

Oldster Dies in Torrance Apartment House Blaze

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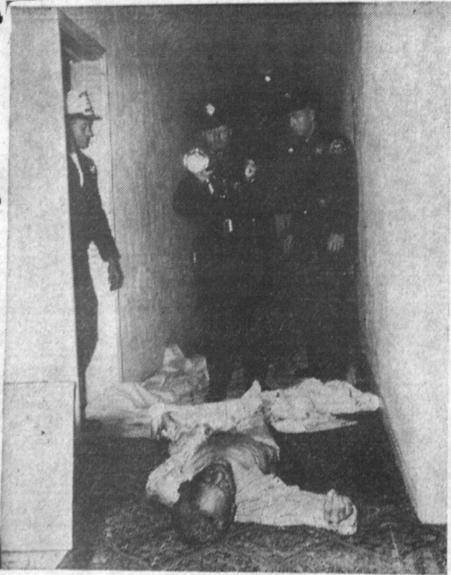
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DIES IN FIRE—Body of Elmer John Reese, 69, lies in hall way of apartment house at 1414 Cravens ave., where fire broke out early Tuesday morning. Fire was discovered by occupant of first floor apartment when burning embers fell through ceiling. Press Photo

Board Rejects SHS Bids, Will Drop Grid Stadium

Construction of the third phase of South High School will be delayed by at least three months after bids were tossed out as "too high" by the Board of Education at a special session Monday. At the same time the board chopped the football stadium from the building plans in order to conserve sufficient money for both South and North High Schools.

Even without the athletic stadium, construction costs for South High were \$88,000 above the estimate of \$1,590,000 for all facilities including the stadium. "I can't see signing a contract and then being unable to pay for North High School," S. E. Waldrip, assistant school superintendent, told the board.

No Cash Left

He said that if the board accepted the low bid of \$1,700,000 excluding the stadium, the district might be strapped for cash to award bids for the next phase at North High School, which will be advertised for bids in 60 days.

On Waldrip's recommendation, the board rejected the three bids for South High School and ordered a revision of specifications in order to obtain lower bids when the project is re-advertised in 60 to 90 days.

School officials will drop the athletic stadium, some of the classroom equipment, and make the library or cafeteria optional.

Classroom Wings

Waldrip said that the third phase of South High School will include two two-story classroom wings, chemistry and physics laboratories.

Board members said that although the stadium at South High is doomed this year, there is still possibility the athletic facilities may be included at North High School, if the price is right. They also told William C. Boswell, new member, that in rejecting bids, they are taking a chance that costs won't go up.

Van Wagner Heads 'Adoption' Group

Selection of a foreign city which Torrance should "adopt" will be made at a future meeting of a newly formed committee.

Sam Van Wagner was selected chairman of a citizens committee which will work on the program sponsored by the U. S. Information Agency for better international relations.

A Latin American city appears to have the inside track in the minds of most committee members who attended Monday's meeting.

BOWL NIGHT SLATED

A choice block of seats has been reserved for Torrance Night at the Hollywood Bowl Aug. 1. Reservations and arrangements for bus transportation to view Disneyland at the Bowl may be made through the Torrance Chamber of Commerce.

Phone Avalanche Follows Press House Rental Ad

LeRoy W. Thompson of 3410 W. 224th st. had a virtual avalanche of calls after he advertised a three bedroom home for rent in the Torrance Press.

The first call came in at 7:20 a.m. It was followed by 32 calls the same day and 10 on the following day after the classified ad appeared in this newspaper June 26.

Needless to say, Thompson had no problem selecting a desirable tenant.

Fast results will be yours too if you call a courteous advertiser at the Torrance Press, FA 8-2345, if you have something to rent, buy or sell.

when they re-advertise later this year.

Board members theorized that another building boom is engaging the interest of contractors, since only three bids were received.

Waldrip said that apparently money is more readily available, bringing a greater boom in construction.

He also pointed out that because of the delay, the labs and classrooms will probably not be available until October or November of 1959, instead of at school opening time.



Joseph La Torre

Executive Dies While Skindiving

Requiem Mass for Joseph La Torre, 42, Torrance executive and widely known sportsman who died Saturday while skindiving, will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m. in St. Lawrence Martyr Catholic Church.

The deceased, president of the Lok-fast Company, which manufactures fasteners for aircraft and missiles, was pronounced dead at Hillside Clinic, after he was picked up off the Portuguese Bend Club, where he had been diving for abalone.

He was a member of the Torrance Mounted Police, and owned the Jo-Bolt Ranch, which raised quarter horses. One of them set the track record at Pomona Fair last year.

