The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 1933

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be submitted before noon on Wednesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the copy as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a shortage of help in the composing room, headlines written by persons 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.

A Friendly Criticism

A letter written by Thomas A. Neal, of Oakland avenue, commending the City Commission for omitting from its new budget an appropriation to cover the cost of publishing the minutes of its meetings will be found on another page of this paper. Though sincere in his belief that publication of the minutes is a needless expense, Mr. Neal has assured The Eccentric that he has no personal animosity toward this newspaper, despite implications in his communication that we are attempting to dodge a public duty by not publishing the minutes at our own expense.

As pointed out previously in these columns, The Eccentric is in an embarrassing position in taking issue with the Commission's action. We make a profit from publishing the minutes at the city's expense, and will miss that profit if publication is discontinued.

Nevertheless—and Mr. Neal should realize this as readily as anyone else—those minutes, published as an advertisement in this newspaper, represent an official accounting of the Commission to the public it serves, and the only official accounting that could ever be practical at low cost.

Mr. Neal says that "The Eccentric can help to pay its debt to the public by keeping the latter—the citizens of Birmingham—posted as to the activities and deliberations of the Commission." The Eccentric—and Mr. Neal knows this, too—has always attempted to give in its news columns a comprehensive and accurate account of the actions of the Commission. It will continue to do this no matter what decision is finally arrived at in regard to publication of the minutes.

But the fact that The Eccentric gives an account of what the Commission is doing in its news columns does not relieve the Commission from the duty of making its own accounting to the public. Assuredly, many duplications occur, but no newspaper can attempt to record in detail every action of an official body. The best it can do is to report only those items of wide general interest. Other details, not of general interest, but of vital interest and importance to some people, would be lacking if official publication of the minutes were abandoned, and we believe the people whom these details concern have a right to expect they will continue to be readily available.

These minutes represent almost the last remaining thread of direct contact between the Commission and the people. This newspaper will be fulfilling its duty if it maintains a contact which, no matter how steady and reliable it may be, must nevertheless be indirect. The Commission will be fulfilling its duty if it maintains that direct contact which will do more than anything else to serve as an evidence of good faith between the city's governing body and the people it governs.

Insuring High Salaries

Among those who have lived plentiously and copiously during the golden decade just passed are officials of many life insurance companies. Some of their salaries, according to The Chicago Daily News, make the president of the United States appear to be an apprentice clerk. These princely remunerations are eloquent evidence that "once upon a time" there must have been lots of money in the U. S. A.

Not only have the salaries of big life insurance companies been kept up but in some cases they have even been boosted since the high time of 1929. According to the News, the Equitable Life is the only one that has reduced these salaries—it having recently declared a cut of 11 per cent.

The president of the Equitable is stated to have received $75,000 a year in 1929 and $100,000 in 1932. Besides him, two vice-presidents are put at $40,000 a year, another one at $30,000 and a fourth at $20,000.

The president of the Metropolitan Life is charged with $75,000 in 1929 and $200,000 in 1932. And the company has one vice-president at $125,000, another at $40,000, a third at $35,000 and a fourth at $21,000.

The Mutual Life is charged with paying $125,000 to its president, $40,000 each to three vice-presidents, and $30,000 to a fourth one.

The New York Life is stated to have paid $125,000 to its president, $40,000 each to three vice-presidents, $37,000 to two other high officers, and other salaries in proportion.

The Prudential Co. is declared to have paid its president $125,000 a year, besides $75,000 to one vice-president, $50,000 to a second one and $43,000 each to two others.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, in publishing these figures and commenting on them, says:

"Let policy holders who find the doors of these companies shut to them when they apply for loans who find Congress, state legislatures and state insurance commissioners tumbling over themselves in an eager rush to help insurance companies through the depression—let them read these figures and weep." Of course, big business men feel differently than we ordinary people do about huge salaries and stake-offs. Probably the average big corporation officials would see nothing wrong in drawing anything up to a million or two a year out of a business which they help to operate. In fact they are said to rate one another largely on the basis of the money they get. They see no moral in it involved.

