

MYRON FLOREN

# Musician Travels the Country

By HAL FISHER  
Press-Herald Staff Writer

To find a man who has really lived the motto "See America First" you would not have to go any farther than Rolling Hills and meet Myron Floren. The popular musician

who plays accordion with Lawrence Welk's orchestra, has performed in every state except Alaska—and he doesn't rule out playing there some day. Floren will be featured so-

loist with the South Bay-Torrance Symphony Orchestra when it gives its first performance of the 1968 season next Wednesday at Mira Costa High School.

He was born on a farm in South Dakota. "My first exposure to music was an old pump organ we had in the living room at home." Floren taught himself to play the accordion when he was seven by listening to music on the radio. A musician all of his adult life, Floren's only formal musical instruction came when he took 10 piano lessons at the age of 18.

FLOREN played his accordion on local radio stations in South Dakota from 1939 to 1945. During the war years, he did overseas shows for the USO. He moved to St. Louis in 1946, where he performed with groups on local television until 1950 when he picked the right night to take his wife out to dinner.

On that night in 1950 Lawrence Welk's orchestra was playing for one night at the restaurant where the Florens went for dinner. Floren asked to sit-in for a couple of numbers and a few weeks later he got a call from Welk offering him a spot in the orchestra. He has been with Welk ever since.

Welk's orchestra established its home base at the old Aragon Ballroom in Ocean Park in May of 1951. In August of 1951, the orchestra started its show on local television. In those days the

orchestra also played five nights a week at the Aragon Ballroom. The TV show was done live until the show switched to color broadcasting. It is now done on tape.

DURING the heyday of the Aragon Ballroom the crowds dancing to Welk's music varied between 300 and 3,500 people a night. Today Floren plays once a week with the orchestra at the Hollywood Padiam and tapes one show a week at the ABC studios.

Most of Floren's personal appearances are scheduled during the summer months when every other TV performance is a repeat tape. He plays from 100 to 150 outside dates a year.

In 1964 he performed in 35 different states, playing at fairs, conventions, and as guest artist with local symphonies. Floren performs sometimes in units with other members of the orchestra and sometimes alone. In one week he played dates in Los Angeles, Montant, New Orleans, Mississippi, back to Los Angeles and to Illinois. Most of his travel is by air or car.

SINCE moving to Rolling Hills about 30 months ago, Floren has tried to cut down on outside engagements so he can spend more time at home with his family. His family consists of his wife of 22 years, Berdyne, and five daughters ranging in age from 7 to 18. Floren plans to settle permanently in this area, which he calls "a great area to live."



COUNTRY GENTLEMEN . . . Myron Floren, nationally known musician with the Lawrence Welk orchestra and guest performer with the South Bay Symphony Orchestra, attends one of the horses on his Rolling Hills ranch. Floren's familiarity with animals goes back to his boyhood days on his father's South Dakota farm.

## Obituaries

### Chris Briganti

Chris Charles (Trieste) Briganti, 1230 Elm St., died Jan. 13 after living in the area 40 years. Born April 9, 1915, in New York, he is survived by his widow, Florence; a son, Phillip Charles of Torrance; four sisters, Lillian Longo of Los Angeles, Concetta Lupo and Mary Donish of Torrance, and Lucy Ward of Arcadia; two brothers, Luigi and Louie of Torrance.

Mr. Briganti, a veteran of World War II, was a partner in Louie's Liquor Store, Torrance.

Rosary was said Monday at Stone and Myers Mortuary. Requiem Mass was celebrated yesterday at the Church of the Nativity.

### Kenneth Olson

Kenneth Grant Olson, 1612 W. 223rd St., Torrance, died Jan. 15 in a Corona hospital.

### Church Youth Plan to Hold Spanish Dinner

Harbor City Foursquare Church will hold its annual Youth Week for Jan. 28 through Feb. 4, with nightly services at 7 p.m.

This Saturday, the youth of the church will give a Spanish dinner from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. to raise funds for the annual event. The dinner will be held in the multi-purpose room of the church. The public is invited.

at the age of 28. He leaves his widow, Judith, and two sons, Ken and Eric.

Other survivors include his parents, Delbert Olson of Kansas and Opal Forbes of Gardena; two sisters, Ruth Immenschuk of KaKnsas and Michelle Forbes of Gardena; and one brother, Kenneth Forbes Jr. of Torrance.

Services will be held Friday at 1 p.m. at Halverson-Leavell Mortuary Chapel. Interment will follow at Roosevelt Memorial Park.

Mr. Olson was a member of the National Rifle Association.

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### Sabbath School Slates Subject

The power of Christianity to settle arguments will be studied by adult members of the Torrance Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1610 Acacia Ave., Saturday at 10 a.m.

The second in a series of Chamber music concerts will be presented Sunday at 3 p.m. in the Little Theatre on the Brentwood campus of Mount St. Mary's College. Admission is free.

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