The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 1932

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those other than members of the staff cannot be used. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

Bay Village Taxes Now

Birmingham's village treasurer, Charles E. Plumstead, last week sent out the annual "reminder" to local property owners that the current taxes are due July 1. Unwelcome, in a certain way, as these little "reminders" may be, they are necessary to carry on our form of socialized government. The money you pay in the form of taxes is the means by which communities are held together, and, though there may be some who feel that present governmental costs are far too high, even they would not accept a tax-free government if they could—for should some "Santa Claus" be found who would foot all the bills of government, how would the governed reasonably "kick" about a thing that they then would not be supporting?

Taxes are, always have been, and always will be a subject of human controversy. They vary in amounts, from time to time, depending upon the demands of the taxpayers themselves for public comforts and conveniences and improvements, or the frugality and efficiency of public officials who administer the different units of government. Birmingham's tax rate this year is lower than it has been for some time, revealing a lessening of expenditures on the part of the village. As time goes on the rate will be lower still, it is hoped. But right now you can help your village by paying your taxes.

Looking Back To Youth

Once again the "Old Hill School" students held their annual reunion in Birmingham last week. To wander a-field again; to recount the carefree days of childhood; to review once more even a few of these days that belonged to childhood's innocent and guileless era—that is a happy heritage of all. Few attainments or possessions of adult life ever approach or exceed the ability of one to look back to his youth and, beholding it correctly in retrospect, to receive from it a sort of peace and serenity that passeth understanding. Realizing this, is it not the duty of adults of every generation to make the life of their own children rich in memories?

Fair Play In Business

A prominent New York business man, tired and disgusted with the unfair and predatory methods used by business today, is crusading to urge that the "fair play of sportsmanship" be the economic guide. A most commendable crusade, we would say. But about as near to realization as universal peace and immediate disarmament. Men are afraid to trust one another because you see, they have not yet learned to accept a common Fatherhood of protection and guidance.

Brucker's Sceptre

It is perhaps only fitting and proper that eight brunets and five blondes are pitted together for the title of Cherry Queen in Traverse City this summer. Which also reminds us that, from now on, Governor Brucker will be given his annual opportunity of seeing Michigan via the Madame Queen this and Madame Queen that-route.

MANY TOWNS ON THE WEST COAST of Mexico were threatened by a huge tidal wave, while some lives and much property were lost. Men live paradoxical lives; they build their homes next to colossal dangers, are threatened by sea, river, earthquake, or volcano—yet when round they often rebuild on the same sites. Men fear fear more than they fear death.

TODAY THE UNITED STATES is seething with politics. Nation, state, and county are the various units of government about which there is much struggle going on. Men spend so much time trying to correct government that they have little or no time left to correct themselves. That is why government remains uncorrected.

"CONGRESS SEES SNARLS PILE UP" was the way The Detroit News last week referred to the federal government's legislative activities. Well, with so many "angles" of a political nature, with the various "strings" tied to each, can you expect anything but a snarl? But for a real snarl, just wait until the people go to the polls!

ONE GOOD THING about both the Republicans and the Democrats, nationally speaking, is that they are as close to you as taxes. Why, it's so bad now-a-days that a fellow can't open his mouth the first thing in the morning without paying a tax—providing he uses toothpicks.

THE OUTSIDER that gave Jack Sharkey the world's heavyweight title in New York last week is, from all reports, scrambling with bad odors.

MICHIGAN POSTMASTERS will hold their 1932 convention in Pontiac. Would you call such a gathering a stamped?

The Scorn Of Mussolini

Mussolini, in a London interview, is quoted as speaking derisively of the United States in the latter's efforts to be a practical democracy. The Italian Premier is vigorous in his belief that our American experiment in government is headed for the rocks of ruin and revolution.

