ourselves whether or not we can do without advertising—with expressions of regret and a sincere vote of thanks to those whose ads have helped get us to a point where such an experiment is possible.

We think we can rely upon the intelligence of our readers to understand the full implications of this gesture for the future development of the magazine. And we await their reaction, both in the form of letters and subscriptions, with high interest.1

As a corollary, the price was raised the next issue from thirty-five to fifty cents a copy and from $3.50 to five dollars for twelve issues.2 And, although the masthead had changed from "published monthly" to "bi-monthly"

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in June 1959, this word was dropped in October 1959, and the magazine was actually published only four times in 1960.

Looking back in 1974 on the major shift in concept involved in dropping advertising, Myron Roberts saw it as part of the magazine's search for an identity or image—"a way of being undergroundy and more Free Pressy, although we didn't use those terms then."

He went on:

We wanted to make a clear-out distinction between ourselves and the regular magazines, and one way of doing it was to drop advertising. It didn't occur to us to run porno movie ads.

Plus the fact that it was a constant struggle to get an ad salesman--either that or go out and sell myself, which I didn't want to do--and then it was hard to collect.

And we realized after a while that the establishment people were simply not going to buy any advertising from us. Here and there I'd go out and talk to a person who owned a business, and they would say, "Yeah, I'll run an ad--why don't you go check with my ad agency?" You'd go to the agency, and you'd find that they would not want to do it; in one way or another would manage to kill it. They tended to be more easily frightened, I think, than the owners of the businesses, and more worried about doing something unconventional like advertising with us.

The Tanner Gray Line account was the prime example of that. Ms. Tanner wanted to stay with us, but her agency man kept squawking until he killed it. He just didn't approve. After all,
they worked on a 15 percent commission, and it would cost them just as much to make up an ad for us as for the Times, which would bring them a far higher fee.

Incidentally, those editorials were fairly frank about the decision-making process. I guess one of our decisions was to be very candid and very open with our readers about the magazine—to try to get them to feel like members of the family, and that they were involved in it.

The no-advertising editorial was frank enough to provoke an angry retort from a western outpost of Madison Avenue. In a letter published in the next issue, President Roderick A. Mays of the Western States Advertising Agencies Assn., Inc., wrote:

...I should like to correct a statement in your inside cover editorial referring to advertising agencies. Your claim that it is they who have stirred up the once untroubled waters which existed between advertisers and media is unrealistic...

The tendency in recent years to criticize advertising agencies as the parties chiefly responsible for almost any element of the social system with which one is finding fault, has itself become an intellectual cliche. I urge you to eschew it as beneath the analytical capacity of thoughtful comment, and well beyond the boundary lines of truth.

As for advertising itself and your opinion of "the distractions of merchandising," I find it interesting to note that you have used the magazine's prime advertising position, the back

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cover, and the advertising techniques of illustration, typographic display, and the imperative mode, when you ask for your own subscription orders.¹

This in turn was followed by a reply from Myron Roberts, who wrote:

...We were unaware that the advertising industry has some proprietary [sic] rights over "illustration, typographic display, and the imperative mode," anymore than writers have dibs on the use of sentences...

As Mr. Mays probably knows, or could have guessed, L.A. did in fact welcome, even seek, advertising for a considerable period of time. We were routinely informed by most agency men...that what was wanted was a more commercial "package." Having accepted the logic of this argument, we take it hard that you still don't seem to like us. We think both the Western States Advertising Association and the readers of L.A. Magazine will be happier, less resentful of one another, if it turns out that a magazine like this can survive without you. That way you won't be blamed for stifling literature, and we won't be blamed for being insufficiently "commercial." To this noble end, we suggest Mr. Mays can help by urging his membership to subscribe at once...²

The change itself was finally "advertised" in a cover line, "No Advertising," on what proved to be the last issue.³

²Ibid.
Production

After printing L.A. during the first few months at the little shop on Washington Boulevard mentioned in Chapter III, the editors shifted in subsequent months to other printers and methods in a constant effort to lower production costs. The files of the magazine, with their variations in type faces and quality of printing and paper, reflect these repeated changes.

Myron Roberts elaborated:

We shopped around and finally beat the price down to $600 from the original $2,000—including typesetting, printing, paper, binding, everything. We'd go to different places, get this done here and that done there, schlepping everything around in the trunk of our car, including the finished magazines. One reason we were able to survive on so little money was that we learned how to do it cheaply.

Eventually we learned to do the paste-ups ourselves for the last year or so—right at this little glass coffee table here, with a lamp underneath to make it a light table. At one point we hired a girl to set the type on an IBM, and took it someplace else for printing.

And that Copy Girl outfit that advertised with us—they were printers, as I recall. We started out looking for an angel who would support us in the style that we wanted to become accustomed to, and what we found instead were some

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printers looking for jobs. So we'd make a deal with them. They would print our magazine, or maybe do the typesetting, at a cheaper rate, and we'd give them an ad, or we'd plug them, or whatever.  

Circulation

The editors tried every device they could think of, short of spending much money, to increase the magazine's circulation. But it never again reached the peak of the first issue, boosted as that had been by the Tom Duggan article described in Chapter III above.

Stapled into almost every copy was a standard postage-free business-reply card for subscriptions, at an opening rate of $3.50 for twelve issues, or one dollar for three issues, to match the thirty-five-cent cover price.

In addition, various advertisements, editorials, and promotional inducements to increase readership were tried from time to time. There were advertisements for carrier boys "to establish regular routes selling single copies and subscriptions" and for women to "earn extra income selling subscriptions."  

Neither idea elicited enough response to pursue it.

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1 Interview with Myron Roberts, 25 June 1974.

Other promotions included an offer to evaluate an article, a story or poetry free with each new subscription; testimonials from columnists Matt Weinstock, Robert Kirsch, and others in a full-page advertisement offering the first five back issues free with each new subscription; an offer of ten free Christmas cards with each subscription, etc. Estelle Roberts recalled that these offers produced "quite a few" subscriptions.

The monthly house advertisements seeking subscriptions would frequently be entitled "The Commercial" and would feature some wry manifestations of the Myron Roberts style of writing. One of the most imaginative was a lighthearted self-satire, which Roberts said he wrote after a "joint bull session" with his partners, and which included the following passages:

...The scene opens upon the topmost floor of The L.A. Magazine Building. Everything is lovely. The place glows with an air of intense activity. Beautiful young women and bright young men are seated at desks or moving about

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1 *L.A.*, June 1959, p. 29.
3 *L.A.*, October 1959, p. 31.
purposefully and yet gracefully. Telephones are ringing. Enter--The Editor, a Luce-like figure, Olympian and yet touched by humility. There is a momentary hush. The Editor speaks: "Your Orders," he says quietly, "Today Southern California, tomorrow the world!"

...Then a beautiful and gracious lady comes in, swathed in mink and French perfume. "It's the Boss' Wife." She is known to be a woman of strong feelings, generous and compassionate, and yet dreadful when angered. She pauses by the desk of one of the young girls and glances casually at her work. "Why, that's very good" she says in a rich, melodious voice. "Did you know that only a little while back I was typing address cards myself?"

...It is approaching noon and the Executive Editor waddles in. Through the too great success of his dining out column he now weighs 250 pounds. He enters grandly, takes in the scene, removes his cape, and raises his gloved hand in the direction of a beautiful brunette with a touch of the dreamer about her eyes. "You there," he says in a voice heavy with dissipation, "make arrangements for lunch at Romanoff's. You may join me if you wish, my dear."

...The scene depicted above is not yet. Chances are it never will be. What we will settle for, at the moment, is a publication which occupies a quiet corner of this metropolis where we can unpack our psychological suitcases and tend our literary gardens.

If you are of like mind, we invite you to overcome your timidity, lay aside your deep-rooted suspicions which are probably absolutely justified, tear out the enclosed card and send us your subscription. 1

Two further innovations to increase circulation were mentioned by Sasha Gilien in a letter to Lincoln Haynes in Tokyo, dated 30 September 1959:

... This current issue of the mag seems to be selling well so far—and we're sending 300 copies to Frisco as a pilot. We might do better up there. Still a struggle, but we break even every issue—so we'll see. Oh yes—we're having the first of L.A. magazine sponsored "salons" the 11th of Oct. and if we can get people to give these regularly we should increase our circ. no end. ... 1

Myron Roberts reported that neither of these ideas resulted in enough new circulation to be worth continuing.

He explained:

The salons were great fun, and we realized afterward that we'd provided a great party for a lot of people, but it hadn't done the magazine any significant good, except in a vague P.R. way. We gave two—one at our house in Claremont and the other at the Pen and Quill Restaurant in Manhattan Beach. Gus Albrecht 2 was playing the piano, and Sasha was reading poetry, and the people drank the liquor and had a good time and said "Thank you" and left. And we were not at a place where we could really afford that kind of vague P.R. People had to buy subscriptions. We had hoped to sell enough subscriptions to at least pay for the party; maybe a little extra. We were recognizing that the subscriptions, which had started out in the early days at fifteen, twenty, thirty a day, voluntarily through the mail, had dwindled down to one or two a day. 3

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1 Sasha Gilien, personal letter.
2 The magazine's music critic.
Estelle Roberts recalled that, socially, the salons were a "tremendous success." She said:

For the first one, we had Abbey Rents with silver trays and champagne glasses, and thought we would make it very elegant. Champagne flowing like wine, and all. The second one wasn't quite as good, but it was quite a crowd at the Pen and Quill, and everybody helped. We made hors d'oeuvres, and they were supposed to make some money off the bar.¹

Aside from these salons, the circulation work was a matter of Gilien and the Robertses, month after month, trundling bundles of magazines from the printers to the distributors for newsstand sales, and to the Roberts house for labeling, bundling and mailing to subscribers.

For example, Estelle Roberts said:

Once Sasha picked up all the magazines in L.A. and had to take them to our house on a very hot day. We were all ready to go to Las Vegas the next morning, so we wanted to make sure and get that magazine out that night.

Then his car broke down on Kellogg Hill, and he called Mike, and they were gone a long time, and when they finally got there at seven or eight o'clock we had to call everybody in to help get the magazine out. We wouldn't dream of going to Las Vegas the next day unless we had. And Sasha

was very warm and very upset about lugging all those magazines in the car.1

Despite all their efforts, circulation (which Myron Roberts estimated was about evenly divided between newsstands and subscriptions) remained disappointingly low after the first number's sale of some twelve thousand. The circulation figure given in his ownership statement on the last page of the last issue told the story. It listed the average number of copies sold during the twelve preceding months as 4,178,2 although Myron Roberts believed that total distribution averaged about 5,500.