La Torre was an aviation enthusiast, who owned his airplane with which he made frequent trips to New York and was a noted hunter and sports fisherman.

A resident of 37 Crest Road, Rolling Hills, he was a member of the Los Angeles Skin Divers Club, Sheriff's Posse, and president of the Caballeros of Rolling Hills.

Survivors are his wife, Kathryn, a son, Joseph, two daughters, Sherry and Renee, his parents, two brothers and a sister. A rosary service will be held today at 7 p.m. in the McCormick Redondo Beach Mortuary.

Crenshaw Blvd. Opening Told

Completing a project to relieve traffic in the Palos Verdes Peninsula, Supervisor Burton W. Chace Tuesday announced the opening of Crenshaw Blvd. from Palos Verdes Drive North to Crest Road.

The opening of this roadway will afford citizens of Rolling Hills and other citizens of the Palos Verdes Peninsula through traffic on Crenshaw to the ocean.

A majority of the grading on the project, Chace said, was accomplished by detention camp labor.

Man Dies As Fire Guts Room

An elderly man died early Tuesday morning in a fire which gutted his downtown Torrance apartment.

The body of Elmer John Reese, 69, was found on the floor of his bedroom at 1414 Cravens ave. when neighbors rushed into the smoke-filled apartment.

The fire was discovered by Mrs. Irene Bagley, 63, an invalid who occupies the apartment directly below Reese's.

She said that the fire burned through the ceiling of her first floor apartment and cinders started falling down from the apartment above. She crawled to her wheelchair to notify the manager.

Probe Cause

Firemen are still probing for the cause of the fire, which was confined to Reese's apartment except for a hole burned through the floor.

Police Sgt. Mickey Fischer said that it is possible that Reese had a heart attack while smoking and that the bedding might have caught fire, with the smoke causing asphyxiation.

Firemen said that the victim's face and head were burned. He was near an electric heater which was in operation and quite hot when they reached the scene. They said they will not know whether a cigarette or the heater started the blaze until they have completed their investigation.

Fight Flames

The apartment manager, Mrs. Josephine Knapp, and a neighbor, Robert R. MacGregor, pulled Reese's body out of the apartment and the latter fought the fire with an extinguisher until five fire companies under direction of Battalion Chief Eugene K. Walker rushed to the scene. The body was taken to Halverson-Leavell Mortuary.

Pro Safecrackers Abandon Tools at Scene of Burglary

A burglar alarm frightened expert safecrackers enough to drop their tools but not \$300 in cash during a burglary of Smith Brothers Fish Shanty, 4020 Pacific Coast hwy. Sunday night.

Police said the thieves broke in through the rear door and tunneled their way into the restaurant office where they "peeled" the safe.

Officers said the alarm apparently went off when the thieves swung open the safe door. They abandoned an array of safecracking tools in the restaurant, but grabbed \$300 in wrapped coins which had been locked up in the safe.

Detectives said the work was done by expert safecrackers.

Service Station Held Up by Pair

A pair of robbers who forced service station attendant Chris A. Spreitz, 63, into a rest room while they took cash, 20 cartons of cigarettes and a watch, are being sought by police today.

The bandits walked into the station at Crenshaw Blvd. and 190th st. early Wednesday morning and threatened to "shoot your head off," the victim said.

Eye Fall Vote on Schools

Consolidation of a \$15,000,000 school bond issue with the November General Election ballot is under study by the Torrance Board of Education today.

Dr. Warren Hamilton, director of special services for the district, said that the combine election will not result in any financial savings, but it will bring a greater turnout of voters.

However, board members noted that all previous successful bond issues had been passed in special election.

Building Needs

Although the \$15,000,000 figure is tentative, Dr. J. H. Hull, district superintendent, said that a conservative estimate of building needs for the next seven years indicates that at least \$12,700,000 in new buildings will be required.

New facilities will include 199 elementary classrooms, a complete West High School plant, a fourth unit for South High School and rehabilitation of Fern School and other projects.

Rising Costs

School officials pointed out that when the \$10,000,000 issue was passed in June 1955, they believed that it would be sufficient until 1960, but rising costs and growth have used up nearly all that sum.

Assistant Superintendent S. E. Waldrip said that unless a bond issue is passed this fall, all elementary school building will come to a halt.

At the present building rate, district officials hope to eliminate virtually all double sessions within a year, barring unforeseen residential development.



