

\$690,000 Raised at Yorty Dinners

By Drew Pearson

LOS ANGELES — Sam Yorty, personable, peripatetic Mayor of this city, has come a long way from the humble days when Mrs. Yorty used to cook for the family in a modest Washington suburb. Sam was then a member of the 83d Congress, and Mrs. Yorty was a good cook. The guests always had a good time.



Pearson

Mrs. Yorty is still a good cook but she doesn't have to cook any more. For today Sam lives in style in Mickey Rooney's old house with the help of one of the most generous expense accounts allotted to any American Mayor. Yet he has also raised around \$690,000 through five testimonial dinners in the past two and one-half years.

Three of them were held between elections. But unlike the dinners of Sen. Tom Dodd, they were not billed as campaign dinners. They were described as a "birthday dinner," a "civil dinner" and a "community tribute" dinner for the Mayor of Los Angeles.

So the big question is: What has Sam done with the money?

Looking over the Mayor's personal spending reveals some interesting items. Since 1961, Yorty has charged \$108,374 in personal expenses to

the City of Los Angeles. Of this, the Mayor itemized \$15,090 for "official entertainment supplies," the Mayor's high-sounding name for liquor.

Junket to Jerusalem

Another interesting item which the Mayor charged to the city was a junket to Europe and the Middle East. This totaled \$1934. Justification which the Mayor gave for charging the trip to the city was that he stopped in Jerusalem, Jordan, for a "conference with Arab leaders on the means of restoring peace with Israel."

This was the first time in memory that city funds were ever used for the City of Los Angeles to conduct American foreign policy.

The next time foreign policy became involved in the Los Angeles City expenses was in 1965, when Mayor Yorty and his harbor commissioners visited Japan, with a side trip to Saigon.

Yorty spent three hectic days sightseeing in Saigon and going to cocktail parties, at one of which he lost his shirt, plus \$430 in travelers' checks.

The Mayor lost the checks when peeling off his shirt at a cocktail party to trade with an Air Force general who was wearing a Filipino peek-a-boo lace shirt which Yorty admired. The general promptly gave it to him. The checks must have fallen out of Sam's shirt.

"Never mind," said the Mayor brightly. "They were American Express checks. I'll get them replaced."

'Atomic Sam'

Yorty and party traveled on a U.S. Air Force DC-3 while in Vietnam at a time when airplane space was at a premium. The American Embassy and the Air Force detailed two men to escort them. Total bill to the City of Los Angeles was \$33,500. There is no record of what the trip cost the Federal taxpayers for the special airplane, Lincoln convertible and other prerequisites.

After this trip, Yorty came to Washington to advise President Johnson to use the atomic bomb in Vietnam. After that some people called Yorty "Atomic Sam."

The Mayor is quite generous with his city commissioners. Since he spends money, he doesn't object if they do, too. When Commissioner Melvin Erickson paid \$85 a night for a suite at the Waldorf Astoria in New York for four nights, the city paid the bill.

The Mayor also OK'd the cost of hiring 31 geisha girls for two hours in Japan for his commissioners.

Home Worth \$75,000

Erickson is the business associate of James W. Raymond, who acquired a second trust on Mickey Rooney's home, then sold it to Yorty for no

down payment. The Rooney home on Blairwood Drive in Studio City is valued at around \$75,000.

Before he became Mayor, Sam was living in a modest little house in the San Fernando Valley worth about \$35,000.

However, none of these expenses were deducted out of the whopping \$690,000 which Yorty raised at his five dinners in the last two and a half years.

Looking over the expenses of the City of Los Angeles, it is difficult to see how the Mayor could spend that much money; for even the electric shaver which he keeps in his desk for a last-minute shave was paid for by the city—\$19.77.

When G. Bentley Ryan, Los Angeles attorney, wrote a letter to the city's business and political leaders on Sept. 18, 1963, inviting them to a birthday dinner for the Mayor at a cost of \$1000 per table or \$100 per ticket, he said that the money was needed for "fact sheets" which the Mayor mailed out to "6 to 12 thousand civil leaders, and the cost of this has to be borne by the Mayor himself."

These fact sheets are what the Mayor calls "voter education." But city records show that at least one of these mailings, the one attacking the alleged poor quality of Gov. Brown's judicial appointees, was paid for by the city.

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