The Birmingham Eccentric

(founded in 1878)

Published every Thursday, at Birmingham, Mich., in The Eccentric Building, 324-332 North Woodward Avenue.

Telephones 71, 72, and 73

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Entered as Second Class Matter in the U. S. Postoffice at Birmingham, Michigan

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(In Oakland County)		(Outside Oakland County)	
One Year	$2.00	One Year	$2.50
Six Months	.00	Six Months	1.50
Three Months	.50	Three Months	1.00

All newspaper and advertising copy must be in the Eccentric office by Wednesday noon to obtain insertion for that week.

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

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 1933

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 copy submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper, and as are required by law of the state. Because of the 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.

The Public Works Program

The City Commission has voted to apply to the Federal Government for more than half a million dollars with which to finance a public works construction program to provide jobs for the unemployed. There is no question but that the purpose of the program is a worthy one, in harmony with the spirit of the National Recovery Act under the provisions of which the city will apply for the money.

If the application is approved, part of the half million dollars, it is assumed, will be granted by the Government outright, and the remainder issued in the form of a loan. Just what percentage would be donated is not known, although it would probably be between 22½ and 30 percent.

Although many different projects have been considered, the two which have found particular favor with the Commission are a sewage disposal plant and a water treatment plant, the first because of the urgency of the need for it, and the second because of the apparent ease of financing it.

While from these standpoints alone, the projects appear to have considerable merit, The Eccentric reserves its endorsement of either of them until definite figures are available as to how many men they might be expected to put back to work, and as to exactly how (especially in the case of the sewage disposal plant) they are to be paid for.

In the meantime, we whole-heartedly agree with those citizens of the community who believe that the Commission should not proceed finally with any public improvement without a vote of the people. The water treatment plant, it is understood, could not be authorized without such a vote, but the sewage disposal plant would not require it. No matter from whom nor under what provisions a loan is secured, and no matter what arrangements are worked out for paying it back, the money for paying it back will come ultimately out of the pockets of the taxpayers. The columns of this paper are open to any authentic information designed to show how painless a process this can be made to be in the present case, how many persons will be benefited by it, and any other facts pertaining to the whole program or any part of it.

But we do feel, in view of the fact that the city has already incurred—with the approval of the taxpayers, to be sure—more debts than it can pay back on schedule, that it should not contract any new ones unless those same taxpayers again agree to it at the polls.

Cities Of The Dead

As one travels by automobile through various sections of the country, one place in each community that is nearly always a spot of beauty is, by a strange paradox of human sympathy, the cemetery. There, in a quiet spot, perhaps on ground that is hilly, or flat, or a little of both, is the town's "city of the dead"—there lie the bodies of those who once measured their footsteps upon our common earth. As the seasons come and go, there you may see flowers and trees and shrubs, growing 'neath the caresses of a universal sun, while from the earth itself comes nourishment to all plant life. Upon the graves you will find lovely flowers, placed by the hands of those who, alas, too soon themselves will join the endless caravan of the departed.

In the winter time, a warm blanket of pure white snow covers the markers o'er the graves mounds. But, wherever one sees these cemeteries, can one be called merely emotionally sentimental if the throat swallows a bit harder, the eye glistens brighter, and the heart pulsates faster while one's mind dwells upon the sweet paradox of human existence that makes these "cities of the dead" among the most beautiful handiworks in a city of the living?

Let's Control Prosperity

The so-called "era of prosperity" that engulfed this nation since 1922 is, after all, the real cause of the depression that has been with us for over three years. The loose practices of business and finance in the granting of unsound credit; the creation of fictitious values of stocks and bonds, of real estate, and of other material things that could be gambled with, was the cause of the hard times that descended upon us. And back of this, of course, was the immorality of a world that had gone to WAR.

You can't erect a prosperity, so-called, upon the dead bodies of millions of soldiers, upon widows and orphans by the hundred thousands, upon national debts and a host of other disastrous results of wholesale slaughter. Had that "era of prosperity" continued for another five years is it not sound to believe that our country would have been wrecked beyond time repair?

