

The Birmingham Eccentric
(Founded in 1878)
Published every Thursday, at Birmingham, Mich., in The
Eccentric Building, 225-227 North Woodward Avenue.
Subscription Rates: (Outside Oakland County)
One Year \$1.50 One Year \$2.00
Six Months .75 Three Months .50
Three Months .50 Three Months .50
All newspaper and advertising copy must be in the Eccentric
Office by Tuesday noon to which insertion for that week.

The Eccentric is a member of:
National Editorial Association, Michigan Press Association, Uni-
versity Press Club, and Oakland County Weekly Press Association.
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1933

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events
which have news value and which are written by persons not
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CHRISTMAS LIGHT
LIGHT . . . that's what Christmas
is all about. It's the light of spirit to a troubled land.
LIGHT of soul to comfort flesh and
just
LIGHT to point our steps
where we can stand
IN the realm of happiness with friends,
IN the place where Peace, Goodwill abound
ISN'T that what God intended for
ALL His children, the whole world around?
LIGHT, then, is the symbol of this Day.
LIGHT, though it may come from sun or star,
OR from lesser bodies in the world of air,
TOUCHES us, wherever, wherever we are.
MAY the LIGHT of Christmas shine this year
AS it always has in days of yore:
IT—and it alone—will guide us right,
GIVE us all the good things of life's great store,
NONE of us can shine like sun or star,
Yet a single candle lights the night;
EACH of us, wherever, wherever we are,
Can send forth gleaming rays of Christmas
LIGHT!

(G. R. A.)

This newspaper wants to pay public tribute to
a local school teacher, Merlynn Smiley, who had
couraged enough one evening

Local Teachers
are Underpaid

ing last week to tell a
group of parents and la-
school faculty mem-
bers, including one of the Board of Education,
that local teachers are underpaid.

It did require considerable personal courage
to perform this public service, and it is to the
credit of both the Board of Education, through its
president, Charles S. Kirtland, and Mr.
Smiley, that the exchange of ideas on teacher
remuneration was so good feelings and
unanimous.

The Birmingham Board of Education, of
itself, is not responsible for the low salaries paid
teachers. The fault lies in the fact that the
Board is not able to collect sufficient taxes to
maintain a higher standard of wages.

This situation came about several years ago
when nearly rural Oakland County voted to
operate under the 15-mill tax limitation statute;
the school district is in our Birmingham
school district, and since they thus kept
their portion of taxes for the support of schools
to a maximum of \$7.50 per thousand dollars of
assessed valuation, the entire Birmingham
school district was required to get along on
slightly over 50 per cent of operating revenue
that was available prior to 1932.

In future issues of The Eccentric we shall
explain how this has come about, and publish
suggestions as to how it may be overcome, so
that local teachers will be able to get decent
living wages.

One of the charges that Herr Hitler makes
against democratic countries is that public opinion
is not controlled.

Hitler Follows
Two Rules

He insists that the only responsible
newspapers, by
printing inflammatory
articles, create bad feeling which eventually lead
to hostility.

Upon the basis of this argument, the Nazi Gov-
ernment reaches into other countries and at-
tempts to prevent the publication of articles
that are injurious to Nazi prestige. However, in
Germany itself, where the press is absolutely
controlled, one finds articles against other
states. This was notably the case against Czechoslovakia
and even now, controlled German
newspapers are printing articles designed to
create trouble in Rumania.

As near as one can make out, the German
Government has two rules, one of which it at-
tempts to apply in other countries and the other
it uses in Germany. Stated briefly, under one
they encourage anything that might disrupt
other countries and help the spread of Nazi
doctrines and under the other they try to sur-
press everything that is the least critical of
Hitler and his regime.

The highest and lowest points in the United
States are located within eighty-six miles of
each other.

Approximately 2,100 square
miles of dry land in this coun-
try are below sea level, nearly
all of which is in California, and Death Valley
is the lowest, 276 feet below the level of the sea.

Within eighty-six miles rises Mt. Whitney, the
highest mountain peak in the United States,
standing at an elevation of 14,496 feet, according
to maps of the Geological Survey.

