

## OBITUARIES

# George Farquhar, Huntington Beach publisher

By Dana Kennedy  
The Register 6-13-85

George Farquhar, a legend in Huntington Beach who ran the weekly Huntington Beach News for 53 years, died in his sleep Saturday from bronchial pneumonia, coroner's officials said Tuesday. He was 71.

Mr. Farquhar's father bought the lively Huntington Beach News in 1926 when the area was a booming oil town. Mr. Farquhar began writing obituaries for the paper at age 13 and later took over the publication. He was reporter, columnist, owner and publisher until he sold the newspaper in 1979.

His witty, often acerbic columns detailed both his opinions about city politics and tales of the numerous women in his life.

He once referred to an ecologist who ran across his path as a "numb-brained individual incapable of thinking to a logical end." When the possibility of a full-time city mayor was raised, he wrote: "If the people are stupid enough to vote for a full-time mayor, then

they deserve their fate."

Mr. Farquhar's affinity for romance was legendary. Local rumor held that he was once so smitten by a member of the city's architectural review board that he attended every one of the meetings while the woman was there and never went to one after she departed.

Rarely a week went by when the front page of the News didn't include a photograph of a beauty queen or a group of nubile young women.

"The old Huntington Beach News sometimes made people laugh, sometimes made them angry but we always got their interest," said Mr. Farquhar in a 1982 interview.

He remained unimpressed with the paper once it was sold to a succession of different companies. The city's oldest newspaper now is published by a company in Long Beach that hopes to revitalize circulation in Huntington Beach.

Mr. Farquhar's reputation as a city personality was enhanced by his fondness for surfing, a sport he

enjoyed until illness overtook him this year.

When the newspaper was sold, Mr. Farquhar moved his headquarters to Terry's coffee shop across the street where he ate either breakfast or lunch every day, often with his good friend Don Shipley.

"Sometimes he called it his office," said Nancy Chen, 53, at Terry's. "Friends and girlfriends knew to call for him here.

In his last interview in May, Mr. Farquhar remembered his career on the Huntington Beach News as a dream job.

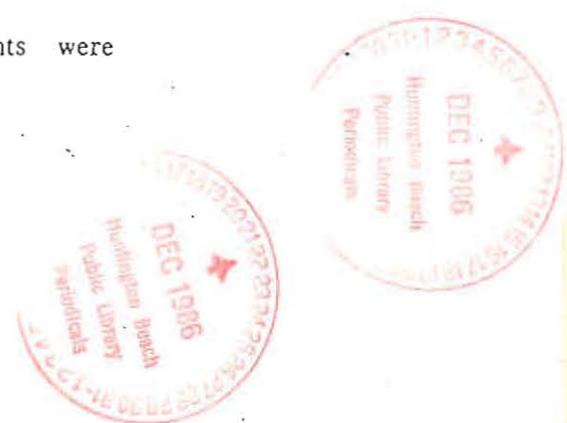
"It was a real cornball country weekly," he said. "I loved it. I could do what I wanted. I was my own boss. B-11

Mr. Farquhar is survived by four children, Annette Faust of Lake Arrowhead, George Farquhar of Marina del Rey, John Farquhar of San Francisco and James Farquhar of Walnut Creek.

Funeral arrangements were pending.



George Farquhar  
Reporter, columnist, owner



HISTORY  
(CITY)  
PAMPHLET

# Unique, by George!

## Veteran newsman is one of a kind

By Rod Speer  
Register staff writer

2-24-82

HUNTINGTON BEACH — Everyone knows George.

That is because George Farquhar has been a newspaper reporter-editor-publisher-owner here for 55 years, ever since as a 13-year-old he wrote obituaries for his father, then the owner of the Huntington Beach News.

Farquhar's written words have alternately informed, shocked, titillated, angered, and soothed News readers since 1927.

But times — if not Farquhar — change. The Huntington Beach News is no longer owned by the Farquhar family, though the world as viewed through George Farquhar's eyes still appears on its pages.

Now 60, Farquhar calls Terry's Coffee Shop on Main Street his "office." It is at Terry's, a block from the beach and pier that have been the subjects of so many of his stories, that Farquhar holds court.

During his leisurely lunches, old friends, new and old girlfriends — those ever present girlfriends — and members of the surfing fraternity stop to chat.

