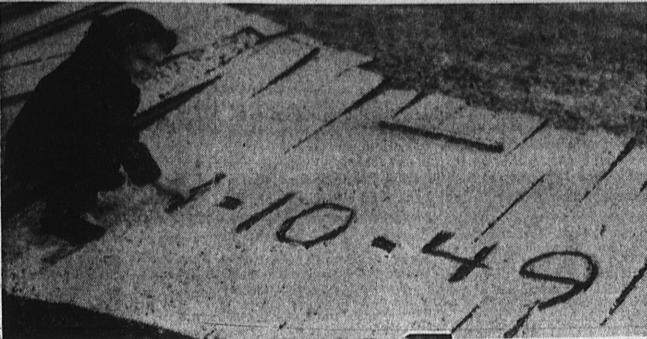


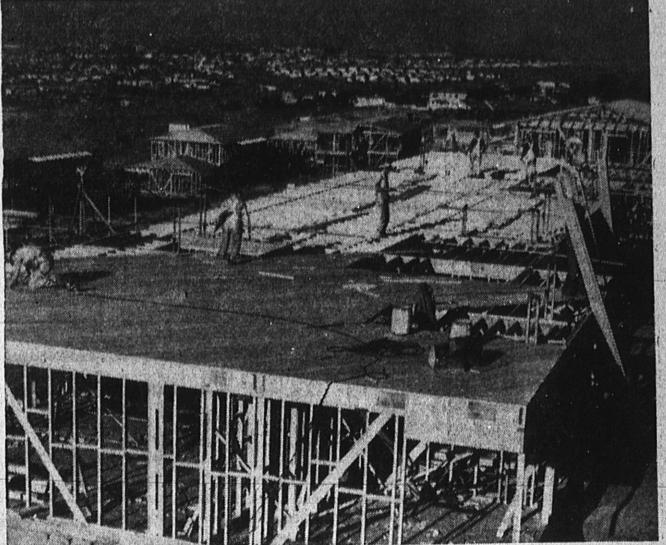
# These Were The Most-Talked-of Local Stories of 1949



**MORE THAN TALKED ABOUT . . .** was the "Big Snow of '49." In typical Southern California screw-ball style Torranceites donned bathing suits and trunks in the thin layer of snow that fell in Torrance for the first time on record. Here Carol Lee Malloy of 2366 Dominguez street, inscribes the date on a snow-covered fallen fence. Lovely skiers climbed the graceful white-coated slopes of Palos Verdes Hills in the early morning hours after daylight to slide down the rolling hills before the mantle of white quickly disappeared. The event was unconditionally the Number One talked of local story of the year. —Herald photo.



**COMMUNITY'S LOSS . . .** The year of 1949 was one of gains and losses. Perhaps the greatest loss to the community was suffered when Postmaster C. Earl Conner died of a heart attack on February 4. During the 14 years that Conner served Torrance as postmaster he made friends numbering in the thousands. His enemies, if any, could be tallied on the fingers of a single hand. His funeral was perhaps the largest ever held in Torrance. For more than a decade Conner headed the local March of Dimes. He was stricken while attending a March of Dimes benefit parade. A past commander of both the American Legion and the VFW, Conner died serving his country, his community, his friends.



**BIG BOOM . . .** Though not likely to reach the record-breaking figure of nearly eight million dollars set in 1948, building activity during the past year ranks among the ten top stories of 1949. With only two days remaining for builders to take out permits it is more than likely that the building permit evaluation will have to be content to stop its upward climb a few dollars over the seven million mark. This year, claims a recent Chamber of Commerce survey, new tract developers built 1216 new homes in Torrance. Next year, say the same builders, they will erect 2426, representing nearly 15 million dollars in permit evaluation. The scene above was taken during the middle of construction of 156 rental units comprising the Palos Verdes Apartments overlooking the ocean on the Hollywood-Palos Verdes Parkway. —Herald photo.



**THE LABOR PICTURE . . .** By virtue of its significance, the steel strike of September 30 would be high on the list of any stories reviewing the events of 1949—even nationally. Effected by the 40-day shutdown of Torrance's biggest employer—Columbia Steel Company, were nearly 1500 employees. The workers were seeking company paid pensions and insurance. A plan, costing five cents per employee hour was finally agreed upon with the cost being borne jointly by the employee and the company. The strike was back in the news last week with an announcement that the price of steel would be hiked approximately four per cent. Cost of the pension-insurance plan was given as the reason for the price increase. In the photo, John Oursler, superintendent of the open hearths at the local steel plant (extreme right), watches workers pour the first batch of ingots to be cast following the six-week shutdown. —Herald photo.



