

# Neighbors Rally To Aid Burned-Out Family of Four

## FIRE CAPS STREAK OF HARD LUCK

Neighbors of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Kimmet, whose Kettler Knolls home was extensively damaged by fire last Monday afternoon, rallied to help the burned-out family this week even to renting the Kimmet's an apartment to live in while their home is repaired.

The fire is believed to have started in the clothes closet of the Kimmet's home at 1715 W. 234th street, when Gary, their four-year-old son, accidentally ignited clothing while playing with a cigarette lighter.

The fire was the third of a series of "bad breaks" which has dogged the family during the past week. Several days ago, Mr. Kimmet, a machinist at the Pacific Electric Shops, smashed his hand. The day before the fire the water heater in the house blew up.

Lost in the fire was all the Kimmet's clothing.

Smoke and water damage was heavy, according to Chief J. J. Benner of the Torrance Fire Department. Extremely dense smoke from the smoldering clothing hampered firemen who were forced to don oxygen masks to locate the source of the fire.

Almost before the smoke had cleared from the house neighbors had raised \$25 and given it to the burned-out family. Boxes of clothing, bedding, and food were brought by neighbors. Fellow workers at Pacific Electric collected \$30. The Knights of Pythias donated a comforter. An apartment at 23504 Dolores avenue in Avalon Village

(Continued on page 2)

## City Ranks High In 59 Southland 'Booming' Areas

Torrance, 18th largest city in Los Angeles County, was surpassed in the amount of building permits issued during 1950 by only three other cities in the county.

Torrance with \$16,009,783 issued last year, was topped only by the cities of Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Pasadena.

Of 59 communities in the southland, Torrance was seventh on the list. The top ten communities and the amount of building permits issued last year for each community were as follows:

Los Angeles	\$407,178,693
L.A. County (upine)	\$341,507,113
San Diego	\$60,526,718
Long Beach	\$38,672,650
Pasadena	\$20,991,046
San Bernardino	\$17,402,717
TORRANCE	\$16,009,783
Whittier	\$15,974,922
Arcadia	\$14,855,872
Santa Ana	\$11,355,133

In 1949 Torrance was ninth with \$7,296,905 in permits being issued during that year.

# COUNCILMAN NOMINATED FOR CIVIL DEFENSE JOB



INVESTIGATE HANGING . . . Detective Sergeant Percy Bennett (ladder) and Officer Harold Trezise remove electric cord from a pipe in attic trapdoor. A few moments before a local merchant hung himself by fashioning a noose of the wire, binding his hands behind his back, and kicking the ladder from beneath him. (Herald photo).

## Single Court Plan Gaining Support

A plan which may see the Torrance City Court moved to Alondra Park was one of several voiced at a meeting of local civic representatives last Thursday in the Gardena Justice Courtroom.

Attending the meeting, which was chairmanned by Judge John A. Shidler, justice of the peace for the Gardena Township Court, was Supervisor Raymond V. Darby.

Among the listeners was Martin Katz, chief research director for Chief Justice Phil Gibson and for the State Judicial Committee. Katz will make recommendations regarding the new court set up to Darby.

### MAY 'HUNK' BEACH COURT

As a result of several plans proposed at the informal meeting, the new court building in Redondo Beach may be "junk-

ed," according to Raymond V. Darby.

Under the recently passed Proposition No. 3 local courts, including the Torrance City Court, presided over by Judge Otto B. Willett, and Shidler's Gardena Court will be abolished. It is planned to establish instead, one municipal court for each 60,000 persons. The meeting Thursday was to discuss "where and how" the new court would be organized.

Two proposals were suggested.

(Continued on page 2)

# Wife Discovers Merchant Hanging From Light Cord

EDITED in Torrance — PRINTED in Torrance — OWNED by Torrance Folks — SINCE 1914

## TORRANCE HERALD

37th YEAR—No. 3

TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 1951

24 PAGES



## Local Man Hangs Self In Store

Alex Calhoun, 60-year old owner of Calhoun's Men's Shop, was discovered by his wife yesterday morning in the rear of the store at 1319 El Prado where he had hanged himself with an electric light cord.

Calhoun, who had opened the store only last November '23, apparently left no note, according to Detectives Captain Ernie Ashton and Percy Bennett.

The one-time owner of a chain of stores in Canada, was seen early yesterday morning by nearby businessmen to carry a tall ladder into the store. He had fashioned a noose from a heavy electric cord which was suspended from a piece of pipe laid across the trapdoor opening in the attic. He had apparently bound his own hands before kicking the ladder out from beneath himself.

Reason for the suicide was not immediately determined, although several neighbors stated he had appeared despondent during the past several days.

Mrs. Beulah Calhoun, his wife, was treated by Dr. John Beeman for shock following her discovery. She lives at 705 Acacia avenue.

Stone and Myers removed the body to their chapel where funeral arrangements are pending.

Surviving are a son, Alexander Junior, of San Diego and a daughter, Mrs. Alberta Beaver, San Mateo.