SAY AH—Glen Moss, who was awarded a scholarship to finish his senior year training as an osteopathic surgeon, examines son John, 7, while his wife, Lila, Debby, 2, Glen Jr., 6, Gregory, 4, and Jeffrey, two weeks, look on. By working nights, it has taken Moss 13 years of school to get into his senior year. Press Photo

Key to Better House Bargains

Members of the Torrance Lomita Board of Realtors will feature "key buys" for the month of July in connection with the national "Buy a Home First" campaign. Whenever you see the key and the words "Key Buy" you will know that an outstanding real estate value is being offered. Check the classified real estate section for "KEY BUYS"

Surgical Student, Father of Five, Wins Scholarship in Senior Year

Monte Sano Hospital's first \$1000 full tuition one-year scholarship was presented Glen Moss, 30, a senior at the College of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.

Moss, who resides at 21310 Ladeau st., is the father of five. It has taken him 13 years of part-time school, part-time employment and continuous study to reach his present status.

He attends classes eight hours a day and works, studies and sleeps during his 12-hour night shift at the Lincoln-Manchester Medical Arts Center in Westchester, where he is employed as a first aid man, laboratory and x-ray technician.

Applicants for the scholarship were required to show good aptitude and interest for the osteopathic profession and to produce evidence of need for financial assistance for tuition.

Moss' monthly budget exceeds \$300. This scarcely clothes, feeds and houses the seven-member family which includes his wife, Lila, 28; John, 7; Glenn Jr., 6; Gregory, 4; Deborah, 2; and Jeffrey, 2 weeks. His job pays between \$250 and \$300.

The senior admits it is a struggle and that he never could have progressed to this point without the budget-juggling ability of his wife.

Moss wants to specialize in

Magnavox to Build Plant in Torrance

Plans for a Magnavox electronics plant near the Torrance Civic Center have been submitted to the Planning Commission for approval of access streets.

Planning Director George Powell said the plant will be constructed on 20 acres on the north side of Maricopa ave., between Madrona and Crenshaw Blvd.

The new manufacturing plant will do production work for electronic equipment. Plans for providing a buffer strip between the industrial area north of Maricopa ave. and residences south of that street are now being studied by the commission.

Council Clash on Rezoning

Proponents of retaining industrial zoning in the south central section of Torrance won a narrow victory Tuesday night when the City Council turned down a request to rezone the land for residential purposes.

In backing the Planning Commission by a 4 to 3 vote, councilmen served notice that owners of large undeveloped industrial tracts spare no effort in building up the area with manufacturing or be faced with rezoning for residential uses.

"It's wrong, wrong, wrong, it's poor planning," declared President Bert Lynn of the Planning Commission, who spoke up in favor of retaining present industrial zoning.

'City Rape'

"If you overrule the commission, it would be to rape the city of its industrial land. It's like bringing in malaria and then trying to cure it with penicillin," Lynn averred.

He said once the city grants a zone change for 97 acres at the southwest corner of Crenshaw and Sepulveda blvds., to develop it for business and apartments, the city would have to rezone about 900 acres of industrial land.

Councilman J. A. Beasley, who spoke in favor of the zone change applied for by Bjorklund and Smith in behalf of the Home Savings and Loan Association, said he wants to pressure the major land owners to develop the land, instead of leaving it vacant.

Put on Pressure

"I think we should put pressure on Standard Oil and the Santa Fe Railroad to develop this land. In the past Santa Fe has been very uncooperative. Lately I have seen some change in spirit," he declared.

Both he and Robert Jahn, who voted against the commission recommendation, said they want to put "the squeeze" on land owners to develop their land to raise city tax revenues.

Councilman Willys Blount made the motion to uphold the commission in retaining industrial zoning. He was joined by George Bradford, Nicholas O. Draie and Mayor Albert Isen.

Need Purse

"We need a seventh inning stretch. We should wait six months and if nothing happens, I may change my vote," Isen declared in breaking the tie.

Frank Leonard, representative of Getty Oil Company, which now owns the 97 acres, said that his company might not want to sell, if the present application is turned down.

George A. Bjorklund, one of the applicants for the zone change, said that residential areas are vitally needed near the new Del Amo Shopping Center. He was joined by Bernard Kemp, a real estate broker, who said that the city is very limited in residential areas.

School Taxes

"You want to put in a big project and let the citizens of Torrance worry about school taxes," Bradford snapped.

Fred C. Todd, chairman of the Industrial committee of the Chamber of Commerce, and Fred Mill, president of the Chamber, both opposed the rezoning on grounds that it would raise costs and represents an upset of the present balance of industry, commerce and residential development.



PEELED SAFE—Sgt. Bob Wright examines safe at Smith Brothers Fish Shanty, which was "peeled" by expert burglars Monday morning. Thieves escaped with \$300, but left tools when alarm went off. Press Photo