Retired secretary from Poly dies in morning house fire

Blocked floor heater cited as reason for $100,000 blaze near university

By Brandon K. Engle

A former Cal Poly secretary died in her home early Thursday morning when a fire started from a blocked floor heater.

The Graves Street house, a few blocks from the Cal Poly campus, was fully engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived at 4:17 a.m. Eleanor Gibson, 82, was found lying on a floor furnace in the front living room. She was unmarried and lived alone.

Next door neighbor H.W. "Mac" McDonald said he heard a "popping sound" and stepped outside to find smoke coming from Gibson's house. He said he immediately called the fire department.

City firefighters as well as an engine from the Cal Poly Fire Department battled the fire for about 20 minutes before getting it under control.

The fire, for the most part, was confined to the interior of the house, said John Paulsen, chief of Poly's fire department.

Gibson had apparently fallen on the floor and was lying over the floor furnace, said Gayle Rosenberger, city fire department spokesperson. The furnace overheated and caught fire. It is not known whether Gibson was unconscious at the time.

The contents of the house were still smoldering in the front yard about noon Thursday as firefighters mopped up the scene. A charred couch, end table, lamp and other personal effects were strewn across the lawn and driveway. Several neighbors watched as firefighters boarded up the windows.

"The cause of the fire appears to be accidental pending further investigation," said State Fire Marshal Investigator Jim Allen in the fire report. Damage to the house is estimated at $100,000. Fire Marshal Erwin Willis said the house did not contain a smoke detector.

Gibson worked for Cal Poly from 1958 to 1971 in various secretarial and clerical positions in the crop science department and the general office, said Stan Bernstein, director of Public Affairs at Cal Poly. She was a schoolteacher before coming to Poly.

James Landreth, vice president for business affairs, said he knew Gibson when she worked at Poly. She attended the same San Luis Obispo church — The First Presbyteran Church — as Landreth.

She was disabled and used a walker for the last year or two since an operation to place a pin in her hip, Landreth said.

"On occasion my wife and I visited her in the convalescent home," he said. McDonald remembered Gibson as a "nice, gentle lady" and "easy to get along with."

San Luis Obispo, SLO business leaders discuss Poly, city growth

By Tara Murphy

San Luis Obispo needs to start planning for and accepting growth as a part of the future, said San Luis Obispo business leaders Thursday morning.

Several speakers — including Cal Poly President Warren Baker — addressed the issue, among others, at "Good Morning San Luis Obispo," a breakfast sponsored by the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce.

Baker told the more than 150 people who showed up at Embassy Suites that the future will see a "significant demand for more space in the higher education system in California," and Cal Poly, as part of the state university system, has been asked to look at long-range growth.

At Poly, growth will take the form of roughly a 1-percent-per-year increase for the next 10 years, Baker said. Poly is about 6 percent above where it was in 1980, he said, but enrollment should stay level for the next 10 years.

In response to criticism about unplanned overcrowding Cal Poly reported during fall quarter, Baker said the school has 500 fewer students than it did in September and will likely lose another 500 in spring.

Numbers should be compared at a year-by-average, he said, not from quarter to quarter.

Growth at Cal Poly needs to be considered carefully, said Baker. An environmental impact study should be completed before any expansion takes place, Baker said. Studies have already been undertaken to look at "how to preserve the character of the university."

Baker is also concerned about on-campus housing and said he thinks new housing will not be like current structures.

"We still have the largest student housing program in the state," said Baker. "We need to study the type of housing available on campus."

Cost of the undertaking is one factor, he said, but quality, rules and regulations are another aspect.

"We need to look at alternative housing on campus."

The exclusive nature of some of Cal Poly's programs should also be considered, he said. Baker cited the architecture program and the graphic communications programs as examples.

"The polytechnic emphasis at the school will remain," he said. "That in itself is a restraining factor. These are expensive constraints, and we have to take this into account."

Minority participation also needs to be examined, said Baker.

"Funding is based on the assumption that we will improve participation of minorities."

Other speakers expressed concern over parking at Cal Poly and a shortage of professors. But some felt Cal Poly's growth would be taken in stride by the community.

"I'm surprised it didn't grow more in the last 10 years," said David Hudson of Owen Rehabilitation Services, who attended the breakfast. "If what he (Baker) says is true, it sounds like the community should be able to handle it."

Former County Planning Director Paul Crawford said he has seen "startling changes in public attitude" over the last 10 years.

"The attitude has changed from 'get out of my face' to 'the county hasn't done enough,'" Crawford said.

Even if the rate of growth is slowed, Crawford said. See BREAKFAST, page 6
Coffman's column lacks credibility

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The newspaper for Cal Poly. Since 1916.

Second Opinion
States sell gambling as virtue

Most Americans have always considered gambling a vice. You don't see it advertised on the radio or on TV. Today, however, in lieu of getting something for nothing, outsmarting the odds or throwing your lot into the great, pot luck, one-dollar-a-chance, cheap thrill, there are bases qualities of life and thought.