Democratic Prison Control

Considerable criticism is being directed at Governor Comstock's administration because of the wholesale discharge and parole of prisoners from the various State penal institutions. Already, we learn, more than 1400 inmates of Jackson prison have been released since January 1, while at the same time many rumors of "fixing" are going the rounds.

You undoubtedly recall a State Representative named Vernon J. Brown, Ingham County newspaper publisher, who a year ago wrote a number of articles on the subject of State extravagance, which were published in The Eccentric, as well as 84 other Michigan newspapers. Mr. Brown is still a member of the Legislature, and has done some very effective work this session. Let's read what he says about conditions at Jackson prison, and then, Mr. and Mrs. Citizen, do a little straight thinking on your own part so that the next election will mean something to you; here's part of what Brown uttered last week:

"How long before Jackson prison is the scene of a riot or wholesale delivery? That's what several penologists are asking among themselves. They are certain that Jackson is due for an outbreak unless immediate remedies are effected.

"Guards and principal officers of years of experience are being discharged at the prison to make way for political appointees. The prisoners are dizzy from the panorama of changing faces. New offices are being created daily and the majority of them are being passed out to Detroit Jews, it is said. The same report says that if the number of Jew appointees increases further that pork will be banned from the prison diet and that Jewish holidays will be observed by the entire prison.

"Prisoners are in a mental ferment over prison changes. Men sentenced for the most serious crimes are getting sudden releases. A total of 1400 have passed through the parole mill since January 1, it is claimed. Prisoners are gossiping over "fixes" close to the throne who for certain payments can effect paroles and pardons. Certain it is that relatives and friends of convicts have been frequently approached by racketeers who claim influence with the powers that be. State parole officials declare the rumors are without foundation but they still persist.

"Legislative proposals that the fourth offender clause in the prison code be cancelled are being eagerly watched. And if those hardened offenders are disappointed in the outcome they will be desperate indeed.

"There is unrest and excitement at Jackson prison, penologists assert. They claim that the prisoners are wondering if the new deal is a square deal. Some of them hope it isn't. Honest citizens hope that it is."

Hollywood's Glory Fades

Out in Hollywood, where terrestrial stars have shone for the past decade like the milky way on a blue-black night in November, there are many evidences of a vacuous void—in these times symbols of an erstwhile splendor now gone into eclipse by the gloom of a depression. Beautiful homes and grounds, not so long ago the playgrounds of temperamental male and female stars of the picture world, are empty reminders of the glory that once was Hollywood. Too bad, in a way—but it had to come, of course. News of actors and actresses whose salaries once exceeded that of the President of the United States, are either without work, in bankruptcy, or are receiving only a fraction of their former wages. Thus thirteen the seasons, the stars and the planets; they shine for their day and are become cold and lifeless—for such planetary action is governed by temporal, not eternal, laws. Alas! alack; and alad!

Out Fishin'

Our old friend, Murl H. (Doc) DeFoe, editor of the Charlotte Republican-Tribune, has finally succumbed to the great and gentle art of fishing! At least that is what Elton R. Eaton, Plymouth publisher, told us last week. He says he saw "Doc" out in a boat on Burt Lake, a native baiting his hook and extracting the fish taken. This is great news! Further proof of "Doc's" elevation to higher things is seen in his own comment on the subject:

"Fishing has always been associated with the spiritual. It strengthens and promotes "the fruit of the spirit" as against the "works of the flesh." In terms of every day life fishing encourages the democracy of decency which is Godly in any man's religion. As one of the popular poets says:

A feller has no time for hates,
Out fishin';
He isn't eager to be great,
Out fishin';
He isn't thinking thoughts of self
Or goods stacked high upon a shelf
But he is always just himself,
Out fishin'."

LAST WEEK IT LOOKED as though its sponsors were unable to trot out their horse racing bill, as somebody or other it had gone to the dogs.

All of Us

By Marshall Maslin

WHEREAS: It is foolishness for a man to be trusting in this world, because too many people will betray the trust he imposes in them.

WHEREAS: The honest man sees his dishonest fellow ahead of him and succeed where he has failed.