Across the street in that old downtown section close to the ocean is the building that for 66 years was the home of the News, now a much different weekly newspaper than when a Farquhar was charting its course.

Then, for example, it was possible in the pages of the News to learn that the Conners family of Huntington Beach had just returned from a visit to Lincoln, Neb.

There, the family was reunited with Uncle Otto, Aunt Florence and a dozen or so cousins.

But the News under a Farquhar also went heavyweight on its outside pages, hawking the City Council, local school boards, the police and others who do the public's business.

Now, the News is a weekly tabloid that serves its estimated 3,500 Huntington Beach subscribers a mixture of local and Long Beach area news, a reflection of its chain ties with American Publishing Co.

After buying the News in 1978, American initially beefed up the news staff. It converted the familiar full-size newspaper to tabloid and modernized its graphics and type style.

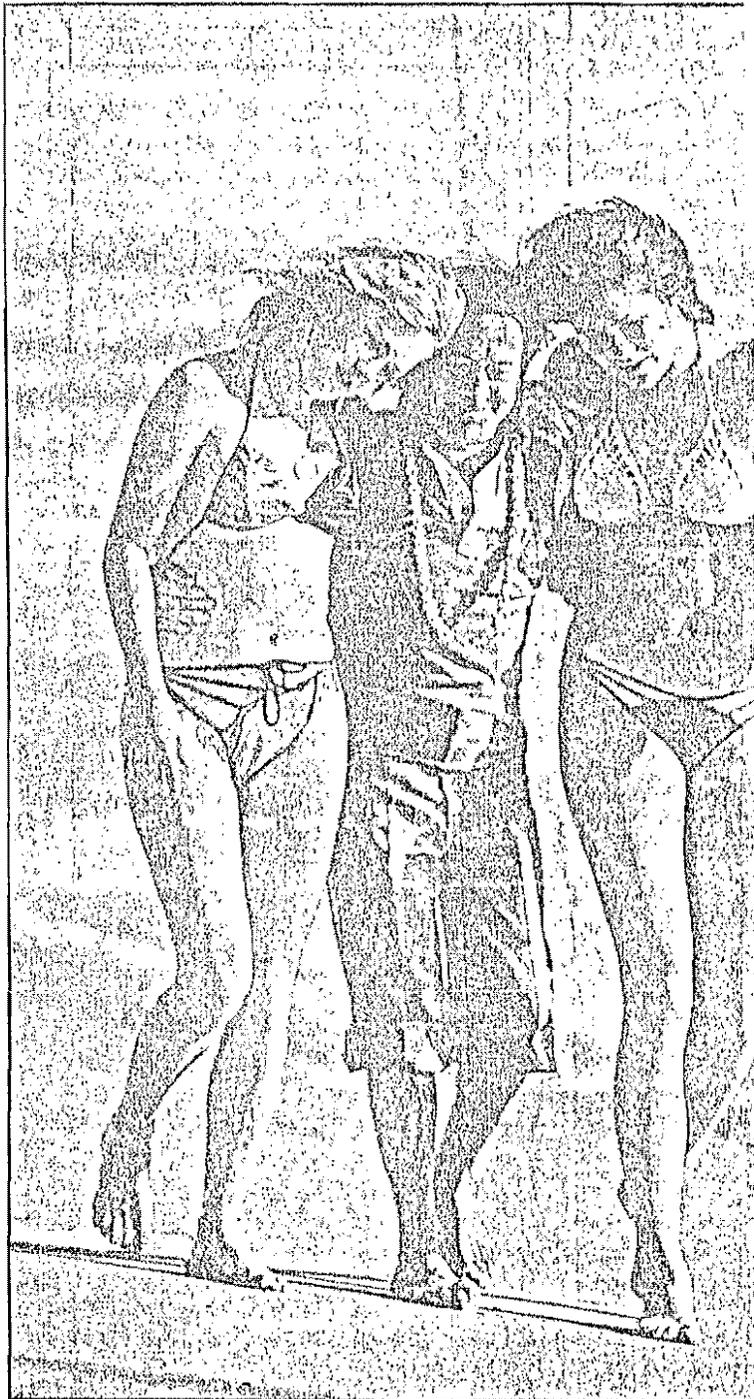
But, according to American President Philip Horwith, a circulation drive did not yield the expected results. And, Horwith says, city government's decision to continue its legal advertising with a competing local paper caused the company to rethink its Huntington Beach activity.

