The Birmingham Eccentric

(Founded in 1878)

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THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1936

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.

Disciplining Children In The Public Schools

In the first place, let us admit that youth is the personification of the spirit of adventure. Youth is eternally full of vigorous energy, wanting—wherever it may be—"to go places and do things." Youth must be supervised, often disciplined, whether it be in the home, the school, or the church.

It is interesting to observe the recent inauguration of greater discipline in the local school—especially the Baldwin High School, where, under the requirements of State law, secret societies are being eliminated. While there may be an honest difference of opinion among parents as to the need, or the vested right, of a School Board to control this matter of sororities and fraternities in high schools, there is no ambiguity in the State statutes covering them. The State emphatically opposes secret societies in high schools, and the School Board is bound to enforce this law.

It seems to us, too, that parents can be appreciative of the public school's efforts to assist them in the effort to make children obedient to law and order. In fact, we repeatedly hear parents praise the efforts of the School Board, Supt. Charles Grandell, and Principal Melvin Hart in their endeavor to enforce other rules in and about the high school building.

Co-operation by the students to observe the no-smoking rule on school property, the no-sitting-in-parked-cars next to the school building will be approved by the school authorities, of course. Here again, we are told, the School Board will be enforcing State laws.

It may seem rather abrupt for the school officials to trot out all these State statutes at this time—so we suggest, in the interests of the whole community, that parents opposed to such procedure get in direct touch with the School Board at one of its regular meetings. They'll treat you courteously, for they really want parent co-operation in the administration of schooling to the youth of this district.

Modern Youth Looks At Religion

How does modern youth look at religion?

In last week's Eccentric the first answer to this highly important question was presented by Rev. W. Hamilton Aulenbach, assistant rector of Christ Church, Cranbrook. Other answers will be presented in this newspaper in the series of articles written by other local preachers. They merit the serious consideration of every parent; no youth can afford to overlook them, either—for to deny the need of God in one's life is to deny the need of life itself for life!

Rev. Aulenbach presents a fair and frank thesis on the subject, holding that, in most cases, a young person's interest or disinterest in religion depends very largely upon the home. Rev. Aulenbach, himself still young enough in years to have more than an average preacher's sympathy with youth's problems, makes the following pointed statements:

"If the problem of youth and religion, however, stands out today as never before, it is because in addition to his own natural uncertainty, he has to cope with the uncertainty, the confusion, and the indifference of his elders.

"May I pound away on this idea that young men and women look at religion as do their parents, their teachers, and the neighbors next door. Where there are normal, reasonable, spiritually-minded people about them, youth, if not immediately, eventually comes to appreciate religion . . . We err in pointing the finger at the youth of our land. The pointed finger should serve to emphatically remind us that too many adults are thoroughly lost as to their own religious beliefs and convictions.

"Youths today seldom see their mothers and their fathers in prayer about the home . . . Youths are naturally religious. They were intended to be . . . If youths are to be given the chance to express themselves spiritually, then as adults we must first insist that religion be given the attention and consideration it deserves."

Rev. Aulenbach's utterances merit attention. Youth enters a world created by its elders; youth will grow into the dwarf, or the fullness of its rightful stature, only as youth's elders prepare the way for them.

"Star Chamber Sessions"

Birmingham is supposed to have a "commission form" of local government, with public discussion of the public business. In reality, though, for quite a number of years Birmingham has had a "committee form" of government, with most of the public's business discussed in "star chamber sessions" in the City Hall. One Commissioner, with what he thinks is a good idea, seldom gets that idea outside the "star chamber session," when he finds himself out-voted by a majority of his fellow Commissioners.

Thus, a Commissioner who may have a minority, though good idea, is unable to become a true "representative" of the people in his relation to local government. We do not impugn the motives or intent of any City Commissioner who believes in these "star chamber sessions"; but we do hold that this type of administration is not in keeping with the American concept of democracy, and to that extent is not conducive to a maximum of efficiency and economy in operation.

28 Pigs—With 13 Each For 7 People (How To Do It:)

Farmer Landsoil went to sleep early that night in a Washington hotel—all tired out from his train ride and from reading government literature sent him from Henry Wallace's Dept. of Agriculture. His mind was in something of a turmoil, confused over the program of scarcity being planned for him by a philanthropic braintrust. For the first time in his long life he was going to get something for nothing; so much for plowing under crops, so much for holding land from cultivation, so much for killing off, or not raising pigs.