Publicity and Promotion

The first splash of publicity, for the Tom Duggan article in Volume I, Number 1, was not the last. The editors continued to garner considerable coverage for themselves and the magazine in the mass media, both print and electronic, and they supplemented this with internal promotions such as the salons, a short-story contest with leading Los Angeles book critics Robert Kirsch and Rex Barley as judges,3 and a photo competition.4

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1 Ibid.
Gilien, writing to Haynes in the aforementioned letter of 30 September 1959, summarized a few of the media "breaks" that the magazine was getting at that period:

... Sidney Skolsky quoted about a column of my article on method acting in his column in the Citizen-News and I received a few clippings from the N.Y. Post where it is also carried—rather whizzo, I'd say. Also—Tom Duggan invited me to be a guest on his T.V. show—I appeared, and we went round & round for about 15 minutes—they said I looked good in the close-ups! To close the file on "communication media" I had my own little show on station KPFK (the subscription FM with a high I.Q.). I read off the week's calendar of cultural events every Monday at 5:30 for 15 mins. but gave it up after 5 shots because of the no-pay and the press of time....


Smith, in the course of some fifteen column inches about the Tom Duggan contribution and the magazine, said in part:

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2Sasha Gilien, personal letter.
I hope Mr. Duggan wrote it himself because it is very well written and very, very funny. .

Incidentally, the new magazine seems a bright little publication and I wish it luck. However, Los Angeles has been over the years a terrible graveyard for magazines. .

L.A. also received frequent mentions through the months from other Times columnists, including Gene Sherman, Robert Kirsch, and Joan Winchell, as well as much additional coverage in other newspapers, including those already mentioned and such dailies as the Pomona Progress-Bulletin, Culver City Star-News, and Ontario-Upland Daily Report, in addition to many community weeklies.

In the Herald-Express, television writer Bob Krauch welcomed the magazine with four paragraphs which quoted from the Tom Duggan article but did not name him:

"L.A.," new Southern California magazine which could become a Southland counterpart of the recent Fortnight publication, will debut on local newsstands this month with an article blasting TV critics. .

The author, in part, comments on video reviewers:

"If they could write, their newspapers would find work for them on the 'city side.' If they could understand what they are criticizing, they

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would be invaluable to the television industry and be part of it. But as they can neither write nor understand, they remain where they are, doing whatever it is they are doing—overpaid and under-worked.

After careful study of the new magazine—and this article—it appears there is a definite future (for the magazine). "L.A.," though the publication needs more refinement, may well fill a literary void in the Southland.¹

A short while later Matt Weinstock noted in the *Mirror-News*: "The new magazine 'L.A.' has sold out at many newsstands and gone into a second printing."²

Robert Kirsch, the *Times* book editor, noted the arrival of *L.A.* along with that of the elaborate, book-bound, $3.95-priced *Horizon Magazine*. About *L.A.*, he wrote:

The second new magazine is a much more modest affair devoted to Southern California. It is *L.A.*, edited by Myron Roberts, priced at 35 cents. In its prospectus *L.A.* says that it will attempt to record and illuminate significant ideas, events and persons in this area. There is no question of the need for a good regional magazine. The question is whether Los Angeles will support it. *L.A.* has made an excellent start in this direction. The writing is sharp and lucid, the design and format attractive. My one disappointment was in the field of fiction. The editors had to reach back two decades to find a good short story,


John Fante's "Helen, Thy Beauty Is to Me--," and that is not a promising sign of this area's cultural maturity.1

Regarding Kirsch's complaint about the lack of new fiction, it may be noted that L.A. published his own short story "The Eulogist" in the third issue, for December 1958, as is mentioned elsewhere in this study. Kirsch wrote about the intervening November issue:

SECOND ISSUE of the magazine L.A. is now on the newsstands, much improved typographically and nicely illustrated with pen and ink drawings. There is an excellent story, "Copenger's Toes," by Harold Brooks Warde. Standout essay on suburbia by Myron Roberts.2

Roberts summarized:

Kirsch and Weinstock, in particular, gave us many good plugs. And we got a lot of radio and television exposure. There was Sasha's show on KPFK, and we were on the Tom Duggan show many times, which was sort of the big talk show of the day then. And we were practically regulars on one of the local TV shows called The Press and the Clergy, the format being that newspaper people would interview clergymen. Sasha was on several times, and I was, and Estelle on occasion. So we didn't feel that the media were ignoring us.3


2 Ibid., 27 October 1958.

Summary

With the magazine launched, the editors confronted new and continuing problems and decisions in the fields of advertising, production, circulation, and promotion, in addition to their primary editorial function.

Advertising was dropped after Volume I, Number 11, after a losing battle of a year and a half to build its volume to a profitable level. Production was shifted from printer to printer in a constant effort to lower costs, which were reduced from $2,000 to $600 an issue, with the editors themselves finally learning to paste up the pages to camera-readiness.

Circulation never maintained the peak level hit by the sellout opening number and averaged 4,178 per issue for the last twelve months, despite contests, salons, gift offers, and other inducements. In publicity and promotion, the editors and the magazine achieved good media exposure in the Los Angeles Times, in many other local newspapers, and on radio and television.
CHAPTER V

THE DECISION TO SELL

Final Attempts at Economic Viability

As the months and years wore on, the partners became increasingly restless at the routine of "working for nothing"—of devoting most of their time to a venture that was paying them no salary or dividends but barely breaking even.

They had tried without success every measure that seemed feasible to make the magazine profitable—to increase advertising and circulation, and/or to attract a substantial backing of outside capital. Still, while L.A. continued to attract interest and seemed to hold commercial promise for future years, for the present it apparently was becalmed.

As Myron Roberts remembered the situation, income and expenses had more or less balanced each other out at from $2,500 to $3,000 per issue for the first two or three months, then dropped. He said:

When our income faded to a thousand dollars an issue, where it more or less stayed after the
first months, we cut expenses to match—by beating down the printers' prices, shopping around, cutting corners wherever we could. I was trying to come as close as possible to breaking even, from issue Number 1. I felt that the important thing was to last; that if we got the magazine out, and if we didn't go broke, this angel that I kept expecting to come flying in would find us, and then we'd be able to do all these things we talked about doing—get a real office, pay going rates for contributions, and eventually start making some money.1

Some of the parallel efforts at continued publication on a skimpy budget and at tracking down leads for sources of adequate capitalization were described in Sasha Gilien's letter of 8 February 1960 to Lincoln Haynes. It read in part:

. . . We're still in there, pitching away. I was definitely offered this job in Spain, but I'm turning it down—I want to see this magazine thing through one way or the other. Sales definitely are rising on all fronts and we feel pretty solid about it.

This evening Mike and I are to have dinner with a Pasadena millionaire and maybe we'll be able to line up a buck or two of capital and really go out & sell the thing as it should be sold. All the circ. and subs we've got we've gotten practically unsolicited so if we pushed it I think we'd start getting big time—and for that we need $. We've got some hooks out for that—we'll see. . . 2

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1 Interviews with Myron Roberts, 25 June and 7 September 1974.

2 Sasha Gilien, personal letter.
Myron Roberts, too, remembered being approached by the "Pasadena millionaire," although not his name. He added:

He was a young fellow, and he talked mighty big. But then I think when we really got down to it we learned—and all of this is kind of vague now, you understand—that he really wasn't all that rich, and he was more blue-skying than anything else. He wanted to buy control of the magazine for $200 or something.

Another time the librarian at UCLA—maybe Lawrence Clark Powell or an associate whom he put us in touch with—felt as I did, that this was something that made a contribution to the scene and was needed, and he therefore introduced me around to some people who were supposed to be angel types who were interested. I had lunch there a couple of times in the faculty dining room, and we talked in general terms, and again that was the end of it. I gathered they just weren't interested, because they didn't follow through.

Perhaps it was our fault. Maybe we just aren't any good at this kind of thing. We always sort of expected that the power structure in L.A.—rich people—would recognize that this was something that had merit, and that it had a following, and that we kind of knew what we were doing and were badly undercapitalized, and that one of them would come along who was in a position to do a lot. But that fellow never showed up.

At one point a fellow named Justin Stone, a stockbroker who did a jazz piece for us,1 called me and had some ideas for trying to put a stock

1 Justin Stone, "What Is Jazz?", L.A., August 1959, p. 16.
issue together and go kind of heavy—first class—on it. We talked about it, and nothing came of it. Justin just sort of disappeared, as so many of them did.¹

Gilien echoed this feeling of disillusionment about raising capital in a letter to Haynes dated 28 March 1960:

... On the matter of the references I make each time to money we think will be invested in the mag. Thus far there have been a few nibbles but when it comes to biting, the nibbles melt away like the morning dew. The last time it was a millionaire from Pasadena—took us to dinner at the Wild Goose or some such place, talked a good game but when it came check time, he faded.

This sort of thing has happened enough times that we're getting a bit cynical about it and when anybody looks like he might be a possibility, we don't get excited anymore until we're on our way home from the bank (so we haven't been excited yet)...²

Meanwhile the partners, still seeking ways to sustain interest and build a wider audience, experimented with different editorial approaches. These included "theme" numbers, each keyed to a different idea or issue of the day. A prime example was the magazine for April-May 1960, with its cover stories by and about Death Row inmate Caryl Chessman. Myron Roberts suggested another possibility in a letter to Haynes in Tokyo dated 15 June 1960:

¹ Interview with Myron Roberts, 8 September 1974.
² Sasha Gilien, personal letter.
Why don't you send us a piece on all the bell-raising going on over there? As you will note from the next issue, we are trying a Humorama format. Surely there ought to be something funny--like a riot--that you can relate for our growing army of subscribers. . . .

The Humorama issue failed to materialize for lack of humorous material, but Roberts points to what proved to be the final issue, for December 1960-January 1961, as another "theme" number. The cover and part of the contents constituted a somewhat sardonic salute to politics and the newly elected John F. Kennedy administration.

Despite this and other maneuvers, as 1960 waned the partners became increasingly convinced that their original idea was not going to work out economically. Estelle Roberts recalled:

One of the first bits of autumn chill was the lack of mail--fewer subscriptions--and we spent less time trying to get them, too. At the beginning there had been maybe twenty a day, and it was very exciting. But they dropped off, and we had many, many talks about going out of business. We didn't want to--we thought it would be a terrible thing--and Mike would say, "We just have to," and then we'd say, "Well, let's put out one more and see." Actually, we were putting in more of our own funds--a hundred dollars here and there--to help pay the bills.

1 Myron Roberts, personal letter.
We kept running those special offers for subscriptions, but there was a certain amount of bravado in those ads. We'd get enough subscriptions to get out another issue, so we would, one at a time. Mike would want to quit, and I'd urge him to try one more. Even that last issue—we didn't know it would be the last one at the time we put it out. But we just finally decided to give it up.¹

In sum, the editors at length concluded that they should suspend publication because of a feeling that the magazine was on "dead center" financially. Efforts to increase advertising, circulation, and/or capital funding having failed to bring substantial results, the partners finally decided that a continued investment of almost unlimited time and effort, while drawing no salary or profits, would be counterproductive.