Marshall Maslin

WHEREAS: Humility is too often mistaken for cowardice, and the humble man is abused and mistreated by the arrogant.

WHEREAS: The man who goes his own gait in this world and does not clutter up his life with obligations, wives, children, love and regard for the rights and responsibilities of other people, frequently achieves wealth and power.

WHEREAS: The cynic plays the safest game and is never surprised by the meanness, sluggishness, callousness and wickedness of human beings.

WHEREAS: The pessimist draws more joy out of life than the optimist because he expects nothing and is rarely disappointed.

WHEREAS: Children grow up and leave their fathers and mothers lonely in their old age.

WHEREAS: Love, more often than not, lasts but a little while.

WHEREAS: We can find no positive evidence, anywhere on this earth, that there is anything beyond this life or this mortal scene.

THEREFORE: Be It Resolved: That the wise man will reject these earthly considerations that rise from weariness, headaches and the disorder of his liver and will trust his fellows, be honest, make friends and keep them, consider that optimism is better than pessimism, stake his happiness on marriage, have children, and believe that there is something more in life than he can know with his eyes and his ears and his little brain—and that thus he will come unregretting and joyously defiant to the end of his days on earth.

From THE ECCENTRIC Columns of Long Ago

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Get your corn planted.

George Shain is now residence of Willis street in Jackson this city and will be a credit to the town.

The farmers have been busy as bees the past week—studying up forms of protesting against the weather with.

Anyone wishing Kendall's valuable treatise on the horse can have one by calling at THE ECCENTRIC office and asking so.

Found by Mrs. James Ivers, a ladies waterproof. The owner can have the same by calling at this office and paying for the ad's.

King Karnival and his Komical Krew will be the main attraction on the coming Fourth and will help to make one of the merriest, maddest days, our village ever saw.

One of those old time, old fashioned barn dances came off at Charley Adams' Gilbert lake, last Friday night. We are sorry we could not attend, but the fates willed it otherwise.

That billiard balls of a head that deals out stamps at the P. O. is the same old genial John Hannis but the barber got him in the chair and dealt with him with every one else, cut him short—yes, very short.

Children's Day was appropriately observed at the M. E. Church last Sunday by a very beautiful service in the evening. The church was profusely decorated with flowers and something like a dozen canaries helped along the music. Several very young ones did much to add to the success of the occasion, among whom were Miss Blanche Bigelow, Miss Mamie Tasker, Miss Rose Brockway and many others. Altogether it was a joyful occasion and one to be remembered.

We wouldn't for the world have our readers infer that we think matrimony has had any effect on our friend Gus Pohle, oh no! But it looks as if he had forgotten how to drive, all of a sudden, for he went to turn around in the road this side of the toll gate the other morning and deliberately backed the buggy off the bank and the aforesaid turned a "summersault" backwards in the twinkling of an eye and Gus and his bride of a week "tumbled to the racket" after the most approved plans and specifications. The horse was generous and Gus was let headed as usual and the only damage was a broken wheel and some disarranged toilets. After this, Gus will carry a ten acre lot with him to turn around in.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

The happiest and most surprised woman on Maple avenue last week was Mrs. William Mitchell who went to her door on hearing a rap, and there discovered nearly twenty of her Baptist lady friends who had dropped in unexpectedly to help her celebrate her birthday anniversary. It don't matter what one, but it all the same, everybody pitched in and had a most delightful afternoon.

The young gentlemen, Messrs Seely Peck, Jr., and Don M. Blair have gone west to seek their fortunes. Success to boys!

Thomas Thurlby, of Maple avenue, has a gang of carpenters, led by Theo Bookham, making great improvements on his cozy home. When "de gang" leaves you won't know the place.

35c per night for sleeping is pretty good wages and Mr. Mitchell will pay it to any young man who wants it, for any night in 100. Call at the telephone office and see Manager Mitchell for particulars.

Charles J. Shain attended a meeting of the Grand Chapter at Grand Rapids one day this week representing Birmingham Chapter No. 93 R. A. M. Everything grand.

