

Inspectors Suspended In Building Scandal

TORRANCE PRESS

Conveniently Located at 1406 Cravens Avenue — Phone FAirfax 8-2345

VOLUME V

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 1954 — TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA

119

NUMBER 49



Builder Denies Charges

Swift action followed in the wake of the city housing scandal when James S. Dresser, building inspector, and Cecil W. Smith, assistant building inspector, were suspended this week by the City Council on the recommendation of City Manager George Stevens.

Admitting the need in the Building Department for better supervision, better record maintenance, and more thorough inspections, the city manager declared that evidence indicates that the responsibility for what has occurred rests primarily with the two individuals who have been suspended.

Investigation
A report submitted by the Division of Housing of the California Department of Industrial Relations last week charged the contractor of the Crenshaw Gardens tract with half a dozen violations of the city building code and accused the City Building Department of gross negligence in enforcing the state and city building code.

Whether the city will sue the contractor must await the (Continued on Page 8)



HE LIVES IN A HUT by the side of the road and lets the rest of the world go by, Sylvan Cameros, 71, came to America in 1897 from the high mountain ranges of the Pyrenees in France. He lives by the city dump with his 11 goats. Cameros points at the factories, and the houses and swings his arms in a wide, vague circle: "This was all wilderness at one time." He has lived in Torrance 11 years. His days are spent watching his goats and day-dreaming. Cameros takes his goats as far as Torrance Blvd. and on occasion he, himself, makes a trip into downtown Torrance.

\$3 MILLION SCHOOL BOND PASSES 9-1

The construction of additional school facilities to provide for the rapidly growing school population here was assured this week when Torrance voters approved the \$3,000,000 bond issue Tuesday by a vote of 2749 to 305, it was announced by Albert Posner, administrative assistant.

The election results represent a 91 percent approval of the bond issue. The election turnout amounted to 18 percent of the 16,000 registered voters, a figure considered higher than usual here as well as in comparison with other districts.

One reason for the overwhelming approval of the bond issue was said to be the sincere awareness of the school needs by voters in this area as well as local industry which came out strongly in favor of the bond issue.

Money from the bonds will help construct more than 200 classrooms which will be necessary to meet anticipated enrollment increases during the next two years, according to Dr. J.

Opportunity Days Are Back Again!

The recently held coupon sales were so outstanding that Opportunity Days are back by popular demand!

Coupons will be found on page 16 of this issue.

The popular sale will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of this week. There'll be bargains galore at every store that's joined the Opportunity Days band wagon.

VOTE FOR A CIVIC CENTER

(In order to air our civic needs, the Torrance Press is running a series of weekly editorials written by people of the community. Editorials may be submitted by anyone. All manuscripts become the property of the Torrance Press. We welcome ideas on any subject, controversial or otherwise. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publishers.)

By HOWARD PERCY, Guest Editor

Recently I spoke to a member of our City Council regarding the proposed Civic Center which is to be located on Torrance boulevard between Madrona and Maple streets. He informed me that not enough discussion or publicity has been given to this important bond issue.

The "Civic Center Bond Issue" will be on the April ballot and provides for facilities for a new city hall and a police station as well as adequate off-street parking areas. Our city fathers have endorsed the project and need our support at the April elections.

It is a known fact that to expand our present city facilities at El Prado and Cravens would mean a complete start from the foundation up which would not only interrupt the services but would be extremely costly. This would not solve the parking problem either.

I hope that the Industries Tax Committee will endorse the Civic Center bond issue as they did the \$3,000,000 school bond issue. We, the people, want to know how industry feels about our problems.

Both bond issues will serve the same purpose, namely, to provide facilities both civic and educational, for a population of 125,000 people in the Torrance trading area.

The greatest opposition against the Civic Center bond issue has arisen from some of our merchants who contend that moving the Center out of the shopping area will hurt their business. But poor parking planning, poor merchandizing, and lack of vitality to draw people to Torrance has already done the job. Ask any Torrance housewife.

The voters will go to the polls in April either to provide for themselves and their children better city facilities and a badly needed recreation area or defeat temporarily a well-planned Civic Center.

