

BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

Published every Thursday at Birmingham, Mich. in The Eccentric Building, 126-128 North Woodward Avenue.

Subscription Rates: (In Oakland County) One Year \$1.00, Six Months .60, Three Months .35.

The Eccentric is a member of National Editorial Association, Michigan Press Association, United Press Club, and Oakland County Weekly Press Association.

Thursday, February 10, 1927

Noting: During the absence from Birmingham for a week of George R. Averill, publisher of The Eccentric, the editorials are being written by Raymond Girardin, managing editor.

EDITORIAL IDEALS

The following is the paper read by George R. Averill, publisher of The Birmingham Eccentric, at the city-wide luncheon of the National Editorial Association.

Because the duties of an editor of a publication involve all those things which deal with the present and the happenings of a community, my subject treats on all those things which a newspaper publishes, including, briefly, the realm of paid advertising.

Let me say at the outset that I believe it the rightful inheritance of a newspaper not merely as the necessary to gather and present truthfully the happenings of a community.

Every week I receive, through the mails, about thirty weekly newspapers published in Michigan. They are, I believe, representative of some of the best published in this state.

When I find in an editorial column a review of what he is thinking about, in this column he reveals his secret thoughts, his sacred longings and yearnings, his reasons why a certain thing is good or bad, his real allegiance to the cause of those things with which he feels that he lives on the side of virtue and constructive progress.

As men and women of the newspaper world, we are the inheritors of all the possibilities for good or bad that moveable type places at the disposal of mankind.

It is my honest belief that the people in a community who know most about the affairs of that community are those engaged in getting out the newspaper.

Let me become serious. In the support of the church, society recognizes that only an individual whose sole efforts are directed toward the getting of spiritual knowledge is capable of dispensing such knowledge, and so we have the paid preacher.

your community, then, which opens a channel for the dispensation of the kind of knowledge that neither the church nor the school provides.

It has been said that most newspapers reflect the lives of their localities, of the people who go to make up the community in which a newspaper circulates.

I know that, in perhaps a majority of weekly newspaper offices throughout the land, the publisher is more of a printer than he is a journalist; that he remains more the printer in his own fault and, if he would but admit it, the lack of his developing modern journalistic tendencies is not only stifling his own character development as well as that of his community, but is actually preventing an increase in his publishing profits.

It is foolish for any publisher to say that he or she cannot write editorials; of course, the degree of editorial efficiency is a matter of personal talent and personal development, but practice, backed by a firm resolve to continue such writing, will make for remarkable progress.

Where shall you look for subject matter for the creation and maintenance of an editorial column? The answer is easy: chiefly in the columns of your own newspaper for local matter, assisted by the usual recollection of every observation you naturally make in your community, and in other newspapers or periodicals for more general topics.

You publish the story of the birth of a child; does this mean anything to its parents? And are there not many parents in your community whom you could reach by some sympathetic comment regarding the event? Somebody dies in your town; do you matter who he is, the deceased undoubtedly means something good to someone; and, since all of us come to the same fate, what is there in this for comment? Men and women, boys and girls, in your own community are doing fine things every day for the good of your town; do you know of their activities, and are you apt to commend them?

It makes no difference whether your town is miles from another, or that you may be situated on the main artery of the metropolitan area, the material at hand for a personal editorial column. I've been about our own State of Michigan a bit, and I've talked with newspaper publishers in their own offices. What they have to say about their own communities, its people and natural advantages is splendid; yet I seldom see it reflected in their newspaper columns.

I believe that editorial character includes specific stands on religious, social, and political affairs of the world. A newspaper, like an individual, (for newspapers are but the transference of human thoughts and human activities upon white newsprint) should stand behind religion as an institution for good, but not take sides on any local editorial controversy.

Sitting as you do, on the very pinnacle of your tower of observation tower, you newspaper-men and women, you give to the people of your respective community from a different perspective than anyone else; what do you see? And what do you write about it all?

None of you will deny the necessity of a newspaper's interest in local matters of government; a few will stop there, though, believing that state and national political situations are simply covered in the larger newspapers, both in news and editorial text—and then, so queer some of are, that we will holler—holler because the national advertiser thinks that the larger newspapers cover the weekly field, and therefore sends us very little advertising copy.