As we emerge from this depression into better times, will our nation, and the whole world, develop a safe and sane leadership that will seek to maintain moderation in the heights of our prosperity, so that our valleys of depression will not be so deep?

ANCIENT PICTURES reveal the fact that children in old Greece were spanked with thick-soled sandals, too. Well, here's only further proof that the classic Greeks—though they may not have been well-heeled—did apply soul-ful methods to their youths' seat of learning.

Human Discontent

"The matter of a flat or shack
Of joy, is but an incident;
It is the strife for place and riches
That spawns in us a discontent . . ."

The above four lines are part of a poem published in School News, that excellently edited institutional paper published by the inmates of Jackson prison; they were written by one who signs himself "Charles Esslinger." Those four lines tell, upon study, what a dozen preachers might seek to put over in a dozen long sermons. The theme is an old one—has been with mankind since the dawn of time.

Way back in 1895 Charles Wagner, a quiet, thoughtful French writer, said the same thing in these words, published in his book, "The Simple Life": "If we have not become happier, neither have we grown more peaceful and fraternal. The more desires and needs a man has, the more occasion he finds for conflict with his fellow-men; and these conflicts are more bitter in proportion as their causes are less just. It is the law of nature to fight for bread, for the necessities. This law may seem brutal, but there is an excuse in its very harshness, and it is generally limited to elemental cruelties. Quite different is the battle for the superfluities—for ambition, privilege, inclination, luxury. . . .

"Never has hunger driven man to such baseness as have envy, avarice, and thirst for pleasure. Egotism grows more maleficent as it becomes more refined. We of these times have seen an increase of hostile feeling among brothers, and our hearts are less at peace than ever.

Yes, "it is the strife for place and robes that spawns in us a discontent . . ."

Human Nature In Government

While we believe in proportionate representation in government, we cannot overlook the important fact that, after a city or area becomes over a certain population, its inability to govern and be governed decently decreases in ratio to its increase in people. This fact, variable of course in areas whose populace is more or less cosmopolitan, is a provable piece of statistics; a careful check on American government reveals that the larger the city the more corrupt it becomes—not because the proportion of good and bad citizens is different than in a much smaller community, but because the larger the unit to be governed the more unwieldy and unmanageable it becomes.

And when a unit of government becomes large and unwieldy, such as New York, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, or other large centers, you cannot expect it to perform as well as its people could, if they lived under smaller civic control.

We think this fact of human nature in government is worth considering in the matter of re-apportionment in State and National affairs. Especially in State affairs as, for instance, Michigan. Right now Wayne county is upset because the last State Legislature did not see fit to re-apportion its right for seats in the Legislature; while we agree with those who criticise Lansing for not living up to the Constitutional requirements in this matter, we do feel that the requirement itself does not fit human nature into the making of the best kind of good government. Such a problem, of course, will never be equitably worked out in our day. In the meantime, human nature in Michigan will probably maintain a competition in State affairs between the urbin and rural sections.

FOR LONG IT HAS BEEN SAID that love is blind. Considered seriously, this statement points out the truth that real love is blind to ordinary faults. Therefore, don't more of us need a clearer understanding of "real love"?

BY DOING GOOD with his money, a man, as it were, stamps the image of God upon it and makes it pass current for the merchandise of Heaven.—(T. L. Rutledge.)

"STRANGE FLUID Causes Those Heavy Eyelids" says a newspaper headline, quoting a distinguished scientist. Well, that's paying quite a compliment to 3.2.

All of Us

—By Marshall Maslin—

I HAD A FRIEND whose father owned a harness shop. That wasn't so terribly long ago, but it was in the days when considerable handwork was done. Our shoe repairer fixed our shoes by hand. Some of the men in our town loaded their own shotgun shells in brass cartridges (and they may do it yet, for all I know). And the leather goods man made many of the suiteases he sold. . . . George's father made harness and whips, as I remember it, and it was fun to visit his shop and smell the unforgettable odor of the leather. Someone has said that the memory is led by the nose more strongly than by anything else. And it is true that even though you can reprodnce a perfume or an odor by memory, still it does lead you back strongly and surely into the past.