I say temporarily for we will have to do it sometime in the future at a greater cost to the taxpayer.

Let us back up our city fathers and city planners and provide our city with means for a Civic Center that will serve us for many years to come.

Miracle Fails

LOCAL BOY DIES TWICE

Death came twice for a local 7-year-old boy when Lincoln F. Bird, Jr., died Wednesday morning. He died 24 hours after he had been miraculously saved by his physician, who massaged

his heart when it stopped beating for 3½ minutes Tuesday morning.

Lincoln Frank Bird, Jr., 7, of 2225 Moneta ave., died as a result of an acute medullary failure (brain damage through lack of oxygen) Wednesday morning at Doctor's Hospital in Los Angeles, it was disclosed.

Just about 24 hours earlier a miracle was performed by Dr. Alex Wilcox who cut an incision in Frankie's chest and massaged his heart for half an hour when the boy's heart stopped beating for 3½ minutes. He had been given an anesthetic preparatory to having a broken arm reset.

Dr. Wilcox cut a 5-inch slit between the boy's ribs, reached in with his fingers, and began a rhythmic massage after a stimulant had restored the heart beat briefly.

After a half hour, the heart began beating faintly and then stronger. When it maintained a steady beat, a fire department pulmonary squad administered oxygen for two hours.

The boy was transferred to Doctor's Hospital in Los Angeles from a Long Beach hospital. He was alive but barely conscious.

Critical Period
"His heart is working well now," Dr. Wilcox said. "We will know by Thursday (today) or Friday whether there has been any permanent damage. If he comes out in that period, damage will be little if any."

During the time his heart stopped, no oxygen reached his brain.

Flying Kite
Lincoln Bird, the father, a truck driver for a rock products company, said his son broke his arm last week Tuesday when he fell from a pile of lumber

while flying a kite. The arm was set but complications set in and an X-ray taken Tuesday at the Harbor General Hospital showed it was not properly aligned.

Final Count Puts Voters At 17,072

A total of 17,072 voters are officially registered now to vote in the forthcoming municipal elections, it was announced this week by City Clerk A. H. Bartlett.

This compares with 11,000 who registered for the previous election. A total of 59 precincts have been established, four of which are split precincts. Precincts which have been split in two because of excess population since the last election are: No. 20, 699 voters; No. 27, 528 voters; No. 37, 619 voters; and No. 41, 538 voters.

At the last election the city had only 43 precincts. Four precinct workers will be placed in every area during the election.

Approximately 65 per cent of the registered voters can be counted on to participate in the elections on the basis of past performances, Bartlett estimated.

Registered voters broke down as follows according to party affiliation: Democrats, 10,072; Republicans, 6133; Independent Progressives, 11; Prohibitionists, 14; miscellaneous, 29; non-partisan, 690.



FIRST IN THE AREA: The Cecil King—Vincent Thomas headquarters opened at 1405 Sartori last week and will serve as the temporary 17th District office. The headquarters is open every day except Sundays and is also open Friday evenings. Among the campaign plans are an open house party and a membership drive. Volunteer help is invited. Ernest Carreau (l) here helps Mrs. Irene Frazer hang up a poster.

Lomita Trailer Court Squabble Flares Anew

Two factions in a Lomita zoning squabble this week charged that county officials, "sidestepped" the trailer court zoning issue near Narbonne high school.

Three months ago an urgency zoning ordinance was placed on a central area of the community, bounded by 252nd and 257th streets, Oak street and the Los Angeles city limit, after a request for permission to use a parcel of land across the street from the high school as a trailer park.

Factions
A group of residents, led by Mrs. Ann Atkinson, sought and obtained the emergency zoning rule, preventing use of the land as a trailer park site.

However, bitter antizoning sentiment, led by the Lomita Property Owners and Regis-

tered Voters association fought against urgency order.

County Acts
In an attempt to "satisfy" both sides, the county acquired right-of-way for the extension of 255th street from Walnut avenue to the city limit, which took up the proposed trailer park site, and then lifted the zoning regulation.

The move was figured as a side-step of the zoning issue and also resulted in banning the trailer park.

