

Taft, California

Greetings from Pete Gianopulos, Class of 1942

The Taft Newsletter

Boom Town Taft, California

By

Edward F. "Eddie" Coffee

The next installment of the Eddie Coffee series will not be shown today but will continue next week.

Meteor to start filming, local extras to be used

Published: Thursday, July 3, 2008 11:50 AM

By Doug Keeler

Editor, Midway Driller

The Taft City Council is going to decide whether or not it wants to allow the city's name to be used on a scientific fiction miniseries about a community facing destruction from a giant rock from outer space.

The council was asked Tuesday night to give its permission and all five councilmen seemed willing to do so but could not take action since the item was not on the agenda.

The council did approve a long list of street closing to allow for filming for the production of "Meteor" over a two week period stretching from July 13 to 24.

Producer Juan Mas has already spoken with Taft Police Chief Ken McMinn about the use of the city's name since well-known actor Stacy Keach will be playing the chief of police in the town, no matter what it is called.

The downtown area will be used for several scenes, but other scenes will be shot on 25-Hill Road, Gardner Field Road, and the Sixth Street-Emmons Park Drive area.

The residents will have a chance to get into the act too.

Producer Juan Mas said local extras will be used in several scenes in addition to professional actors.

Second-assistant director Adam Boyd has already contacted Taft Union High School drama teacher Kelly Morris to start recruiting local extras.

Dedication of Taft Post Office, Thursday, July 3, 2008

The photo in the attachment was taken by Doug Keeler, editor of the Midway Driller. Congressman Kevin McCarthy is seated second from the left next to Pete Gianopulos. Also seated behind the podium were Larry Pierce's widow and his daughter. One of the sons can be seen seated behind his mother and sister.

There was a very large crowd present for the dedication -- which called for changing the name to be forever known as the Larry S. Pierce Taft Post Office in honor of Taft Union High School's and the County's only Medal of Honor recipient, Larry S. Pierce who was awarded the medal posthumously.

The program was organized by Alicia Delgadillo from the Santa Clarita post office who is in charge all of the post offices in this area. There was a large local committee headed by Randy Miller to work out the details at the local area. The decorations around the post office were very colorful with flags every twenty yards or so along North and Fourth Streets and at the back of the large parking lot just east of the post office. North Street was closed for the occasion.

The flags were loaned by the West Side Cemetery District. The high school band was there and marched in to play several numbers even though the students are on summer vacation. The city and the chamber provided-finger food all under a tent set up in the parking lot. The street had been washed by the city and chairs for a large crowd provided by Eric Copper's True Value. There was a standing room only crowd present.

The Invocation was given by Scott Pearson of the First Baptist Church.

The Colors were placed in their appropriate place by members of Boy Scout Troop No. 50. Mayor of Taft, Paul Linder, led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A young girl from the elementary school, Baeleigh Bevan, sang the National Anthem, and a young boy, Zachary Powell, played taps.

Congressman McCarthy presented the family with a flag that was flown over the Capital, and the Post Office unveiled a plaque that will be placed in an appropriate place showing the official name of the building. McCarthy presented a framed copy of the bill passed by congress bearing the name of the president.

Pete Gianopulos spoke of his knowledge of Larry Pierce and remarks that had been made by family members him and their trip to Washington, D. C. on Air Force One to received the Medal of Honor from President Johnson.

Dale Bramlet, Larry Pierce's best friend, told the crowd some stories about events in their lives.

What was surprising was that many people came from distant places to be present for the dedication. One fellow had driven from Redwood City to be there.

The people present seemed to feel that it was an appropriate ceremony to honor Taft's and Kern County's only Medal of Honor recipient who gave his life to save his squad members. One person was heard to say that it was a perfect ceremony, and it showed a great deal of community pride.



Readers Responses

From Joe Snyder, Class of 1957.

Smokey, (Neill)(Binford) and Pete:

WELL GENTLEMEN, IT APPEARS THAT THE BULLDOGS ARE NOW THE 2008 NCAA NATIONAL CHAMPIONS. A TRULY GREAT GAME AND HONOR TO THE BULLDOGS. GO FRESNO STATE.

We are all happy and smiling. :-) :-) :-), at least for awhile.