Marshall Maslin

My memory is happily escorted back to the time when George let us go with him on a trip into the country to paint signs advertising his father's shop on farmers' fences. . . . I think they'd object to that now, but then they didn't seem to mind. I think they were content as long as we didn't sneak through those fences to steal melons. . . . We started very early one morning in a cart behind a lazy, sorrel horse. . . . We had two buckets of paint, two brushes. One bucket had yellow paint in it, the other had red. On the way out we'd stop every few hundred yards and paint a length of fence yellow. . . . It was fun driving slowly along between the orchards and the green fields, with the low hills in the distance, talking about things, agreeing and contradicting pleasantly a part of the morning.

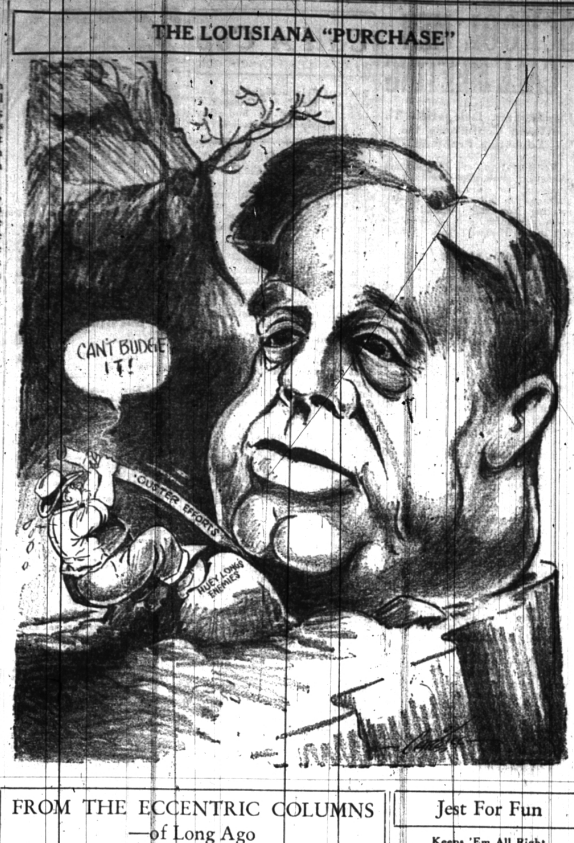
After four or five hours, miles in the country, in the foothills, we stopped and unharnessed the horse and put a noseling on him, and sat on the sweet grass and ate our sandwiches and drank our root beer and crunched our apples and threw the cores at impudent blackbirds. . . . Men of the world, and artists, too.

The way back was the best run, though. Then's when we did our creative work of painting the letters on the yellow background, telling the world to go to "OSBORNE'S AT 539 MAIN STREET," reminding people to buy "THE BEST HARNESS OIL AT OSBORNE'S," stroking in the letters in a lovely red, beautifying the landscape, advertising George's father's place. And doing it just for fun, going along just for the ride and the chance to handle a paint brush.

It isn't much of a memory, but an exceedingly pleasant one, and they do say that people who like to think of their childhood haven't really grown up and probably never will be fully matured like other folk.

But somehow I don't care. It was fun, anyway, being an advertising man on a summer's day.

THE LOUISIANA "PURCHASE"



FROM THE ECCENTRIC COLUMNS —of Long Ago

Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—
The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Returned from his New York visit last week—Horace Hall, esq.

Charlie Aldrich recently presented us with a nice lot of extra large radishes—the best we ever observed.

C. B. Holburt of Royal Oak is painting John Benjamin's house, having finished up McGoldrick's dwelling, both inside and out.

The Bee predicts that our comic opera will be very funny. Didn't suppose it was a funeral sermon, did you Mac?