Mrs. Atkinson and her zoning group are angry because the urgency ordinance would have made it simple to go ahead with permanent zoning, while Mrs. Phillips and the property owners association are angry because they consider the side-stepping a kind of "zoning."

Denker St. Slough To Get Bridge

The long-awaited temporary flood-bridge for Denker st. and 212th st. became a virtual reality this week when the Los Angeles City Council unanimously voted funds for such a project as a result of the continuous efforts of local residents and Councilman John S. Gibson.

A temporary flood bridge with asphalt sidewalks leading to the streets on either side of the bridge will be installed across the Denker st. slough in about three weeks, it was reported.

Plans for the bridge have been approved already by the city engineering department.

An Open Letter . . .

A great majority of the population of the City of Torrance lives in newly constructed homes.

There has been growing dissatisfaction with the type of construction permitted here by the authorities, and the merit of this criticism is supported by the State Housing Division's indictment of the City of Torrance.

The City of Torrance building code is known as the "Uniform Building Code of the State of California," and every qualified engineer and building inspector knows what is called for under this code.

Since the Torrance Press first started receiving calls about homes now labeled "Krappy Kottages," efforts have been made to stir the official city family into action to correct the situation.

After all, the families which buy these homes expect a dollar's worth of construction for the dollar invested, and if they do not get it, we must assume "something is wrong."

Responsibility
We do feel that higher up in city government are those who must be responsible for this situation, and that it is to these men that we should look for correction.

Although 2 inspectors have already been suspended, this does not solve the problem permanently. It is merely a political maneuver at this crucial pre-election period.

After six years of the City Manager form of government, under the direction of a civil engineer who has been responsible for the building department, we feel that this condition is uncalled for and bears the full consideration of the City Council.

And, because this is "election year," with a possible change of city administration in the offing, we do not think that anything hasty should be done in "cutting off heads" to save others' necks.

We believe that this matter should be given serious consideration by the City Council, and that the City Council majority should be held responsible for this unfortunate situation which has damaged the reputation of Torrance.

State Position
While we hold the Councilmanic majority responsible for this, we think that the incoming Council members should state their positions on the matter, because two of the seven candidates probably will be sitting in judgment on the investigation.

Therefore, we address this OPEN LETTER, to all candidates of the City

Council in the forthcoming election, and will print their answers in the next edition of the Torrance Press.

TO THE CANDIDATES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF TORRANCE:
Mr. Willys G. Blount, Mr. Francis W. Burk, Mr. Robert F. Evans, Mr. Alvin K. Hill, Mr. Albert Isen, Mrs. Herma Tillim, and Mr. Jack E. White.

You are aware of the serious charges which have been brought against the City of Torrance and its building department relative to alleged laxity in inspections and building code enforcement of new homes constructed by the hundreds in this City during the past six years.

You are asking the people of Torrance to elect you to the City Council, to represent their interests in providing a good, stable government, such primary purposes being protection of life and property.

You will be called to pass upon the vital issues at stake, if a thorough investigation is made of the charges brought by the State Housing Division.

Investigation
Therefore, the Torrance Press asks you, and each of you, to make a thorough investigation of the charges against the City of Torrance and the Building Department, as made by the officials of the State Housing Division, and that you determine to your own satisfaction the merit of the charges.

After such determination, we ask you to state in writing to this newspaper what steps you believe should be taken and will take, if elected to correct such conditions as you find to be in need of correction.

We ask you to state what your intention is to protect the people of the City of Torrance against recurrence of conditions which might result in such charges as those made by the state.

Your statement, if presented in writing before Tuesday, March 9, at 5 p.m., will be printed in the next edition of the Torrance Press, in the next issue if received later.

We call your attention to the fact that 75 per cent of the voters of Torrance are watching this situation, because they, too, are living in new homes built in new subdivisions in this rapidly expanding City of Torrance. May we hear your views on this matter?

