

EDITORIALS

Arsonists Roman Holiday?

Evidence seems to indicate that the past week has been a Roman holiday for the firebugs. Fire chiefs are convinced that one or more arsonists set off the tragic Malibu conflagrations and there is some evidence that the destructive Palos Verdes blaze originated in the twisted minds of reckless teenagers.

Few sections of the country offer temptation to the firebug comparable to that of Southern California. All the elements are present to give him maximum satisfaction from his terrifying inclinations. Almost every brush area is accessible by road, enabling a quick getaway and convenient return to mingle with the curious or even to join the volunteer firemen.

Law-enforcement authorities tell us that the arsonist is one of the most difficult criminals to apprehend and there are no statistics available to accurately estimate the number loose in the community. While he is undoubtedly a factor in some fires it is safe to conclude that most fires are generated by the rank carelessness of persons who wouldn't think of deliberately starting a fire.

In this category are the motorists who toss burning cigarettes or matches from their cars; campers who are careless; trash-burners who allow bonfires to get out of hand during high winds or by igniting rubbish in too close proximity to buildings or vegetation, and children whose parents have permitted them to get their hands on matches.

Brush fires are a constant threat to individual safety and property values in Southern California and never more so than during this present dry spell. Every individual must be constantly on the alert, not only in seeing that he does not himself become careless; but, also in reporting at once any fire he sees to the proper authorities. Most fires can be checked in the beginning and fire chiefs say they would much rather have twelve persons reporting the same blaze than having all twelve assume someone else already had done so.

Short Takes . . .

Oklahoma City (Okla.) Capitol Hill Beacon: "Federal funds are not 'free'—we have a pretty good idea as to where that money comes from. We send some up to Washington every week."

Reynoldsville (Pa.) Star: "There will always be the need for labor organizations. And more so, there will be the need for the assumption of economic responsibilities by the heads of labor."

Out Of The Past

From the Files of The Torrance HERALD

December, 1946
10 Years Ago This Month
Enrollment at El Camino College hit the 500 mark, in the first semester that the new junior college started instruction. . . Rev. Ben H. Lingenfelter was named local chairman for the 1947 March of Dimes campaign. . . Jan. 24 was set as the date for an election to determine if the Torrance school district was to become a part of the Redondo Union High School district.

15 Years Ago This Month
December, 1931
John T. Smith, 24448 Hawthorne Ave., was listed as a member of the crew of the Union Oil tanker Montebello which was sunk by an enemy submarine off the California coast. All hands were reported safe. . . All manner of weapons, from snub-nosed automatics to high-powered rifles, were collected at the police department as alien residents complied with a government order to surrender such weapons. . . Mayor Tom McGuire forwarded a request for \$22,000 to the State Legislature for defense preparations in the city of Torrance.

20 Years Ago This Month
December, 1936
Building permits in Torrance totaled \$453,978 for 1936, more than double the \$204,895 issued in 1935 and

over triple the value in 1934. . . A Christmas Eve rainstorm, depositing 1.78 inches on Torrance, brought the season precipitation total to 5.45 inches. . . The Torrance public library was designated as a depository for United States government publications by Congressman Charles J. Colden.
25 Years Ago This Month
December, 1931
The Southern California Edison Co. made final preparations to move into new quarters at 1328 Sartori Ave. . . High winds and rain, resembling a miniature hurricane, hit Torrance on Christmas Day causing property damage in several locations. . . Earl Babcock was named to the office of worshipful master of the local Masonic lodge.
30 Years Ago This Month
December, 1926
The installation of 54 new telephones brought Torrance's total to 581 according to Fred W. Smith, manager of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. . . A "reverse English" Santa Claus entered four Torrance homes on Christmas Eve and stole articles of jewelry valued at \$145. . . The industrial forecast for Torrance in 1927 was bright with the scheduled completion of the \$2,000,000 Columbia Steel sheet mill which will provide employment for 400 men.

I'm An Old Cowhand



YOUR PROBLEMS

By ANN LANDERS

Dear Ann Landers: I just read the letter in your column asking if you had a piece of AA. Your answer compels me to write my first letter to a newspaper.