Farmer Landsoil rolled and tossed fretfully—when all of a sudden he found himself ushered into a huge marble building in Washington, and he remembered hearing someone say: "Here, Mr. President, is Farmer Landsoil, he wants to get on relief."

And Farmer Landsoil walked over to a large desk behind which sat a smiling man, who extended his hand and said: "Welcome, my friend. So you want to get on relief, eh? That's easy—all you have to do is to prove that you haven't anything,—you haven't anything, have you, back on your farm?"

Farmer Landsoil scratched his greying head, and answered: "Well, Mr. President, it's correct that, outside a heavy mortgage, my family, and 28 pigs, I ain't got a thing."

The President smiled in a friendly way, and then said: "Well, my friend, just go back and give the 28 pigs away to your neighbors and then we'll be able to put you on relief. By the way, how many neighbors have you? Seven, eh? Well, just go back home and divide the 28 pigs among your seven neighbors, giving each neighbor 13 pigs. Then we'll put you on relief."

Farmer Landsoil looked at the President in dumb amazement. "But . . . but, Mr. President, while I admit I didn't go to Harvard, I don't see how I can divide 28 pigs among seven neighbors and give each 13 pigs. Would you mind telling me how to do it?"

Taking his budget-balancing pencil in hand, the President said: "It's easy. See—just write down 28 and divide by seven; seven goes into eight once, leaving one; place the one below the line and bring down the 2 and you have 21; divide by seven and you have three—that makes 13. Do it like this:

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7 | 28 | 13
    7
    --
    21
    21
    --
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So Farmer Landsoil left the President's office, still somewhat puzzled. He sauntered down the marble corridor until he came to a door over which was the name of General Hugh S. Johnson. "Gosh, there's a right smart man," thought Farmer Landsoil, "been readin' a lot about him—guess I'll go in and ask him about it.

"Well," answered General Johnson, after being told of the President's system of division, "the President is generally right. Let's work it out by multiplication. Let's write down 13 and under it place 7 and so 7 times three is 21 and we'll write it down; then seven times 1 is seven and we'll place it under the 1 in 21, like this:

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 13
  7
 --
 21
  7
 --
 28
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by golly, that does give us 28, doesn't it! Yep, the President is right," beamed the General, as he went back to his NRA.

But Farmer Landsoil was still in a quandary. Never in his life had he been told of this new form of arithmetic. Never had he been able to work out the number of rows to an acre, the interest on his mortgage, or the number of fenceposts per mile by this new and bewildering mathematical formula. He kept on walking down the marble corridor until he came to another door, over which was written: Harold Ickes, Secretary of Interior. Farmer Landsoil had heard of Sec. Ickes, too. He decided to ask him "how about dividing 28 pigs among seven neighbors, giving each 13."

Secretary Ickes was very affable. His long friendship with Harry L. Hopkins had made him charitable toward an otherwise cruel and heartless world. He listened intently to Farmer Landsoil's problem, then said: "Well, at first glance it does sorta look odd—but the President is never wrong, and General Johnson is generally right, too—they've worked it out by division and multiplication, so let's see how it works out by addition.

"Now, let's write down seven sets of 13, like this:

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13
13
13
13
13
13
13
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and then let's start in an' add 'em up; 3 and 3 makes 6 plus 3 makes 9 plus 3 makes 12 plus 3 makes 15 plus 3 makes 18 plus 3 makes 21—and then let's keep right on going from the top 3 to the top 1 and then go downward and we get 21 plus seven 1's and we have 28. By golly, Mr. Landsoil, both the President and General Johnson are right. You can go home and divide up your 28 pigs among seven neighbors, giving each neighbor 13 pigs; then come on down to Washington and we'll put you on relief."

So Farmer Landsoil went back home and started out to do the trick; he called in his seven neighbors and told them what he was going to do. While engaged in making himself quite plain about how he would accomplish the feat, he was interrupted by rude hands placed upon his shoulders, and he recognized them as belonging to the keeper over at the . . . .

And just at this tremendous moment Farmer Landsoil was roused from his sleep by the noise of seven thousand riveters as they clinched the redhot bits of iron into the immense government building being put up next to his hotel, to house a rapidly decreasing bureaucracy that was the Democratic Party's platform promise during the 1932 Presidential campaign.