Mrs. Irving H. Wood is a delegate representing Birmingham L. O. T. M. M. lodge at the National convention held at Toledo, Ohio, all this week. She is accompanied, supported and aided by the following members of the Birmingham Lodge of Maccabees—Miss Anna M. Parks, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Todd, Mrs. Carrie Howland, Mrs. Amos Howland, Miss Ethel Harris and Mrs. F. J. Shain. Good time? You can wager.

The Birmingham R-O-Martian band was out last Saturday night and stirred the blood of many a listener. With John Benjamin, as fifer, James B. Hunt snare drummer and John H. Shain bass drummer, the boys got out music that was fine indeed. They had a big audience that stayed just as long as they and they were sorry to see them quit. Do it again, please.

FIVE YEARS AGO

Fifty-six seniors of Baldwin High School will receive their diplomas Friday night at the commencement exercises in the high school auditorium.

General growth in the enrollment of Birmingham schools was reported Monday night by Superintendent Clarence Carman at the annual meeting of the school board for this district.

Continuing solicitations in the drive for funds for the Birmingham Community House workers this week reported a total of approximately $108,000 in pledges already received.

Plans are completed by the Briggs Commercial and Development Company of Detroit for the construction of a commercial building at Woodward and Maple avenues, but work will not start until more rentals are recorded, according to James Goudie, vice-president of the company.

Fourteen Birmingham boys have signed today to go to Y. M. C. A. camps for the summer, according to announcement by Robert D. Lynd, secretary.

THE OTHER CHAP SAYS SOMETHING—

59 VARIETIES OF CRIME

In looking over the statistical report of the Michigan State Police for April, I observed that there are 59 crimes which, in this state, are punishable by confinement in a prison. So when I am disposed to be discouraged with the conduct or attitude of some friend, cheer up and keep sweet. Look what he might be at. It might interest you to know that, with a single exception, every one of the 59 varieties of crime is represented in the present inmate population at Jackson. The non-criminal crime is "robbery armed," with 1146 out of a total population of 5437. Incidentally, conviction of this crime in April sent 37 men to Jackson while 16 men so charged were released during the same period. Breaking and entering at the night time is a good item, with 378. Stealing automobiles is still good with 380 representatives, but fess however of 22 for the month. The liquor law violators are showing a slump with 63 at the end of the month compared to 86 at the close of the March count.—Murl H. DeFee in Charlotte Republican-Tribune.

THE MORGAN CASE

The investigation of the house of Morgan by the senate committee has brought forth some startling revelations. Chief among these is the fact that many men prominent politically were accorded the courtesy, through special arrangement, of buying stocks and bonds at quotations much lower than appeared in the regular market.

Whether or not actual political favors were received in return for the condition is an unhealthy one. Whether or not material political favors were offered and accepted in reciprocation, the men who were extended the courtesy of purchasing at low quotations would be under obligation to Morgan. It is always well that men such as Morgan have certain men who are in high position under obligation to him. Therefore it is fairly safe to assume that Morgan, either directly or indirectly, did benefit politically in the transactions.—George Breen in Iron River Reporter.

OURS TO REBUILD

Surely there are troublesome times. We go from day to day wondering what is going to happen next. We wonder if there is something in the offing to indicate better business, to indicate relief from present unsatisfactory conditions. When President Roosevelt by one stroke of his pen closed the banks of the country, it looked like a desperate thing—it looked like the end for a time of all business.

Serious as it was—and as it has proven to be—we are firmly convinced that the new president performed a real duty to America. Drastic, to be sure, but drastic action is needed in times like these. We are down to bed rock and as President Roosevelt has indicated, we are going to build from a firm, solid and an honest foundation.

The early preparations for a great, beautiful new building are always ugly to look at. Torn up earth, splintered timbers, broken and misshaped pieces of rock litter the ground where the new building is going to be erected.

As the foundation takes form, as the great steel frame is placed together and the walls erected, some of the ugliness disappears. And soon there is a completed edifice, a great building that is beautiful to look at and stands as a credit to the engineering and artistic ability of man.