I'm a man 46 years old. I was a daily drinker at 17 and have been a daily drunk for the past eight years. I had a wonderful wife and four swell children. I made life so miserable for them I don't know how they stood it.

Twice I was arrested for drunkenness and I had one bad car accident that laid me up for weeks. All of this didn't stop me from drinking. My spiritual adviser and family could do nothing. My wife finally left me.

A sister-in-law who was a daily reader of your column had faith in your advice. When I had hit bottom she begged me to let her call AA and I agreed. They sent out a man I'd never seen before.

He took me to a meeting and asked that I do only one thing—stay sober for 24 hours. Well, I've been dry nine months and have never been so happy in my life. My wife and kids are back. I've been promoted in my work and the whole world looks different.

I've been devoting my spare time to helping alcoholics and speaking at AA meetings I've found a new joy in living by serving others.

All this is due to you, Ann. I can never repay you, but I remember you in my prayers every night—and always will.

—An Anonymous Alcoholic
Dean Ann: My daughter, age 12½, is making a nervous wreck of me. She hangs around the bowling alley near our house and some of my friends have seen her smoking cigarettes there.

She doesn't give me any help with the housework and when I try to have a mother-daughter talk with her she walks out the door.

I've looked her in her room at night but she crawls out the window. I don't know where she'll turn up next. Please tell me, Ann, what can I do about a girl who is growing up too fast?
—Worried Mother

This girl isn't growing up too fast. . . she's completely out of control and "too fast" period. You should have had some advice nine years ago. She didn't get this way overnight. Since you seem to have no influence on her whatsoever, you'd better get some outside help.

The Family Service Assn. can give you a hand. Children learn at an early age who's going to be the boss in the family. If they can take over, they will—and she did.

Dear Ann: I was terribly disappointed in your answer to the husband who was a motorcycle enthusiast. You told the fellow to "act his age." What has age to do with it, anyway?
I'm 33 and have three chil-

dren. I've been riding motorcycles since 1938. I courted my wife on a motorcycle. When the kids came we sold the "bike" but now we're back in our black leather jackets and we love it. The kids are in their glory when we take them for a ride.

This is a healthy wholesome sport for the entire family and I'm sorry you saw fit to criticize it. Please think it over and write something in your column when you've softened up on the subject.
—The Happy Rider.

There are lots of motorcycle enthusiasts in this country and I think I drew fire from them all. To you and others who wrote defending the "bike"—may I say this: I see nothing wrong with motorcycles. I agree cycling is a healthy and wholesome sport—but. It ceases to be healthy and wholesome when chrome gadgets come off the top of the family income and there's little left for necessities.

Furthermore, when a father of three children romps off on his "bike" and leaves the family at home while he cavorts with 18-year olds, it's not so wholesome. And I fail to see that it's very healthy—for anybody.

CONFIDENTIALLY: Worried Girl: Any boy who would make these demands is strictly selfish. If you lose him you're lucky.
HEARTBROKEN MOTHER: Your "baby" is now 27 years old. Be happy he wants to live his own life and help him to do so.

TAXI-DRIVER'S WIFE: His job isn't as easy as you think. It's entirely possible that he's working all those hours. Your nagging won't help much.
(Ann Landers will be happy to help you with your problems. Send them to her in care of THE HERALD and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)
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GLAZED BITS

By BARNEY GLAZER

Now that radio, TV and the movies are offering "stereophonic sound" why hot refer to TV commercials as "hysteriaphonic" sound?

While on the subject of electronics, I hear that a local college group have started a new fraternity. They call it Sigma Hi Fi.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen said it on his TV show: "I was once on the Sahara Desert. It is an unusual feeling, like reaching up to pluck stars by hand. You become tremendously impressed with the nothingness of man and the sovereignty of God."

After a thorough search, I have finally uncovered a man who enjoys television commercials. He's the sponsor.