HIGHWAY CASUALTY . . . Bernice Mitchell, employee of the North American Aircraft plant here, is shown being lifted onto an auto seat cushion following an early morning crash on Western avenue at 220th street last Friday morning. She suffered only minor injuries, according to police. (Herald photo).

## Powell May Quit Council

Councilman George Powell has been nominated for the salaried position of Assistant Director of Civilian Defense, according to a rumor picked up on the city hall steps yesterday morning.

If Powell accepts he would be forced to resign from the City Council.



COUNCILMAN POWELL . . . May Take Defense Post

Powell commented on the matter:

"I consider it a great honor that I was nominated for what I consider a highly important job at this time. I haven't had the opportunity since I learned of the offer last night to discuss the issue with my present employers and have not reached any definite conclusions regarding the position."

The new position was created recently upon the suggestion of City Manager George W. Stevens, commander of the city's defense program. Powell would receive approximately \$325 per month for supervising the development of the civilian defense program.

Contacted by phone and asked for information regarding Powell's nomination, Councilman Harvey B. Spelman Jr. and Willys C. Blount stated, "No Comment."

The matter of a decision is likely to come before the council at the next meeting of the group on Tuesday, January 23.

The vacancy created on the council should Powell accept the position would be filled by appointment.

Powell is presently employed as bookkeeper for K. Sunde Semmes, developer of the Pacific Hills Tract in South Torrance.

## Twister Leaves Path of Debris In Oilfields

(See Pictures on Pages 2 and 13)

With the prediction that another storm is on the way, Torrance was still cleaning up from last week's 75-mile-an-hour tornado which knocked down 12 oil wells in its curlicue path thru the oilfield last Thursday at 3:40 p.m.

Havoc wrought by the freak twister included:

One oilwell fire across Narbonne avenue between 235th and 236th streets.

Four north-south streets were blocked by fallen wells and dangling high voltage lines.

Television sets in the area were blown out by the sudden surge of electricity as power lines shorted across one another.

Telephone service in the Kettler Knolls area was out for nearly 20 hours.

Homes in some sections of the Kettler tract were without electricity until after midnight.

Two firemen sustained minor injuries.

The wall of a home was knocked out by a falling rig.

Water pressure dropped and hampered fire fighting efforts when the electric power-operated pumps of a Lomita water company failed.

Roof of a farm house of 235th street was lifted and cast 30 feet from the house.

According to witnesses the twister, estimated to be about 30 feet across the vortex, came through a stretch between 234th and 236th streets, starting west of Pennsylvania avenue and leapt eastward. It knocked down 10 wells in the City of Torrance. After flattening a well across Eshelman avenue near 235th street the tornado lifted, hopped across Western avenue and came earthward again to knock down two wells in the

(Continued on Page 2)

## Defense Speed Up Ordered

A speed-up in the recruitment program for volunteer workers to aid the Torrance Civil Defense and Disaster Council has been ordered by City Manager George W. Stevens, commander of the Disaster Council.

Stevens, a former Lieutenant Colonel in the National Guard, put a "Number One Priority" on the Civil Defense recruitment effort.

"It is everybody's job and we are all going to have to work, sacrifice, and pay. The success of the program depends on the large scale participation by the citizens," Stevens said.

He estimated that at least one member of each family in Torrance will have some part in the defense set up when the program is fully organized.

Application blanks for volunteer workers will be available shortly after a forthcoming meeting with representatives from the principal organizations in the city and members of the Disaster Council. The blanks will be available at the city hall, police station and all city fire stations.

Recruitment of auxiliary units to aid the police and fire departments has been underway for some time, Stevens said.



HOUSE FIRE . . . Dense, choking smoke from the clothing-filled closet of Gordon Kimmet's Kettler Knolls home hampered Torrance firemen Monday afternoon as they fought

to control a fire which started in the wardrobe in the front bedroom. Fire, smoke, and water damage was "heavy," according to Fire Chief J. J. Benner. (Photo by Reid Bundy).

## Five Hurt In Early Morning Auto Crash

Four employees of North American's Torrance plant here were slightly injured in an early morning crash last Friday when a car driven by John A. Scott, 44, of Los Angeles, collided with another at 220th street and Western avenue.

Driver of the other car, Iris Reuss, 26, of 2843 Alberta street, Torrance, was slightly injured, according to Los Angeles police.

Taken to Harbor General Hospital with contusions and lacerations were Scott and his passengers George Allen, Bernice Mitchell, and Pauline Boyde.

Torrance police officers responded to the accident call, but notified Los Angeles police when they found that the collision had occurred in Los Angeles territory.

## Harbor Hospital To Train Nurses

The Board of Supervisors, Tuesday approved a student training program at Harbor General Hospital, similar to that at the General Hospital, to help ease the acute shortage of graduate nurses.

Supervisor Raymond V. Darby revealed that fifteen trainee positions had been borrowed from the General Hospital to allow for the training of students at Harbor Hospital.



VIEW DAMAGE . . . Mrs. Gordon Kimmet and her nine-month-old daughter, Jacquelyn, survey charred walls in the bedroom of their home at 1715 West 234th street, which was damaged extensively in a fire Monday afternoon. (Herald Photo).