Speaking of national advertisers brings me to the statement, too, that editorial idealism permeates and governs to a major extent—or ought to so govern—the advertising columns of all publications. As an illustration let me cite the following: Having read, a few days ago, the statement from the president of this country's largest tobacco company that cigarette advertising in the near future would make a direct appeal to the feminine sex, I told my brother, who is advertising manager of The Eccentric, that should he receive an order for the insertion of cigarette advertising containing such feminine appeal, he should return it to the agency



with a polite note reading something like this: "Gentlemen: Herewith we are returning your advertising schedule for cigarette advertising on the virtues of Lounging cigarettes for the ladies. We are aware of our usual allotment of journalistic short-comings, but this advertising is too damaging to that portion of the animal world which we esteem, to find space in our advertising columns.

There is something mystic, almost, about cold type that is reflected on the surface of paper. When, in reading, you come across a statement that is in entire accord with your own notion of something, you warm up to the author, you feel a kinship to him, and your own ability to practice a good precept is quickened and crystallized.

Your newspaper is but a trust which you hold; your failure to exercise and develop editorial ability is just as damaging to your community, and just as damning to your own soul, as would be a neglected preacher, or a deaf and dumb school teacher who fills these two latter important places in the social order.

If you were ever search through the wisdom of the ages, scanning closely the recorded thoughts of the world's greatest men and women, what would you find to be the most wonderful attribute that the human animal is capable of acquiring? What human trait commands the most profound admiration and love in the minds of men and women? It is the development of a fine character.

I plead for the institution of character in your newspaper columns, not only because I would have the newspaper that leaves your office made a bit more godly in the process, but because of the good that it will do for you, the editor. What you are—or what you are not—is reflected involuntarily in the thing that he does. The blacksmith makes a fine pair of shoes for an unknown horse because he puts character into his work, and his business expands.

At present price, the advice of an apple a day was not a windfall. The man who is contented with his lot usually lets weeds flourish in it. They gave Sacrates hemlock to drink. Moonshine hadn't been invented then. The only time some folks' minds are not on vacation is two weeks out of 52.

In Case He Gets Some Customers



with editorial ideals; though he may not be rich in the material possessions of this world, yet he has proved his right to occupy a place upon the earth—consequently, he stands unafraid before the world, unafraid of the manifestations of man or of the mysticism of God, yet beloved by both.

The width of Woodward avenue is definitely set at 100 feet and smoke, from a severe battle which was waged for some weeks over this point, is drifting skyward. Birmingham is turning to other things.

THE WOODWARD AFFAIR

Many persons were disappointed at the decision of the state administrative board; but a still larger number, in our opinion, believe time will prove Governor Fred W. Green and the board have done the best thing for this village, county and state.

No matter the side one took in the debate which preceded the decision, sincerity marked the contest. By far the greatest number of persons who took active part in the various discussions had the interest of the village at heart rather than personal gain; of this we are confident and should hate to think differently.

Our Job, it seems, is to forget the various differences of opinion in the matter and to aid the state, AS BOTH SIDES PROMISED TO DO, in carrying out its plans.

IDEALS OF HOME

Aside from any financial remuneration, (which is but the by-product of any service well performed) Charles S. Kinnison, Birmingham poet, must get a great deal of enjoyment from his writing. The task of creating a verse for a daily newspaper is a strenuous one, compelling the writer to be ever on the alert for "copy." Inasmuch as Mr. Kinnison's verse deals chiefly with the things "Round Home," as exemplified in his first book by that name, he must necessarily take a keen interest in and show a keener zest for, this business of "living, loving, and hoping."

When the train is coming, the driver who tries to beat it over the crossing is going. Many a man thinks he has an inspiration to work, as long as it is not the kind that produces perspiration.

BLOOMFIELD BIRMINGHAM Arthur Brisbane Says--- GET a piece of Gland and keep it—and later it will keep you. Sound advice this—particularly sound when it comes to Birmingham-Bloomfield property where demand and value are always on the increase. Bloomfield is still in its infancy as Detroit's outstanding suburban section. Literally thousands of Detroit families are thinking of moving out here. Hundreds of them are coming this year and next year and every year—automatically adding to present property values. They are coming because this district—with its hills and lakes—its schools—its wider Woodward—offers greater suburban value than any other near-by district. We have a handful of lots left in Chesterfield Gardens and Pleasant View. They are on the western edge of Birmingham Village—facing on Chesterfield Road. To the west is Bloomfield Village—a site has been purchased for a new public school. These are our reasons for believing that at \$2,000 and up, these lots offer unusual values to either the home builder or the investor because the future of this neighborhood is already guaranteed by the character of the homes on all sides.

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