

HUSBAND, WIFE SUFFOCATE IN CHRISTMAS NIGHT FIRE

Death visited a husband and wife Christmas night when they were asphyxiated in their bed as a result of a smoldering chair-fire believed started from a cigarette.

Pronounced dead on arrival Harbor General Hospital Saturday night were Grady Dolbre, 54, and his wife, Dolores, 44, of 705 Acacia street.

Mrs. Dewbre's brother, Glenn

Patterson, stated that he had seen the Dewbres to bed around 6 p.m. whereupon he went to visit neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Green at 703 Acacia.

Notes Smoke

Around 8:15 p.m. Green made a trip to the garage and on his way back noted smoke from under the eaves of the house, according to police reports. He checked for burned wiring

but when he noted the heat, he went to the front of the house and entered. The heat was so great that he backed out and began opening doors and windows.

As he got around to the bedroom he noted Patterson hanging out of the window, badly overcome by smoke.

Drags Bodies Out

Green went quickly back into

the house, dragging Patterson out and then returned for Mrs. Dewbre and again for her husband which two he removed by the back door, placing them on the sidewalk in the rear of the house.

The victims apparently had tried to get out of bed. The woman was found near the door and the man between the twin beds on the floor.

Torrance firemen, who were

summoned to the scene, tried to resuscitate the couple while other firemen extinguished the blaze.

Dewbre was employed at the Torrance plant of Douglas Aircraft.

There were three fatalities due to fire in the State of California over the Christmas week-end, Fire Department officials indicated. Torrance accounted for two of these deaths.



"THIS IS MINE" asserts Leo S. Girard of 17102 Prairie avenue. Girard claims that the city never obtained an easement for constructing streets and sidewalks in front of his home and

that the city has infringed on his private property. He won't lift the barricade, marking off his own land, until he has been properly reimbursed.

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Torrance Building Boom Tops Last Year By 65%

Building Total Hits \$45 Million

The Torrance building boom reached unprecedented heights the total for 1954 hit \$45,052,242, representing a 65% increase over the 1953 record total of \$29,315,265.

These were the figures released by Walter Bradford, senior clerk in the Torrance Building Department, December 28, with little variation expected by December 31.

Nor will this year constitute the peak for Torrance, according to John Russell, superintendent of the Torrance Building Department. Russell predicts that the end of 1955 will see the building figure rise to \$70 million.

Figures for the month of December (Continued on Page 13)

Elk Officers



ELECTED... Heading the Torrance Elks' Lodge for the coming year are (left to right): rear—F. W. Fahnestock, esteemed leading knight; Roger W. Holmes, esteemed lecturing knight; front—Ralph Jakubowski, esteemed loyal knight; and Joseph E. Yates, exalted ruler.

DRIVER'S LICENSE SERVICE CLOSED DEC. 30 TO FEB. 7

Leavitt Tudor, manager of the local office of the Department of Motor Vehicles announced today that due to the anticipated heavy demand for registration during the annual renewal period it has been tentatively decided to close the driver's license service from December 30 through February 7.

During this time, however, applications already on file will be taken care of.

Tudor recommends that anyone in need of a driver's license file his application prior to December 30. Full time driver's license service will be resumed February 8.

Councilmen Wax Lyrical

Torrance city councilmen proved last week that there was definitely a sentimental side to a politician's nature, when they burst out into strains of "Happy Birthday."

The occasion was Councilman Willys Blount's birthday which coincided with the date of the council meeting, December 21.

Councilmen did not follow through with the whole song, however, possibly embarrassed by the quality of their voices or the sudden breach of dignity.

6800 Acres in Rolling Hills Offered City for Annexation

Temptation was turned on to an unprecedented degree last week when 6800 acres of land were wafted under the noses of Torrance city councilmen for the purpose of annexation.

J. R. Newville of the Engineering Service Corp. exploded this little bombshell when he informed councilmen that Great Lakes Carbon corp. and Capital corp. were willing to offer Torrance all their 6800 acre holdings in the Rolling Hills area for annexation.