So he packed his carpetbag and returned to his home in the middle west, determined that, perhaps, it was easier to let the braintrust figure out how to restore prosperity through a program of scarcity, than to try to divide 28 pigs among seven neighbors and give each 13 pigs.

YOUR AVERAGE AMERICAN is a gregarious animal who loves his fellows, but is willing to pay a high tax for maintaining political isolation. He loves to think he can self-govern himself, and then wonders why his taxes are getting higher and higher because he won't take time to govern himself.

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.

To the Editor:

Please publish the two enclosed letters, one from City Manager James W. Parry to me, and the other my reply to him. Thank you.

HARRY A. STONE
547 Riveroak avenue

March 4, 1936

Mr. Harry A. Stone
5-120 General Motors Building
Detroit, Michigan
Dear Mr. Stone:

Acknowledging your letter of February 27th, it is a matter of sincere regret to the commission that you do not see fit to accept their invitation to attend a meeting and discuss with them the questions you raise. Every paragraph in your letter indicates that you do not have the information on which to base a sound conclusion. In general, the fact is inaccurate, on which to get it is a newspaper.

For instance your original question, if I understand it, was what does the city pay for personal services? The answer you got was a semi-monthly payroll and an indication of some $95,000 per year. The right answer is more nearly $126,000. Any conclusion you therefore reached on the basis of the newspaper figure might well be in error.

Again the payroll is misleading as to functions. For instance, there is nobody in the manager's office except the manager and one clerk. All other functions listed are city wide and are carried on the payroll merely for convenience in clerical routine, but the question asked was correctly answered.

"Did the collection of delinquent taxes justify the payment to a collector at the rate of $1800 per year?" The cost is more nearly $3,000 per year and the effort was judged worth more than its cost at two different specific sessions when it was decided by vote of all seven commissioners to continue it July 1st and November 1st. It would take you 20 or 30 minutes to accurately appraise these results both as to actual receipts and other benefits but the categorical answer to your question is "yes." Did you have specific information to the contrary or was it merely a rhetorical question?

This Thursday evening of this week at 8 o'clock there is the first meeting of the Citizens Committee appointed to study the municipal Light Plant problem and the commission cordially invites you to attend. Some 22 citizens, most of them men of large affairs, have consented to put in six or eight evenings in the study of this project, believing it to be worth while to the comunity. If you have information that would prevent this waste of time you should give it to them.

I should be glad to have you call at my office any time to discuss any phase of city problems in which you are interested.

Yours very truly,
J. W. PARRY
City Manager

March 13, 1936

Mr. J. W. Parry, Manager
City of Birmingham
Birmingham, Michigan
Dear Sir:

Upon my return from a business trip to Philadelphia and New York, I find your letter of March 4th and I am quite surprised as to its contents. It has always been my idea that the reason the American Press has been uncensored is due primarily to the accuracy of these papers and the fearlessness which the editors display in supporting or condemning policies of local and state, as well as national concern. Do you not realize that the Birmingham Eccentric is exchanged with every other newspaper in this part of the country and that every editor will shortly know of your feelings towards newspapers?

The city payroll the Eccentric published was given them by one of your co-workers as being correct, but now you are betraying your fellow workers by saying the 1936 payroll was $126,000 instead of $97,000 as published in the newspaper. How do you suppose we feel now when you state that it really and truly was $126,000; not very pleasant reading I assure you for we who pay the bills.

Referring further to your letter and to last night's Eccentric, with the 40% delinquency now in tax collections for which the city spent $3,000 in an endeavor to collect same, doesn't look very good, and why did you not assign the delinquent tax collections to the basis of the City Treasurer? I understand he has lots of spare time and he could have done the work at no increased expense to the city. These are things that the taxpayers resent by you and the Commission not using good business practices.

You state in your letter you regret I do not see fit to appear before the Commission to discuss some of the phases of the city problems that I am interested in. I attended a Commission Meeting last year and I was so disgusted with the tactics initiated at that time and also distressed to listening to a long drawn out discussion about nothing by you, that I decided to never waste my time going to the City Hall again.

Last night I read about the proposed budget for the eight succeeding years. You have stated you desire 3/4% annual increase. Ye Gods! Will you politicians never have pity on the pocketbooks of we taxpayers? Where do you think we are going to get the money to pay this increased cost? That is one reason you have so much delinquency because the cost of the government with a consequent reduction in your taxes and the delinquencies will take care of themselves as the smaller amounts demanded will be paid in larger proportion by individual taxpayers. This is only common sense.