The Sale

On 8 October 1960 Sasha Gilien wrote to Lincoln Haynes:

...Did you know that L.A. is about to be, shall we say, disbanded? I'm speaking of the magazine...It's so damn slow that we are seriously considering a halt to the operation. Naturally, it's hush-hush at this point; we don't want to let it get out on Publisher's Row, but it's in the offing. My advice to you is to call your broker and sell, sell, sell... ²

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²Sasha Gilien, personal letter.
What clinched this "sell" decision was an offer made by David Brown, then editor and publisher of a new monthly magazine called the Southern California Prompter. This publication was billed on its cover as a "Guide to the Good Life in L.A. and Suburbia" and covering "Sports--Theatre--TV--Music--Films--Art--Books." It was published by the Brown-Hall Publishing Co. at 342 North Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills.

Volume 1, Number 1, of the Southern California Prompter was dated July 1960. Its associate editors were James Hartford, Geoff Miller, Jean Halliburton Stevens, and Judy King; contributing editors were Layne Garrett, Arthur Millier, and Lee Zhito.

From the beginning it was a sleek, slick publication, with full-color cover and advertising. Full-page advertisers in the first issue included Hilton Carte Blanche, Union Oil, Douglas Aircraft, Saks Fifth Avenue, Ruser (a Beverly Hills store), and the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

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1Southern California Prompter, July 1960. It grew out of a small previous monthly, called simply the Prompter, which featured night-life notes and which had taken a small advertisement in L.A., vol. 1, No. 4 (undated, but issued in early 1959), p. 28, soliciting subscriptions at $1.75 a year.
The "Around Our Town" column in the first issue (using almost the same title as the "Around Town" column in the first issue of L.A.) included light comment on bomb shelters, the forthcoming Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, local newspapers (damning the Times with faint praise), vanishing telephone prefixes, and Elvis Presley's commuting habits between hotel and studio. It was unsigned, as was much of the contents.


This, then, was the magazine whose editor-publisher, David Brown, wrote to the editor-publishers of L.A.
Magazine with the suggestion that they consider a merger.

Myron Roberts recalled:

At first we weren't too interested—because, frankly, we thought our magazine was better and had more circulation, and his was geared to the advertisers with more of a pro-establishment approach. But a few months later we decided to fold, so I went over to Beverly Hills and met Dave in a restaurant, and we got along fine.

There was no haggling. He made an offer which seemed agreeable, so I talked it over with Sasha and Estelle, and that was it. It was a nominal sum, around five hundred or a thousand dollars, which just about paid for our recent out-of-pocket expenses. For that Dave got, basically, our name and second-class mailing permit.

The Prompter promptly changed its name to Los Angeles and Southern California Prompter in January 1961, and to simply Los Angeles, which it remains, after May 1961.

The subscription list of L.A. was sold to Harper's Magazine under an arrangement which Estelle Roberts recounted:

Mike at the time was writing an article for them about the California aero-electronics business, which they finally didn't run, but he had established a contact with an editor there. And when we were ready to get out of business I recall that we called them, and they wired back, saying they would take over every subscription.

They didn't give any cash, but we got out from under the obligation of the subscriptions, and those people who already had Harper's subscriptions got theirs extended. We thought that was a simple enough way.¹

Subsequent History of Los Angeles Magazine

With Myron Roberts as a longtime Contributing and/or Associate Editor, and reprinting some material from L.A., Editor-Publisher David Brown's Los Angeles Magazine has preserved a thread of continuity from the earlier periodical. But its appearance has always been big and slick rather than little or literary like L.A., even though a Los Angeles Times article in 1973 said that it was "born in poverty more than 12 years ago."²

The Times report elaborated:

...Brown borrowed and begged his way through the first years, trying to succeed where others had failed.

The early years were so lean that Brown occasionally offered local writers stock in the magazine in exchange for literary contributions.

There were a few times when the magazine skipped publication entirely because there were not enough ads. It aimed mainly at the elite.


However, about two years after founding the publication, Brown sold an 85% interest to Harry J. Volk, now chairman of the board of Union Bank.

Although there is no evidence that the magazine ever became affluent, it did finally inch into the black side of the financial ledger, according to reports.¹

The *Times* story said it had been "revealed" that Los Angeles would be sold to *New York* Magazine but remain "a locally edited magazine." That deal soon fell through, but during the negotiations *New York* Editor-Publisher Clay Felker and writer Gail Sheehy came to town in a flurry of Polo Lounge brunches and Daisy lunches to look over the new territory and talk about their planned million-dollar expansion of Los Angeles. Felker said:

"... I hope we learned a lesson from Saturday Review. They tried to transplant New York editors and it won't work. We're not going to bring New York editors out here."²

This proved true enough. Two months later the *Times* reported: "Negotiations by *New York* Magazine to purchase Los Angeles Magazine have been terminated and a tentative purchase agreement between the two publishers is off..."³

¹Ibid., p. 4.


Later that month an agreement was announced under which Los Angeles Magazine was acquired by Community Health Corp. (CHC), described as a Baltimore-based "diversified firm concentrating in the fields of health care, educational services and professional publishing." The report continued:

Seth H. Baker, president of Community Health Corp., said the monthly magazine is expected to retain its current management and editorial staff.¹

As of late 1974 the Los Angeles masthead listed the magazine as "a publication of CHC Corp.," with David Brown retained as special consultant, and Geoff Miller, longtime Managing Editor who had been an Associate Editor of the Prompter, now as Editor.

Summary

The editors were not able to raise the magazine above the "break-even" point financially, despite all efforts to increase advertising and circulation, and/or to attract outside capital. Income and expenditures dropped to about $1,000 an issue and stayed there as the partners held a series of disappointing meetings with potential backers.

Finally in late 1960, as new subscriptions fell off despite the introduction of varied "theme" issues to attract interest, the editors decided to quit. They sold the name and second-class mailing permit to the Southern California Prompter, which became Los Angeles Magazine in 1961, and arranged for Harper's Magazine to take over the subscription list.

Los Angeles Magazine preserved a thread of continuity from the earlier periodical by keeping Myron Roberts on as an editor and reprinting some material from L.A. as it gradually achieved financial stability. In 1974 Los Angeles was acquired by the Baltimore-based conglomerate Community Health Corp. (CHC).
CHAPTER VI

SURVEY OF EDITORIAL CONTENT

Staff Changes

Myron Roberts and Sasha Gilien remained firmly at the top of the L.A. masthead throughout the magazine's existence, the former as Editor and the latter as Executive Editor, leaving no doubt as to the continuity of editorial direction. Other changes from time to time, all of them noted in the Appendix and some elsewhere in this study, will be summarized here.

Roberts gave himself the added title of Publisher for six issues, then dropped it, but he has attached no special significance to these changes. Lincoln Haynes dropped out as Managing Editor after four issues and moved to Japan, and the post was left vacant except for the listing of Sasha Gilien as Managing Editor in the required statement of ownership.¹ Estelle Roberts began as a Contributing Editor and then became General Manager.

Others on the staff--Contributing Editors, artists, advertising people--came and went as their interest in the project waxed and waned. Thus, of the ten names on the first masthead, only three--Myron and Estelle Roberts and Sasha Gilien--remained on the last, along with just three others, Contributing Editors Pegasus Buchanan and Michael Malone and Fiction Editor Lachlan MacDonald.

Myron Roberts's Contribution

The primary thrust of L.A. Magazine's editorial content, from the opening "Volume I, Number 1" editorial (quoted in Chapter I above) to the end, was provided by Myron Roberts, both as Editor-Publisher and as writer of several major pieces in almost every issue.

Roberts wrote a total of twenty-seven articles and essays in the magazine's fourteen numbers, in addition to fourteen editorials and many reviews, "commercials," and miscellaneous commentaries--far more than any other editor or contributor. Moreover, his editorial supervision over the rest of the magazine, whether in the selection of a poetry editor, the reprinting of an appropriate essay by Thoreau or Lord Bryce, or the decision to devote most of an issue to prisoner Caryl Chessman and the death penalty, gave strength and continuity to the entire run of the
As a writer, Roberts was and is primarily an essayist, and no clear-cut line can be drawn between his articles for the magazine, which tended to be interpretative and analytical, and his essays, which had essentially the same tendency. Neither did there seem to be any exact distinction among the pieces he wrote under his own name and those under various pseudonyms as listed above in Chapter III.

In a way, the entire body of Roberts's published work may be viewed as one long, continued essay on modern life, manners, and morals, written from a liberal and humanist viewpoint in thoughtful, opinionated, and witty prose—and even, in one case, poetry. Much of this material first took shape in the pages of the magazine, later to be reworked, honed, collected, and published in different form, such as in his two books of essays.

His lead essay in the second issue of L.A., "Suburbia --Spiritual Slum?" epitomized, even in the suggestion of


its title, the Roberts viewpoint and that of the magazine.

The recurring theme was well summarized in these paragraphs:

...If Suburbia is without ugliness, it is also without much beauty. Its endless rows of flat, new houses sitting on hot streets do not offend the eye or assail the nostrils, but neither do they lift the spirit. They are dwelling units, contrived so that payment-making families can live in comfortable oblivion. And if frequently there is no jail here, more often neither is there a library, or a concert hall, or a community meeting place, or a park, or a theater, or a busy street where the lonely can join humanity in a casual stroll and peep into store windows. Instead, there are shopping centers--designed for quick entrance, easy getaway and fast spending.

In short, while Suburbia has few of the city's traditional mysteries, it has fewer still of the city's joys. Culture and crime alike are all but vanished from its clean, lonely streets. Here people neither starve nor write poetry. Instead, they have a Coke. It is a city made by the machine for the joyless enjoyment of the machine's supreme achievement--the white-collar worker, the manufactured man.

It is a city of, by, and for clerks, dominated politically and socially by that symbolic idealization of the Chief Clerk--the junior executive.1

Roberts devoted much of L.A. Magazine to the good fight against this junior-executive, conformist rat

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As an avid political observer who later served in Sacramento as executive secretary to the lieutenant governor and who himself ran for Congress, Roberts expressed his liberal Democratic views in a number of vigorous articles in the magazine. At various times he surveyed the chances of Edmund G. Brown Sr. as governor, 8 endorsed Adlai Stevenson for president, 9 bade poetic farewell to

1 L.A., October 1958, p. 25.
Stevenson, 1 hailed Jacqueline Kennedy's support of the arts, 2 analyzed the Kennedy style, 3 and scattered political observations throughout his essays on more general themes.