Insurance agents will appreciate this paragraph concerning their clients. IF THEY struck a car, they'll report: "I scratched this other car. It will cost about \$150 to paint." But if another car struck THEIR car, they'll report: "This other car completely wrecked my automobile. It'll cost more than \$500 to fix!"

His wife suffered from a severe case of insomnia. One night she turned on the bedroom light and looked over at her husband. He was sleeping contentedly and soundly. Unable to endure this perfect picture anymore, she leaned over, shook her husband severely until he was wide awake, and then asked him: "What's wrong, dear, can't you sleep?"

It's a new expression, born of the electronics age. When someone is giving you trouble, he's "giving you static." If you can't get ahead of your closest busi-

ness competitor, mister, why not get along with him?
Nothing is personal with Billy. "We had a party at our house last night," he'll relate with a sly wink. "One game we played gave track odds. The loser had to kiss his own wife."

This girl loves Billy Gray for what he is, but especially for what I don't expect him to say next.

In a local market, a produce man was showing a head of cabbage to a housewife. "This cabbage," he explained, "contains the very same magical chlorophyll found in gumdrops, chewing gum and toothpaste."

We know a man who can tell you exactly how many hundreds of times he chews his food at dinner time. He concentrates on it so he can't hear his wife talking.

Growing a garden is just like getting married. You get a lot of things you expect and a lot of things you don't expect.

The income tax collector visited a church and explained to the minister: "I've heard so much about your church, I'd like to see it."

Later, he said: "I'm disappointed. From the sums of money listed as gifts to your church by your parishioners in their income tax returns, I thought that at least your aisles would be paved with gold."

There were two brothers. One ran away to sea and the other was elected vice president and nothing was heard of either of them again.

Feverish Activity Continues As Torrance Ends Great Year

(Continued from Page One)
\$2,000,000 were taken out in 1956. Work was begun on a huge new shopping development adjoining Torrance at 174th and Hawthorne Ave., which will include the May Co., Penney's, and many other leading Southland stores.

Plans also are being developed for large shopping centers at Hawthorne Ave. and Sepulveda Blvd. and at Crenshaw Blvd. and Pacific Coast Hwy. During the year, plans also were announced for a large sports center at 190th and Hawthorne Ave. which will include a golf course, driving range, and many related shops.

During the past five years business in Torrance has increased by 68.28 per cent, according to figures released by Dun & Bradstreet. With the exception of Gardena, this is the biggest increase of any city in this area. Changes in business activity during the past five years in nearby towns show:

Gardena, up 68.73 per cent; Harbor City, up 18.57 per cent; Hawthorne, up 35.37 per cent; Hermosa Beach, up 35.52 per cent; Inglewood, up 16.81 per cent; Long Beach, up 3.24 per cent; Los Angeles, down 5.66 per cent; Manhattan Beach, up 42.62 per cent; Redondo Beach, up 46.70 per cent, and San Pedro, down 11.43 per cent.

The biggest public business in the city, the Torrance Unified School District, continued to show mushroomlike growth with 15,559 students on the first school day of 1956 and 18,798 on the final day. By September, 1957, officials expect an enrollment of 21,375 students.

Enrolled on the last school day of 1956 were 15,554 elementary students and 3244 high school pupils.

To meet the critical double session problem caused by the influx of new pupils, the Arlington and Sepulveda Schools were opened during 1956 and Anza and Meadow Park Schools were opened yesterday. Three more schools will open within two months. Additions were made to the classroom facilities at Wood and Madrona Schools.

Scheduled for a September opening is South High School, which will serve the children of South Torrance. The Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles also has announced plans to open a new high school which will serve 1000 Catholic students from Torrance and the surrounding area.

The Torrance Unified School District completed a new warehouse for its supplies and made plans for a large new library building to house the district's books. The letter-writing and letter-receiving population of Torrance also showed a considerable increase during the

past year with a fourth postal substation added at Torrance Blvd. and Amie St. to handle the increased flow of mail.

Although final figures have not yet been compiled, Postmaster Clara Conner said there has been a considerable increase over the average of 25,000 letters per day recorded in 1955. The peak day in 1956 during the Christmas rush was 244,000, an increase of about 50,000 over the top day of the previous year.