"Democracy is nothing; the people are nothing; in every country they are weary of talk—they need men of action. They cannot save themselves; they need saviors—but there are no saviors, either." Those are a few of Il Duce's ideas. They are pessimistic ideas, too. They smack as coming from the mind of one who, once filled with theories of an ideal form of government, has come to believe, from practical experience, that most every citizen is a paradox—he dreams and hopes for one set of rules for his government in theory, yet requires a competitive, predatory system for the actual control of his political and economic destinies.

It is too bad that a man of Mussolini's ability is not controlled more by a sacrificial idealism—a sort of combined Galahad and Napoleon. For it must now be patent to this great modern Italian that people and governments are lifted higher by inspiration than by mere personal domination. If he were, what a wonderful leader he would be in a world where "the people are nothing; they cannot save themselves . . . they need saviors . . . but there are no saviors."

Social Co-operation

France may be backward in many things, but the Socialist Party in that war-infested country certainly comes forth with bold requests from the French government. For instance, a recent proposal of the Socialists demanded: a forty-hour week for labor; state control of banks; nationalization of railroads; a national monopoly of insurance; general amnesty of political prisoners; a balanced budget without cutting social services; prohibition of traffic in arms and nationalization of arms manufacture; organization for peace by international agreements, embracing reduction of war credits.

Some day, as society makes progress toward less selfishness, many of the above demands will become the universal practice of many great governments. They are as inevitable as the modern apartment house has followed the cave and the cliff dwelling. They will come to man as he ceases to be a predatory competitor and practices the competition of cooperation.

Rotary Inspires

Over in Seattle last week more than 6,000 Rotarians from nearly 70 countries in the world, held their annual convention. To attend such a gathering is a real inspiration. We have journeyed to a number of places in this country where such meetings were held, and always we came away with regenerated spirit and renewed faith in the ultimate ability of mankind to achieve universal brotherhood. There perhaps is no greater organized influence for international peace at work in the world today than Rotary International, with its nearly 165,000 members in all parts of the world.

Saloon-less Beer

Steadily and unceasingly, from all sections of the United States, there is revealed a growing disgust with prohibition, and a desire for something or other to supplant it. Nobody wants the old saloon back; many, however, want what the old saloon sold back. Question: how can you restore strong drink without bringing back the old saloon? There is a question that well might be asked of both Republicans and Democrats.

State Bureaucracy

During the first 15 months of Governor Brucker's administration 13 commissions were appointed to investigate as many ramifications of government. Most of them, according to Secretary of State Frank D. Fitzgerald, carried appropriations with them—all coming from the taxpayers' pocketbooks. That is a fair sample of the manner in which government bureaucracy increases the cost of government.

All of Us

By Marshall Maslin

I KNOW a haunted house.

I have seen in it and I know it is haunted.

No chains clanked down its stairways. No blood-curdling screams echoed along those halls. No mysterious knockings, no clocks that struck only at midnight, no flitting ghostly trappings were there. None of those did I see and yet I tell you that house is haunted.

Marshall Maslin

That house is in my state, in the Santa Clara valley. It spreads rambling self over many acres and when you look at its towers and turrets and gables and pergolas and porches it seems like many, many houses. . . . In that house are three elevators, 40 stairways—many of them have 13 steps and some of them lead nowhere at all—fireplaces without chimneys, chimneys without fireplaces, trapdoors, secret panels, gold and silver chandeliers, ceilings with 13 panels, stained glass windows that cost $1,000, massive doors that cost twice that sum, newel posts that are upside down, gas lights, electric lights, interior finishing of cherry, maple, rosewood, walnut, ash, mahogany, oak and cedar. . . . A mad house. A house to drive you mad with wonder about its builder.

The woman who built that house was rich. She was kind. But she was driven by a strange fear. The story is that she believed she would live long as she continued to build, and would die if her house were ever finished. . . . So, for 36 fantastic years, she spent her money and her time and her own self on a house so monstrous, so unbelievably grotesque, that no one can live in it now that she is gone.