Roberts's satiric work in L.A. was grounded in equally serious thinking, and it also sometimes provided a trial run for books which he published a decade later with his partners on the magazine. Thus his pseudo-Biblical satires "First Epistle to the Hollywoodians" 4 and "Sermon on the Mound" 5 suggested a later best-seller, Begatting of a President. 6 And his "Crusade on 101," 7 on a "war" between San Francisco and Los Angeles, was rewritten and expanded into a paperback. 8

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3 "In Good," ibid., p. 6.
8 Myron Roberts and Sasha Gilien, Begatting of a Revolution (San Dimas: Triad, 1970).
With like regard for human values and verities Roberts chose the reprint material for the magazine—such varied works as Ginsberg's beatnik poetry,\(^1\) Camus's indictment of capital punishment,\(^2\) Bryce's amused view of American political conventions,\(^3\) and Thoreau's quiet praise of the quiet life.\(^4\)

Other Contributors and Contributions

Sasha Gilien

Besides functioning as Executive Editor, co-founder Sasha Gilien wrote several pieces, long and short, for every issue of *L.A.* Some were serious, well-researched feature articles—e.g., illuminating pieces on the people and government of Beverly Hills,\(^5\) on Method acting,\(^6\) and


\(^5\) "Be It Ever So Humble," *L.A.*, June 1959, p. 10.

on psychotherapy. 1 A few were delightful works of humor and satire, such as a comparison of old and new etiquette books, 2 a take-off on the varying styles of popular magazines, 3 a classical satire on a Dantian hell of tract housing and television commercials, 4 and spoofs of tense young moderns trying to outdo each other with freaky furniture 5 and trips to the "real" Europe. 6

In addition, Gilien wrote two regular columns. One was the dining-out column (usually called "Dining Out"), in which he covered the traditional steak and spaghetti houses and also uncovered offbeat hideaways in the backwaters of the city's many cultures. The other was "L.A. Notebook," signed "Junipero," in which he might range from a Norman Cousins speech to a martial-arts school, with or without an advertising tie-in, to a reminiscence about his

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youthful job as a playground coach in East Los Angeles, and all in the best "Talk of the Town" manner.

Myron Roberts commented on Gilien's work thus:

Some of the stuff Sasha did is understood today as more important, I think, than it was considered then. He was talking about the far-out life style—psychiatrists, far-out furniture, little health-food restaurants, the sophisticated, modern thing—that was fermenting in the Fifties and had already become very much a way of life for some people. New York City sophisticates, I suppose, to this day are living that way—they aren't going to buy Sears furniture, or they're into Zen, or all these funny little ways of eating. Sasha was writing about that kind of stuff—the counterculture, if you want to call it that, which was really kind of being born here in what was still in some ways a very conformist city.¹

Michael Malone

Michael Malone, a teaching colleague of Myron Roberts, wrote for almost every number of the magazine and became a Contributing Editor with the August 1959 issue.

His specialties were book reviews and long, solid, didactic yet engrossing articles on broad subjects, including Zen Buddhism,² bullfighting,³ Judaism⁴ and

¹Interview with Myron Roberts, 25 June 1974.
existentialism. 1

Other Articles and Essays

Tom Duggan's controversial opening attack on television critics, which made L.A. Magazine an "instant best-seller," has been covered at some length in Chapters III and IV. Other strong articles by outside contributors in the first two issues were "Curse of Chavez Ravine," 2 a hard-hitting investigative expose of the city's real-estate deal under which the Brooklyn Dodgers moved to Los Angeles, and "Greeks of Westwood," 3 a description of fraternity life at UCLA, both by Joe Rothstein, and "Man in the Taxpayer's Suit," 4 a profile of attorney Phill Silver, "who fights City Hall--and wins," by Bennett J. Mintz.

Among the best articles and essays in ensuing months were an account of the colorful and historic beach community of Venice, 5 an expatriate's view of Los Angeles

1"Existentialism, the Art of Being," L.A., July-August 1960, p. 22.
3L.A., November 1958, p. 3.
4Ibid., p. 16.
revisited, a "new journalism"-styled feature on pianists. Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson, defenses by and of Death Row inmate Caryl Chessman, a 19-year-old student's trenchant critique of abstract art, and a visiting professor's condemnation of Los Angeles, which provoked a chorus of letters and an answer from Myron Roberts.

About the article on the pianists mentioned above, Roberts observed:

We were practicing new journalism ten years before anyone else was. We printed this piece because we liked the style. We were kind of reaching for that style all the time. I guess one of the things the magazine was about, very much, was style, without ever stating it. And I think we kind of had a sense that one of the keys to the whole Sixties thing was going to be style. I mean Sasha's pieces, for example, and my comments on the Kennedy period, and so on.

6"For the Defense," ibid., p. 11.
7Interview with Myron Roberts, 25 June 1974.
A special category of article which enriched the magazine comprised history, reminiscences, and atmospheric notes on Los Angeles and its folkways. Subjects included the Los Angeles River,¹ the grunion run,² wine-making in an old Italian neighborhood,³ the Santana wind,⁴ smudgepots,⁵ and a three-part history of Los Angeles written in anecdotal, somewhat sentimental style.⁶

Fiction

There was fiction—at least one short story, and occasionally two—in every issue of L.A. except that of July-August 1960, although, as indicated by Myron Roberts in Chapter III above, this was of only minor interest to him.

Beginning with John Fante's classic "Helen, Thy Beauty

⁴Eleanor R. Judd, "Ill Wind," ibid., p. 22.
Is to Me--" in the first issue\(^1\) (the only reprint fiction used), the stories were generally of literary rather than popular-magazine caliber. Their authors included Harold Brooks Warde, Roberta Greenwood, Robert R. Kirsch, John L. Dooley, Betty Andrews Blunt, Sanora Babb, A. S. Hewitt, Ruth Mulvey Harmer, Constance Dippel, Richard Barnes, Carla Van Dyck, Edith M. Sherman, and Walter Ballenger.

Poetry

A Pulitzer Prize poet and others with national and regional reputations were among the dozens of writers whose short verse appeared in *L.A.* from the first issue on. In later numbers there was a regular Poetry Page handled by Contributing Editor Pegasus Buchanan (Mrs. Barney Barnum).

Contributors of verse, both light and serious, included Richard Armour, Robert Hillyer (the 1934 Pulitzer Prize winner), Roy W. Adair, David Cornel DeJong, Georgie Starbuck Galbraith, Judson Jerome, Allen Ginsberg, Vahan Gregory, Ethel Jacobson, and many others.

Like the prose contents of the magazine, their work tended more to wry comment on the modern predicament than to conventional bourgeois sentiment. Some of it was later

\(^1\) *L.A.*, October 1958, p. 15.
anthologized by the editors.1

Reviews

Of the reviewers still unchronicled in this chapter, perhaps the most frequently recurring name was that of music critic (and sometime Contributing Editor) Gustav Albrecht. A science teacher, musician, and critic for the Pasadena (Calif.) Independent, Star-News, Albrecht demanded high standards in the artists and audiences he covered. His comments ranged from heralding the arrival of non-commercial radio station KPFK-FM to scoldings of discourteous audiences to reviews of classical records.

Other critics from time to time included Sidney W. Brossman, a colleague of Myron Roberts and now chancellor of the California Community Colleges, with a book review; Mark Eden, Jarvis Barlow, and Paul Rivas in art; and David Seidman and Joseph Firman, in theater.

Letters to the Editor

Beginning with the first issue's letters of best wishes from author Ray Bradbury, columnists Matt Weinstock and Albert Goldberg, and others, the correspondence column

was always a sprightly feature of the magazine.

Some of the letter writers were local and national celebrities, such as those above and politician Adlai E. Stevenson, Editor Gilbert A. Harrison of the New Republic, State Assemblyman Don A. Allen, civic leader Valley M. Knudsen, and historian Lawrence Clark Powell, most of whom thanked the magazine for favorable mentions of them or their projects. Others, including Roy W. Adair, Leo Caloia (Estelle Roberts's brother), and Pegasus Buchanan, later became contributors of prose and poetry.

Many showed real reader involvement with and affection for the magazine, and appreciation came from even as far afield as San Francisco. Hugh Burke of that city wrote:

... Had I been asked to guess what sort of magazine L.A. would be likely to produce, it would have been one with a strong "visual" impact, slick and appealing... with lots of emphasis on the spectator sports, Fun at the Beach and a blurb or two about coffee-houses to add a note of High Culture.

What I got was the direct opposite. Gutty prose, irreverent sarcasm, an emphasis on ideas, and haphazard, almost careless packaging. Although this town never fails to surprise me, it seems likely that either the city or the magazine will have to change. I don't think it will be the city.¹

¹L.A., June 1959, p. 3.
In regard to the "almost careless packaging," another had more to say. Mabel Westmeyer of Pomona wrote:

None of you bright young things seems to be able to spell or proof-read, and I feel that I should send your printer a good scrub-brush, but the quality of your material is definitely rewarding. . . .

From the beginning, the volume of correspondence was surprising and gratifying to the editors, and by and large indicative of enthusiastic reader support--particularly when accompanied by subscription checks. Myron Roberts recalled:

I think we probably got, in relation to our circulation, twenty times the mail that Los Angeles Magazine gets. In the beginning we'd get a hundred letters a day. It was amazing how many subscriptions came. We printed the best letters, the most interesting. Then it began to taper off, but even at the end we were getting a hell of a lot more mail than Los Angeles Magazine ever has.  

Art and Photographs

Beginning with Joseph Magnaini's opening cover described in Chapter III of this study, cover illustrations for L.A. gradually expanded their themes from the Southern California scene to include more general subjects, in line

1L.A., October 1959, p. 4.

with the editorial halfway through the publishing period which stated that "we have begun publishing a magazine which is national and even international...in concept rather than purely local."\(^1\)

Covers\(^2\) and their artists for the complete run were:

October 1958: Suburban Scene by Joseph Mugnaini.


March 1959: Oscarama by Ted Gilien.

June 1959: Design by Estelle Roberts.

August 1959: Design by Estelle Roberts.

October 1959: Here Come the Phonies by Sam Pollack.

December 1959: Culture in Suburbia by Sam Pollack.

February-March 1960: Swinging Sixties by Lois Stearns.

April-May 1960: Caryl Chessman Theme by Sam Pollack.


\(^1\)"You Don't Know What It Means to Be a Mother," L.A., August 1959, p. 7.

\(^2\)Time-sized.
December 1960-January 1961: President Kennedy

Caricature by Robert Farrington.

Many of the inside drawings and cartoons through the months were contributed by these same artists, as well as Daryl Wyckoff, Interlandi, and others. Some, as noted in Chapter III, were of national repute. Major art layouts are listed in the Appendix.

