

## Douglas Drivers Receive Awards for Safe Driving

With the last 19 receiving awards last week, 73 truck and courier drivers of Douglas Aircraft's El Segundo division have now received recognition during the past year for approximately 4,000,000 miles of safe driving. Their continuous record of accident-free motoring adds up to 163 years, according to M. L. Andrews, safety supervisor for the Douglas Division.

Drivers honored with National Safety Council pins and certificates last week include 10 couriers and nine truck operators, Andrews said.

Three year awards were presented to three drivers, including G. D. Kiser, 21112 S. Berendo, Torrance.

Winners of two year awards were: T. L. Axton, Jr., 1525 W. 208th street, Torrance; R. K. Benskin, 4806 Carmelynn street, Torrance; Evelyn Z. Cataline, 3922 W. 170th street, Torrance; and W. R. Morrison, 4211 W. 176th street, Torrance; G. P. Rodenhauer, 4920 Cadison, Torrance.

### ECONOMIC RESOURCES

California has a greater diversity of natural economic resources than most European countries, reports the National Automobile Club.

# French War Bride Reunited With Mother After 3 Years

By RALPH R. GOMPERTZ

After three years of working, waiting, and hoping, a French war-bride and her mother were reunited here . . . but not without one final frightening experience before the happy ending.

"Isn't she pretty!" 26-year-old Colette Plaetke of 22002 S. Bonita st. exclaimed, looking fondly at her mother, Mrs. Yvonne Villemain, who arrived here from Paris, France a week ago Tuesday.

"We only had each other after the war," Colette reflected. "I made a promise to myself when I was younger that I would give my mother a home and security. I knew that we would see each other again when I left France—it was just a strong feeling I had that I was not leaving her behind for good!"

### Wrong Destination

While waiting anxiously for her mother to arrive Tuesday, Colette received frightening news—her mother had obtained the wrong tickets and her plane was to arrive in San Francisco instead of in Los Angeles. "I was afraid I'd lose her because she doesn't speak a word of English," Colette recalled excitedly.

Colette was too upset to think and co-workers at Longren aircraft where she works, hearing of her predicament, advised her to wire the manager of TWA.

It was already Tuesday morning and her mother had arrived in New York. Colette wired TWA and by afternoon she received a return wire from the manager telling her not to worry and assuring her that matters had been straightened out and her mother would arrive in Los Angeles that evening.

### Mother Not Afraid

"I wasn't frightened," Mrs. Villemain said. "I knew that once I landed in New York people would be nice to me—and that's exactly what happened."

Destiny pointed the way to America for mother and daughter six years ago when Colette met Harold Plaetke who was then an American GI in Paris.

Though Harold had participated in the Normandie invasion and Colette had lived close to the fighting, they did not meet until Harold returned to France in 1950 upon re-enlisting.

"We went—how do you say—steady' for two years," Colette recalled, talking and gesturing with the light, lilted, effervescent quality which one likes to regard as typically French. "We married in 1952 and I came to the states three years ago."

"We lived in San Francisco and one day I made the mistake of asking my husband to take a trip to Los Angeles," Colette laughed. "I saw the blue sky and the sunshine and the sky and the sand—and I told him that we better go back and pack. A week later we moved down here."

Her husband now works at the Torrance plant of Douglas aircraft.

What do people coming to America from another country expect to find and what do they actually find? What do they like and what don't they like? How do they change after they have been here.

### So Different Here

"The American people overseas are very gay and full of laughter," Colette remembered. "They act like children. But I found them much more serious—almost too serious—in their own country. At first I thought that they needed too many material things to make them happy. I also expected them to live 'outside' a lot, but I found them to be the family type after all."

Colette had always dreamed of America as the land of opportunity and equality, and she found the reality to prove even truer than the dream.

"I found out what American democracy really meant when



REUNION . . . Mrs. Colette Plaetke, French war bride, and her mother, Mrs. Yvonne Villemain, were reunited here after three years separation. Mrs. Villemain self-expected to find Americans living the life of frontiersmen. She was glad she didn't have to use a covered wagon to come to California—Press Photo

I came to work for Longren," she said, deeply impressed. "Mrs. Wentworth—the vice-president of the firm—called me in one day and told me that we are all equal in America and she made me feel at ease. She told me that she would give me a chance to do whatever I thought I could do and that in America it didn't matter who you are or where you were born."