Because she did die. Despite all her pains and fears and efforts to stave off death, she laid herself down at last and died—and the house is haunted.

* * *

Almost in the center of this house a great oak grows. I have seen it. It is green and strong. It was young when this woman began to build and it is still a young tree. It will die when it ceases to grow, but when it is old it will be shapely and lovely; none of its great limbs will be grotesque and it will haunt men only with its beauty.

That woman might have learned from her oak. It could have told her that men live by inner growth and not by outer constructions. It would have taught her if she had looked and listened, and if she had let that tree be her teacher she would have been at peace, doing kindly things and driven by no monstrous fears.

But she didn't. Instead she built this curious, extravagant house and she left behind her a nightmare of wood and stone that is haunted by her sad, sad failure to be wise.

From The Eccentric Columns of Long Ago

FIFTY YEARS AGO

'Rah! 'rah! the Fourth!!"

Fourth of July celebration at Birmingham? You just bet your boots.

A beautiful display of fireworks will take place in the public square on the evening of the Fourth, postponed from Miss Xenia Post's school to take place in the Orchard of A. Bayley in Troy last Tuesday. A large attendance from here assembled, and with others had a gala day.

Make your headquarters at The Eccentric office the Fourth of July, where you will be welcome sure. Bring in your packages, whips, etc., and make yourself at home.

Mr. J. B. Grow of Clawson lost a valuable silver watch not long ago. While burning brush on Benjamin's brick yard, he hung his vest carefully on a stump with the watch in one of the pockets, and then absent-mindedly piled brush on and around it and fired up—total loss, no insurance. Shortly before this he had his dinner eaten up by cows.

H. A. Randall is putting a high picket fence around his grocery lot adjacent to his residence on Mill street, and will make needed improvements therein, such as levelling up the brush, filling in the low spring holes, etc., after which he will turn his deer loose in the miniature park. With the recent improvements to his residence, Mr. Randall will have one of the handsomest homes in the village, and we are heartily glad of it too.

Married: At the M. E. church on Wednesday evening, June 28, 1882, Mr. Charles Howard of St. Johns, Mich., to Miss Ida E. Bodine of this place. After the ceremonies at the church, a reception was held at the residence of the bride's parents near by. We go to press too early to particularize this week, but heartily wish the young folks a happy and prosperous life.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Why don't the Village Improvement Society get permission from the village and from the owners and clean up some of the downtown alleys and back-yards?

Miss Blanche Heth and Miss Florence A. Green, out driving towards Orchard Lake recently took time enough to stop the pony and with the buggy whip whipped an immense blue-racer to death. Brave girls.

Motorman John Barras of Oxford leaned out of his car window at Big Beaver while running and struck the telephone post by the track. The blow knocked him clean out of his car and almost killed him.

Somebody broke into the depot one night last week and stole both mail bags. The bag containing the papers was found down the tracks, but the leather pouch containing the letters has never been found from.

Nothing has been heard from M. R. Blair's lost pocket book. He has decided that he was "touched" in a crowd by a big fat man, who pushed and crowded him around enough to cut out a pocketful of cash. The thief got sure enough booty, as the certificates were not available to the crook.

Charles E. Toms was a Birmingham caller on his way to Lansing from Detroit on a recent visit. Well, He had the trip of a life. She visited with both the Leonard boys,—Stewart at Cadanea, Tex., and Harry at Bisbee, Ariz. He met Julian Leet as before mentioned, went down the mines, both copper and gold, coming back loaded with souvenirs, the main article being a beautiful rich cloth of Mexican women's work of the drawn variety.

When a man, usually supposed to be sane, makes the statement that a free public library will do no good to Birmingham, and expresses doubts as to the public library doing any good in Detroit—we wonder, yes, we wonder.

With our new upto-dated school building and its neatly kept grounds; and with a free public library, and a reading room with some of the best magazines and periodicals; a village in the state can offer greater inducements to the home seeker. Just come and look at us.