In addition to photographs illustrating specific articles, the magazine featured photo layouts from time to time. Subjects included "L.A. Street Scene" by Austin Anton,1 "Pershing Square" by Charles Tobias,2 "Way of Life" (study of a Skid Row elder) by Charles Tobias,3 and "Study in Terra Cotta" (on the work of sculptress Bacia Gilien, mother of Sasha and Ted Gilien) by Lou Jacobs Jr.4

Summary

Despite frequent staff changes, Editor Myron Roberts maintained a continuity of editorial direction in a magazine which reflected his own beliefs and interests.

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throughout its run. He wrote a total of twenty-seven articles and essays, fourteen editorials, and many shorter pieces, all showing his humanist viewpoint as typified in the essay "Suburbia--Spiritual Slum?"

Executive Editor Sasha Gilien contributed several serious articles, as well as many columns and shorter features, embodying an early awareness of "far-out" lifestyles. Michael Malone contributed several major articles, as well as thoughtful book reviews. Other contributors ran the gamut from Richard Armour to Caryl Chessman to Robert R. Kirsch, while writers of letters to the editor ranged from Ray Bradbury to Adlai E. Stevenson. Southland artists and photographers, some of national repute, were well represented.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Restatement of Objectives of Study

This research project has as its formal objectives the collection, arrangement, analysis, and interpretation of data on the founding and early development of L.A. Magazine.

Specifically, it seeks to probe the question of whether the early promise of the magazine, as set forth in the opening editorial and as refined in the developing goals of the editors, was fulfilled. Were the editors successful in reaching these goals? Did the magazine indeed fill the need to "define the significance of our community," as such a need was perceived in the "Volume I, Number 1" editorial?

In short, was L.A. Magazine a success or a failure—and why? What lessons may be learned from this twenty-seven-month chapter in city-magazine history?

Summary of Study

L.A. Magazine began publication in October 1958 at a critical juncture for American magazines. The older
general periodicals were beginning to die off in the
withering glare of the television eye, giving way to pub-
lications of smaller circulation, with editorial content
more sharply focused on specialized fields of interest.
The city magazine represented one of these fields, and L.A.
was one of the first of the modern city magazines, although
in a sense following a tradition dating back at least to
the turn of the century, both locally and nationally.

In a wider context, the magazine came at the end of
the conformist decade of the 1950s, when the nation was
led by such conservatives as Eisenhower, Nixon, and
McCarthy. It perceived and chronicled the early develop-
ment in Southern California of the conflict between the
conservative establishment and the emerging counterculture
that would shake the country in the following decade.

L.A. Magazine was founded by four young friends who
had met as Los Angeles City College journalism students:
Myron Roberts, Editor and Publisher; his wife, Estelle,
Contributing Editor and later General Manager; Sasha Gilien,
Executive Editor; and Lincoln Haynes, Managing Editor.
With $4,000 in pooled capital they set about developing a
magazine that would not only bring them personal fulfill-
ment but also, they hoped, illuminate the Los Angeles com-
munity, its promise, and its problems.
The first issue of twelve thousand copies was a sell-out, thanks to publicity generated by television broadcaster Tom Duggan's controversial cover article criticizing critics.

Distribution never again equalled this opening figure, with sworn paid circulation averaging 4,178 per issue for the last twelve months of publication, despite such inducements as salons, gift offers, and contests, and despite much publicity exposure for the editors and the magazine in the Los Angeles Times and other newspapers, as well as on radio and television.

Production expenses were lowered from $2,000 to $600 an issue by stringent cost-cutting, "do-it-yourself" page make-up, and constant shifting and subcontracting of various printing functions. Such measures became especially imperative when advertising was dropped after a year and a half of vain striving to build it to a profitable volume.

Finally, with L.A. no more than breaking even, month after month, at a level of about $1,000 per issue for income and expenses, and with the failure of several attempts at securing adequate capitalization, the editors decided at the end of 1960 to give up the enterprise. The fourteenth issue (Volume II, Number 2), dated December 1960-
January 1961, was the last.

The subscription list was taken over by Harper's Magazine, the rest of the enterprise by the Southern California Prompter, which became Los Angeles Magazine in 1961.

During its publication span L.A. Magazine's masthead showed a constant coming and going of various editors, artists, and advertising people, but the names of Myron Roberts and Sasha Gilien at the top assured a firm continuity of editorial direction. Roberts's liberal, humanist views, as set forth in the opening editorial, were reflected in the large volume of essays and articles he wrote, as well as in his selection of other editorial material. Gilien's work conveyed an early awareness of the ferment from which a distinctive, trendsetting Southern California life pattern was emerging.

Outside contributors included fresh Southern California writers and artists, as well as such well-known names as Richard Armour, Caryl Chessman, Sidney W. Brossman, Robert R. Kirsch, Interlandi, and Judson Jerome. Roberts also sought out and reprinted material from famous writers of regional, national, and international scope, including Albert Camus, John Fante, Lord Bryce, Henry David Thoreau, and Lawrence Clark Powell.
Analytical Evaluation of L.A. Magazine

In retrospect, concerning the question of whether L.A. Magazine fulfilled its promise, the answer would appear to be "yes and no."

It did not make money, but then again it did not lose money, and it did carve out a definite niche for itself in the community, with many thousands of interested, involved readers, plus presumably many times that number who were made aware of the magazine and its impact through repeated publicity exposure in the mass media. And that impact would appear to spring from the fact that the magazine did indeed help to "define the significance of our community."¹

Looking back, Myron Roberts expressed the belief that L.A. might have succeeded financially had it appeared a few years later, when the counterculture was in fuller flower in Los Angeles and across the nation, or had the editors chosen a different format or a more blatantly anti-establishment line. He said:

¹As an indication of the magazine's significance, it may be noted that libraries which have preserved files of L.A. include the Los Angeles Public Library, the Honnold Library at the Claremont Colleges, and those at the University of California, Los Angeles, and California State University, Los Angeles.
I think we did plant the idea of Los Angeles being at the edge of a new way of life, which has now become widely accepted. But we were a little premature, about five or ten years early.

Another mistake was that we probably should have gone to a newspaper format, not a magazine, because a newspaper is cheaper to print and somehow easier for people to relate to. We probably should have started a community newspaper in West Los Angeles, because that's where basically our market was. Not a shopper, but maybe sort of halfway between the Village Voice and the L.A. Free Press. Not the New Yorker, but more like what New York Magazine is today.

We were sort of a step in the direction of the whole underground-press thing, but we weren't all the way. We didn't get into violence or sex orgies or drugs or crazy music. We didn't print pictures of naked girls—although we talked about it—or dirty words. We didn't do any of the things that the real underground press did a few years after us. We just didn't feel that to reject the middle-class American model you had to be a lunatic.

In terms of trends in mass communication, Roberts has come to look on the print medium in general as perhaps irrelevant in reaching growing numbers of people. He said:

What we really didn't understand was the McLuhanish kind of thing, that what we were doing was obsolete in the sense of trying to comment on this new jazzy culture within the framework of the old culture. It really didn't require a magazine. The real bards and prophets of this

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1 The Free Press began in 1964, three years after L.A. was suspended.

new culture were going to be rock musicians, and that never occurred to us.

People who are into rock and drugs don't read many magazines, so we had no economic base. Mostly we crashed on the rocks of indifference.

The question was whether the idea of an intelligent magazine about life in Los Angeles was a good idea or not. We were driving for a market that didn't exist in sufficient numbers to mean anything.¹

Aside from this tyranny of the market and the numbers, the idea persists, as has been expressed several times in several ways throughout this study, that L.A. Magazine had something to say—a literate, liberal, humanist point of view—and expressed it well, usually, to a surprisingly wide audience, considering the "shoestring" nature of its financial underpinning.

What the magazine had to say was of course applicable primarily to Southern California, although from the beginning the tone was more cosmopolitan than parochial. At one point in mid-run, as the editors cast about for a format of wider appeal, an editorial announced that "we have begun publishing a magazine which is national and even international (we shall continue to ignore outer space) in concept rather than purely local."² Thereafter a slight

¹Ibid.
tilt toward a broader subject matter might be noted, but it apparently was not important enough to affect reader acceptance.

Judging from the hard core of this reader acceptance which made itself known to the editors, through the months and years, in letters, in person, and in subscriptions, L.A. struck home with its thrusts--more often made with satiric barbs than with a blunt instrument--at the middle-class, suburban, Eisenhower ideal that at times seemed unchallengeable and invulnerable in the 1950s.

In this sense L.A. was, first, a front-runner in the new wave of modern city magazines. Secondly, it was also in some respects a forerunner of the underground press of the 1960s.

In considering the place of L.A. in the new wave of modern city magazines, it may be borne in mind that many such publications were traditionally bogged down in the economic, cultural, and hence editorial, restrictions of old-style Chamber of Commerce boosterism. There was little emphasis on impartial feature articles or on investigative reporting, especially when it might turn up evidences of conflict of interest, civic corruption, or other aspects of community life which could prove unpleasant to advertisers. Development of this more responsible kind of journalism has
been comparatively recent in the field. The situation was described by *Business Week*:

City magazines used to be hardly more than Chamber of Commerce newsletters, as exciting as the minutes of the last meeting, as stylish as the instruction label on a paint can.

... Indeed, most still deal primarily in the meat and potatoes of Chamber activities and a good deal of the intramural back-scratching that has typified the genre.

... But more and more the city magazines—even several of those bearing the official Chamber imprint—are reaching out with slick paper, full-color illustration, good writing, and controversial material to where the sophisticated readers—and some attractive advertising dollars—are.

In a more academically oriented study, Moon discovered in a 1969 survey of sixty city magazines throughout the United States that twenty-three were independent and thirty-seven were owned by chambers of commerce. (All four of the California magazines on his list—Los Angeles, Palm Springs Life, San Diego, and San Francisco—were independent, and Los Angeles was the national circulation leader with sixty thousand.) Moon found that chamber editors reported more direct controls upon their decisions than did the independents. He wrote:

Almost all of the independent editors said that their magazines are free to "impartially wade into controversial issues with complete freedom," whereas only 40% of the chamber magazines enjoy the same degree of freedom. Many chamber editors envy the degree of freedom that they think independent editors enjoy, admitting "there is an unavoidable degree of restraint whenever a publication is designed to foster and promote the interests of a certain group." Thus, even though the long-range, enlightened self-interest of a chamber of commerce is well served by a hard-hitting, critical city magazine, complicating factors such as vested interest often interfere with a chamber's ability to sponsor a city magazine truly cast in the new mold.¹

A similar contrast in the degree of controls, matched in inverse ratio by the same sort of financial problems faced by the editors of L.A., was reported in another scholarly study based on a national survey of regional, including city, magazines:

Where corporate and individually owned magazines cherish editorial independence, they struggle to reach and maintain a balanced budget.

