

BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 1929

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have some value and which are of interest to persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be in the hands of the editor at least 48 hours before publication, however, to make such superficial changes in the copy as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical fire in the printing plant, the printing of the Eccentric office by Wednesday noon to obtain insertion for that week.

Our Community Resolution

On more than one occasion this newspaper has lamented the apparent apathy of the average citizen toward his government; to correct part of it, especially relating to Birmingham's own affairs, we have often suggested that a committee of men and women be formed into a permanent organization, to investigate candidates and propositions at election time, and to lend their active support toward or against the shifting elements that enter into a community's growth.

We who constitute this thing we call government are busily engaged in the modern complexities of life; we live but in moments of exaltation or discontent, of dire need or extreme satiety—we seldom attain the complacency of moderate happiness and contentment. We walk for hours about a favorite movie actor or actress, a new book, or, unfortunately, engage in gossip about something or somebody; we rise up in indignation when something goes wrong in our social affairs, or in our government—we try to calm a storm-tossed craft in times of turbulence when what we ought to have done was to have watched the weather reports and trimmed our sails accordingly.

Birmingham, today, has much to be thankful for. In spite of its proximity to a great city, it is vastly different in makeup from any of the many small communities that have reaped a portion of Detroit's overflow population; many problems still confront our people, and they will be solved in direct proportion to the amount of careful thought given them by our citizens.

The future looms large before us; apathy of citizens toward their community affairs always results in a poorly constructed government. What better New Year's resolution can we make in Birmingham than to formulate a permanent civic organization? A sort of responsible citizens' league, in the interest of better and more helpful government? Such a group, we are sure, will be most welcome to our elected officials who, so often, need the kindly assistance and sympathetic understanding of a wide-awake electorate.

For Our Fire Department

The Eccentric is always glad to obtain suggestions for a realistic comment for our local fire department, so we were pleased to receive in Monday's mail the following communication from Dr. Eugene Smith, Jr., of 196 Abbey road, Birmingham, which was addressed to village president H. T. Ellerby. Here is Dr. Smith's letter:

December 27, 1928.

Village of Birmingham, Care of H. T. Ellerby, City Hall Municipal Bldg., Birmingham, Mich.

Dear Sir: I wish to take this opportunity, through you, to thank the fire department for the splendid and efficient manner in which they handled the fire at my home, on Christmas Eve.

It certainly was a worthy demonstration of the value of trained full time firemen. In spite of the fact that the entire roof was ablaze on the inside, if not on the outside, the water damage was negligible. The men were very water, polite, courteous, considerate, and efficient.

If I were to try to express all my feeling of gratitude in this letter, it would take too much of your time to read it.

Hoping that the people of Birmingham will appreciate as I do, the fire department, and support the endeavor to improve it, I beg to remain,

Sincerely, EUGENE SMITH, JR., M. D.

Fourth-Time "Liquor-ites"

We accept with thanks the criticism directed at us last week by Joe Sturgeon, publisher of the Delta (Glaston) Reporter, for our suggestion that four-time liquor law violators be given from 10 to 15 years in prison instead of life. Reflecting more upon the subject, we recall that the average life term in Michigan is about 12 years; so we hereby correct our original suggestions to a shorter period for 18th Amendment violators to, say, from one to three years. We would include, however, with the term of years, the necessity of the violator reading a four-time prison sentence by going to church regularly. The advertisements were splendid suggestions; but the campaign has evidently stopped, for the last issue of the Independent is without the usual full-page plea—yet Frank Bryce, editor of the Independent, had a fine editorial plus on page one urging people attend church regularly. We hope many Grand Ledgers went to church—including the estimable Mr. Bryce who, though a strong believer in the un-Christian doctrine of capital punishment, always befriends the church as an institution for good. The Independent's assistance toward getting people to attend church is a contribution to the community—more Michigan weeklies ought to follow the example.

On Going To Church

For the past ten or twelve weeks the excellent Grand Ledger (Mich.) Independent has been publishing full-page advertisements, urging its readers to participate in Christianity by going to church regularly. The advertisements were splendid suggestions; but the campaign has evidently stopped, for the last issue of the Independent is without the usual full-page plea—yet Frank Bryce, editor of the Independent,

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Charlotte Papers Merge

Something more than a business deal is represented in the fact that Charlotte, Lansing's close neighbor, now has one newspaper instead of three. The consolidation represents the present public attitude. Newspapers are no longer regarded, primarily, as mediums for the expression of controversy. The day when patrons used to subscribe to their favorite paper because of the ability of the editor to "take the hide off" the other editor is past.

Newspapers today are in a pretty large degree public service institutions. Regarded in this light, there is no more need of more than one newspaper in most communities than there is of two telephone exchanges. Under the combination, Charlotte will get a much better newspaper. It cannot be otherwise. The readers, the community as a whole, will reap the benefit.