FIVE YEARS AGO

No public celebration will be made in Birmingham July 4, according to announcement made today by village officials. A proposal for an appropriation for fireworks was turned down by the Village Coommission, and any celebration will be of a private nature.

Charges that the circulation of petitions presented to the Village Commission asking that that body exercise an option on Hampton avenue property as a site for the new proposed fire station were financed by individuals are being probed today by H. T. Elsby, village president.

With the annual school election two weeks off, interest in the proposed $400,000 bond issue, to finance the building of a new school at Chesterfield and Oak streets, and an addition to the Barnum School, which is to be voted upon then, is at high pitch.

Because the general trend of the Hill School area is toward business, public building, churches and higher education buildings and because the traffic on West Maple avenue and Southfield avenue has become dangerous to small children, the board plans to build one new school on the Chesterfield site, where it will eventually serve all small children west of the River Rouge, and the other on the Barnum site, as an addition to the present Barnum Building, to serve the central part of town.

WHO'S WHO IN CHICAGO?

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request.

An Open Letter to John E. Marth, treasurer of the Birmingham School Board

Dear Sir:

We are interested in your answers to the following questions, many of which are being circulated throughout the community. We believe it for the best interests of the schools that you answer these questions at this time.

Why did the School Board make Mr. Vliet take a 20 percent cut when the teachers took only 5 percent?

Is your appointee, Mr. Crandall, coming to Birmingham at an advance in salary over Mr. Vliet's?

Could Mr. Crandall's services have been obtained for $5,000 if the Board had realized it in time?

Is there some basis for saying that the school administration in the Barnum district will suffer as a result of the change in superintendents?

Did you have a secret agreement last year with Mr. Dalley that he should run to split the Barnum vote?

Is it true that last summer you made a pre-election promise to a present school candidate which you failed to keep?

If the board is forced to close one of our smaller schools next year, is it true that they are planning to send the Pierce children to Barnum rather than inconvenience the north end by having Quarton and Adams Schools combine?

And finally, will all the Birmingham schools have to close anyway some time next year?

GROUP OF
INTERESTED CITIZENS.
(Mrs. William E. Esery,
240 Aspen Road,
Birmingham, Mich.)

POOR RELIEF

To the Editor:

In an editorial in the June 23 issue of The Eccentric you express the view that it would be desirable for the County Board of Supervisors to rescind their action which places the welfare problem in the hands of the townships and cities beginning Jan. 1, 1933.

No doubt you are aware that under the old plan Bloomfield Township must pay (under present economic conditions) more than $100,000 in excess of what it expends on local indigents. This amounts to approximately 8 percent of the entire tax roll, which will be saved to the local taxpayers under the new plan. That this township is able to handle its part of this problem efficiently is beyond question.

Evidently the thought you have in mind is that your view is justified on humanitarian grounds due to the possibility that some of the townships would not financially be able to take care of their own indigents. While at present Bloomfield Township can undoubtedly take care of its own problem, we must not lose sight of our own situation, as might develop, if economical conditions continue to be unfavorable for any great length of time.

The constant decrease in the percentage of taxes being paid in this township is sufficient proof that the local taxpayers have not the ability to continue, without relief, to pay very much longer. This to some extent, is due to having and to shoulder an inequitable share of the welfare burden during the past few years. Unless relief is soon forthcoming this township will find it very difficult to take care of its own indigents.

Morally it is right to expect the strong to assist the weak. But under our political system the various governmental units, from townships to congressional districts, are forced to assume a selfish attitude and obtain the best deal they can for themselves, by trading votes or otherwise. This is true in our county, as is proven each year by the squabbles over tax equalization among the members of our Board of Supervisors. Incidentally, one of the important benefits listed by the proponents of city form of government for Birmingham is that we would have a much larger representation on the Board of Supervisors, and thus would be in a better position to have legislation enacted that would be favorable to Birmingham.

