

\$10,000 'Junk' Jewelry Recovered

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Students Win Award

Torrance High School made historic history last Tuesday evening when their group of players captured top honors in the 20th annual Pasadena Playhouse State One-Act Play tournament.

Some 30 high schools and 300 students participated in the tournament, which ran from Monday through Wednesday, and a winning group was chosen each evening. The Torrance High play, "Sunday Costs Five Pesos," a comedy by Josephine Niggli, was given a "superior" rating, the highest awarded by the judges.

The victorious group was presented with the Governor Earl Warren trophy, stage equipment, and a two-year scholarship to the Pasadena Playhouse College of Theatre Arts for the senior class.

Torrance faculty members. Cast of the play included Lenis Smith, Babs Whitley, Yolanda Goldsmith, Jan Desmond, and Delores McCollum. Faculty director was L. L. Bereskin and student director was Harry Fralich.

The stage crew was composed of Don Sclarotta, David Haffner, Bob Hopkins, Warner Smith and Al Legus; and the prompter was Dee Schumert.

'Suicide' Pilot Wanted Here on Bad Check Charge

Sperry Skips Court Date on Bum Checks

War-wounded flyer Roland Sperry, 30, a former Torrance furniture salesman who threatened to kill himself by crashing a stolen plane into the sea Friday afternoon, faces a series of bad check charges here when he gets out of jail for stealing the airplane.

Detective Lt. Percy Bennett of the Torrance Police Dept. said yesterday Sperry, a former salesman for the El Prado Furniture Co., is wanted for passing at least \$250 in bad checks. Holding bogus checks are Charlie Gotts of Daniels Cafe and Dave Figueroa of Figueroa's Shell Service Station.

He was scheduled to have appeared to answer the bad check charge in the South Bay Municipal Court on Monday but failed to show. A bench warrant had been issued for his arrest, Sgt. Bennett said.



JAILED . . . Booked for stealing an airplane in which he threatened to kill himself by diving it into the sea on Friday is Roland Sperry, former furniture salesman here. He was out on bail on a bad check charge at the time he made the "suicide" flight.

THREE CHILDREN

Until he split with his wife, Mrs. Ovella Sperry, the ex-flying Tiger pilot lived at 619 Acacia Ave. They have three children, a girl five and two smaller boys.

The ex-Air Force flyer was arrested a month ago by Det. Lt. Bennett at Les Bacon Studebaker agency in Hermosa Beach where he was employed. He was out on bail at the time he took the airplane.

He was returned to the Gardena Police Dept. Friday night from San Diego, where he landed after a four-hour flight during which he talked with friends by radio, telling them he was going to plunge his stolen Stinson airplane into the sea.

CODE VIOLATION

Lt. Detective Roy Tracy and Sgt. Clifford Hall of the Gardena Police Dept. booked Sperry on a violation of section 449D of the Aeronautical Code — flying a stolen aircraft. The accused will be arraigned in the South Bay Municipal Court Monday afternoon at 2 p.m.

Sperry stole the plane in which he had taught the owner, Arthur Eytchison, a furniture dealer, and his son, to fly. He flew between the Gardena Airport from where he took off to San Diego, where he landed at 1:20. Motorcycle officers paced his plane to a stop and arrested him.

The despondent flyer had left two notes, one of which was found at the airport by Tom Peck, 18536 Ashley Ave., an employee at the Gardena airstrip.

WIFE WAITS

During the four-hour ordeal, his wife, who obtained an interlocutory decree from the veteran flyer, waited tearfully at the airport.

Two days earlier the flyer attempted to hang himself but was discovered by the younger Eytchison.

The couple's three children, Marcia, 5, Ronnie, 2, and Kathy, 9 months, are currently living in Texas with relatives. He said.

Valuable Jewels Thought to be Junk by Thieves

Had a ring of auto thieves read the newspapers last week they would have known that the jewels which they found in the glove compartment and regarded as "junk jewelry," was valued at \$10,000—More than ten times what they hoped to get for selling the stolen auto.

The jewelry, part of a collection of imported diamonds, pearls, sapphires, and other precious stones, was recovered this week by Torrance police after one of the thieves was nabbed in Mexico on a drunk driving charge.

JEWELS IN COMPARTMENT

Recovered was the jewelry of Army Major James Barrett, who reported to local police that his late model Buick Riviera containing the jewels in a velvet bag in the glove compartment was stolen March 16 from in front of his apartment at 456 Palos Verdes Blvd., Hollywood Riviera.

In a Tia Juana jail booked on charges of drunk driving and transporting stolen goods across the border is Harry Thias, 18, of 4132 W. 170th St., Lawndale. According to Detective Captain Ernie Ashton of the Torrance Police Department, Thias was nabbed driving the stolen Buick in Mexico, where he and two other men had taken the car to sell it.

TRIO WANTED

Still wanted by police for their part in the deal is John Campbell Calder, 24, of Hawthorne, and Donald Dan White, 19, of 17019 S. Denker Ave., Gardena. Also wanted is Robert Ben Hunt, 18, of 3312 W. 189th St.



RECOVERED 'JUNK' . . . Detective Captain Ernie Ashton catalogues some jewelry regarded as junk by thieves who found it in the glove compartment of an auto which they had stolen. The car thieves gave the gem studded pieces to girl friends thinking them worthless—the gems, that is!

who Thias told Capt. Ashton stole the car from in front of Maj. Barrett's apartment.

