

Herewith, in the Knave's not so humble opinion, after due consideration and consultations with colleagues, are the 20 best local stories of the year 1953.

No attempt was made to rate the stories in the order of their importance, except that there was general agreement the Key System strike was the top story of the year.

KEY SYSTEM STRIKE—The worst transit stoppage in the area's history, lasting 76 days, affects a greater number of people than any single event of the year, and involves courts and governmental agencies.

NEW BRIDGES—A \$62,000,000 Bay span goes under construction between Richmond and San Rafael. A \$2,300,000 bridge is completed between Alameda and Bay Farm Island.

VELDE HEARINGS—The House Committee on Un-American Activities develops testimony naming more than 130 Alameda and Contra Costa County residents as communists.

OAKLAND CITY ELECTION—Clifford E. Rishell becomes Oakland's first elected mayor since 1931 as a change in the city's form of government goes into effect.

CONTRA COSTA CANAL—A 3-year-old boy becomes the 33rd person to drown in the unguarded Contra Costa Canal of the Central Valley Project.

POW RETURN—Prisoners of War return from Korea, developing a series of stories of great emotional impact, climaxed by the arrival of Gen. William F. Dean.

THE "KISS OF DEATH"—A German war bride shoots nine bullets into the body of her husband, in an auto parked on a lonely road near Niles.

"BAD BOY" BANDIT—An epidemic of bank holdups dominates the crime statistics. The major story is the career of Robert Fleet Current, Oakland "Bad Boy."

CENTENNIAL—Alameda County celebrates its 100th anniversary with a series of elaborate observances.

EXPLOSION—Twelve men are killed and five injured in an explosion at the Hercules Powder Company plant.

THIRTY-NINE CENT MEAT—Imports of Australian beef break the high-price front and housewives storm markets.

PLANE CRASH—An Air Force transport, coming in for a landing at Oakland Airport, crashes near Alvarado, with a death toll of 35.

COUNTY CARS—Long smoldering resentment over luxury autos for supervisors and private use of county-owned cars erupts in widespread public protests.

SHARKY SCHOOLS—The Oakland Board of Education reports surveys revealing earthquake hazards in more than 40 school buildings and calls for \$30,000,000 bond issue to finance replacements and expansion.

UNION STREET FRANCHISE—Two years of wrangling end with the issuance of a franchise for a railroad freight line along Union Street, predicated the removal of trackage on Shafter Avenue.

OAKS GET DRESSEN—Charlie Dressen quits Brooklyn after piloting the Dodgers to a National League pennant, and signs to manage the Oakland Baseball Club.

WAR ON TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS—Jail sentences curb speeders, and police campaign against jay-walkers.

CHIN BOK HING—A Chinese gambler sits in his Vernon Street home, thinking of the odds against him.

FREeways—A continuing story, vitally important to the freedom of the Bay area. Prominence goes to the Eastshore Freeway, with completion of a \$4,838,000 section through San Lorenzo, near completion of a \$1,195,000 overpass of the Posey Tube, and extensive progress on the \$2,552,000 Powell Street overpass and widening to Ashby Avenue.

DEVELOPMENT—Another story with a new facet each day. For the first time, Alameda County moves ahead of San Francisco County in population—815,000 to 783,700, and the growth of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties continues at amazing speed.

So, 1953 slips away and the stories that were live, exciting, or at least interesting events, become history. And we turn to see what 1954 may have to offer.

—THE KNAVE



Shown on an inspection tour of the F9F jet fighter-bomber which is named after their Cub Scout unit are, from left, Darrell Bidstrup, Michael Houlihan, Dennis Paulelich, Wes Hicks, and Marcy Dupree.

120 Flee Fire In S.F. Building

A three-alarm fire drove some 120 persons from the seventh and eighth floors of the Spreckels Sugar Company office building at Pine and Market Streets in downtown San Francisco yesterday afternoon.

But no one was injured, and the flames were quelled by firemen after doing an estimated \$75,000 to \$100,000 damage.

Lieut. George Kelley, chief of the Bureau of Fire Investigation, said the blaze broke out in the office of Spreckels Vice-President Guy Manuels, which was being redecorated by painters.

One hundred sixty firemen and 34 pieces of equipment were turned out.

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., Dec. 31.—A motor in one electric shaver has one-thousandth of one horsepower, weighing four ounces. It is capable of spinning the shaft up to 6000 times per minute.

Deed Filed in Purchase of Moraga Land

MARTINEZ, Dec. 31.—The deed covering the recently announced purchase of 5020 acres of Moraga Valley land for a projected city of 28,000 inhabitants was recorded today at the Contra Costa County Hall of Records.

Transfer of the property is from the Moraga Company to Utah Construction Company, a Utah corporation, and Preston Management Company.