The state- and association-financed books, on the other hand, operate in the black, but struggle with bureaucratic red tape and too many hands in the editorial pie.²

As to L.A.'s position as a forerunner, in some respects, of the underground press of the 1960s, it has

¹Moor, p. 718.

already been pointed out here that the magazine antedated by just three years, and presumably influenced, the Los Angeles Free Press. One source considered the Free Press to be the pioneer example of the underground newspaper:

The underground press probably began in May 1964, when Art Kunkin...spent fifteen dollars "to promote the concept of a new weekly tabloid," the Los Angeles Free Press.1

Another scholar, Glessing, believed that the Free Press "was modeled after the Village Voice"2 and further characterized it as "one of the most prominent and successful of the underground papers."3 (Myron Roberts also credited the Village Voice with being one source for the idea of L.A. Magazine, as this study has shown.) Glessing wrote:

The Freep [Free Press] soon gained the reputation of being against police brutality and President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and for acid heads, rock music, and classified mating-game sex advertisements...

Once again the underground press was a reaction, this time to an uptight and unconcerned Southern California journalism scene...4

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3Ibid., p. 4.

4Ibid., p. 18.
The first part of this latter description might well apply to _L.A._ Magazine, which took an early and independent stance against some of the middle-class, mid-American, presidential values when these were perceived as leading toward mere conformity, mediocrity, and worse, as this study has shown.

But Myron Roberts made explicit his indifference to, if not downright repugnance for, the more lurid aspects of the counterculture lifestyle, including the rock-and-drug scene and casually excessive sex. This study has brought out his candid acknowledgment that _L.A._ might have prospered financially had it chosen to indulge these appetites, as did much of the alternative or underground press which followed.

Thus one of the magazine's contributions was its role as a bridge between the more traditional publications representing the older, more formal life styles of the 1950s and previous decades and the free-wheeling publications which reflected the newer, freer patterns that erupted in California and across the nation in the 1960s, whether these publications took the form of the modern city magazines or of the underground press.

Myron Roberts explained:
All during the Forties and Fifties there had been only the establishment papers and the shoppers, and not even the possibility of alternative publishing. It's hard to measure these things, but certainly alternative publishing became much bigger after we did it. I think we probably had a role in getting some of these people started.¹

Estelle Roberts summed up the editors' experience from a more personal point of view:

A certain amount of romanticism pervaded our entire involvement with the magazine. Mike and I had romantic feelings about L.A. We were both born here; we met here during the war; we felt very simpático about it. With the magazine we were trying to find L.A.'s soul, to make it out a meaningful city. We thought we were participating in a worthwhile and historic endeavor; that it kept us in the mainstream, meeting literary and political and artistic and media figures.²

Myron Roberts summed up his view of the venture's success or failure in fulfilling its promise as follows:

I think we succeeded in fulfilling our promise of providing an alternative publication—of illuminating an alternative life style—for Southern California, but unfortunately there was not all that much demand for it. I think we did a pretty good job of doing what we set out to do.³

These, then, were the contributions of L.A. Magazine, as pointed up in the present study. It probed with genuine affection and respect, free of Chamber of Commerce

¹ Interview with Myron Roberts, 25 June 1974.
² Interview with Estelle Roberts, 4 October 1974.
³ Interview with Myron Roberts, 4 October 1974.
boosterism, into the sprawling metropolis that was maturing into a city to be reckoned with, a city with plenty of rough edges that a constructively critical publication could help to smooth out. It pioneered in perceiving, chronicling, and illuminating the early development in Southern California of the struggle between the establishment and the rising counterculture, and in trying to show a literate, intelligent alternative to the mindless, organization-man, prepackaged, suburban way of life that threatened to engulf the city. And in these things it succeeded.

Fittingly enough, L.A. Magazine wound up its publication under the original editor-publishers with a caricature of newly elected President John F. Kennedy on the cover for December 1960-January 1961. Eisenhower was out, and so was Nixon for the time being; the New Frontier was in, and the new magazine had survived long enough to bridge the gap.
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Westways, February 1974.


APPENDIX

MASTHEAD AND ANNOTATED CONTENTS PAGES

OF L.A. MAGAZINE

FROM VOLUME I, NUMBER 1 (OCTOBER 1958)

THROUGH VOLUME II, NUMBER 2 (DECEMBER 1960-JANUARY 1961)

Volume I, Number 1 (October 1958)

Masthead

Editor: Myron Roberts.

Executive Editor: Sasha Gilien.

Managing Editor: Lincoln Haynes.

Contributing Editors: Bob Reuben, Jean Parham, Joe Rothstein, Estelle C. Roberts.

Art Director: Joseph Magnaini.

Staff Artist: Saul Bernstein.

Advertising Manager: Jean Pascal.


Address Editorial contributions and correspondence to: 637 Geneva Ave., Claremont, California. Phone Madison 5-2243 or National 6-1052.

Entire contents copyright 1958 by D & R Publishers.
Annotated Contents

3--"Volume I, Number 1." Opening editorial.

4--Letters. Best wishes from columnist Matt Weinstock, author Ray Bradbury, etc.

4--"About Ourselves." Biographical notes on editors and contributors.

5--"The Democrat Faces Life" by Stewart Sargent. Article: "Will the liberals find happiness with Pat Brown in the Governor's Mansion?"

7--"A Plague on TV Critics" by Tom Duggan. Article in which "one of television's most controversial personalities bites the hand that bleeds him."

8--"Decline and Fall of the Madonna-Prostitute" by Myron Roberts. Article on the Suburban Woman: "Capable, sexy and sometimes frigid, she has much in common with Scarlett O'Hara and even Lady Macbeth."
11--"On the Beat" by John L. Dooley. Satire on a beatnik coffee house at Malibu.

13--"World's End in Five Years?" by Lincoln Haynes. Article on the missile race in which JPL Director William Pickering warns that the final button may be pushed by automation.

15--"Helen, Thy Beauty Is to Me--" by John Fante. Reprint of a Saturday Evening Post story about a Filipino cannery worker's love for a blonde taxi dancer.

17--"Rebel Without a Mind" by Paul R. Dewey. Essay on "a subhuman creature with the body of a man or woman but the brain of an aborigine -- is this America's teenager?"

18--"The Curse of Chavez Ravine" by Joe Rothstein. Article: "A mayor, a newspaper and a public-housing dream have toppled, but Chavez Ravine is still empty and the Dodgers are still homeless."

21--Four Poems by Bert Meyers. "At My Window," "On the Hill," "Pity the Child" and "In the Alley."

22--"First Epistle to the Hollywoodians" by Myron Roberts. Satire on Cecil B. DeMille's epics in pseudo-Biblical style.

23--"Executive Sweet" by Morton Cronin. Essay: "Palsy-walsy manners breed the despotism of the nice guy."
25—"Damn the Commuters--Full Speed Ahead" by Ed Portland. Protest article by "a freeway-frantic citizen."

27—"An Evening Downtown" by Sasha Gilien. Dining-out column on the Traveler's Cafe (Filipino), Club Granada (Mexican) and Cafe Fresco coffee house.

28—"Around Town" by Bob Reuben. Light column by a world traveler.

29—"Short, Cool Summer" by Archer Curtis. Theater notes on forthcoming The Music Man at the Philharmonic, Auntie Mame at the Biltmore, etc.

31—"Remembrances of Things Past" by Viola Frederick. Old-time resident's essay on L.A. in 1912.

Volume I, Number 2 (November 1958)

Masthead Changes

Editor and Publisher (added title): Myron Roberts.

Contributing Editors: Bob Reuben and Jean Parham are dropped.

Art Director is dropped.

Advertising Manager is dropped.

Corporate name is changed slightly to D & R Publishing Co., Inc.

Cover by Ted Gilien.
Added entry: "Application for permission to mail at second-class postage rates pending at Claremont, California."

Annotated Contents

3--"Off and Running." Editorial on magazine's successful launching.


5--"Suburbia--Spiritual Slum?" by Myron Roberts. Article: "Culture and crime alike are banished from its clean, lonely streets."

8--"The Greeks of Westwood" by Joe Rothstein. Critical article on UCLA fraternities.

10--"The River" by Robert Olmos. Essay on the Los Angeles River, then and now.

12--"Copenger's Toes" by Harold Brooks Warde. Short story about an elderly eccentric.

14--"Grunion Run" by Irene Bertschy. Essay on the beach ritual.

15--"Beach Mural" by Betty Isler. Three poems: "Beach Mural," "Long Distance," and "Just Sitting Around With Nothing to Do."

16--"The Man in the Taxpayer's Suit" by Bennett J. Mintz. Article on attorney Phil Silver, "the man who fights
City Hall -- and wins."

18--"L.A. Street Scene." Photos by Austin Anton.

20--"Old Semper Fidelis" by Roberta Greenwood. Fiction on suburban marriage.

22--"San Francisco, Goodbye" by Boris Sobelman. Satire on "that quaint Northern city."

24--"Sixth and Hill" by George I. Mayhall. Slice-of-life essay.


26--"In Glorious Black and White" by Lincoln Haynes. Review of films Kings Go Forth and Too Much, Too Soon.

27--"The Hunt" by G. R. Small. Poem.

28--"L.A. Notebook" by Sasha Gilien. Notes around town.

29--"About Ourselves."

30--"Sauces and Songs" by Sasha Gilien. Night-out notes on Taix, Le Petit Trianon, the Ash Grove, and the Cafe Capriccio.

31--"The 'Season!'" by Gustav Albrecht. Music notes on the Shrine, Philharmonic, etc.

33--"The Cut and the Angry." Book reviews--by Michael Malone of The Beat Generation and the Angry Young Men, edited by Gene Feldman and Max Gartenberg; by Myron Roberts of Child of the Century by Ben Hecht, and by
Lincoln Haynes of *The Best of Everything* by Rona Jaffe.

**Volume I, Number 3 (December 1958)**

**Masthead Changes**

Staff Artists: Ted Gilien and Lois Stearns are added.

Cover by Saul Bernstein.

**Annotated Contents**

3--Calendar. "Selected Events In and Around L.A."

5--"The Beat Generation and All That Jazz." Editorial.

6--Letters.

7--"Television--the Light That Failed" by Myron Roberts.

Essay on the medium's failure to fulfill its early promise.

10--"Festival of Bacchus" by Leo Caloia. Recollections of wine-making in an old Italian neighborhood.

12--"The Political Future of California" by Stewart Sargent. Article assessing Edmund G. Brown Sr.'s election as governor.

15--"Little 40% Redder Riding Hood" by Herb Oxstein.

Satire on advertising.

16--"Pershing Square." Photos by Charles Tobias.

18--"Variations on a Theme." Three poems: "Street Scene"
by Alice Wyatt, "What Can One Say?" by Ted Carmack, and "To a Suburban Bride" by Pegasus Buchanan.

19--"The Eulogist" by Robert R. Kirsch. Short story about a comedian turned producer.

20--"Hawk and Shadow" by Lawrence P. Spingarn. Poem.