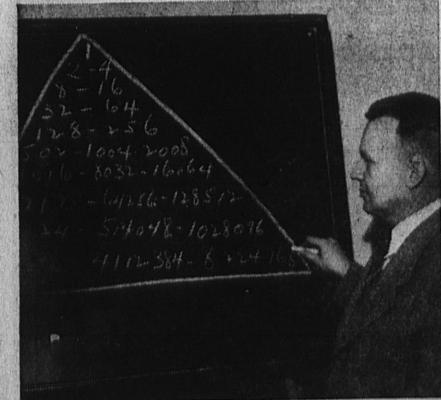
**POLITICAL POT . . .** High on any list of the top local stories would have to come the story of the unsuccessful effort to recall Torrance's mayor and three councilmen. Here Mayor J. Hugh Sherfy Jr. reads Fred Montgomery's barber shop copy of the Torrance Herald's Special Edition. The extra, the first in 22 years, informed the community of the collapse of the recall move. Though the action was widely followed and covered rather fully in the press, editors agreed that the story lacked a wholesomeness that prevented it from being labeled "a good yarn."



**TEN CENTS A CARD . . .** Heated arguments, both for and against, were presented to the City Council following an application of the VFW to operate a Keno Skill-Quiz game in Torrance. The tongue twisting name was hatted around between church organizations, the VFW, The Moose Lodge, (also a game-permit seeker), and was finally nixed by the City Dads, 4-1. The game, similar to Bingo, required a certain amount of skill, claimed the out-of-town operators, and therefore was not a gambling game but one of skill. —Herald photo.



**POOL SEEKERS . . .** Still being talked of today is the plan for a city-owned, school-operated swimming pool for aqua-minded Torrance residents. During the heat of the campaign and summer months, Charley Gotts attracted some attention to the cause when he donned a green and black striped suit of the '90's, a derby, and a sign. More attractive than Gotts were curvy Doris McQuillan (left) and shapely Cuba Bohanon. It has been suggested the pool be put before the people as a bond issue on the April ballot. More will be heard about the pool in 1950. —Herald photo.



**A DOLLAR A FRIEND . . .** Nearly everyone seemed to know someone who knew someone who collected from one to thousands of dollars in the famous Pyramid Friendship Club—but few seemed to have actually been on the receiving end on a payoff night. William Zoeller, a certified public accountant, calculated that eight million people would have to belong to each club if the chain were to run to its entirety without a break. When late-comers discovered this and other facts about the "bring a friend—bring a dollar" scheme, the clubs died a natural death. —Herald photo.



**CRIME RIPPLE . . .** Major crime of the year was the daring daylight holdup of the Bank of America. A red-haired bandit shoved a paper sack and a note through the window to Ross Mayfield, head teller, and commanded him not to move or he would be killed. Following the holdup, Mayfield (left) and Paul Creighton (standing) assistant cashier, looked through thousands of criminal pictures attempting to identify the carrot-topped bandit who got away with \$2600 in the stickup. Other man in photo is Detective Captain Ernie Ashton of the Torrance Police Department. Though never solved, the case is still open on the files of the FBI. —Herald photo.

**NO BOUNDARIES . . .** No editor compiling a list of the top ten best stories of 1949 could omit the heart-grIPPING story of the little girl who was entombed in a water well in San Marino—The Kathy Fiscus Story. Though the tragedy did not occur in Torrance it was so strongly felt here it could hardly be disregarded. At the peak of its action, the dramatic rescue attempt was witnessed by hundreds of local residents who crammed tele-



vision stores all night long to see the climax to what has been described as the greatest human interest story of all time. Local law makers acted to prevent such a tragedy from occurring here by passing laws and actually capping several open wells which dotted Torrance's oilwell covered terrain. Had the Fiscus story come from the pen of a fiction writer the author would have been scoffed at for producing a story about an event that could not happen—but did. Officer Gale Whitacre of the Torrance Police Department climbs into the opening of a 3500 foot well to show that the event could have happened here.—Herald photo.