When the men found the jewelry they thought it was junk, and gave it to Eviline Thias, 15, sister of the arrested man, who in turn gave it to Mrs. Betty Davis, 18-year-old wife of an Army sergeant, who lives at 15006 Kingsdale Ave., Apt. 5. She in turn gave some of the jewelry, including a \$1000 bracelet, to another girl friend who pawned it for \$7.50.

HID CAR IN GARAGE

The car thieves had hidden the stolen car in a garage of an unoccupied house in a new home tract in North Torrance, waiting for the "heat to get off," Thias told Capt. Ashton when the detective visited him Friday in the Mexico jail.

Most of the jewelry, identified by insurance lists, was recovered from Mrs. Davis.

"The boys dumped some of it in my lap one night and said, 'Here, do you want this junk?' I didn't know it was stolen. I thought it was just gaudy costume jewelry," she told Capt. Ashton.

ESTIMATES VALUE

Among the items recovered were a set of gold earrings studded with 22 diamonds valued at \$1000; a six-strand pearl necklace insured for \$750; a set of cameo earrings valued at \$150; a very large opal ring, a gold locket, a platinum, and a pearl earring set, all value unknown. The detective was able to identify six pieces of jewelry with a total value of \$2125, but was unable to set the value on eight other pieces which he had recovered.

Chace to Take Over New Supervisor Job April 7

Mayor Burton W. Chace of Long Beach will take his seat on the County Board of Supervisors on April 7, it was announced in Los Angeles yesterday. He was originally slated to assume the seat vacated by the death of Supervisor Raymond V. Darby next Tuesday. He will represent the Fourth District.

Truck, Two Cars In Fiery Wreck; Two Injured

A flaming, three vehicle smash-up at 190th and Hamilton Sts. sent a 50 year old man and a 5 year old boy to Harbor General Hospital Friday evening.

Hospitalized were Ned Farrar, of Long Beach, with a compound fracture of the left leg and possible serious chest injuries, and little Timothy Betts, 2147 S. Normandie, with minor injuries.

Farrar's car struck a scrap filled truck being driven by John Kellogg, 43, of Los Angeles, and burst into flames. Kellogg pulled Farrar from the burning car — then along came Mrs. Doris Betts, 29, Timothy's mother. Her car plowed into Farrar's flaming wreck.

Last Rites Held For Oscar Swintz

Funeral services were held yesterday afternoon at the Congregational Church in Redondo Beach for Oscar Vandell Swintz, 65, who died Thursday at his home, 268 Via la Ciruela, in Hollywood Riviera.

The Rev. Walberg conducted the services. Interment followed at the Pacific Crest cemetery Swintz, a native of South Carolina, had lived in the South Bay area for 14 years, and was employed at North American Aircraft company. A veteran of World War I, he was a member of the Redondo Beach Elk Lodge and a Mason.

He is survived by his widow, Gertrude; a daughter, Joan; two brothers, Harmon and Major, of South Carolina; and two sisters, Mrs. Essie Larimore and Mrs. Minnie Hays, also of South Carolina.

Construction In Torrance Fourth Highest in Area

The city of Torrance stands fourth in the county in total valuation of construction for the month of February, according to the county-wide report of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

Out of a list of 46 cities, Torrance's total valuation of \$2,201,806 was headed only by Long Beach, with \$3,647,925; Monterey Park, with \$2,693,140, and, of course, Los Angeles itself, with \$3,767,540.

Van Nuys and West Los Angeles, which are sections of Los Angeles and not incorporated cities, also topped Torrance, with totals of \$14,756,822 and \$2,313,293, respectively.

Total number of building permits issued here—412—was third in the county, topped only by Long Beach, with 2254, and Los Angeles with 4990.

Total Los Angeles county construction values are currently hitting a two-month pace 20 per cent greater than the same period in 1952—a near record year—the Chamber of Commerce said.



SIX-YEAR OLD BILLY HIATT
Prays He'll Get His Pony Back.

The Gate Is Open Boy, 6, Prays His Pony Will Come Back

Hit-Run Charge Reduced to a Misdemeanor

If his nightly prayers are answered, six-year old Billy Hiatt will soon get back his stolen Shetland pony "Zinnia."

Each night little Billy bends his tear-stained cheeks over his palms jointed together in a prayerful pose and kneels at the side of his bed to pray for the return of his beloved pet.

The animal is missed not only by little Billy but by seven other children, all wards of the court, who are cared for by Mrs. William Hiatt, the boy's mother.

"Zinnia" has been missing since March 20 when it disappeared from the side yard of Billy's home at 21502 Berendo Ave.



BUENO, SENORITAS . . . Young Actresses Barbara Whitley, left, and Yolanda Goldsmith, both 15, had leading parts in the Torrance High School play, "Sunday Costs Five Pesos," which won top honors in the Twentieth Annual State One-Act Play Tournament at the Pasadena Playhouse last Tuesday. The three-day tournament brought 30 schools from all parts of the state to Pasadena and more than 300 students participated.

Police found the car in a parking lot at the Union Oil Co. refinery in Wilmington. It was registered to Vierow, who police said admitted he had been involved in an accident.

"It's heartbreaking to see him get up early each morning and run to the window and look out into the yard to see if during the night his prayers have been answered."

BULLETIN

World famous athlete Jim Thorpe, who thrilled millions with his athletic feats in football and nearly every other sport for two decades, died in a trailer court near Pacific Coast Hwy. and Pennsylvania Ave. yesterday afternoon.

Thorpe's death was listed tentatively as due to a heart attack. Firemen had worked over the stricken athlete for more than half an hour before he was pronounced dead.