

Gay Community Asks Slash in Police Budget

By Johanna Newman

A Los Angeles attorney called on city councilmen yesterday to cut the police department's \$160 million budget to eliminate the expenditure of monies "for the sole purpose of generating arrests, and not preventing crime."

Thomas F. Coleman, who described himself to councilmen as a gay attorney, said the city council should instruct the police to use part of the vice section's budget to establish a liaison office with the gay community.

That idea was rejected by Police Cmdr. Pete Hagen, who said that "the Los Angeles Police Department and particularly its chief doesn't believe we need liaison officers between the police and the so-called homosexuals."

Hagen said the department has

no liaison officer to the heterosexual community, and added that the department does not arrest homosexuals unless there is solicitation or an overt lewd act involved.

"The chief would probably be negligent, would be guilty of malfeasance in office if he set up a liaison office with people who break the law," said Hagen, who added that the recent death of 27 young males in Houston, Tex., was proof that victimless crime was a myth.

Coleman also charged that the Department of Recreation and Parks was cooperating with the police by leaving public restrooms in disrepair in order to facilitate arrests.

John C. Horan, director of administrative services for the department, flatly denied the allegation, countering that "if that charge had any credence, why didn't we go around boring holes in the walls?"

Horan said the department has always cooperated with the police and the city attorney, but that "we wouldn't touch entrapment."

Coleman later told reporters that he and another attorney, Alberg Gordon, have filed a taxpayers lawsuit in superior court against Police Chief Edward M. Davis and County Sheriff Peter Pitchess over

the enforcement of lewd conduct statutes.

The lawsuit, which was filed last Thursday, ask the court to issue an injunction against the city and county of Los Angeles to halt the expenditure of public funds to enforce Sec. 647a of the Penal Code, which the plaintiffs contend is unconstitutional.

Coleman also credited City Attorney Burt Pines with being "the first public official to stand up to Ed Davis" in adopting a new policy of prosecuting clients in gay bars only for those offenses prosecuted against patrons in heterosexual bars.

But Coleman said the activity in bars was only one aspect of the problem, and offered that "if there has to be prosecution, at least it should be even-handed," recommending that the police department employ female as well as male vice officers.

Citing a survey of lewd conduct arrests for a four-month period in 1972, Coleman said that of the 664 arrests made, only five were prompted by private citizen complaints.

"People are not outraged by the conduct of gays," he said. "It is a question of whether the city council has the guts to see that."