The documents recorded include a deed turning over 78 per cent to Utah Construction, and a deed of trust showing an indebtedness of \$2,924,150, with the Crocker First National Bank of San Francisco as trustee.

H. Hoyt Hayden, chief deputy in the office of County Recorder Ralph Cunningham, said no revenue stamps were attached to the deed or the deed of trust.

Charity Probe To Be Resumed

Investigation of charity fund operations at California race tracks will be resumed in a few weeks, Deputy Atty. Gen. Clarence Linn declared today.

Linn said investigations that have recovered more than \$300,000 from the Bay Meadows track will be extended to other tracks throughout the state.

He said audits of race track accounts will be made as soon as transfers of funds can be made by the State Racing Board.

The board is temporarily inactive, because of the resignation of members when Gov. Goodwin Knight took office, but new appointments are expected momentarily.

In a related move, a legislative committee has announced it will conduct hearings on race track operations in Southern California sometime next month.

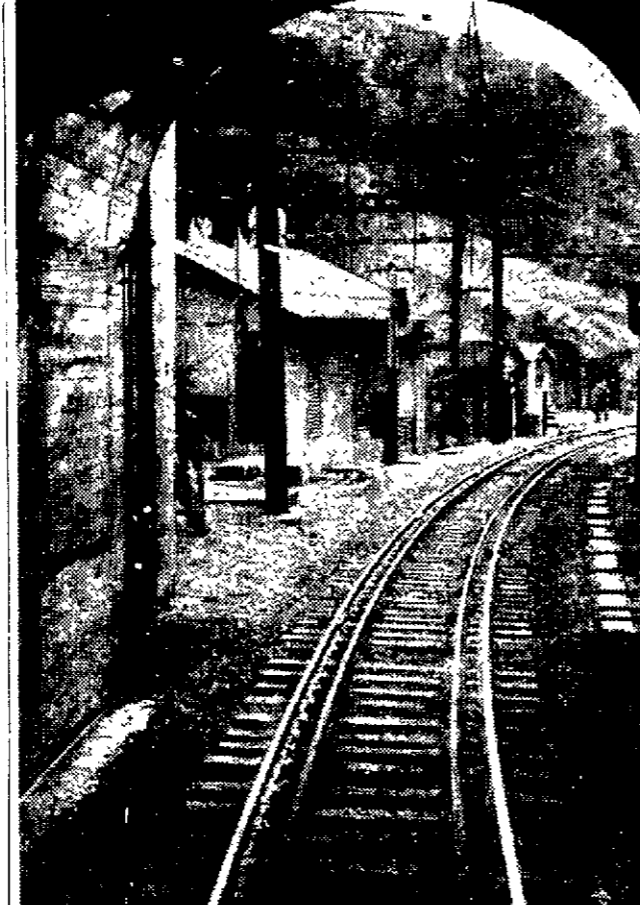
Nine Months for Robbery

Bernard W. Duffley, 30, of 2223 East 14th Street, a construction worker, today was sentenced by Superior Judge James R. Agee to nine months in the County Jail and placed on three years probation for a liquor store robbery.

Use of Rail Link in Bay Transit Plan Is Studied

MARTINEZ, Dec. 31.—Possibility of integrating the Oakland-Walnut Creek link of the Sacramento Northern Railway, via Shepard Canyon, into the over-all San Francisco Bay area transit plan, is under consideration.

Chairman H. L. "Jack" Cummings of the Board of Super-



Commuter trains linking the Oakland area with Contra Costa County may rumble through this Shepard Canyon tunnel on the Sacramento Northern Railway line as one link in rapid transit network under study for nine Bay Area counties.

visors was advised today that the New York consulting firm directing the \$600,000 study to develop the master rapid transit plan for the nine bay counties will have a report possibly by next June.

"We shall be glad to give you the results of our analysis of the transportation demand and its relationship with this section of the Sacramento Northern, possibly as early as June," the firm informed Cummings.

The study will revolve around "the line's usefulness—not the dollar worth of the property," the letter said.

The board recently delegated Cummings to confer with the Eastbay Rapid Transit Authority to determine what plans might be made for use of the right-of-way through Redwood Canyon.

While the supervisors have considered use of the right-of-way as a potential new traffic arterial in connection with the long-discussed second vehicular tunnel through the Oakland hills, they also want to know how the route would fit into the over-all transportation program.

REPLY QUOTED

W. S. Gray, administrative assistant of the New York consulting firm, said in reply to Cummings' letter:

"In one of the first general surveys of the area we learned of the contemplated abandonment of the Sacramento Northern Railway from a point near Walnut Creek to Oakland. We were told that its present operations have been restricted entirely to freight service.

"The possibility of integrating this piece of railroad into our over-all transit plan immediately suggests itself as desirable, but no intelligent appraisal of its usefulness can be made until origin and destination surveys are completed in that area."