Respectfully,
W. R. Zappas,
M. L. Owens
Co-Publishers

SCHOOL BUS EXTENSION UNDER STUDY

A study has been called for by the Board of Education to determine the possibility of extending school bus privileges to a larger number of school children. At present only those pupils qualify for school bus privileges who live outside a 1¼-mile radius of school. This figure may be reduced to a one-mile radius, according to the Board of Education.

Mothers from the Shady Nook tract in the Kettler Knolls section complained before the Board about not having bus runs for their children. A study will be made to see whether the area comes under the present 1¼-mile policy as the mothers maintain it does.

Special Need
There is the possibility that the area may be given bus service if it is discovered that hazardous conditions exist for children walking to school.

Board members and school officials explained to the mothers that funds do not permit as extensive a bus service for the children as the district would like to provide. The spectacular growth in this area demands stretching of bus facilities to the fullest.

The school district spends 7.2 per cent of its budget on transportation which compares with 4.3 per cent for the county.

Many Made Happy By Little Ad

You'd never think of it that way, but a little classified ad can make a lot of people very happy . . . that is, if it's a classified ad which has been placed in the Torrance Press classified section.

For instance, there's Mrs. Arnold Bazell of 1631 West 209th street, who was happy because she was swamped with calls and who sold the following objects to the first person who called after her 75 cent ad appeared in the Torrance Press.

FOR SALE—Schwinn boy's bike. Good condition. \$25. Record player, \$10. After 5 p.m. FA. 8-4677

Of course the person who got such a terrific buy was pretty happy, too.

And finally, the Torrance Press is happy to be able to offer all its classified advertisements such continuously good results at such low costs.

McCuiston Killed at Air Base

Airman 3rd Class Lawrence J. McCuiston, 19, a graduate of Torrance High School, was killed at the March Air Force Base when he was run over by a fire truck while on sentry duty at 2 a.m. in the morning, Sunday, March 7, it was reported.

The death was termed an accident by Air Base authorities. McCuiston's wife, Patricia, 19, lives at 1340 W. 5th St., Los Angeles, as does a 14-month-old daughter.

Richards To Address Democrats

Richard Richards, Democratic candidate for state senator, will address Torrance Democrats at a Democratic breakfast to be held Sunday morning, March 21, at 10 a.m., at Alan Richard Hall, 1953 West Carson street, it was announced this week.

Tickets for the breakfast may be bought at the Torrance Democratic Headquarters, 1405 Sartori. Reservations may also be made by calling FA. 8-5679 or PR. 5-1276. All reservations must be made and paid for by March 15.

Miss Rose Sarukin, program chairman, is in charge of the breakfast.

Takes Car, Gets Married, Gets Caught

Following a trip to Tijuana to buy a pair of shoes and to Las Vegas to get married, Irwin Stewart, 45, of 13007 Yukon, was arrested in Barstow for theft of a '50 Pontiac which he allegedly intended to purchase from Paul's Chevrolet, according to Police Chief Willard Haslam.

Stewart, on probation for a bad check conviction, was also booked for forgery in connection with about \$150 worth of bad checks which he has passed. The extrusion foreman was given the car for a trial drive Thursday. When he did not return within 24 hours a warrant was sent out for his arrest.

Beatty Circus Coming

An old-fashioned circus parade will lead the Clyde Beatty circus into town Monday, April 5, for a one day stay which will feature two afternoon shows and one evening show, according to Chris Sorenson, president of the Optimist Club which is sponsoring the event.

The circus will be located at 220th St. and Western Ave., and all money collected by the club will be spent on youth activities, as has been done in previous years.

Dave Figueredo, general chairman, and Stew Meyers and W. C. Weaver, co-chairmen, have been working out the plans for this spectacle.

By purchasing tickets in advance spectators will be assured seats, it was disclosed. Tickets may be bought at the following places: Shell gas station, Torrance and Crenshaw; Lawson's Jewelers; Frank's Furniture; Alter Realty (Walteria). Tickets will soon be sold at stands around town.

Resolution Asks Better Mail Service

Keystone residents in a new home tract on Moneta avenue between 220th and 223rd streets have issued a complaint against poor mail delivery in the area. A resolution calling for better delivery is being sent to the Torrance postoffice by the Keystone Civic Betterment Association.