22--"Ill Wind" by Eleanor R. Judd. Article on the Santana.

24--"L.A. Notebook." Notes on a taxidermist, etc.


27--"Charming Billy-Boy" by Sasha Gilien. Theater review of the Billy Barnes Revue and River in a High Place.

28--"The Villa and the Inn" by Sasha Gilien. Night-out notes on the Villa Capri and Aware Inn.

29--"Information Free." Listings of "where to write" for free magazines and booklets.

30--"Books" by Michael Malone. Review of Breakfast at Tiffany's by Truman Capote.

Volume I, Number 4 (undated)

Masthead Changes

Undated.

Staff Photographer is added: Charles Tobias.
Cover by Jirayr Zorthian.

Annotated Contents

3--Calendar.
4--Letters.
6--"Out, Damned Smog." Editorial, blaming big cars.
8--"Los Angeles, From a Corner Darkly" by Oscar Mandel. Article by a visitor, denouncing the city as ugly and vulgar.
11--"For the Defense" by Myron Roberts. Essay in answer to the above, defending the promise for human hope and excellence in L.A.
12--"Way of Life." Photo essay on a Skid Row elder by Charles Tobias.
14--"See-Saw Marjorie Daw" by Betty Andrews Blunt. Fiction about an American couple in Europe.
15--"The Russians Look at Hollywood" by Jeanne Stephens. Article on a Soviet film group's visit.
17--"By the Beautiful Sea" by John L. Dooley. Article on suburban Venice, "with an illustrious past and a hopeful future."
19--"Those Blooming Smudgepots" by Kathryn L. Shillock.
   Reminiscence of childhood among the citrus groves.
20--"If Carl Sandburg Had Lived in Los Angeles" by Richard Armour. Poem.
23--"F.M. With a High I.Q." by Gustave Albrecht. Music notes on KPFA and the forthcoming KPFK.
24--"Viva El Matador" by Sasha Gilien. Dining out at the Matador.
25--"L.A. Notebook" by Junipero. Notes on a judo school, etc.
31--"Information Free" by Arnold E. Hagen.
32--"The Commercial." Letter from the editors, asking for subscriptions.

Volume I, Number 5 (March 1959)

Masthead Changes

Managing Editor is dropped.

Contributing Editors: Jean Parkham is reinstated.

Added category: Advertising: Alice White, Dan Thompson.

Staff Photographer is dropped.
Cover painting, "Oscarama" by Ted Gilien. Cover design by Estelle Roberts.


Entered as Second Class matter U.S. Post Office, Claremont, Calif.

Annotated Contents

3--Selected Events In and Around Los Angeles.

5--Letters.

8--"Hooray for Hollywood." Editorial speculating on a new era for the movies.


11--"Late Afternoons" by Mary Graham Lund. Poem.

12--"The Food of Love" by Paul R. Dewey. " Aphrodisiacs through the ages."

14--City Sketches by Peter O'Malley Pierson.

15--Three Poets. "Sunday Morning" and "At Work" by Bert Meyers, "Highway 6 Blues" by L. W. Michaelson, "Seven Come Eleven" by Pegasus Buchanan.

16--"Exterior Decorating" by Estelle Roberts. Article praising the Los Angeles Beautiful Committee.

18--"The Birth of Los Angeles" by Margaret Romer. First of a series on the city's history.
21--"The Low Cost of C Sharp Minor" by Sanora Babb. Fiction about a downtrodden film-studio unit manager.

24--"Speed!" by Leo Caloia. Recollections of the 1920 family Chevrolet.

25--"The Best From the Penal Code" by Joseph Firman. Satire on odd laws.

25--"Music" by Gustave Albrecht. Protest against noisy audiences.

26--"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. Notes on the Pen and Quill, Cyrano and Haji Baba's.

27--"L.A. Notebook" by Junipero. Visits to General News Agency, Theatre of Arts, Tectron Record Center, and other advertisers.

28--"Art" by Mark Eden. Column on renaissance in L.A. art.

28--"Theatre" by David Seidman. Interview with new producer Gerald L. Meisser.

29--"Fashion" by Jean Parham. "Gone the casual look..."

Volume I, Number 6 (June 1959)

Masthead Changes

Staff Artists are dropped.

Advertising: Dan Thompson is dropped.
"L.A. Magazine is published monthly" is changed to "bi-monthly."

Annotated Contents

3--Letters. From Jo Pagano, Valley M. Knudsen, etc.

5--Calendar.

7--Editorial: "A Sermon on the Mound." "The Dodgers enter the Promised Land."

8--"The Fashion of These Times" by Myron Roberts. Essay critical of some avant-garde arts and life styles.

10--"Be It Ever So Humble" by Sasha Gilien. Article on Beverly Hills.

12--"Zen Buddhism...An Explanation" by Michael Malone.

14--"Chicken in the Rough" by Paul R. Dewey. Light essay on dinner invitations.


17--"Dual in the Sun" by Jean Parham. Fashion layout.


22--"L.A. Notebook." Seeing the town by Tanner Gray Lines, etc.

23--"Books." The Van Cliburn Legend by Abram Chasins and Villa Stiles, reviewed by Myron Roberts; Automobile
Year and The World's Racing Cars and Sports Cars by
Douglas Armstrong, reviewed by Michael Malone.

23--"Music: Stereo...Phonic or Phoney" by Gustav Albrecht.


26--"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. On the Greek Village, Cafe Serbia, Kowloon, Five Lanterns, Darlund's, Fog Cutter, Lawry's, Canter's, Chez La Vie, plus an annotated guide.

30--Poems. "The Prospect of Night" by Margo Sorzano, "Story" by Pegasus Buchanan, "The Valley" by Arlette R. Rose.

31--"The Commercial." Fantasy on a future day at the mighty L.A. Magazine Building, prefacing an appeal for subscribers.

Volume I, Number 7 (August 1959)

Masthead Changes

Contributing Editors: Joe Rothstein dropped. Pegasus Buchanan, Michael Malone added.

Advertising credit dropped.

"L.A. Magazine is published bi-monthly" is changed back to "monthly."

Telephone: MAdison number dropped.
Annotated Contents

3--Letters.

5--Calendar.

7--Editorial: "You Don't Know What It Means to Be a Mother." Statement that "we have begun publishing a magazine which is national and even international (we shall continue to ignore outer space) in concept rather than purely local."

8--"The Failure of Success" by the Outsider. Pessimistic essay on progress.

10--"Acting and the Method" by Sasha Gilien. Article covering the field from Stanislavsky to Brando.

12--"Death as a Fine Art" by Michael Malone. Article on bullfighting as "a tragedy, not a sport."

14--"The Golden Fleece" by Myron Roberts. Article on Disneyland, where "only non-conformists get into trouble."

16--"What is Jazz?" by Justin Stone. Article both historical and didactic.

17--"Rendezvous" by Pegasus Buchanan. Poem from her collection Chestnut Street.

18--Poetry Page, edited by Pegasus Buchanan. "The Apple Tree" by Robert Hillyer, "Hotel Lobby" by Roy W. Adair, "Uncontested Town" by David Cornel DeJong, "The
Cliffs of Night" by George Abbe.

19--"The Cat" by Ruth Mulvey Harmer. Story verging on fantasy.

20--"The Rabble Rouser" by Roberta Morgan. Poem.

21--"Hollywood Bowling" by Gustav Albrecht. The coming Bowl season.

23--"L.A. Notebook" by Junipero. Suggestion for an L.A. Magazine salon, La Cienega Boulevard art galleries, etc.


26--"Books." Fidel Castro: Liberator or Dictator? by Jules Dubois, reviewed by S. W. Brossman; Heaven in the Home by Charlotte Edwards, reviewed by Pegasus Buchanan; In the Wrong Rain by Robert Kirsch and Chestnut Street by Pegasus Buchanan, reviewed by Michael Malone.

27--"Among Ourselves."

28--"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. On Harout's Har-Omar, Saratoga, Wan-Q.

Volume I, Number 8, (October 1959)

Masthead Changes

Editor: Myron Roberts. (Dropped Publisher title.)
General Manager: Estelle Caloia Roberts. (From Contributing Editor.)

Contributing Editors: Gustav Albrecht added, Jean Parham dropped again.

"L.A. Magazine is published by D & R," etc., eliminating frequency of publication.

Annotated Contents

4--Letters.

5--Calendar.

7--Editorial: "Fauna and Flora of Our Literary Desert."

8--"Here Come the Phonies" by Myron Roberts. Essay describing the prevalent types.

10--"A Look at Psychotherapy" by Sasha Gilien. Article surveying the field in informal, anecdotal style.

12--"The Hard Way" by Ed Portland. Personal journalism on the latest in Las Vegas.

13--"Home Thoughts From Paris" by Matt Carney. Article by an expatriate on L.A. revisited.

14--"Judaism" by Michael Malone. Article outlining the scope of the faith.

16--"In Sandyland" by Constance Dippel. Story about an old itinerant preacher, his young wife and a husky hitchhiker.
18--"Upon Closing the Switch" by John Kountz. Poem.
19--"The History of Los Angeles, Part III: Oil, Water and Stars" by Margaret Romer.
20--"Books." _The Holy Barbarians_ by Lawrence Lipton, reviewed by Myron Roberts; _Drug Store Days_ by Richard Armour, reviewed by Michael Malone.
22--"L.A. Notebook" by Junipero. On the song "Angeltown," the Miss Beat Generation contest in Venice West, etc.
23--"Music" by Gustav Albrecht. On new radio stations KPFK and KBCA, plus record reviews.
23--"When All About You" by Roy W. Adair. Poem.
26--"At the Galleries." On those of Joseph Massa, Paul Rivas, Joseph Young, etc.
27--"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. On the Ready Room, Dorando's, Marquis, Ash Grove, Bit of Europe.
29--"Conversation Piece" by Pegasus Buchanan. Poem from _Chestnut Street_.
30--"The Commercial."
Masthead Changes

None.

Annotated Contents

2--Letters.

4--Calendar.

6--Editorial: "Elegy for the Big City." New suburban lifestyles.

7--"The Power of Negative Thinking" by Myron Roberts. Essay on "the uses and pleasures of simply saying 'no.'"

10--"The Code of the Cad" by Sasha Gilien. Article contrasting The New Esquire Etiquette with the 1901 Encyclopedia of Etiquette.

12--"Claremont: Culture in the Suburbs" by Pegasus Buchanan.

15--"Afternoon of a Salon." Notes and photos on L.A.'s recent event.

17--"Study in Terra Cotta." Photo layout on Bacia Gilien and her sculpture.

18--"A Two Is a Two" by Harold Brooks Warde. Story about Russian sailors in a Seattle pawnshop.

19--"Sound Advice" by Edith Ogutsch. Poem.

19--"Lapse" by Pegasus Buchanan. Poem.