That rethinking ended with purging the News staff in half and moving its printing equipment to Tijuana, American's operating base. The editorial offices of the News now are located in Long Beach.

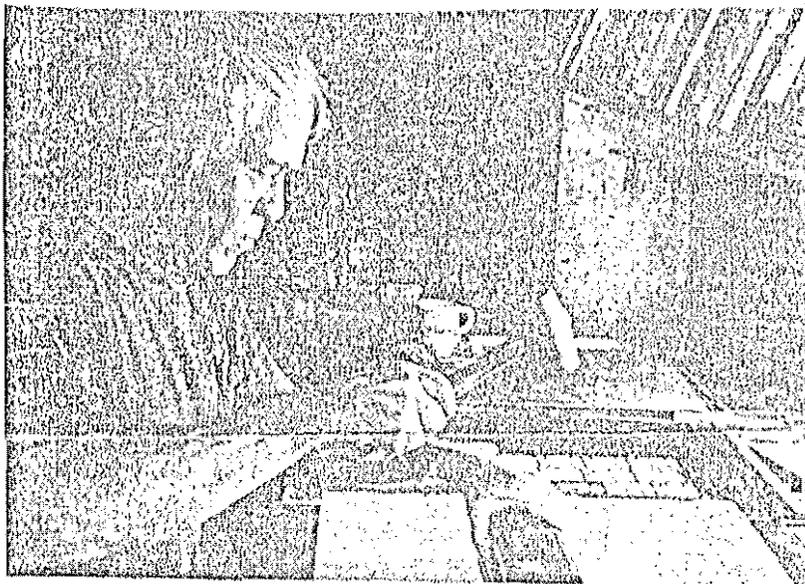
"The city didn't give us any support," Horwith says. "We felt the city didn't care. We reciprocated."

Farquhar thinks the new News is a bit dull, a whole lot dull.

He says the old Huntington Beach News sometimes made people laugh and sometimes made them angry. "But we got their interest," he says.



George escorts Susan 'Bunny' Graves, 19, left, and Charle Campbell, 18, on walk along be



(Register Photo By JACK D. MILLER)

NEWS PUBLISHER GEORGE FARQUHAR READIES OLD-FASHIONED LEAD-TYPE PRESS

# Era Of Gossip, Goings-On Ends For Weekly HB News

By STEVE EDHY  
Register Staff Writer

HUNTINGTON BEACH — Call it the end of an era, if you want. That's what George Farquhar calls it. Farquhar, 65, whose family has owned the Huntington Beach News since 1927, recently completed sale of the weekly paper — a mainstay of old town Huntington Beach gossip and goings-on — to a Tujunga-based chain that operates 15 weeklies in the San Gabriel and San Fernando Valleys.

The new owners, American Publishing Co. Inc., haven't completed planning for the paper's future. But it's a good bet the News' 4,000 or so paid subscribers no longer will be exposed to such tidbits as why doesn't anyone say, "Your mother wears Marine skivvies" anymore?

"A lot of people are saying 'we hate to see you go,'" said Farquhar as he put together pages in the News' backshop, which resembles an impromptu Smithsonian for a newspaper technology that long ago died.

Farquhar has a contract with the new owners to remain on the scene in some capacity for two years. He says he doesn't know what they've got in mind for the News.

Yet one thing is certain, the paper is going to look different. Up to now, the News has been easily recognizable primarily because it is wide — nearly 19 inches — and filled with gigantic photographs showing local youths in school play garb or the Christmas decorations adorning someone's mobile home.

Jeff Horwith, 24, the new general manager, said the paper eventually will be produced in American Publishing's Tujunga headquarters and that the modern, computer-dominated "cold type" printing process will be used.

That'll mean a paper as narrow as all the others you see. And no more sandged fingers.

What finally convinced Farquhar to sell, he says, was the city council's action last year to award a lucrative legal advertising contract to the rival Huntington Beach Independent, published out of Long Beach.

"Well, that was the last straw," Farquhar said. "When a city council doesn't support local business, what can you say?"

The News was the low bidder, as in years past, and Farquhar said he believes the council's move will cost city taxpayers an additional \$10,000 per year.

The News currently employs only seven people, Farquhar said, but that doesn't interfere with news gathering. That's because the news isn't gathered by anyone — the vast bulk of it is mailed or hand-delivered to the paper's Main Street office.