Community newspapers are institutions to be respected. Everyone who takes a home newspaper of any kind is entitled to the power of most of us to put in words. Modern facilities enable the great newspapers to reach out and forever out with their service, but they will never be able to supplant the home newspaper, the expression of community consciousness.

It is told how the famed editor and publisher of the Kansas City Star used to advertise his paper in the rural papers of his territory. That advertising always stated, "Take your home paper first, and then if you desire another paper of different type, consider the Kansas City Star." That is a good attitude to have been between all newspapers.—LANSING STATE JOURNAL.

Mister Nowack Must Be An Elk

As one of the weekly newspapers of Michigan that most ardently supported the cause of Governor Fred W. Green when he opposed ex-Governor Croesbeck two years ago, we now salute the apparent change of heart that has overcome one Ed Nowack, publisher of the Michigan State Digest, a Lansing political weekly paper—for Mister Nowack, be it known, is now so colorfully Green that geranium leaves are red by comparison. We might have known that sometime, some day, our public or contemporary would succumb to the great present Governor but to accomplish such a feat in two short years—well, Ed, you certainly must be in excellent standing as an Elk—both in lodge and on the table. Here, folks, is what Mister Nowack—who but two short years ago was calling Fred Green anything but polite names—now thinks of Governor Green and his family.

Governor Fred W. Green recently entertained the newspaper men who write about state affairs at an elk dinner. It was given in his honia home—served in a den as typical of the host as song is of Gull. It was a real one—purely and unadorned, and ceiling covering. Trophies of the hunt hung here and there. It was the room of an outdoor-man. The newspapermen—and their wives—turned out en masse. Only one, so far as is known, missed it—and he has been sorry ever since. But he couldn't help it. However, his wife went and she hasn't been the same since.

The governor is one of those rare individuals. He knows how to put on a party, and he knows how to keep the cares of the most responsible job in the state out of it.

"If you think it is fun being governor, come down and stand in Fred Green's shoes for a week. You will either get new shoes and start walking in a southern direction or you will curl up on the spot. All day long, from early morning until night, the crowd is there. If it isn't someone wanting a pardon for a son or brother, it is someone wanting a job for someone, or someone telling how good they are, or someone wanting to get their bill approved by the governor or someone wanting any one of a thousand things. In between times are the massive details of running a huge state government, of making speeches at events which the governor must attend, of the bills he could go on and on. Some governors have lighter days or that. Governor Green, no matter whether you be in sympathy with all his policies or not, is a hard working and conscientious executive. How much his services would cost, if they had to be paid for on a reasonable basis, is a question. It would be more than the taxpayers could ever afford to pay. And he would be worth it, no matter how much it was.

"Anyway, on the day of this elk dinner, the governor had his usual grinding day. But when the shades of night fell and the time came, there was no reflection of his responsibilities and worries.

With his own hands he broiled the elk steaks. He had a gracious welcome for everyone. He laughed and talked and joked, as though the cares of state never existed.

"His Green was the most delightful of hostesses. Her greeting alone warmed hearts. And her good personality, made everything lovely. A dozen or more of the newspapermen will ever have a spot in their hearts for the wife who took care of Green. She made a hit—that is the easiest way of saying it.

"Peggy, the governor's daughter, was likewise as gracious as a daughter can be. She is more charming to pay. And she is more of an apple of her eye as well as the governor's, is a baby who would warm the cockles of even a hardened newspaper man's heart.

"It was a pleasant occasion and a most delightful family group that sponsored it.

"This is not intended to be a society page item. So get away from that. It is said here and now that the Green family is there when it comes to making a gang feel at home and feel good while at home. If any society page has been guilty of saying anything about someone 'being there,' in the happened—so we hope it is. Because as has been said before, this is not a society item but is purely and simply a piece about something that ought to be written.

Truly, Mister Nowack, politics makes strange bed-fellows, and so does a nice elk dinner in a Governor's private log cabin.

THE HERR AND THE TORTOISE



BOOK REVIEWS

A Book for the Sophisticate

By DOROTHY E. WILLIAMS
The Misbehaviorists. By Harry Wickham. Lincoln: MacLaughlin, The Dial Press.
Here is a book for the lover of subtleties. And should that lover of subtleties happen to be a psychologist he will read with interest. The pages of intensive thought.