For the first time in about five years, Miss Nettie Stewart visited in Birmingham last week. She was the guest of Miss Daisy Sibley.

Tuesday, August 7, added another lad to the household of William Hawthorne, Jr. Everything lovely, and William way up of course.

The Ladies Library Society have just finished framing elegant large lithographs of Emerson and Bryant to hang up in their rooms at the Library Hall,

A sign set out by the postoffice door one day last week read, "Woodchuck soup at all hours by F. Durkee and Co.," the result of a party hunting this succulent animal and bagging eight large full-grown chucks.

Last week Wednesday, Mr. S. T. Boyd, as Mrs. Boyd says "while 'toxicated" and coming from Rochester, tipped over his covered carriage and threw out Mrs. B. Fortunately no damage was done as Tib quickly controlled the colt.

Gregory Bros.' combinations gave an exhibition at this place last Friday and for all we know behaved like ladies and gentlemen, paid their bill, and gave a good show, fully as good as any circus troupe that we ever gazed upon. Speaking of behavior, the combination far excelled the group of loafers who made the night hideous and insulted both actors and audience by their unseemly howls, profane and obscene language until obliged to cease by Deputy Sheriffs Beattie and Decker. We expected to hear the cry "Hey, Rube!" and think that some of the boys deserved a thrashing.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

After many years of careful application to work and his barber shop, W. I. Deer takes a week off, accompanied by his wife, and is happily enjoying a visits with relatives in St. Thomas, Ont.

Miss Mary Wilson, sister of H. C. Wilson of Maple Avenue, is spending a summer at Chautauqua, is visiting here at present and enjoying the healthful air that Birmingham is noted for the year 'round.

Last week Wednesday, while Fred M. Spicer was unloading gravel, accompanied by his son, Harold, just south of the Twelve Mile road, two automobiles racing suddenly appeared. One struck the wagon, throwing the little fellow up in the air sky high. His head was badly cut and bruised. An ear was sit and torn from his head, but Dr. N. T. Shaw and a few stitches made the lad nearly as good as before the accident.

The neighboring women were condoling with Mrs. S. Bennett over her latest affliction. With commendable cheerfulness she replied: "I've raised four girls and three boys, expectin' every time they'd be twins, and red-headed like Grandpa Bennett, an' yet they ain't, an' I've been worried considerable over smallpox breakin' out in my big family—so far 'taint. All last summer, July and August and mebbe part of September, I was real melancholic, fearin' I'd got an appendix, but I guess I can't; an' it never onct occured to me that I'd be the one to fall through them rotten old meetin' house steps an' break my leg in two places, but I be."

Happy trio of visitors at Lone Pine, the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Jenkins, are Mrs. Sarah J. Watson, and Mr. William Fletcher and daughter, Miss Alice all the way from Washington, D. C., the land of Teddy, the Roosevelt.

FIVE YEARS AGO

Efforts of physicians failing, Mrs. Lulla Overmyer, 28 years old, mother of two children, died in the St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital, Pontiac, Monday night from effects of taking three ounces of disinfectant following a quarrel with her husband, according to police. They lived on East Maple avenue.

Ten days were given the State of Michigan to open negotiations with the owners of property damaged by the relocation of the Grand Trunk right-of-way, in a decision handed down Monday in Circuit Court. If this is not complied with, the state will be enjoined from further nonstruction on the right-of-way until the new settlement is reached.

The number of Birmingham users of the air mail have doubled since the reduction of rates which took place Aug. 1, according to a report from James W. Cobb, postmaster.

Another Bloomfield Hills policeman—Patrolman Isma Banks—narrowly escaped serious injury Friday night when he was struck by an automobile while questioning a driver on Woodward avenue north of Quarton road.

Announcement is made today of the closing of the Community House for the remainder of the summer for redecoration and repair. The House will be reopened Sept. 4 for the winter season.

With a total attendance estimated at 35,000, the Oakland County fair, held last week, is said to have been the most successful of the 47 previous fairs held in the county.