Yet today Americans are being sold on gambling as a virtue. It is presented as legal. In reality, they are buying, but a supposedly harmless low-level form of betting — state lotteries. Part of the lure of lotteries is that it is government — via public relations firms — that's pitching the virtues of betting.

Last year 29 states made $16 billion on lotteries, according to a study in the January New England Monthly. The new twist — one suckering the middle class — is that state lotteries supposedly benefit the homeless, the poor, the arts. A bond bond, in this case, is a shaky way of doing business.

At one time, California's public higher education institutions depended on income from tideland oil revenue, and it was告诉我 in reference to the "whirlwinds of impulses of the '80s: greed, manipulation and glitz."

This statement by King is not in reference to the "whirlwinds of revolt?" as Coffman has claimed but relates to King's suggestion: "We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence."

I suggest Coffman open his eyes and stop seeing the world so selectively.

Robyn Johnson
Education

Equate M.L. King with T. Jefferson

Editor — In response to the column on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Jan. 22), we would like to point out that King is known to do the same thing. We don't know who he has said or what he said. He is known for the effect his words have had on our way of thinking, both in the past and the present.

Each person has specific rights in our society. These rights are the same no matter what the conditions of our birth, or parents or our bank balances.

King is a man we might equate with Thomas Jefferson. Both men worked from the framework of the society they were born into and sought to free the oppressed people.

Robyn Johnson
Education

Look for alternatives to bonds

By Christine Kohn

Cal Poly's new Recreation and Physical Educa­ tion addition is in jeopardy. The $13 million facility with nine raucourtball courts, a gymnastics room, a wrestling room and a multi-purpose gymnastum may never happen. A $15,000-per-year Performing Arts Center is also in danger, along with a poultry­ science classroom and laboratory.

Their survival may appear to look good now; they have been included in Gov. George Deukmejian's 1990-91 state budget. But regardless of whether they survive legislative scrutiny and funding, the state may not have the money to pay for them.

The reason is this: In order for Cal Poly to receive the $7.3 million requested to move these projects forward, California voters must approve a general obligation bond measure. And a bond, in this case, is a shaky way of doing business.

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According to some, Jefferson worked for the "oppressed" colonial landowners, merchants and bankers. Do we honor him any less because his undertaking was for white people?

William A. Knight
Food Science

Hidden handicaps disable people, too

Editor — Cyrdy Smith's Jan. 23 column "Learn to understand" was a disabled student's real life experience with me. I am a disabled student with a "hidden" handicap. I feel guilty when I park in designated handicap spaces because I am fortunate enough to have two legs and the ability to walk. Those who frown when I park in the handicapped parking spaces are entitled to the pain I live with daily or see the large scars on my foot and ankle. I pity those who believe without a missing limb or without paralysis, an individual isn't handicapped. Doctors do not give handicap permits just because they are able to walk. I am a disabled student with a "hidden" handicap.

Gina Garcia
City and Regional Planning

Letters to the Editor

Coffman's column lacks credibility

Editor — The arguments Jeff Coffman used to support his n­ motion that Martin Luther King Jr. is undeserving of honor demon­ strate his inability to perceive King's enormous efforts and contrib­ utions of civil rights.

More specifically, he has proven his total lack of credibility by taking several items out of context and distorting their mean­ ings. (Jan. 22 column)

One of the quotes Coffman used is obviously misleading when read simply as "the marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community."

This statement takes on new meaning when read in context: "The mar­ velous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom."

This statement by King is not in reference to the "whirlwinds of revolt?" as Coffman has claimed but relates to King's suggestion: "We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence."

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Gina Garcia
City and Regional Planning
Peace Corps still strong at age 29

Hungary, Poland are added to list of host countries

By Tara Murphy

John F. Kennedy's baby has finally grown up. At age 29, baby has become a young adult, venturing across new territory, facing new challenges. This year, baby will travel to Eastern Europe.

Next year, perhaps China...

JFK's baby, known as the Peace Corps, has reached age 29 bigger and stronger than ever. And this year, for the first time, the Peace Corps will have volunteers in Hungary and Poland.

"We are told to look for recruits specifically for Eastern Europe," said David Kelley, a Peace Corps recruiter at Cal Poly. "We give preference to people who are fluent in Hungarian or Polish.

The Peace Corps is sponsoring activities from Jan. 23-25 to raise student interest. Kelley said he is looking for volunteers not only for Eastern Europe, but for 65 other countries as well. When volunteers arrive in Hungary and Poland this summer, the Peace Corps will have 6,300 volunteers worldwide.

But Kelley said he doesn't think the expansion into Europe will necessarily raise the number of Cal Poly Peace Corps volunteers, which has been traditionally high. Kelley said about 25 Cal Poly graduates enter the Peace Corps every year.

Cal Poly contributes so many volunteers because it is a technical school, said Kelley. "Recruiters have quotas to meet in the scarce skills," including agriculture, forestry, public health and math and science education.

Although Eastern European countries are requesting English teachers, and not volunteers with the "scarce skills," Kelley doesn't expect the move to affect Cal Poly recruitment.

"At a school like Cal Poly we're looking for technical people," said Kelley.

In the future, the agency's English program has about 10 applicants for every position. Kelley calls the English program kind of a catchall.