It seems to me that last year I saw your resignation published in the paper, but you are still in the city payroll, I notice. How come? Good business concerns would not allow such a condition to exist because the minute you resigned you lost interest in the city government and your heart cannot be in its welfare now. With a business concern that is running in the red all the time, such as the City of Birmingham is, with a consequent default in their bond interests, the first logical thing that a business concern does is to secure a new Board of Directors and a new Manager and I call upon all our City taxpayers to do everything we can this coming election to see that all of the present Commissioners are replaced.

Very truly yours,
HARRY A. STONE,
547 Riveroak

(Editor's Note: An interview with City Manager Parry showed that his reference to the refund of $126,000 during 1935 covered the last half of the year 1934 and the first half of 1935. Mr. Stone's figure of $97,000 was taken from a report published in The Eccentric, and obtained from Miss Irene Hanley, City Clerk. Miss Hanley's total was for the year 1935 only, and was correct, as Manager Parry admitted to The Eccentric this week.)

Birmingham, Mich.
March 17, 1936.

Editor Birmingham Eccentric
Dear Sir:

Five of the eight personal opinions quoted in your March 12 issue under "Civic Comments" would be classed as against Municipal ownership of a power plant and the reasons as stated seem to be somewhat out of line with the scores of successful installations as assembled by the writer over a period of years, several of which follow:

Jacksonville, Fla. The rates charged by the municipal electric light and power plant are 26.8% lower than the rates charged by private companies in Florida. Through these lower rates the taxpayers have saved $30,015,457.55. Out of the gross rece pts of the plant $6,871,410 was turned over to the general fund for reduction of taxes and $7,898,405.41 was used to pay for the plant in full, except $1,602,500 still owing on the bonds.

Alma, Nebraska. The population of 1,058 has its own municipal light, water, power, and ice plant worth $250,000 all paid for from the earnings of the plant. It makes no charge for street lighting, hydrant rental, fire protection, sprinkling the city auditorium, city library, or the public athletic field. Besides having the city at a cost of $228,655. Alma has had no tax levy for the past three years.

White Cloud, Mich. This town has its own municipal power plant, and at one time had not had to levy any municipal tax since 1932.

Independence, Iowa. This publicly owned water and light plant makes current at 2c a mill, per kilowatt hour and the bonds issued to build the plant have been paid for from profits, besides, over $100,000 has been diverted to other funds, thereby saving the taxpayers that sum.

Marshall, Mich. During 1935 this municipal electric light plant enabled the taxes to be reduced to the lowest level in 17 years, while giving city employees a 10% increase in wages.

Birmingham, England. This city owns and operates its own light, water, gas, street car, bus, banking and marketing services and has the best sewage disposal plant in the world. Half the garbage goes into marketable fats and fertilizers; the other half being used to generate electricity. Public ownership of public utilities in Birmingham dates from 1870, and there are 32,000 civic employees, but the civic tax rate of less than $20 per head per year is only 40% of that in Toronto which is one of the best governed cities in America. The city supports 24 swimming pools, 5 golf courses, 3,500 acres of parks and playgrounds, 6 civic cemeteries, and a civic hospital all paid for that cost $6,000,000.

The writer would be interested in notable failures of such reasons.

Yours very truly,
JOHN F. HANNA,
55 West Maple Ave.

Silly Question

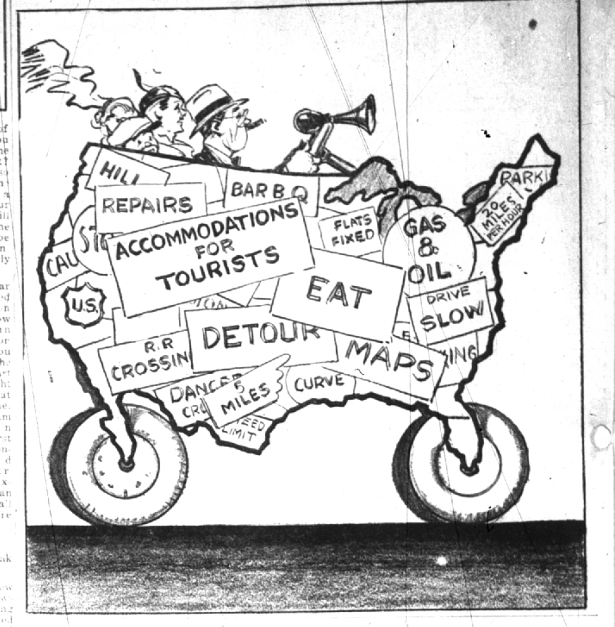
Tramp—"Could you spare me something for a cup of coffee?"