So it is with our business structure. When President Roosevelt closed the banks, it was like setting off a charge of dynamite to clear away a place for a stronger, safer and more useful business structure in America. Every American is a workman on that new building. If we give to President Roosevelt an honest day's work, loyal and conscientious service, the kind that he has a right to expect from us, the sooner the new building will be erected and the better off will be all America.—Elton R. Eaton in Plymouth Mail.

THE DIFFERENCE IN TOWNS

The reason why some towns seem to do things and get ahead while others, often more favorably situated, do not, is that in the former there lives a citizen or two who believe these things can be done and goes ahead disregarding all croakers and knockers and doubters and does the job. Trace any community development down, in any city and you will find if you go back to the beginning of it, that some man started the movement and stayed with it until the job was done. It might be well to note also in this connection that no program of development was ever unanimous when it was started. Every community has a number who stand on the side lines growling and doubting until the band wagon gets started and then climb on to join the victors.—Harry Myers in Lapeer County Press.

Much talk about our Michigan legislature taking steps to abolish all property and real estate taxes. This might not be a bad idea, especially for farmers whose property is nearly always in sight and can't be hidden from the assessor, as is too often the case with holders of vast industrial assets, bonds, stocks and mortgages, etc., for whom there has always been many legal and technical avenues of escape.

Of course, the property tax will largely be replaced, no doubt, by a sales tax, but this at its worst will more nearly equalize the tax burdens.

There has never been a tax system devised that was just or equal in its application, and probably never will be.—George English in Huron County Tribune.

MAY GO HOME IN JUNE

The adjournment of the Michigan Legislature is expected to come about the second week in June and then the legislators will go home. That's going to be the biggest break the people of this State have gotten since these mere were elected. Some will say that's the best thing they have done yet.—to adjourn.—C. S. Seed in Rochester Clarion.

One of the ways the faculty of the University of Michigan adjusts that institution to its appropriations cut has been to let a part of its hospital nurses go and overwork the rest. Representative Vern Brown, of Mason, points out that it could absorb the slash by scaling down some of its own $10,000 salaries. That would have been genuine chivalry.—E. O. Gildant in Utica Sentinel.

One Minute Pulpit

A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.—Proverbs, 28: 17.

Ships and Sealing Wax

By ALLEN TERRY

A Newspaper Man's Portrait Of The Perfect Public Official

He neither seeks publicity nor tramps to avoid it.

He says what he thinks and is surprised nor peeved when editors pick his statements in the newspapers.

He submits readily to questions and interviews, and doesn't weep when his conversations with reporters by saying that "of course, this is for publication."

He doesn't figure he can fool all of the people most of the time, and get by the rest of them by saying he was misquoted.

He expects accuracy and fairness on the part of the newspapers but at the same time he understands why it is that they will use two columns to a paragraph political scrap in the course of which somebody has called him a liar and a liar, but will relegate the newest pet scheme for erecting a new flag pole on the city hall to two paragraphs under a 3 point headline on page 12.

He'll fight like a Trojan for anything he thinks is right, but will expect the newspapers to carry his stories into the Tray. He'll be satisfied if they just stand on the sidelines and watch him.

He's the chairman of a board or commission he'll never. In the course of a public meeting, when the newspaper men present will make requests that they plug up their ears as what's going on, he doesn't want them to hear, he would be better for him to throw them out, hold a secret meeting and let them try to find out what happened for themselves. But if he's the chairman of a school board, he won't often talk about things that would be harmful for the public to know.

He realizes that an effective way of keeping things out of the papers is by telling them to reporters "in confidence," but he also realizes that news can't be suppressed merely by not being published, and he's square enough not to resort to such a trick except when the information he gives will be valuable to the reporters as being sound material, for preparing items in advance for a story which is to ripen at a future date.

He knows that reporters and newspapers are no more infallible than others, and makes allowances accordingly.

When he sees something published that he doesn't like, he doesn't jump to the immediate conclusion that the paper's are "after him." And when he sees something he does like, he doesn't get inflated with notion the papers are giving his bandwagon for him.

He makes a friend of the newspaper man, but not a recipient of favors which he passes out with the sole intention of receiving favors in return.

He treats newspaper men with the same courtesy and respect he extends to other associates.