Virtually everything gets published, too. "We've got the hometown touch," Farquhar said. "I've been here 32 years, and in that time you get acquainted with everybody."

"But it's changing, no doubt about it. I take all the pictures, and the other day I went to the installation of

some new women's club officers. You can really tell the area is getting freeway-oriented. Just people who buy a tract home here and work somewhere else. A woman asked where our offices were, and I said by the pier. She said 'What pier?' I'm hearing that stuff all the time now."

It was the pier that sold Farquhar on Huntington Beach in the first place, in 1927, when he was 13 years old.

The family had moved from Iowa after Farquhar's newsman father, the late James Farquhar, purchased the News.

"I saw that ocean and that pier, and I said, this is the place for me," Farquhar said. "I'm a surfer. I love the water. I got a letter in swimming in high school. That's what I did the best."

Farquhar and stepbrother Tom Wylie assumed full control of the paper when their father died in 1970.

Farquhar said the new owner has taken possession of the land, the building and all equipment. The production machines haven't been manufactured for years, and the paper has survived by picking up needed parts from junked units.

The words you see on machines and bins and on the walls of the backshop are enough to make an old newsman cry in his beer. Ludlow. Potchill. Cannon. Castor Old Face Heavy. Tempo Heavy Condensed.

There's the smell of hot metal and the clack of an antique Linotype machine.

"The end of an era, you've got it," Farquhar said. He and assistant Maurice Young trade old newspaper anecdotes while the youngster in the crowd, "printer's devil" Janice McIntosh, listens in.

"I suppose all the stuff they've got now is progress, in a way," Farquhar said, referring to the new electronic processes of producing newspapers. "It's more efficient."

But Farquhar says he isn't sad about the changeover. As a matter of fact, he thinks he's going to take an old friend up on an offer to join him on a round-the-world cruise.

New general manager Horwith says changes are down the road, but the News still will be "community oriented." He hopes circulation can jump by about 10,000 in the next year.

"There's unlimited potential," he said. The News currently costs \$5 per year and is mailed every week under a second-class permit.

"The News is an institution," Horwith said. "But now it's really only recognized by the old-timers. By that I mean people who've been here since 1920 or before. There's a whole new market out there."

Meanwhile, George and Mamie and Justice are out back, and the presses will be rolling soon. There's a calendar on the wall and a clock on a table.

The calendar says January 1973, but the clock runs two hours behind.



# FARQUHAR

2-21-82

(FROM B1)

However, longtime Farquhar readers say his column also has lost a little of its former sting, especially his personal recollections of encounters — a seemingly never ending number of them — with attractive young ladies.

In one of his tales of romance, Farquhar on the front page agonized over a wayward fire truck that had blared down the street at a particularly delicate moment in his romantic life.

Farquhar legend has it that he once was smitten by a female member of the city's architectural review board and never once failed to attend a board meeting while the woman was a member. He hasn't attended one since.

And when Farquhar was in charge, the front page photo usually depicted a beauty queen or a large group of beauty queens.

In his recollections of prerogatives that formerly were his at the newspaper, Farquhar recalls that he sometimes liked to tweek his subjects by such devices as constant reference to their ages or slipping double meaning into the printed word.

The stuffy and starchy? Sometimes they found themselves cut out of large and frequently blurred group pictures that adorned the News' front page.

Not far from the front pages was all the skullduggery that went on in Huntington

Beach, a reprinting of the police blotter, which put in public view those who had been tipsy in public or participants in a family disturbance.

When the news pages couldn't hold Farquhar, he exposed what he saw as monkey business in his column.

An ecologist who once crossed his path, for instance, was referred to as a "numb-brained individual incapable of thinking to a logical end."

And when it was suggested that the city should have a full-time mayor, Farquhar opined that "if the people are stupid enough to vote for a full-time mayor, then they deserve their fate." <sup>B5</sup>

But those days are in the past. And Farquhar is not a man to dabble in the past.

He still checks the surf. When it is right, Farquhar is there, a 68-year-old lifelong surfer who still yearns for days when offshore winds and the curl of a breaker means the surf is up.

During those years when he operated what was then his own newspaper in concert with his business-minded half-brother, Tom Wyllie, Farquhar's surfboard stood alongside his desk ready to go on a moment's notice.

Now his board is kept in a Main Street surf shop, ready at any time for one of Orange County's better senior surfers to hit the beach.