"Everyone in America speaks English," he said. "Anyone can be taught to teach it."

Kelley said programs in Eastern Europe may be expanded in the future.

"Developments have happened only since reforms happened there less than a year ago," Kelley said. "I foresee them looking for small business and cooperative help — and maybe agricultural and public health down the line."

Congress recently increased the Peace Corps budget to allow the agency to expand into new countries. Los Angeles area Peace Corps recruiter and Cal Poly graduate Bill Mabie estimates the yearly budget at $163 million. Mabie said it will cost between $2.3 million to start and support the "European Initiative."

In the future, said Mabie, "countries either want us to come in or want us to come back."

The Peace Corps had planned to send volunteers to China. However, plans were scratched at the last minute because of student uprisings and political problems in that country.

"China is on the backburner until further notice," said Mabie. "But it's still planned. It's a response to the political climate. We'll see what happens."

Still, neither Kelley nor Mabie thinks the Peace Corps will have volunteers in China.

Kelley said programs in Eastern Europe may be expanded in the future.

"It's expensive to go into a new country," Kelley said. Still, neither Kelley nor Mabie would be surprised if the Peace Corps extended activities into other Eastern European countries.

"John Kennedy is probably flip-flopping in his grave," Kelley said.
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Advocate urges consumers to fight utility 'bad guys'

By Patty Hayes

Defending consumers from the "bad guys" became her passion.

"Everybody has to have a passion. I don't know why I developed this kooky one for public utility rate normalization," Siegel said.

"I'm not here to be impartial," she said. "I find it deplorable that young couples both have to work to pay high rent or house payments."

Siegel said that the utility companies are partly to blame.

"A $3 or $4 increase in a monthly telephone bill means a lot to the elderly and the poor," Siegel suggested that consumers write to the CPUC to voice concerns and complaints.

Siegel has recently retired as head of TURN, but still remains involved with utility rate issues.

Siegel became a consumer advocate in the late '60s as executive director of the Association of California Consumers.

Siegel spoke in the University Union as part of the 1989-90 Arts and Humanities Lecture Series. The theme of the series is "Silenced Voices: From the Margins of America."

Elizabeth (Biz) Steinberg, of the San Luis Obispo Economic Opportunity Commission, will discuss the local homeless situation on Feb. 1.

Psych professor's back injury forces early retirement

An associate professor in the psychology and human development department will not finish out the end of the quarter because of medical reasons.

Peter Rabe had one year left under the Faculty Early Retirement Program, but students in his classes were notified Thursday that he would not return because of a crushed disk in his back. The FERP program allows teachers to retire early and teach one quarter a year until they reach an equal amount of classes as they had previously.

Rabe's General Psychology sections are now being taught by Ned Schultz (Psych 201-05) and Elaine Holder (Psych 201-06). Both Normal Psychology sections are being taught by Zoe Alexander.

— Larre Sterling

BREAKFAST

From page 1

down, it will spread to rural areas, said Crawford.

"Everyone dreams of a house in the country," Crawford said the character of the county will change regardless of interest in slowing the growth rate.

"The landscape we love is going to be covered with houses," Baker said Cal Poly does not plan to go to a maximum growth rate. "That would be a disaster for Cal Poly."

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Sports Calendar

Friday, January 26

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- Men's Basketball at Chapman College — The Mustangs knocked off their overall record of 13-4 at the game against Chapman. Poly is coming off a thrilling overtime defeat of UC Riverside, and sports a 3-1 CCAA mark. The Panthers at Chapman are 10-8 overall and have a 1-3 league mark.
- Wrestling at Oklahoma State — The Mustang wrestling squad will be in Oklahoma this weekend to take on two perennial NCAA powerhouses, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.
- Men's Volleyball — The men's volleyball team will be in Santa Barbara this weekend to compete in an invitational tournament. They opened their season with a loss to Division 1 powerhouse Fresno State, so they're looking to bounce back this weekend.

Saturday, January 27

- Women's Basketball at CSU Dominguez Hills — The game will be at 1 p.m. in Fresno. The Toros will carry an even 9-9 record into this weekend's action, while the Mustangs sport an 8-10 mark into this weekend's game.
- Men's Basketball at CSU Dominguez Hills — The men will face the Toros of Dominguez Hills at 5:45 p.m. The Toros will carry an even 9-9 record into this weekend's action, while the Mustangs sport an 8-10 mark into this weekend's game.
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- Women's water polo opens its season this weekend at a tournament in Davis.
- Men's Gymnastics — The Cal Poly men's gymnastics club will host a meet against CSU Fullerton. The meet begins at 7 p.m. at Cramall Gym.

Classifieds

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Sound Interesting?

Fourteen 1989 Cal Poly graduates thought so. We invite both Juniors and Seniors to learn more about us by attending our Information Session on Monday, January 29. Please contact the Placement Center for additional information. A brief presentation will be given which will be followed by an open floor Question and Answer session. Food and beverages will be provided.

On campus interviews will be held Tuesday, January 30, so this Information Session will be an excellent head start. We look forward to seeing you there!