He gets annoyed with interruptions to any reasonable time.

He is obliging with photographs.

His office is responsive, but not gargantuous.

He is reliable.

He is to be found when wanted.

He doesn't exist.

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 500 words and must be in the office by Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

A LEGAL PRECEDENT

To the Editor:

Not only was the recent Supreme Court decision in favor of the Bloomfield Hills and Birmingham residents a Godsend to the people whose properties had been devaluated by the re-location of the Grand Trunk Railroad, but it is said to have established an important legal precedent.

It is claimed by those versed in legal matters that this case, so strenuously fought on both sides for more than three years, is the first in the country where damages have been awarded for properties not actually taken for the construction of a railroad.

The expression "railroad environment" was used by one of the experts who testified early in the hearing of this now famous case to describe the effect upon the properties adjacent to the new location of the railroad.

The witness said that the condition of the properties involved in the litigation had been changed from an exclusively residential environment to one of railroad environment. This expression was expounded and clarified by the attorneys for the property holders, and used by Judge McGaffey in Pontiac, was again referred to by the Supreme Court and was included in the decision written by Justice North showing the change of "environment" which had been brought about by the location of the railroad near to property which had been dedicated and restricted for the exclusive use of residences only."

That damages had been done by such change of character was of course plain to any fair-minded person, but was bitterly contested by the attorneys for the Grand Trunk Railway and State of Michigan. What these attorneys could not gain by facts of legal arguments they sought to gain by delay and trivial obstructions to such an extent that both the local judge and the Supreme Court decision in the following reference to their tactics:

Now, all you are doing here is trying to delay this so long that the property owners will die before they have the benefit of the award. That is the way it looks to me."

Incidentally this case also proves that real estate restrictions, carefully drawn, may not, with sanity be defied, even by the sovereign State of Michigan nor by that part of eminent domain held by individuals in its charter by the United States Government.

This important victory was won by the genial, mild-mannered Frank W. Atkinson, for some years a resident of Birmingham but now living in Bloomfield Hills, where, five years ago, in Stinchfield Acres, he built a beautiful home.

He is a member of the Detroit law firm of Atkinson, Ortman and Shock. The other members of the firm also live here. Mr. Ortman in Birmingham and Mr. Shock in Bloomfield Estates.

THEODORE H. MILLINGTON,
Oakland Avenue.

BARNUM POOL

To the Editor:

Well guided, healthful recreation will be offered to the boys and girls of Birmingham this summer if money can be raised to open the Barnum School swimming pool.

Surely, Birmingham wishes its recreation to be under thoughtful, competent guidance. The opening of this pool is quite in harmony with such a wish.

W. E. PECK

Jest For Fun

Homeless Ties

We frequently wondered who buys
The simply terrific cravats
The purely malefic cravats
The miles of unspeakable ties
Gents' Furnishing places
Display on the cases
Which hold the pajamas and hats.
The deadly and dreadable ties
The wholly incredible ties
Designed to drive anyone bats,
The wild, unbelievable
Weird, inconceivable
Piles of unholy cravats!

Who falls for these maniac dyes
Of dizzy, erratic cravats?
Of polychromatic cravats
Set generate spots in the eyes?
Can anyone bear 'em?
—The man who would wear 'em
Would also wear polka-dot spats
To go with these poisonous ties
These shrieking and noisonous ties
Which hit you a punch in the slats;
These livid and lecherous
Queasy and recherous
Hideous heaps of cravats!

—I have a bunch on who buys
These vilely obscenous cravats
These highly gangrenous cravats
—The ladies absorb the supplies!
As gifts they employ 'em
And husbands destroy 'em
Or drown 'em like puppies or cats.
Or plant these deplorable ties
These sawful, and horrible ties
In deserted burial-plots,
Where Nature demolishes
Ends and abolishes
Mounds of malignant cravats!
—Berton Braley in "Life."

His Sister: Do you know that our wife is going abroad telling everybody that you can't keep her clothes?

The Husband: That's nothing. I thought her a home and can't keep in that, either.

Famous Firms
Faith, Hope & Charity.