WHAT THEY READ—HERE and THERE

The following is a list of the best sellers in fiction and general literature as announced by Brentano's New York, for the week ending Dec. 22:
Fiction
The Case of Sergeant Grisha—Arnold Zweig
The Well of Loneliness—Radclyffe Hall
The Wanderer—Alain-Fournier
Orlando—Virginia Woolf
Point Counter Point—Aldous Huxley
Elizabeth and Essex—Lytton Strachey
The Tragic Empress—Maurice Paléologue
John Brown's Body—Stephen Vincent Benet
Leonardo the Florentine—Rachel Taylor
Whither Mankind—Charles A. Beard
My Autobiography—Benito Mussolini

Labels Congressmen "Peanut Politicians"

By CHARLES P. STEWART
Washington Correspondent for Central Press and The Eccentric
Washington.—"Peanut politicians! The average American citizen asks for nothing to start with a new political thought every bit as good as that he dispenses."
Wickham has made a pastime of detecting the weak spots in accepted psychology and in aiming at the newborn infant," he quotes and then remarks, "it is not asking to do to lift his scap. All the misleads they tried to pin on out of Frederick, would not look well in print. Fred swore by high heaven that he never would resign under fire, but he finally did. Thereafter Fred held it peace for a longer time.

Strang language!—what? Yet Frederick A. Fenning, who uses it, speaks with considerable authority. Fred's congressional quaquaintance is pretty wide. Washington's mayoralty is vested in a trinity—two civilian commissioners of the District of Columbia and a military man, all appointed by the president, but required to work in harmony with congress, as the capital's city council. In harmony? Well, theoretically. In practice, maybe not always—if Fred Fenning knows what he is talking about. And he does. Fred was one of Washington's civilian commissioners until a couple of years ago. For awhile after Fred's appointment there was harmony enough. Then Fred got into a row with certain congressmen and they started out to lift his scap. All the misleads they tried to pin on out of Frederick, would not look well in print. Fred swore by high heaven that he never would resign under fire, but he finally did. Thereafter Fred held it peace for a longer time.



Income Property
We are offering a few well chosen Birmingham and Pontiac business properties which show gratifying income returns.
Colgrove, Buck & Tillotson
First State Bank Bldg.

The Other Chap Says Something

MICHIGAN EDITORS
Possibly there were over 150 editors from all parts of the state at the various meetings, at the University Press club annual meeting in Ann Arbor, November 22, 23 and 24. Most of the editors of the Booth string of papers were present. During the various sessions one had plenty of opportunity to size up the general run of the men directing the newspaper affairs of Michigan. Maybe it will prove a rather surprising statement that he is not known that the weekly press of Michigan offers more editors of the daily newspaper standard than do the daily newspapers of Michigan. In fact, in selecting the outstanding Michigan editors of the state there is but one that can rightly be named—Frank Sparks of the Grand Rapids Herald. He can be vicious with his pen when there is something going on that he does not like. But he can be just as emphatic when it comes to laudation of some worthy project or measure. Fred Keister of the Flint County News, Muri DeFoe of the Charlotte Republican, George Averill of the Birmingham Eccentric and Tom Conlin of the Crystal Falls Diamond Drill, as well as many others in the weekly field, rank far in ability above most of the daily newspaper editors of Michigan. If one was to enter the class of the machine-type editor such as most Booth editors are, to make a selection for a group of outstanding editors, J. K. Walsh of the Kalamazoo Gazette, and Mr. Gorman, editor of the Flint Journal, can rightly be named as the best among the Booth editors. But with the Booth papers there is no opportunity for outstanding individuality such as is revealed every morning in the Grand Rapids Herald. The Booth papers are produced something like Ford cars, except that each Ford does not carry a different name as the Booth papers printed in the various parts of Michigan. Eton T. Eaton in Northville (Mich.) Record.

Friendly Thoughts By G. Dewey Kimball

This "Friendly Thought"
Let us, like the mariner, stop to get our bearings. Other wise we cannot plan our course with calmness, decision and wisdom.
It is natural that we should appreciate the kind words said in our behalf by those we best served. We shall continue to merit the goodwill of the public.

G. DEWEY KIMBALL
FUNERAL DIRECTOR
300 N. WOODWARD AVE.
PHONE 880
AMBULANCE SERVICE

REVERSED VERDICTS
Up at St. Johns, John Ohlansk has been convicted of murdering Howard Bashore, a neighbor. It was a brutal crime, the man was clubbed to death. Witnesses testified that Ohlansk had threatened violence against Bashore. He had previously accused his neighbor of setting fire to his house. All the evidence introduced at the trial, although very convincing, was purely circumstantial. At Plymouth, Mass., a few months ago, a man named Vanzetti was convicted of murder on similar testimony. Public opinion was overwhelmingly against him—as it was with Ohlansk. But now it has developed that in all probability Vanzetti was innocent! Some of the principals in the trial are beginning to get conscience-stricken. They would like to undo the conviction, but they can't—because the fellow was electrocuted!

Now, it is quite certain that Ohlansk was guilty. But still it would have been easy for some one, knowing his bitter hatred of Bashore, to "frame" the whole thing! We are glad that Michigan has a life imprisonment law instead of capital punishment. Probably jurymen are too busy to see the principle in reversed verdicts are reversed!—Eaton Rapids (Mich.) Journal.

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