

FLOOD THREATENS EVACUATIONS



CONFUSED—Somewhat mixed up Thomas Garrett, 21, who was refused unemployment check because he was unavailable for work while hostage of two gunmen last week, receives information that Governor Knight will send him personal check for \$40 to make up his loss. —Press Photo

Victim of Gunmen Loses Jobless Pay

It was bad enough to be a prisoner of two desperadoes, Thomas Garrett, 21, thought, but it was even worse Monday when his captivity cost him his unemployment check.

Officials at the Torrance office of the Department of Employment refused to hand over his \$40 benefit check Monday on grounds that Garrett had been unavailable for work during his 25 hours captivity by two gunmen.

Garrett and three other members of his family had been kept prisoners in their home at 1664 W. 205th st., Tuesday night and all of Wednesday by two men who escaped from the San Luis Obispo County Jail.

Refused Check
When Garrett put in his claim for his weekly jobless

Garrett was notified yesterday that Gov. Goodwin J. Knight will send him a personal check for \$40 to make up loss suffered when Department of Employment refused payment of jobless check because he was not available for work while hostage of gunmen.

Garrett said he does not know whether he will appeal Department's pay refusal in light of governor's promise.

check Monday, officials at the Employment office noted that he listed himself as unavailable during the time he was held prisoner.

They refused to give him his check.

"We're stuck with the law," explained Mrs. Winona Ellis, manager of the Torrance Employment office. "Under the law, a person must be available and seeking work in order to receive his benefits."

"While he was being held prisoner, he was certainly unavailable for work," she added.

Abide by Law
Mrs. Ellis said that her staff is forced to abide by the regulations set by the State Legislature, even if there are cases that break our hearts."

She explained that before a person is given his check, he must fill out a form which states what the applicant has done to find work.

Mrs. Ellis said she assumed that Garrett had listed his involuntary captivity on the form and that was the reason he was refused payment.

Laid Off
Garrett was laid off Jan. 3 in the Torrance plant of Douglas Aircraft.

"Maybe we should sue the gunmen," said his mother, Mrs. Lola Garrett. She and Thomas and Ray, 22 and Mary, 16, were held captive by Bert Blackburn, 22, and Ronnie Rhonemus, 21, who are still at large.

The pair escaped in a white Thunderbird stolen from the Garrett's neighbor. The car was found on a Los Angeles street Sunday.

Isen in Clash on Zoning

Opening guns in the political campaign boomed out Tuesday night when Mayor Albert Isen accused Councilman Nicholas O. Draie of backing out of a compromise agreement to settle a long smoldering zoning battle.

Isen made the accusation at his chief rival in the race for the mayor's post, when Draie asked to delay action to settle the case involving the Don-Ja-Ran Construction Company case out of court.

"Mr. Draie also agreed to compromise this case," Isen said during a debate on the matter. He said all Councilmen had previously said they will go along with the compromise.

Denies Accusation
"I did not," retorted the Councilman. "It's funny how much you let councilmen in on one case and not in others."

A few moments later, Draie clashed again. This time with Councilman Victor E. Benstead.

This occurred when Draie attempted to explain why he voted against the compromise of the case, which was approved 4 to 1. "Is this going to be a filibuster?" Benstead asked. "If it is, I'm going to take a walk."

Urges Settlement
The argument broke out after Charlton Mewborn, special counsel for the city in which it is the defendant in court action brought by Don-Ja-Ran, advised the Council to accept an out-of-court settlement before the case goes to trial Wednesday.

The construction company brought the suit after the City Council changed a zoning on a bluff strip stretching north from the Palos Verdes Estates boundary along the ocean.

The Council had originally granted the company a zone change to R-4 to enable it to build a resort hotel. Later the Council became angered when the company proposed to build a "motel-type" structure and changed the zone to R-1.

Sues City
The Don-Ja-Ran Company sued for an injunction against the rezoning.

Under the compromise, 25 lots will be rezoned to R-3, permitting apartment units not to exceed 20 feet in height over sidewalk level. Four other lots will remain R-4, with the company to build a resort hotel with strict

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HIGH WATER—Motorists slow down to snail's pace as they pass through intersection of Hawthorne Blvd. and 190th St., in yesterday's storm. Several key intersections, particularly in North Torrance, were impassable to traffic. —Press photo by Milt Svenak

Saturation Point Reached in Storm

Sections of North Torrance were threatened with evacuation yesterday morning when a heavy storm dumped 3.08 inches of rain by 9:45 a.m.

Rainfall came down at the rate of .84 inches an hour.

A police department bulletin issued early in the morning said that the saturation point for the absorption of water was reached and passed by 9 a.m.

Ready to Evacuate
The Torrance National Guard unit with amphibious vehicles, stood by to evacuate 20 families near 182nd St. and Crenshaw Blvd.

Police said that numerous sumps were filled to the brim and overflowing.

A 40-foot pine tree toppled onto a house at 26223 Regent St., Lomita, the Lennox Sheriff's Station reported.

The banks on a segment of Hawthorne Blvd., south of Pacific Coast Highway, started to slip from an avalanche of mud and silt.

St. Catherine's parochial school was shut down for the day, but no schools in the Torrance Unified School District closed.

Attendance Drops
Attendance dropped to a mere fraction at the Edison School in the heavily flooded 182nd St. area.

The Carson Elementary School in the Los Angeles City "strip" was ordered closed due to high water.

An electrical failure occurred in the Torrance school administration offices. Telephone connections at some times were briefly interrupted. Some traffic signals were not operating.

Mud and water from the Palos Verdes Hills washed down on the area near Pacific Coast Highway and Newton St.

