

Witnesses to Local Plane Crash Sought

Torrance Press-Herald

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SHIP OF DEATH . . . George S. Wing (left), president of Hi-Shear Corp. and builder of the Derringer, two-engine experimental aircraft, here checks the ship with pilot Thomas Heffner a few days before the plane carried Heffner to his death off the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Heffner had made several flights in the ship before the trip Saturday that ended in his death.

Council Denies 'Duess' In Police Resignations

Plunge In Sea Probed

A search for witnesses who may shed additional light on the final seconds of a Torrance-made experimental aircraft that plunged into the ocean four days ago has been launched by the craft's builders.

The twin-engine Derringer, designed and built in the Torrance Hi-Shear Corp. facilities at Torrance Municipal Airport, carried veteran pilot Thomas Heffner to his death.

SPOKESMEN for Hi-Shear Corp. told the Press-Herald the firm is anxious to talk to anyone who might have seen the experimental aircraft in the final minute before it plunged into the water nearly three miles west of Rocky Point on the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The 42-year-old Heffner, experimental test pilot for Hi-Shear, was alone in the plane on a test flight when the craft made its fatal plunge. One witness said the plane plummeted to the water and disintegrated on impact.

REMNANTS of the new craft salvaged by the Coast Guard and South Bay lifeguards were identified by George Wing, president of Hi-Shear Corp.

Heffner, a Redondo Beach resident, had been employed with Hi-Shear in 1961 and 1962, and returned two months ago after service with the Federal Aviation Office in Oklahoma City. Before his Torrance affiliation, he was associated with Piper Aircraft Co. offices in Florida and Pennsylvania, it was reported here.

Coed Enrolls
Pamela Moore, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jackson S. Moore of 824 Beech Ave., has entered California State Polytechnic College at San Luis Obispo.



TAKING SHAPE . . . The skeleton for Torrance's New Year's Day float is beginning to take shape in Pasadena as this photo indicates. All around the huge buildings, scores of cities and organizations are busy putting together floats for one of the world's most spectacular parades. Torrance's float will show a New Year's Baby atop the world wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

Two Former Policemen Lose Appeal

Resignations submitted by two former Torrance Police officers were not obtained "under duress," the City Council ruled last night.

The council, sitting as an appellate body, sustained the decision of the city's Civil Service Commission which held that the resignations of Stanley Ray Martin and John Paul Brady were submitted "without threat or promise of reward."

Both officers resigned from the force after they admitted substituting evidence in a narcotics case. A third officer, Michael William Watts, also resigned but did not seek reinstatement. Watts was probationary employe of the city at the time of the incident.

resignations or being jailed on felony charges.

"The acts of the three men were the things that constituted threats in their minds," Councilman J. A. Beasley said.

Beasley's feelings were echoed by other members of the council.

THE COUNCIL'S vote came on a motion by Ross A. Sciarrotta Sr., who said the three men "were merely facing the facts." Only H. T. "Ted" Olson, who said he had worked with a brother-in-law of one of the men, did not vote. The six other members of the council were unanimous in their support of the Civil Service Commission.

An appeal to the courts is possible. McCabe, however, was not available after the council meeting for comment.

MARTIN AND BRADY were represented by Attorney William J. McCabe during the City Council hearing. McCabe said Brady "takes full responsibility for the entire thing."

Arguments before the council hinged on the definition of the word "duress." City Prosecutor Charles F. Catterlin, who argued for the city, told councilmen that duress required an act that was "illegal and unlawful" on the part of the person or agency securing the resignations. Catterlin added that no such act was committed.

McCabe, however, said "duress" did not mean an illegal act had to be committed. He said courts have held that threats of criminal prosecution are duress and added, "We clearly have a threat of prosecution."

Cal Water Wins Hike In Rates

Water rate increases for some 21,000 customers of the California Water Service Co. have been approved by the Public Utilities Commission. The PUC granted only a portion of the increase requested by the company.

The increase, which will become effective Jan. 1 will net \$209,400 per year for the firm. California Water Service Co. had asked for an increase totaling nearly \$375,000 per year.

The monthly water bill of typical householders in the area will go up about 72 cents, compared with a monthly increase of \$1.26 sought by the company.