Scotsman—"Hoots, mon! D'e think I carry lumps o' sugar around in my pocket-s?" — The Nor-west Farmer.

Mother Knows

Young Wife—Pierre is perfectly wonderful to me, mother. He gives me everything I ask for.

Mother—That merely shows, my dear, that you are not asking for enough.



The Other Chap Says - - -

WHAT SENATOR JAMES REED THINKS ABOUT IT

Following is what Senator James Reed, of Missouri, one of the outstanding democrats of all times, has to say:

"I intend to do all I can 'to defeat President Roosevelt's attempt to rape the constitution,' and added 'The real issue is not between Democrats and Republicans, but the preservation of Americanism and the constitution of the United States.

"I am for anyone who is for Americanism and the constitution. The policies being carried out in Washington are not Democratic, and they are not American. They are Bolshevistic, Socialistic, Communistic.

"If I have to choose between a Republican who stands for the constitution and an alleged Democrat who proposes to destroy all that has been created in the past, I shall vote for the Republicans. In so voting I shall continue to be a Democrat. My Democracy shall not be taken away by any one man or group of men who have attained office by posing as Democrats and who have turned out to be enemies of all the Democratic party have advocated in the past and which the real Democrats of the United States still cherish."—Eaton Rapids Journal.

YOUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

Your feathered friends. Getting a living during the winter months is a precarious undertaking. Many times they are cold and hungry. Sweep a spot of ground free from snow in some convenient place and make a practice of scattering table scraps or bird seed each morning and you will be surprised how quickly the news spreads and how many will come to dine at your banquet board. They remain with us during the dreary days, they keep us hopeful of spring and sunshine and a more cheery world. Don't neglect them now. — Wm. H. Cansfield in Livingstone County Republican-Press.

SENILITY

My work is done. The days are dreary
And lonely. Once I was gay and cheery.
There were tasks aplenty waiting then,
But now I shall never toil again.
Here by the fire I sit at last
With my dreams and memories of the past.
The fire and vigor of life are gone,
I am lonely now. My work is done.

Well-meaning kindly hands have taken
Upon them the tasks by me forsaken—
Gentle and patient hands that deem
It is best for the old to doze and dream.
I rub mine one against the other,
Outworn hands of an outworn mother.
Soon they will lay me away to rest
Dead of the ache of a pent-up zest.

—Beatrice McDonald.

Electricity Instructor—Name a non-conductor.
Student—A motorman.

WABEEK STATE BANK

WABEEK BLDG.

CONDENSED

Statement of Condition

at the close of business

MARCH 4, 1936

RESOURCES

Cash on hand and due from other Banks		$ 681,128.61
U. S. Gov't Securities, direct and fully guaranteed		1,817,830.56
U. S. Gov't Securities, direct and fully guaranteed Pledged to secure Public Funds on deposit	216,291.62	$2,715,250.79
Other Marketable Securities		662,940.28
Other Marketable Securities pledged to secure Public Funds on Deposit		77,849.33
Loans and Discounts—Secured		65,805.60
Loans and Discounts—Unsecured		18,240.24
Real Estate Mortgages		167,066.38
Banking House and Site (Less Depreciation)		19,925.33
Furniture and Fixtures (Less Depreciation)		13,382.70
Customers Bonds for Safekeeping		1,350.00
Overdrafts		6.94
Income Accrued Receivable, Net		32,327.88
		$3,774,145.47

LIABILITIES

Capital		$ 300,000.00
Surplus		63,000.00
Undivided Profits		18,411.14
Reserve for Interest, Expenses, Dividends, etc.		5,307.35
Customers Bonds for Safekeeping		1,350.00
Dividend checks outstanding		10.00
Public Funds on Deposit—Secured by U. S. Gov't and other Securities	$ 264,350.76	
Public Funds on Deposit—Unsecured	389,049.94	
Commercial Deposits	1,542,524.24	
Deposits from Banks	52,000.00	
Savings Deposits	1,138,142.04	3,386,066.98
		$3,774,145.47

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