Poems That Live

AUTHORS AND CRITICS

With fame in just proportion envy grows;
The man that makes a creator makes foes;
Slight peevish insects round a genius rise,
As bright day awakes the world of flies;
With hearty malice, but with feeble wing,
To show they live, they flutter and they sting:
But as by depredations wasps proclaim
The fairest fruit, so these the fairest fame.

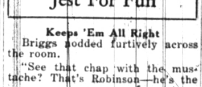
—Edward Young
—"Epistle to Pope"

Jest For Fun

Keeps 'Em All Right

Briggs nodded furtively across the room.

"See that chap with the mustache? That's Robinson—he's the



type of fellow who will promise anything," he said to his companion.

"Really," she said, "but does he keep his promises?"

Briggs grimaced.

"I think he must," he replied rather coldly; "nobody sees or hears anything of them afterwards!"

—o—

Reply to an Invitation to Come to Tea and See The Baby Bedded Down

Thank you for offering to share
Your pride and joy, your son and heir,
With one whose life does not include
The highly spiritual food
Available to those who rear
A child from its initial year.

Although I may be, on the whole,
Exceptionally short of soul,
Unmitigated infancy,
As such, does not appeal to me.
I have do deep conviction that
Association with a brat
(No matter how absurdly small)
Improves the character at all.
Nor do I think that little ones
Mix well with tea and toast and buns.

A baby's place is in his bed—
Not drooling 'round a grown-up's head,
Nor grabbing at a sugar bowl,
Nor squawking for a buttered roll.
The fact that he can walk does not
Astound or thrill me. Many a tot
Has done the same all in good time.
I do not yearn to watch him climb
Nor view his one incipient tooth.
Indeed, my friend, the horrid truth
Is this: I simply do not like
One thing about your little tike.

Why should I, just because he's small,
Salaam and smirk and coo and crawl?
Why should I, just because of size,
Consider him a noble prize?
Forgive me, but I choose my friends
For other reasons, other ends,
For subtler charms along the lines
Of fun or love or monkeyshines,
Or conversational astuteness,
And not for pure and simple cuteness.

—Margaret Fishback in "Life"

—o—

Famous Firms
Around & About

—o—

Modern Babel

Stage Manager—What is all that noise coming from the girls' dressing room?

Assistant—They are all taleing at once.

—Exchange

One Minute Pulpit

As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.—Proverbs 26:9.

The "Big Shots" Say:—

Nicholas Murray Butler, president Columbia University:
"Old-fashioned neutrality has disappeared with the signing of the Pact of Paris."

Edward P. Mulrooney, former police commissioner, New York City:
"Soldiers face danger only in time of war but policemen always are on the field facing public enemies."

Bertram Pollock, British bishop:
"Married life is something different in character from single life."

George E. O. Johnson, Chicago District Attorney:
"I was taught very early that the only way to clean out a garden was to pull up all weeds by the roots and shake them out in the sun."

The Other Chap Says Something—

LET SCHOOLS BE FRUGAL

There is every reason for concern over the financial straits of the Michigan school system. On the other hand it is NOT the most serious problem confronting us today. The recovery program comes first because it is still necessary to eat; to live and education serves no purpose only after the needs of the body have been met. Also graduates from high school and college are of little use if millions educated as well as uneducated are standing in line waiting for a job not yet in sight. In other words a moratorium might be declared on educational needs, until such time as normal conditions have been restored.

Such a drastic step will not be necessary, neither is it to be desired. While a holler goes up all over the state because of the reduced budgets for educational demands, boards of control can, if they will, find a way to limp along until better times return.—Joe E. Sturgeon in Delta Reporter.

