

# Sunshine Advocate

## House razed, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Sunshine

Sunshine Advocate 26<sup>th</sup> September 1973 Page 1 & 4

### The wife who watched and wept as ten years turned to ashes



• ABOVE: In stocking feet, Mrs Dorothy Kelly watches helplessly as her house in Third Ave., Sunshine, burns down. She is comforted by one of the many people who stopped to watch the blaze. - Pictures on this page and on page 4 by staff photographer Clem Lehrke.

MAX KELLY shook his head in disbelief, while his wife, Dorothy just covered her face and wept.

Together they watched 10 years of their lives burn to the ground.

The fire that destroyed the storage warehouse in Third Ave., Sunshine last Thursday, also destroyed their home.

And, although the house belonged to the owners of the warehouse, Kagan Bros. Pty. Ltd. of Pipe Rd., Brooklyn, everything Max, Dorothy and their four children owned was inside.

All that was saved from the blaze was their television set and an armful of clothes.

The rest was buried to the ground.

None of it was insured.

The next day the Kelly family sorted broken-hearted through the remains of what had been their home for the past 10 years.

"I've lost everything I've worked for all my life," Max said. "I just can't believe it."

"I don't know what we'll do. Start again I suppose."

Their sons, Chris, 22, and Lindsay, 26, and their daughter Maxine 15, stayed home to help their parents sort through the debris.

Their fourth child, Lorna, an adopted Aboriginal, was sent to school.

By TONY VELLA

Mrs. Kelly, still shaking nervously, stood looking helplessly at the charred and twisted remains of her house.

"You always read about it happening to others, you never dream it could happen to you," she said.

"But it did, it did," she said.

"All we've got left is what we are standing in," Mrs. Kelly said.

Their car and their caravan were also destroyed by the fire.

"If it hadn't been for the Red Cross I don't know what we would have done."

"They came to help us as soon as they heard what had happened."

"They gave us clothes so we could change, and offered us all the help they could," she said.

"Now I suppose we will have to pull ourselves together as a family and start again," she said.

She said her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gouge, of Dobson Cres., Braybrook, had offered them a place to stay until they found a place of their own.

A spokesman for Kagan Bros. said on Monday that the firm had found the Kelly family a new house and they would be moving in this week.

The spokesman would not give the address of the house.

# HOUSE RAZED

FLAMES leapt more than 100 ft. into the air as a warehouse stored full of foam rubber burned to the ground in Sunshine last Thursday.

Five fire units and more than 20 firemen battled the blaze, trying to keep the flames from a house next door to the warehouse in Third Ave.

They were foiled by the intense heat and poor water pressure.

They managed to save only one room of the house.

Both buildings belonged to storage contractors Kagan Bros. Pty. Ltd., of Braybrook.

The house was occupied by Mr. Max Kelly and his family, the caretaker of the warehouse.

#### BATTLE

The fire started at 11:30 a.m. and although firemen rushed to the scene, the warehouse was well alight by the time they arrived.

They battled for two hours to control the fire.

• CONT. ON PA



• FLAMES and smoke soar into the air as a warehouse and home next to it are burned to the ground.

# SOLE SURVIVOR



● CONT. FROM P.1

which was not put out until late in the afternoon.

It was still smouldering early the next morning.

Reports said the thick clouds of black smoke that billowed from the fire could be seen from as far away as Geelong.

The only person in the factory when the fire

● **A TELEVISION set, a few chairs and scraps of bedding . . . all that was saved from the flames that destroyed the Kelly home.**

started was plumber Mr. Bill Rowlands of Forrest Hills.

Mr. Rowlands said he did not know what happened.

## WHOOSH

"I was working at the back of the factory when there was a whoosh and

the whole place was alight.

"I tried to save my car which was parked at the side, but there was nothing I could do.

"The heat was unbearable."

Mr. Rowlands said the gas bottles he had in the back of his station wagon

began exploding about 10 seconds after he abandoned his attempts to save it.

A spokesman for Kagan Bros. said this week that there had still been no estimate of damage.

The cause of the fire is still unknown.



# Sunshine Advocate

## Third Avenue fire house fire

Sunshine Advocate 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1973 Page 3

### SORROW TURNS TO JOY

## From near ruin to a new start

By TONY VELLA

MRS Dorothy Kelly sat back and smiled.

"It will probably take us a long time to get over it completely - but we are feeling a little better now," she said.

"So many people have offered to help us. It is wonderful.

"When you're in trouble you find out who your real friends are."

Mrs Kelly was speaking one week after she and her husband, Max, lost everything they owned in a fire.

It happened when a fire in a storage warehouse in Third Ave., South Sunshine spread to their home next door.

Firemen battled against the heat and poor water pressure to save the house.

#### SAVED TV

All that was saved was their television set and a few odds and ends.

The warehouse and the home where they had lived for the past 10 years were owned by storage contractors Kagan Bros Pty Ltd., of Braybrook.

Max, 43, was the caretaker of the warehouse.

They have four children, Chris 22, Lindsay, 20, Maxine, 15, and adopted aboriginal, Lorna 9.

Mrs Kelly was speaking from her new home for the next few months in Burn-ewang St., Albion.

The family moved into the house last week.

"Kagan Bros. have been absolutely marvellous," she said.

"They tried to get us an-

### 'Help from many'

other place as soon as they could.

"This isn't the same as home, but at least it's a roof over our head.

"After the fire we only had the clothes we were standing in .. but so many people have come to our help.

#### FRIENDS

"The Red Cross gave us a change of clothes, and friends have given us furniture and all the other necessities.

"Now at least we have beds to sleep in, chairs to sit on and pots and pans to cook with," she said.

"Now we will have to sit down and sort ourselves out."

Mrs Kelly said the family would stay at Burn-ewang St., until at least Christmas before they con-

sidered moving into a more permanent home.

"We are all still very upset about all the things we lost in the fire, but at least no-one was hurt.

"And we still have our sense of humor," she said.

"It would take more than a fire to break a family up."



• ABOVE ... The Kellys look at their razed home. LEFT, the house they have been loaned.