Thus, within a matter of four weeks, the area offered for annexation jumped from the original 250 acres to the full 6800 acres, after various intermediary stages.

Despite the heady thought that this would add an area to Torrance over half the city's present size, Torrance city councilmen indicated that they were not going to be rushed into committing themselves on the matter until some serious problems are settled to their satisfaction.

"I'm concerned about schools, lot sizes, and other facilities such as parks, fire station, and police station," Mayor Nick Draie said in asking for some specific proposals on these issues.

Schools Opposed

The Board of Education previously went on record as opposing land annexations to the city where there was not sufficient taxable wealth to pay for school needs.

The Board of Education registered shock upon hearing of this latest proposal. Dr. J. H. Hull, superintendent of schools, stated that he had been assured by the developers that they had no intention to offer more than the original 2300 acres to the city for annexation.

The city and the school district are awaiting some acceptable offer from the developers for financing the school building program in the area proposed for annexation.

The needs in Torrance alone are such that the School Board has just called for a special override tax election next May to raise over \$4,000,000. The Board is reluctant to assume additional responsibilities.

Prefer Torrance

Newville frankly admitted that his principals would rather annex to Torrance than to Los Angeles county because Torrance would be easier and faster to deal with.

The owners plan 7000 square foot minimum lots. While one Torrance councilman, Willys G. Blount, has indicated that this was too small a minimum, Rolling Hills and Palos Verdes residents have demanded a much larger minimum of 20,000 square foot lots.

Newville indicated that his clients would find it easier to deal with the Torrance City Council than the County Board of Supervisors which, Newville claimed, was too much under direct political pressure from Rolling Hills and Palos Verdes residents.

The 6800 acres (10 square miles) are an irregularly shaped section extending from the Torrance boundary over the crest of the hills to near Palos Verdes drive South and Palos Verdes drive East. The area is said to be uninhabited. It includes the Portuguese Bend club but excludes most of the Portuguese Bend area as well as Marineland of the Pacific.

Opinions

Expressions of opinions included the following.

"It looks like a good business investment," Councilman Albert Isen stated.

"I am favorable if we can come to an agreement," Mayor Nick Draie said.

"I can't go quite as far. On anything as big as this, I don't want to rush into it, but I do want to know more," Councilman Mervin Schwab commented.

"All I can see is the proposal... I want facts and figures," Councilman Victor Benstead said.

Councilman Blount, while not making further comments, just pondered the fact that Great Lakes proposes to provide water service for the area. He also continued to mull over the 7000 square foot minimum lot issue.

Kaiser Hospital To Be Built

Construction on the new Kaiser Foundation hospital in Harbor City is scheduled to start by March 1. The 13½-acre site is located on Pacific Coast highway, between Normandie and Vermont avenues, it was reported.

Purchase of the site for the \$300,000 facility went into escrow last week, according to Paul J. Steil, administrative director.

The hospital will serve the 25,000 members of the Permanente Health Plan in the harbor area.

The one-story, 62-bed hospital and clinic will contain 40,000 square feet and is being designed so that it may be expanded later to 100 beds.

The hospital will overlook Bixby Slough, which the city proposes to develop into a regional recreation center.

Officials said that the hospital is expected to be ready for use by the end of 1955.

Willd To Assist U.S. Sen. Kuchel

John Willd, local attorney and recent candidate for the California legislature, was appointed yesterday as legislative assistant to Thomas Kuchel, U.S. Senator from California.

Willd, who was associated locally with the firm of Willd and Woolley, will leave for Washington, D.C. January 3.

He will help Senator Kuchel with the research, writing, and arguing of proposed Senate measures.

Willd is married and has two children, Charles, 3 years old, and Shirley, 7 months old. He lives at 17216 Eastwood ave., North Torrance.

His family will follow him to Washington as soon as he gets situated.

Willd met Kuchel during the recent election. "I am very, very thrilled at this appointment," the young attorney stated.

Resident Throws Up Barricade

A barricade extending into the street dramatically emphasized this week Leo S. Girard's claim that the city unlawfully appropriated part of his own land at Prairie avenue and 171st street for the purpose of using it for sidewalks and streets.