Alerts Guard
Police Chief Percy Bennett said that he had alerted the National Guard in case they are needed to sandbag and to evacuate families.

Sections of Crenshaw, particularly between 190th and 174th Sts., were impassable.

Evacuation centers were set up in all Torrance schools. St. Catherine Labourne Church and in the American Legion Hall on Border Ave.

"If necessary, we'll call the National Guard and call in our reserves and mounted units," Bennett said.

Worst Flood
He felt the flood conditions yesterday did not approach the heavy deluge of 1932 when 30 inches of rain fell in one day.

The intersection of Maple and Opal was completely flooded (Continued on page 2)

Delay in Library Solution

More time will be needed before the Library Commission makes a recommendation on a municipal library system.

At its meeting Monday, the board decided to consult other cities which have library districts on basic information.

Torrance presently contracts for its library services with the county, but the contract will expire July 1, 1959, and will not be renewed by the county.

This city will then have the choice of joining a library district within the county, or forming a municipal library service.

A recommendation has been asked of the Library Board by the City Council.

Before the board makes a recommendation, it wants to know how much other cities are spending on library service, what type of budget they have for libraries, the library tax rate, how many books it has.

The county gave its contract cancellation notice to Torrance almost at the same time that the county librarian held out the possibility for a \$300,000 county-financed library if the city is willing to donate land in the civic center.

Press Ad Results In Quick Sale of 16-Ft. Motorboat

It took just one call to make a Torrance Press classified ad pay off for Mrs. Norma Orseth, of 26214 Athena, Harbor City.

She wanted to sell a 16-foot motorboat, so she placed the ad in Thursday's paper.

"I sold it on the first call," she said. "It went as quick as that."

If you want to sell, buy, rent or swap, just call a helpful ad-taker at the Torrance Press, FA. 8-2345, for fast results.

Groundbreaking Ceremonies Launch New Torrance Scout Headquarters

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the initial phase of the new Torrance Scout Center was held Monday, with completion of the first stage expected sometime this summer.

The center will eventually have four meeting buildings, accommodating 24 troops a night, according to Tom Wilkes, vice chairman of Torrance Scout Center, Inc., which the Torrance Junior Woman's Club, has raised cash and work pledges.

Together, the two organizations have received \$10,500 in cash, labor and material pledges.

The dedication message at the groundbreaking at the site, 2365 Plaza del Amo, was given by Dr. Warren Hamilton, director of special services for the Torrance Unified School District.

The invocation was given by Rev. H. Milton Sippel, president of the Torrance Ministerial Association. Honored guests were Mrs. John Schwartz, president of the Torrance Junior Woman's Club and W. E. Walton, president of Torrance Scouts Center, Inc.

The completed center will be U-shaped, with 130 feet facing Plaza del Amo and wings jutting back 80 feet to form an interior patio. By building the YWCA building, the existing center will be utilized.

The initial wing will contain the main hall with a fireplace flanked by bookcases. Restrooms and kitchen will be included in the first structure which will have floor space of 1800 square feet.

Brick and redwood will be used on the exterior and the roof will be of cedar shake construction.

Sand Slide Smothers Local Boy

A 12-yr.-old Torrance boy was buried alive Saturday afternoon when damp sand below a coastal ledge collapsed on him.

Dead is John Franklin Dunning, a Waverly School student, and son of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn F. Dunning, 205 Via El Toro.

Discovery of the tragic death concluded a long search by his parents, a friend, and Torrance police Saturday night.

The youngster was discovered under the mound of sand by his father and a friend, Clyde Ray Sexton, 14, of 4203 W. 174th St.

Police speculated that the boy had been playing in a cave formed in the side of the 12-foot high embankment near his home, when the sand suddenly collapsed on him, burying him at a depth of two feet.

The ledge is located approximately 100 feet north and 200 feet west of Via El Toro at Torrance Beach.

City Gets Award for Rose Float

Torrance's award for its Tournament of Roses float was received Tuesday at a breakfast meeting of the Chamber of Commerce.

The portrait of this city's entry was presented by Hilles Bedell, member of the Tournament executive committee, to A. E. Thompson, immediate past president of the Chamber.

Plaques were presented to Donald Hartel, past president of the Torrance Police Officers Association, and Mrs. Victor E. Benstead, float decoration chairman, by George A. Bradford, float committee chairman.

Following the presentation, witnessed by Sharon Starns and Sharon Smith, who rode the float, a movie on the Pasadena Parade was presented.

Bailey Says Others Drank Beer on Job

Drinking during working hours was quite customary in the city painting department, Cy G. Bailey, fired city painter, testified during a hearing on reinstatement Monday before the Civil Service Board.

Bailey was accused of drinking on the job, absenteeism, insubordination and instigating discord in the department.

In his defense he testified that other employees drank beer on the job.

The Commission was to make its findings last night, but the decision will not be made known until the written ruling is made.



STARTING POINT—Breaking ground for the new Torrance Scout Center, are from left, rear: Rev. H. Milton Sippel, president of the Torrance Ministerial Association; Thomas G. Wilkes, vice president of Torrance Scout Center, Inc.; Mrs. John Schwartz, president of Junior Woman's Club; Dr. Warren Hamilton, director of special service for the school district. In front are Bobby Davis, Linda Lenk and Jo Kay Louvier. —Press photo



FLOAT REPLICA—Holding up colored photo of Torrance's Tournament of Roses float, which won third prize in New Year's Day classic, are from left, Sharon Smith, Miss Torrance Chamber of Commerce; A. E. Thompson, past president of Chamber, and Sharon Starns, Miss Torrance. —Press photo