It is undoubtedly possible that some localities, such as Hazel Park, may have difficulty in taking care of their indigents. However, because Hazel Park happens to lie just north of the Eight Mile road, instead of south of it, does not justify the forcing of Bloomfield taxpayers to bleed themselves beyond their possibility to pay in order to take care of Hazel Park's welfare problem.

Under this same reasoning it would be just as logical to ask us to assist Detroit with it's welfare problem. As a matter of fact, Detroit is morally more obligated to take care of this district than is Bloomfield Township, as the great percentage of these unfortunate people are normally employed by Detroit industries.

In conclusion, I am convinced that the welfare problem is not a county problem. If it cannot be handled by the local governmental units it should be handled by the state. In any event nothing can be gained by forcing other townships to assist beyond their means, because by so doing these townships will also soon reach the stage where they, too, will be financially unable to carry on. Bloomfield Township is approaching this condition much too rapidly to ask it to carry the burdens of other districts any longer.

DAVID LEVINSON,
332 Daines Street.

It Will

Soviet Russia expects to embark upon a new five-year plan as soon as the present one is completed. Meanwhile, it will complete this one if it takes a century. —Detroit News.

"The only thing a banker will lend you now is his ears," says the Greensboro Herald-Journal. Well, he's pretty free, too, with his noes.—Weston Leader. But at least he's not overworking his ayes.—Arkansas Gazette

The "Big Shots" Say:—

Wm. Z. Ripley, Professor, Harvard University:

"Publicity is the best available remedy (for short-selling, pull pools and bear raiding."

M. Grattan O'Leary, Canadian journalist:

"Despite a budget deficit, increased taxation, heavy losses on her national railways system, and declining trade and revenue, the Dominion Government has given work and wages and a decent livelihood to hundreds of thousands of Canadians who would otherwise be unemployed and in want."

Walter May, Associated Editor, Portland Morning Oregonian:

"If newspapers were suddenly to cease publication, it would be as if the sun suddenly ceased to shine."

Robert Horne, former Chancellor of the British Exchequer:

"Currency manipulation is no crime. It is carried on every day by the Bank of England."

A. J. Cermak, Mayor of Chicago:

"We need immediately $120,000,000. If we cannot borrow money, we are sunk."

THE OTHER CHAP SAYS SOMETHING

NOT AN EASY TASK

It is never easy for an employer to tell the men who they be personal or expenses involved in the management of a business, a county, a state or a nation. It is never easy for an employer to tell the men who have been with him for a number of years that he is going to lay them off. Every employer who has had to do this the last two years has done it reluctantly and with regret. In addition to the reluctance attached of dismissing the man, there is a tinge of futility and defeat over his inability to help it. The reduction of expenses in state, county or nation is only going to be done at the expense of some wage or salary earner. It can not be done otherwise. It resolves itself to a question of whether it is better to keep up the payroll and bankrupt the taxpayers, or whether it would not be wiser to ease up the load and give the taxpayer a respite from his burden. It is a job which everyone puts off as long as possible.—Harry Myers in Lapeer County Press.

WELSH WILL FIGHT

Pat O'Brien says that with George Welsh in the campaign there will be a full and free discussion of the issues. Anyone that knows Mr. Welsh knows that to be a fact. They also know that there will be no pussy-footing out Mr. Welsh's part. He hits right from the shoulder and talks facts. George Welsh is as well posted a man as there is in Michigan on governmental affairs. His three years as manager of Grand Rapids where, in his first year, he wiped out a million dollar deficit and left a cash balance, has given him a practical grasp on affairs that further enhances his knowledge and his value to the state. If Mr. Welsh goes through with his inclination and gets in Michigan will see sixty days of real informative discussion. There'll be no platitudes when and if Mr. Welsh enters the race. He knows what it's all about and can tell it. What effect that will have on his chances is yet to be seen.—Tom Conlin in Crystal Falls Diamond Drill.

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