Hearings on the application were held in Redondo Beach last July 30 and 31.

Attorney Succumbs

Robert Pannell, widely known Torrance and Lomita attorney, died Monday at the UCLA Medical Center after undergoing open heart surgery two weeks ago.

The 42-year-old attorney, who lived at 2937 W. 234th St., acted as city prosecutor for Torrance from 1956 to 1958 and had maintained law offices in downtown Torrance for several years.

Earlier this year he became a partner in the Lomita law firm of Farthing & Pannell.

Pannell had been ill since September, but was believed to be recovering until a relapse last week.

He was graduated from Loyola University Law School in 1953 and established his practice in Torrance a short time later.

He is survived by his widow, Nancy, and two sons and a daughter.

Special Phone for Santa: FA 0-1311

Kiddies who want to put in a word about their Christmas lists with Santa Claus may do so from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday by giving him a call on the telephone at FA 0-1311.

For the seventh year, Torrance civic leaders will come to the aid of Santa and handle phone traffic through arrangements made by Roger E. Wright of Wright Anserfone, 2115 Torrance Blvd.

The special phones will be hooked up to Santa's bustling workshop during those two days and the kiddies can put in their suggestions direct, Wright said.

As in past years, scores of Torrance businessmen, school executives, professional men, and civic leaders will take turns manning the phones to give Santa a hand. Some spots still remain for those men who might like to help the old gent, Wright said.

New Ordinance Civil Service Board Will Have Seven Men

A new ordinance changing the method of appointing Civil Service Commissioners was adopted by the City Council last night over the objections of Mayor Albert Isen.

Isen, casting the lone nay vote on the ordinance, said it was "a bad ordinance and poor government." His objection was recorded, but the dispatch with which the ordinance was handled makes it a virtual certainty to pass on a second reading.

The new ordinance makes possible appointments by individual councilmen with the approval of a majority of the council and increases the number of commissioners from five to seven—one for each member of the City Council. Terms of the commissioners will run for four years.

Hawthorne Will Get New Look

A "new look" is in the works for Hawthorne Avenue following action by the City Council during last night's session.

The council instructed City Manager Edward J. Ferraro to begin necessary paper work for the formation of an assessment district to beautify the fast-growing commercial street.

Acting on a recommendation made by Ferraro's office, the council agreed to establish the district in order to enhance center strip on Hawthorne Avenue from 190th Street south to Pacific Coast Highway.

The district will be formed under provisions of the 1911 Improvement Act of 1911.

Preliminary estimates of the cost of the district cover Torrance and Sepulveda boulevards. That cost is estimated at \$36,188, or about \$1 per front foot, to be paid over a 10-year period.

The action followed a recommendation of the Torrance Beautiful Commission.

IN OTHER action, the council:

- Approved a change of zone from A-1 and C-3 to R-3 for property located on Artesia Boulevard between Yukon and Glenburn avenues.
- Awarded a contract in the amount of \$49,170.66 for grading, paving, and storm drain construction at Torrance Municipal Airport to H. N. Hanson Construction Co.
- Approved new leases with the Babe Ruth and Little Leagues for a five year term. The property is located at Cabrillo Avenue and Plaza Del Amo.

Juveniles Held for Hearings

Nine youths, ranging in age from 16 to 17, are awaiting a pre-determination hearing in Juvenile Hall today following a gang fight in which a 17-year-old boy was severely injured.

The youths are charged with assault with a deadly weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

The youths allegedly attacked Carl C. Zich, 17, of 4002 W. 177th St., after following him home last Friday night. Zich suffered a broken jaw.

Student Wins Degree Friday

John Charles Dawes, 17009 Casimir Ave., will graduate with honors from Northrop Institute of Technology Friday at the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Los Angeles.



NEW OFFICERS . . . Two new Torrance Police officers are now on duty in the city following their graduation from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Academy. Shown during graduation ceremonies at the Academy are, from left, Torrance Police Chief Walter R. Koenig, Officer Peter B. Morrison, Sheriff Peter J. Pitchess, Officer William J. Cavanaugh, and U.S. Senator-elect George Murphy. Murphy delivered a short address at the ceremonies.