Girard, who lives at 17102 Prairie avenue maintains that he has all the documentary evidence to show that the city never was granted an easement on his property for street purposes and that 12 feet of the present sidewalk, eight feet of the street, and 16 feet on the corner are part of his own private 20 by 50 foot lot.

As a means of driving home this point, he has staked off the area with a wooden barricade, intending to throw up a permanent fence shortly.

Letters to the Engineering Department and the Council have not met with any satisfactory response so far, Girard states.

A check with the Engineering Department indicated that the matter has been turned over to (Continued on Page 13)

PM CITATIONS It's Time For That Change...

The honeymoon is over as far as parking meters are concerned, and penny-wise motorists will find themselves pound-foolish if they don't watch out starting this week.

Traffic officers have been instructed to slap a \$1 citation on all motorists who are found overparked in downtown Torrance, Police Chief Willard Haslam announced.

Till now officers have left courtesy cards instead of citations. Citations will cost \$1 apiece.

Tickets must be paid at South Bay Municipal Court in Redondo Beach. The fine may be mailed in, however.

"The parking meters have proved highly satisfactory," the Chief commented. "We haven't had any complaints. The meters have definitely shown that they keep the traffic moving—we've had parking spaces open in every block."

A total of 75 more meters were added this week, bringing the total number of parking meters up to 445.

During the first seven days the meters brought in \$980. So far a total of about \$1600 has been collected.

City Council Strips Civil Service Board Of Power

While the City Council's recent 3-2 vote to fire the Torrance Civil Service Board was ruled illegal, a follow-up move to strip the Board of its trial and review powers passed last week. At the same time, City Attorney James Hall was instructed to streamline the city's Civil Service ordinances and regulations.

Newlyweds Killed In Auto Crash

A honeymoon was turned into a funeral when a newly married couple, on its way to make a home in Torrance, was killed instantly in a head-on crash Thursday in Arizona.

Local accidents for the holiday week-end, many attributed to dense fog, numbered several, one of which involved serious injuries.

While 15 drunks landed in Torrance jail, the figure was still less than last year's 24, according to Police Chief Willard Haslam.

Dead in the honeymoon crash were Francis R. Freeman, 28, and his wife, Pauline, 24, who were planning to move into a new house at 25714 High Cliff drive.

Also killed in the Arizona crash were Marvin Thurmond, 30, of Georgia, his wife, and a 3-year-old daughter.

Involved serious injuries was a crash Christmas night at Gresham boulevard and Cayson street.

Injured were Reese J. Roberts, 70, and his wife, Minnie. (Continued on Page 3)

Carson Group To Discuss Civic Issues

"Health Department and Police Protection" will be the main topic of the evening at the January 3 meeting of the Carson Civic Betterment association. The regular meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the home of President James G. Caldwell, 22120 Moneta.

"The Growth of the Carson district makes it imperative to provide health services and police protection for the residents of this area," Caldwell stated.

The association will request consolidation of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and Los Angeles County Health Department to form a county service center for the local area which is now divided by Main street into two separate districts.

In either case the transportation to each center is inadequate, Caldwell stated, and therefore the eligible families are not receiving proper care.

The January 3 meeting is open to the public.

Who'll be First in 1955?

The first baby born January 1, 1955 within the circulation area of the Torrance Press will receive several hundred dollars worth of baby clothes, furniture, and equipment.

Simply fill out this coupon if your baby is born on January 1. Bring or mail the coupon to the Torrance Press, Baby Contest, 1406 Cravens ave. (This coupon is to be used also for the last baby born in 1954.)

If mailed, the coupon must be in the Torrance Press office in Tuesday morning's mail. If brought to the Torrance Press, it should be here by 9 a.m. Tuesday morning, January 4.

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Exact date and hour of birth.....

Weight.....

Hospital and doctor's name.....

Baby's name..... Sex.....

Parents' name and address.....

Telephone number.....

Merchants Award Gifts To New Year's Baby