

11/25/62

Animated Window Displays Beautiful To Look At— But Not Easy To Prepare

By Margaret Koch

You can almost smell the pies baking.

There's no old-fashioned, black iron, wood-burning stove in Leask's corner window. But when you look at the Christmas scene which is entitled "Surprise at Grandma's House," you get the feeling there MIGHT be a stove like that just around the corner . . .

Through the beaded curtain . . .

Crackling hot, and radiating the fragrance of mincemeat and pumpkin.

The "holy terror" of the family is trying to sneak a look at the packages beneath the tree; his sisters are on a more ladylike pre-breakfast tour of inspection.

Santa is trapped in the chimney (his toy sack is stuck) and is yanking desperately, trying to get away.

And Grandma—who is supposed to be preparing the surprises for the rest of the family, is the only one who is looking surprised.

The whole scene points up the fact that Leask's celebrated its 70th anniversary this year. From the ruby glass chandelier (House of a Thousand Lights) to the "noble spruce," the window is a-glow with the magic of an old-fashioned Christmas morning.

The motorized mannikins go through their gyrations, old-time Christmas carols float softly over Pacific avenue, and ornaments glitter and lights twinkle all through the store.

Tiny Uruguay, To Vote Today

Montevideo, Uruguay (AP) — Voters in this smallest South American nation will decide Sunday whether to keep their unique chief executive system — the one-man Council of Government. The question is on the ballot in a selection called to elect a council of 31-member Senate, a 99-seat House of Representatives and a group of municipal officers.

Most observers believe the electors will vote down the amendment that would reverse to the man presidential power abandoned in 1952. Uruguay seems to like its collective executive system.

There are two dominant parties — the Blanco party, returned to power in 1958 after nine years on the outside, and the Colorado

whichever party wins, Uruguay undoubtedly will keep its pro-Western, anti-Communist international stand. Candidates of both sides have followed this line. The two parties command 90 per cent of the vote in the election.

Any East African frog lays eggs among wild banana trees, which retain small pools of water. The resulting tadpoles are adapted to survive in this environment.

Everything runs so smoothly. It all looks so easy . . .

But the story behind the story is the one the average shopper never hears about. Display Director R. Earl Ricketts has been preparing animated windows for 16 years. But he and his assistant, Bill Tripps, who is mainly responsible for the mechanical props and art work, and their newest assistant, Gerald McNutt, can tell a few tales.

Like a whole batch of gold garlands going astray at almost the last minute: "We chased them all over the east—finally got them here by air," Ricketts noted.

Like test-running the motors that run the window figures. Last week Leask's basement workshop looked like Frankenstein's lab. Motors whined and groaned as Grandma and the kids (all hinged at the waist) performed tirelessly for hours.

A little Frankenstein-ish sign said: "Run these until motors heat or trouble develops."

The fireplace also was set up ahead of time downstairs and poor old Santa test-yanked his toy sack by the hour.

There was a "noise" permit to get — so those Christmas carols could waft out over the avenue.

Tiny imported multi-colored lights were located to use on store sprays.

Real trees (spruce and Douglas fir) had to be selected, set up and fire-proofed.

And thirty-dozen real old-fashioned tree ornaments had to be located.

They still aren't telling where they found those.



FROM THIS . . . This is how Leask's big corner Christmas window got put together by Earl Ricketts, display director, (standing) and his assistant, Bill Tripps, who is about to plug in the figure at left. For the old-fashioned holiday scene, devised by Ricketts, the two men have built the animated figures which include Santa's toy sack — stuck in the chim-

ney. They also have rounded up all authentic "props," including the cranberry glass lighting fixture from Riverside Hardware and Lighting company and the real Christmas tree from Nielsens' tree plantation on Empire grade. The Christmas theme is carried out in each area of the department store with coordinated decorations.



TO THIS . . . Christmas morning in the 1890s: Santa struggles in the chimney with his toy sack; the family's "holy terror" tries to see what's un-

der the tree for him while his sisters peek around the doorway and poor old Grandma looks surprised.

Controversial Juvenile Hall