20--"Etude for a Cool Piano" by J. P. Bernhard. Article on how Oscar Peterson "cut" Art Tatum.

22--"Notes for Nightschool Intellectuals" by Myron Roberts. Humorous advice on how to sound wise.


24--"L.A. Notebook" by Junipero. On Walter O'Malley, a lecture on Soviet psychiatry, etc.

25--"Transition" by Roy W. Adair. Poem.


26--"Books." Dav of Sacrifice by Fereidoun Esfandiary, reviewed by Sasha Gilien; The Years With Ross by James Thurber (review unsigned), and Advise and Consent by Allen Drury, Piano Playing by James Ching and Confetti for Gino by Lorenzo Madalena, all reviewed by Michael Malone.
27--"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. On the Nine Muses, Don Juan.

28--"Statement required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946, (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) Showing the Ownership and Management of L.A." The statement proceeds:

Published bi-monthly at Claremont, California, for December, 1959.
The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are:
Publisher: D & R Publishing Co., Inc.
Editor: Myron Roberts, 637 Geneva Ave., Claremont, California.
Managing Editor: Sasha Gilien, 3487 Oak Glen Dr., Los Angeles, Calif.
The owners are:
Myron Roberts, 637 Geneva Ave., Claremont, California
Sasha Gilien, 3487 Oak Glen Dr., Los Angeles, California
George Dighera, 9418 10th Avenue, Inglewood, California
Estelle C. Roberts, 637 Geneva Ave., Claremont, California
Lincoln Haynes, APO 94, San Francisco, California
The known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

Myron Roberts
Editor

30--Art: "Caveat to a Particular" by Jarvis Barlow, "Some Out of Town Galleries" by Paul Rivas.
Masthead Changes

Fiction Editor: Lachlan MacDonald. (New title.)

Entire contents copyright 1960 (instead of 1959).

Annotated Contents

2--"February Is the Cruelest Month..." Subscription appeal, offering free bound volumes.

3--Letters.

5--Calendar.

6--Editorial: "Transplanted Man." He doesn't create much literature at first.

8--"A Time to Dance...a Time to Mourn" by Myron Roberts.

Essay summing up the 1950s: "not a total disaster."

12--"The Paper People of Magazineland" by Sasha Gilien.

Satire about, and in, the styles of various magazines.


16--"Beatitudes" by Myron Roberts. "Beat poetry, sacred and profane."

19--"Death to Van Gogh's Ear" by Allen Ginsberg. Poem.
20--"The Suicide of Painting" by David Renaker. Essay criticizing abstract expressionism.

22--"Me and Chuy" by Richard Barnes. Story about poor young Mexican-Americans.

24--"Executive Types" by Estelle Roberts. Satiric catalogue.

26--"The Three Palmas" by John Holden. Article on "Mallorca's capital where tourist, native and expatriate peacefully co-exist."

29--"Books" by Michael Malone. Reviews of This Is My God by Herman Wouk and Poor No More by Robert Ruark.


31--"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. On two San Francisco restaurants.

Volume I, Number 11 (April-May 1960)

Masthead Changes

None.

Annotated Contents

2--Untitled announcement that "We are going to try to dispense with advertising."

4--Editorial: "Once More With Adlai." Stevenson for President.
5—"Reflections on the Guillotine" by Albert Camus. Lead article of several backing Caryl Chessman's fight against the death penalty. Reprint from book of same title.

10—"Sad Music" by Vahan Gregory. Poem.

11—"The Case for Caryl Chessman" by Irwin Moskowitz. Article based on interviews with prisoner Chessman and others.

12—"XIII" by Donald A. Yates. Poem.

14—"On Revenge" by Caryl Chessman. Abridged from one of his court appeals.

15—"A Foreign Viewpoint." "Exclusive interview" with Brazilian industrialist Giacomo Franco urging clemency for Chessman.

16—"Mismate" by Pegasus Buchanan. Poem.


18—"Through Europe With Sketchbook and Cliche." Drawings by Daryl Wyckoff.
20--"Inferno Revisited" by Sasha Gilien. Satire, with
Virgil guiding the writer through a Hell of tract
housing and TV pitchmen.

23--"A Few C.C.'s" by Carla Van Dyck. Gothic tale of
laboratory knives.

24--"Lonesome Gal" by Ethel Jacobson. Poem.

25--"In Case You're Ever in a Real Hurry, Mr. Nash" by

26--"Ask Darwin" by O. L. Abbott. Poem.

27--"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. On Kelly's Steak House,
Hollywood Hill Hotel.

28--"L.A. Notebook." On speeches by Norman Cousins,
Stanley Kramer, etc.

29--"Music" by Gustav Albrecht. Lunch with visiting
Russian composers, record reviews.

31--Letters. From Lawrence Clark Powell, etc.

31--"Death to Ginsberg's Bellyache" by Justin Marcus.
Poem.

Volume I, Number 12 (July-August 1960)

Masthead Changes

"Published bimonthly" line is reinstated.
Annotated Contents

2--"The Pleasures of Publishing." Announcement of single-copy price rise from thirty-five to fifty cents.

4--Letters. From Adlai E. Stevenson, Gilbert A. Harrison, etc.

5--Editorial: "Empty and Marvelous." On the summer letdown.

6--"Idylls of the Rich" by Myron Roberts. Essay: "In short, Americans love money because it makes them strong and confident, because it provides MEANS."

8--"A Sidelong Look at Sin" by Ethel Jacobson. Poem.

9--"Marrying Kind" by Rafael Jesús González. Poem.

10--"...Like a Good Girl Should" by Stewart Sargent. Essay on sexual mores through the ages.

14--"The Compleat Conventioneer" by James Bryce. Classic analysis of political conventions, reprinted from The American Commonwealth.

15--"The Last Word" by John Caloia. Poem.

16--"City Lights." Drawings by Peter O'Malley Pierson.

18--Poetry Page, edited by Pegasus Buchanan. "Wharfside" by Betty Isler, "Centaur in the Museum of Natural History" by Edith Ogutsch, "There Is No Time" by Elliott Fine, "The Doctor" by Jeannette Gould Maino,
"Masquerade" by Doris Moore, "Post Mortem in a Coffee House" by Lee Golden, "If You Should See Her" by Philip Allan Friedman.

19—"How to Fight Sharks" by Joe Firman. Humor.
20—"Home Furnishing for the Far-Out" by Sasha Gilien. Satire.

21—"Ersatz Nirvana" by Roberta Morgan. Poem.
22—"Existentialism, the Art of Being" by Michael Malone. Article both didactic and historical.
24—"Air on a G-String" by Mack Sullivan. Article on a burlesque reunion.

25—"Guest Rules." Death Row humor.
25—"Music" by Gustav Albrecht. Classical-record reviews.
25—"Over Heard" by Jane Merchant. Poem.
26—"L.A. Notebook." On Kenneth Tynan and lend-leasing foreign editors.

27—"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. On Las Vegas.

28—"Books." The Natives Are Restless by Cynthia Lindsay, reviewed by Myron Roberts; The Psychology of Handwriting by Nadya Olyanova, reviewed by J.D.; Set This House on Fire by William Styron, reviewed by Michael Malone.

30—"Faces at a Birthday Dinner" by Bob Ullrich. Poem.
Masthead Changes

Subscriptions $5.00 for 12 issues. (Up from $3.50.)

Cover Drawing by Paul Darrow.

Annotated Contents

2--Letters.


6--"Crusade on 101" by Myron Roberts. Satire on "the war between San Francisco and Los Angeles."

9--"Sociology Made Simple." Drawings by Daryl Wyckoff.


12--"Not to the Swift" by Pegasus Buchanan. Poem.

13--Poetry Page, edited by Pegasus Buchanan. "Traveled Lady" by Ethel Jacobson, "Hot Weather Lullaby" by David Cornel DeJong, "Grounded Jet" by Enola Chamberlin, "Used Car Lot at Night" by Betty Isler, "Scarecrow" by Queena Davison Miller, "Hoof Print" by Barnabas Vail, "XXIX" by Roy W. Adair.

14--"Fight Talk for Young Intellectuals" by Stewart Sargent. Essay: "Hang on to your books, and remember that every man over forty is a scoundrel."
16--"Pick an Image." Satiric political drawings.

18--"Notes on a Russian Journey" by Lee Whitebrook. Personal article about a newspaperwoman's recent visit. Part 1.

20--"Economy" by Henry David Thoreau. Classic essay reprinted from Walden.

23--"Soliloquy on a Machine" by Francis S. Phraner. Poem.

24--"A View of Walden" by John Caloia. Interpretative essay.

25--Television: "David Susskind: Socrates With a Sponsor."

26--"The Musicians." Drawings by David Rose.

27--"Dining Out" by Sasha Gilien. On Diamond Jim's, Cyrano's, Pupi's, Via Veneto, etc.

28--"L.A. Notebook." On women, the Southern California Ocelot Club, etc.


Volume II, Number 2 (December 1960-January 1961)

Masthead Changes

Contributing Editors: Gustav Albrecht dropped.
Cover Drawing by Robert Farrington.

Art by: Paul Darrow, Robert Farrington, Ted Gilien, Daryl Wyckoff.

Annotated Contents

2--"The Commercial" on the mighty L.A. Magazine Building, reprinted from Volume I, Number 6, Page 31.


5--Letters.

6--"In Good" by Myron Roberts. Essay on the Kennedy style.

10--"Europe Moderne" by Sasha Gilien. Satire: one-upmanship for returned travelers.

12--"Mother Knows" by Walter Ballenger. Fiction about a young woman and her dominant mother.

16--"Casting the New Frontier." Drawings by Robert Farrington.

20--Poetry Page, edited by Pegasus Buchanan. "Reluctant Astronaut" by Myrtle Chance Allen, "Wrong Turn" by John McLeod, "Of Such Is the Kingdom" by David Cornel DeJong, "Ballad of Planned Obsolescence" by Edith Ogutsch, "Dispossessed" by David R. Bunch, "Soliloquy" by Herbert Warfel, "Tenting Tonight" by Roy W. Adair.

21--"The Adman & the Wee Small Voice" by Stewart Sargent.
Protest essay against ads promoting "self-indulgency, false pride, and harlotry."

25—"Notes on a Russian Journey: Part II--The Women" by Lee Whitebrook.

26—"Homage to Big Sur" by Lawrence Clark Powell. Reprinted from Books, West Southwest.


30—"Dining Out: Comidas Mexicanas" by Sol Babitz. On Mexican food, restaurants and tortilla factories.
31---Statement of Ownership. Virtually identical to that of Volume I, Number 9, Page 28, save for substitution of Sasha Gilien's new address, 6868 Willoughby Ave., Los Angeles, and addition of the sentence: "The average number of copies of each issue sold or distributed through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: 4178."