A MORAL LET-DOWN

One of the high lights of the last legislature was the enactment of a pari-mutuel betting license law, the proceeds to go towards the support of the Upper Peninsula State Fair, Four-H clubs and several other worthy enterprises. The legislature evidently figured that appropriating the license money from these gambling debauches to worthy projects would add sanctity to the act. The legislature should have gone farther in its search for money to appropriate to worthy purposes. It should have legalized slot machines and dedicated the proceeds of the license to the maintenance of a home for broken-down gamblers at Mackinaw Island which, we understand, is to be the Monte Carlo of the west. The pari-mutuel is just the entering wedge to a moral let down; why not go the entire length? The stench isn't any greater to the nostrils of the decent people of Michigan.—Tom Conlin in Crystal Falls Diamond Drill.

ALEX AGAIN

Thanks to the "straight-from-the-shoulder" tactics of Alex Groesbeck, considerable publicity has been thrown on the raw treatment Federal officials and Wall Street experts handed the Michigan banks. Attorney General O'Brien was ready to quit long ago. This "relentless guardian" of the state commonwealth took the attitude that although the situation was regrettable, there was nothing to be done and advised depositors and stockholders to take their medicine with a smile. It was Mr. Groesbeck who forced the issue and he has made himself a highly popular character in doing so. There is no denying the fact that Mr. Groesbeck has become a gubernatorial prospect again—and a formidable one at that.—Dick Cook in Hastings Banner.

ROMANTIC DAYS

These are colorful and romantic days. As General Balbo, who lead the Italian fleet of airplanes from Rome to Chicago, was speaking from the Italian building at the Century of Progress Sunday afternoon, we walked over to a globe—not being able to understand the intrepid airman—and attempted to visualize the extent of this tremendous history making hop. It is a far cry from Columbus to Balbo, but here are two Italians who will always command a top column position in American history books. Based on the circumstances and privileges of this time, the Columbus errand is, in our opinion, the more daring of the two now famous voyages. If the air trip emphasizes one thing more than another, it is the importance of world peace. Balbo and his men flew a quarter way around the world, showing the possibilities of the airship in future wars.—Murl H. DePoe in Charlotte Republican-Tribune.

IMPORTANT THINGS

Several important things have happened lately, which we desire at this time to bring to the attention of our public.

Al Jolson socked Walter Winchell in the neck. A bystander was heard to breathe, hopefully, "are they both kill?"

Aimee Semple McPherson is back, has convinced most of the boys it wasn't a baby operation she went to the hospital for, is going to go into the divorce court, and what the hell of it.—Ed Nowack in Michigan State Digest.

Our Scrap Book

IT HAS BEEN WELL SAID—

If you want happiness, give it.

To prove your religion, live it.

The great secret of success in life is to be ready when opportunity comes.

A slap on the shoulder is worth two on the jaw.

It isn't the mountain ahead that wears you out—it's the grain of sand in your shoe.

Luck is ever waiting for something to turn up. Labor, with keen eye and strong purpose, turns up something.

In the Store of Success there are no bargain counters.

A man is poor when he makes money at the expense of his character.

What you do, what you become, is traceable to what you have learned to think from day to day.

The greater the heart of a man the less room there is in it for the memory of wrong.

It is better to pin your faith to pluck than to waste your time pursuing luck.

Following the line of least resistance is what makes men and rivers crooked.

You make or mar your chances for promotion by doing just as much or as little as you can.—The Christian Science Monitor.

ParaLaffs

Except

A truthful woman is one who doesn't lie about anything except her age, her weight, and her husband's salary.—Dunbar's Weekly (Phoenix.)

Usually

Hands across the sea, we notice, are usually extended in our direction with the palm uppermost.—Portland Oregonian.

Practically

If the nursing they need is any index, practically all industries are infant industries nowadays.—Arkansas Gazette.

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. Letters must be limited to 150 words, and must be in the office by Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC

To the Editor:

I saw in a newspaper recently a statement made by Sheriff Reynolds that drunkenness was on the increase. Well, why not? Are we not doing by law all we can to make that a nation of alcoholic drinkers? Our rulers propose to take the 18th amendment out of our constitution. What for? So we can have hard liquor to drink. Then we can have drunkenness on the increase in earnest. May our God deliver us as a nation out of this liquor traffic in which we have been caught.

JOHN McCARROLL
431 Park street.

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