### Looking For Indians

Colette and her mother both expected to see cowboys and Indians on arriving in America. Colette was disappointed when she didn't find any but Mrs. Villemain isn't too sure yet.

"I hope it's civilized," she said cautiously upon arriving in California. The absence of roads and sidewalks in certain sections here make her feel that we are still in the pioneer stage.

Colette still laughs when she recalls her first encounter with a "real" Indian at Knott's Berry farm. "That was the first Indian I had ever seen and guess what happened—he spoke to me in fluent Parisian French! That did it!"

There are war memories which left deep wounds and scars and which Colette will only hint at.

"We must live in the present and look toward the future," she said, looking protectively at her mother.

Colette hopes that her mother will find what she has found in America.

"The greatest change that has come over me is that I am no longer afraid. I can't explain what kind of fear it was— you simply grew up with it. Now the only thing I worry about is paying my bills on time — plain nonsense like that," she laughed whimsically, looking happily at her mother.

## Jahn Enters Race For City Council

Robert B. Jahn, 33, of 440 Via Linda Vista, Torrance, took out a declaration of candidacy last week to run for City Council.

Jahn, a builder, has lived in Torrance five years. Prior to entering the building business, he was a carpenter with Universal Studios and a building inspector for the county of Los Angeles.

He attended Monmouth college, Southwestern Law university, and Pepperdine college.

Jahn was an engineer gunner in the Army Air corps from 1942-46. His interest in aviation obtained for him an appointment to the Torrance Airport Commission when that commission was formed.

He and his wife, Barbara, have three children, Brian, 6, Barton, 4, and Beverly, 3 months.

Jahn is a member of the American Legion, Elks and Lions club.

## Councilman Benstead Will Run Again

Councilman Victor Benstead Friday announced his intention to run again for City Council by taking out a declaration of candidacy.

Benstead, who has served four years on the City Council, was primarily instrumental in getting the swimming pool on the ballot which was approved by the voters subsequently at the bond election.

He also initiated the rabies law and has continuously fought for a better recreation program.

Benstead, a steel worker at Columbia-Geneva Steel, has lived in Torrance since 1920, together with his wife, Gladys, and two daughters, Mrs. Fred Byk and Mrs. Joe Banks.

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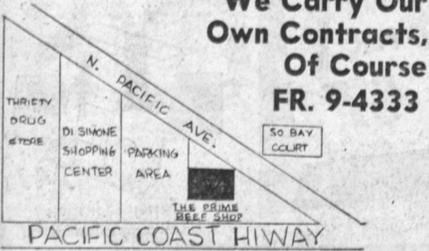
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## Bank Merger Announced

California bank and Hollywood State bank have reached an agreement whereby the Hollywood State bank, 6801 Santa Monica Boulevard, will be merged into and operated as an office of California Bank.

Frank L. King, president of California bank, and Wade E. Bennett, president of Hollywood State bank, in a joint statement today stated that arrangements for the proposed merger have been approved by the boards of directors of both banks.

California bank presently has 49 branch offices and has a total resources of more than \$860,000,000. Total resources of the Hollywood State bank are approximately \$45,000,000.

It is expected, subject to the approval of the shareholders of the two banks, that actual transfer of business will take place about April 15 or as soon thereafter as the necessary formalities have been concluded.

## Advertising Award Won By Baker's

Baker's Furniture, 1515 Cravens ave., won a third place award for excellence in advertising in the 4th Western Retail Home Furnishings Advertising Exhibit held at the Western Merchandise Mart, San Francisco.

The award was based on advertising entered by William Zappas, co-publisher of the Torrance Press, and judged by a committee from the San Francisco Advertising club. Furniture dealers and newspapers in the eleven Western states, Western Canada, Hawaii and Alaska annually submit their best ads in competition.

Buyers attending the Western Winter Mart will have an opportunity to view the ads and gain ideas for their future promotion of home furnishings. The exhibit is sponsored by the Western Merchandise Mart and Evans & Brisebois, national advertising syndicate.

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