Joe Snyder

Class of "57"

From Michael J. Furtney, Class of 1956, from Brentwood, California

Pete,

Great to hear from you, and in response to your question, I am currently living in Brentwood, in the shadow of the Getty Museum, just off the 405. I am a member of the TUHS Class of 1956

and still keep in touch with several members of the class. I appreciate your mentioning my father, Don Furtney, who not only was a Kern County deputy sheriff until he was drafted into the U.S. Navy during WWII, but who worked for Honolulu Oil Corp. following the war and rose to company purchasing agent. In 1961 when Getty Oil purchased Honolulu Oil, Dad and his partner, Don Donley, bought Chuck McKee's California Valve Co., 300 Supply Row, and Dad remained at his desk there until his death in 1990. My brother Steve (Class of 1959) ran the business

for several years, and now lives in Texas, where he sees Noel Binford, Stan Coffee and other Taft High alums regularly.

As for me, I am teaching at both Pepperdine University and USC's Annenberg School for Communication on an adjunct basis. I teach public relations and advertising and have been doing my "professorial gig" for about five years, since I retired from Union Pacific Railroad in San Francisco in 2003 and moved down here to L.A. to join my partner, Joann Killeen, in her public relations agency, where I also continue to do client work on a variety of projects. During my 40 years of corporate public relations, I worked for both Getty Oil and Chevron, as well as Kaiser Cement, Bechtel, Sprint and a great mid-size conglomerate in San Francisco, Natomas Co., which once owned American President Lines (ocean-going cargo ships) and had about a 25% share of the geothermal fields near Santa Rosa. It was a great career, and I thank many TUHS teachers for giving me the ability to compete with anyone.

My fondest memories are of Clara Ihrig Bell (four years of Latin), Alma Steininger (four years of art) and Bailey Newlee (two years of English). Their dedication to us was phenomenal, and I will always remember their efforts to give us a superior education.

Hope you are doing well, and again, thanks for the memories.

Mike

Michael J. Furtney, APR, Fellow PRSA

Partner Killeen Furtney Group, Inc.

149 S. Barrington Ave. # 800

Los Angeles, CA 90049-3310

310-476-6941 Offices

310-476-6256 FAX

www.killeenfurtneygroup.com

From Steve Barber, Class of 1964

To: Joyce (Snyder 64) Hopkins

CC: Pete Gianopulos, Class of 1942

Since you are building a gallery of photos of people from our class showing their current iteration I thought that I'd send along these pics. (NOTE: Not enough room to show the pictures.) They were taken off Long Beach by a fellow sailor last Saturday as I was returning from a wooden boat race in San Diego. That's me at the helm. The boat is my 38 ft. Kettenburg, built in 1951 in San Diego. The other fellow is a friend of mine from Seattle who flew down for the race and the trip. Kettenburg is a long lasting, famous boatbuilding firm which I am chronicling at a website I maintain: www.kettenburgboats.com.

Those days, evenings, and weekends with Jon and Dell Newsom, Ron Parham, Henry Benson, Neal Mitchell and others from our class in Sea Scouts seem to have made lasting impressions. If people receive and read Pete Gianopulos' Taft Newsletter, they will recall the string of recollections about the Sea Scout troop in Taft that thrived in the '50s and '60s with Mr. Lee Talbert, Mr. Neal Mitchell, and Mr. Robert Evans as scout masters.

Steve Barber

From Bruce Cameron

Hello again friends,

This is Bruce Cameron again with a follow-up to my email from last week about my father, Archie. Dad passed away peacefully this morning. Hospice and the staff at the Rosewood Health Center did an excellent job of providing comfort during Dad's final days. Our family appreciates the kind words, prayers and support you have offered during the past week.

While this is certainly a sad occasion, I firmly believe that Dad led a full, active, happy life made richer by his many close friends and family of which you were a part.

I will be placing obituaries in the Bakersfield Californian and the New Orleans Times-Picayune.
Sincerely,
Bruce Cameron

Billy Nelson former Taft track and field standout is going to the Olympics

Billy Nelson placed 2nd in the finals of the 3,000 meter steeplechase in the Olympic Track and Field Finals in Eugene, Oregon this afternoon. It was thrilling to watch Billy in a super finish as he was closing in on the 1st place finisher. He now will be going to the Olympics in China this August as a member of the United States Olympic team. It was very exciting to watch that former Taft High distance runner come through the way he did. It was very exciting to watch him run for four years as a distance runner at Taft High, even to the state finals. I also recall my interview this bright honor student and his coach, David Dennis, during his senior year at Taft High for my "Taft Heritage" TV program. He also appeared before the Taft City Council to be honored that year for his accomplishments. I wish to thank Doug Smith, a world class sprinter himself, who took the time to call me after watching Billy run his race, and I thank the others who called too.