From Dec. 1 through 24, the Post Office handled 3,733,301 incoming letters and 2,401,000 outgoing letters. Letters were picked up every two hours during the day, a speed-up in the handling.

During the year the local Department of Motor Vehicles issued 30,000 drivers' licenses and 46,022 license plates for cars. Commercial licenses totaled 4610, trailer plates, 4173, and motorcycles, 626.

During the year the Department of Motor Vehicles also moved to larger quarters at 1907 Border Ave.

Recreation-minded adults and children in Torrance continued to utilize the city's parks and new municipal swimming pool which drew crowds of more than 1000 persons per day. The recreation program for the year drew a total of 525,000 participants in various activities.

Sea-Aire Park was put into use during the year, although it is not entirely completed. Additions to recreation facilities included a new recreation building and game court at McMaster Park, tennis courts at El Retiro Park, and a recreation building at Walteria Park. Two new park sites were purchased—in Upper Hollywood Riviera and near the intersection of Torrance and Anza Blvds.

An increase in the number of borrowers and in the circulation of books at the Torrance Library also was reported by Mrs. Dorothy Jamieson, librarian.

Some 15,177 persons, a 30 per cent increase, borrowed nearly 190,000 books from the city's three libraries during 1956, a new record. Many additions to the collection here brought the total number of books to more than 12,000.

Churches, too, shared in the general increase, with a number of new churches entering the city and old churches adding new buildings and equipment.

Nearly all pastors reported large increases in membership, and one new Catholic church was completed and another new parish was organized.

The Torrance YMCA also reported a large increase in membership with some 2853 boys participating in 48 clubs and other youth activities during the year. The YWCA

drew the participation of 377 adults and 289 Y-Teens.

An even greater number of youngsters answered the cry, "Play Ball!" in Little League and Babe Ruth League games and many new teams were formed to handle the influx of juvenile participants.

Boy and Girl Scout troops, Cub packs, and Brownie troops all shared in the general increase, with many new troops organized.

The number of children in the city continued to rise as 1883 children were born in Torrance Memorial Hospital during 1956, compared with 1720 in the previous year. Work continued on expansion of the hospital and plans were announced for construction of a new Catholic hospital here.

Some of the city's animal population found the year not to their liking as 2410 dogs, 6520 cats, and an assortment of raccoons, foxes, skunks, kinkajous, peacocks, pheasants, ducks, and rabbits were picked up by the South Bay Humane Society during the last six months of the year.

Humane society officials reported a decline in the number of pick-ups of dogs and opined that it was due in part to the passage of a compulsory dog vaccination ordinance in 1955. The number of rabies cases in the city also declined after the scare which hit the city in 1955.

Life in Torrance during 1956 also had its tragic aspects. Fourteen persons lost their lives in traffic accidents and 5420 persons entered Torrance Memorial Hospital for various ailments. A total of 5932 operations were performed at the hospital, and 5894 X-rays were taken.

Local mortuaries handled final rites for some 300 persons.

During the first 11 months of 1956, Torrance firemen answered 703 calls for help, including 99 rescuator calls.

They quelled blazes in 11 residences, 10 manufacturing concerns, seven commercial buildings, four non-residential buildings, and 46 automobiles. They put out 185 grass fires and 84 rubbish blazes. The firefighters also answered 14 false alarms.

Total fire damage, surprisingly low in view of the activity, was \$47,455. Activities directly related to fires required 2051 man-hours of work. The firemen traveled 3135 miles and used 2385 gallons of gas.

A new fire station serving southwest Torrance was dedicated during the year and improvements were made on two other existing stations.

All in all, Torrance enjoyed a year of record prosperity but had little time to rest on its laurels since there was still much work left to be done.

At the same time next year, City Manager George Stevens expects a population of more than 90,000, which will be a somewhat smaller increase than that during the past year. Nevertheless, many experts expect the city house some 150,000 persons within the next few years.

That will mean that 1957 will still be a year of feverish activity, city officials predict.

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