\$50,000 in Cash Seized By 'Phantom'

Gunman Gets Into And Out of Vault Without Being Seen

HOUSTON, Dec. 31.—A slick gunman robbed the Houston National Bank of an estimated \$50,000 today and slipped away in a payday crowd.

He struck just after the big downtown bank opened for business. A few minutes earlier a large sum of cash had been delivered to the bank. It's payday for thousands in Texas' largest city, and the bank apparently had prepared for heavy business because of the long New Year's week-end.

It was a smooth job. Nobody saw the robber enter the building, and nobody saw him leave. Bank officials did not know how he got into the downstairs vault room—where he held a gun on Donny N. Allen, 19, and ordered him to pull stacks of money in a leather briefcase. The money mostly was in \$20, \$10 and \$5 bills.

The robber, about 28 and dark, melted into the crowd without arousing suspicion.

Young Allen was working behind a cage in the vault room with two other tellers.

"He flashed a gun long enough for me to see it and put it back into his pocket," Allen said. "He told me 'just give me some of the big bills and put them in this briefcase.'"

Allen said he obeyed.

The man grabbed the briefcase and fled up the stairs. Allen immediately called the police.

It was 13 minutes later that police got a report on the robbery.

Asst. Police Chief George Sebor said, "the first we knew of it was from reporters covering the police station."

Melvin Rouff, president of the bank, told Patrolman J. A. Robbins that he would "take full responsibility" for not reporting the robbery earlier.

Once police got the report, the bank was flooded with officers. Allen was immediately taken into an office of the bank by FBI agents in the hope he could give them some clues.

The FBI has jurisdiction because the bank is a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Burglars Hose Cash Box, Remove Prints

Burglars entered the Champion Grocery at 1628 Seminary Avenue last night, removed the cash register and took it into the back yard.

There they broke it open and took about \$50.

Then they took a garden hose and washed it off to remove fingerprints.

The proprietor, Secundino Herrera, 39 lives upstairs but said he knew nothing of the incident.

RELINQUISHES THROTTLE Engineer Retires After 47 Years Railroading



MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM METZGER It Was Her First Ride—and His Last.

When the Western Pacific's crack California Zephyr rolled into the Oakland Mole yesterday afternoon, Engineer William F. Metzger stepped down from 47 years of railroading into retirement.

But his last run was not just another trip. Metzger's wife, Euveta, taken secretly to Sacramento, boarded the train there to make the last leg of the last trip with her husband.

Metzger started with Western Pacific as a fireman aboard freight's working out of Stockton in 1906. His retired wife was Dan McKellips, now retired, of 4734 Edgewood Avenue, who was on hand for the ceremony. Also present to send Metzger into re-

vice-president and general manager of the railroad, and C. L. Droit, corporate secretary.

Metzger, of 2656 68th Avenue, married since 1922, moved from Stockton to Oakland in 1939. When he was promoted from fireman to engineer, he has recently run the Zephyr between here and Oroville.

"He has spent so many years with the line, I'm afraid he'll be lost for a while around the house," his wife said. "All he will have to do is cut the grass and play with the neighbors' children. We have none of our own."

"But then, he's worked hard, and deserves to retire."

City to Dedicate Rose Garden In Honor of Ex-Mayor Morcom

Dedication of the Oakland Municipal Rose Garden to former council-manager form of government, serving from 1931 to 1933.

He was re-elected to the council in 1941 and served until he became ill.

In taking this action, the board concurred in the recent Oakland City Council recommendation that this recognition be conferred upon Mayor Morcom in recognition of his many years' service to the city as Mayor and city councilman.

The board ordered that an appropriate inscription be placed on the monument at the entrance of the garden on Jean Street off Grand Avenue and that a dedication ceremony be planned.

Mayor Morcom, who lives at 4231 Lakeshore Avenue, was forced into retirement from the City Council by illness in September, 1951. His term expired July 1, 1953.

He as Mayor planted the first rose bush in the garden on January 27, 1933. The garden was opened to the public in May of the following year.

An Oakland business man, Mor-

Jaywalkers Total 5364

Fifty-four persons learned yesterday that Oakland area authorities are engaged in a drive to save pedestrian lives. They joined the 3310 persons who have learned about the campaign in the past—by receiving citations for jaywalking.

Table listing citations issued yesterday: Oakland 39, Berkeley 10, Richmond 5, Total 54, GRAND TOTAL: 5364.



Presiding at a joint meeting of Alameda service clubs yesterday in the Hotel Alameda were (seated, from left) James C. Taylor, president of the Alameda Kiwanis Club; Don Rodenick, president of the Alameda Rotary Club; E. J. Lynch, president of the Alameda Lions Club; (standing, from left) Ed Kelly, president of the Alameda Optimist Club, and Robert Crown, chairman of the day. More than 300 attended.

PLAY IT SAFE . . . WELCOME THE NEW YEAR