THERE'S BEEN MANY A CHUCKLE, plus many a
heart-aching, in the Santa Claus letters published
in The Eccentric for these last three weeks. Ole
Santa has been asked the latest that he can
peruse all of them—but he DOES read so fast
that he undoubtedly found plenty of time to
record every one.

"Up to the ninth grade, young people are
willing to help solve their own problems; from
then on they become more
like adults—quite willing
to turn responsibilities over
to others, and by the time
these children have grown up they will be like
two-thirds of the adult population of the world,
who let George solve their problems at home,
in the schools and churches, and even in
politics."

That statement was made one evening last
week at a meeting in Birmingham when Dr.
Eugene Elliott, State Superintendent of Public
Instruction, addressed a group of parents and
teachers in the Bakhin high school.

That is a terrific indictment of the irrespon-
sibility of adults, isn't it? Is it true? We agree
with all fair-minded persons who declare that
it is. It is the source of much of today's confu-
sion and bewilderment. We likewise agree
with those who say it is.

What are we, the adults, going to do to cor-
rect the situation? Is there anything that we
can do? Of course there is. What shall we do?
Isn't the answer to this question something like
this: all of us need to do is to do what we can,
within the sphere of our own responsibility and
influence.

Do we complain that children are unruly and
inattentive in school? Are they not equally so
at home—and if we correct the home situation
aren't we correcting part of the school's
problem?

Are we satisfied with the church as an insti-
tute of practical salvation? If we aren't, are
we participating in its routine activities to cor-
rect the fault? Are we commending the
preacher for his good qualities and sermons?
Are we criticizing him for his deficiencies—con-
structively criticizing him?

We are satisfied with the way government is
operating? If not, do we attend the meetings
of public bodies, write our thoughts to City
Commissioners, Governors, Congressmen, Sena-
tors, and even the President of the United
States?

In short, are we, the adults, who have created
the world's conditions of today, participating in
the preservation of the world's goodness, and
doing what we can, as individuals, to correct
the evils?

It is surprising to be advised, through the
chart of Dr. Willard Thorpe, placed on exhibit
before the monopoly
investigating com-
mittee, that about one-
fifth of all business
concerns in the United States fail annually.

Even in the face of the figures, which we are
able to dispute, it is hard to believe that the
average life of a business firm is only five years.
Yet a study made in Poughkeepsie, New York,
shows that only 16.9 per cent of new firms
lasted more than three years, 21.4 per cent
ten years and 9.7 per cent twenty years.

Today faces new problems under a demo-
cratic government. In addition to being effi-
cient and honest, business is now compelled by
law to assume some social obligations. Inevitably,
it appears that it will eventually be neces-
sary for those entering business to have special
training for themselves to have some special training
for the undertaking.

It is not necessary to point out that an un-
successful business generally creates unfair com-
petition for other enterprises. The manufac-
turer who enters business on a basis which will
certainly injure legitimate producers and with-
out doubt, does nothing beneficial to the con-
suming public in the long run. The same may
be said of a storekeeper, who, through ignorance
or inefficiency, does not understand how to
manage his business on a basis which will per-
mit its continuance. Time and again, we have
heard of inexperienced people going into busi-
ness and into bankruptcy because of a lack of
business training.

Some of the scientists of the world are much
interested in determining when human thought
began. Sir Richard Paget,
British scientist, thinks it began
when man acquired the power
to separate objects, actions and
qualities in his mind and give them pantomime
symbols.

We are quite willing to agree with the British
scientist that human thought did not begin be-
fore human beings acquired the powers that he
has. However, in the interest of truth, we must
report that the world is filled with human be-
ings who can separate objects, actions and qual-
ities in their minds and give them pantomime
symbols, and still remain unable to think.

WE BELIEVE THAT testimonial banquets for foot-
ball players are fine events. We also suggest
that some attention be paid to boys and girls
who are high school and leadership types
of marks. So, since the Lions Club banquet
the football players, which of Exchange or
Rotary will banquet the other group? (Better
call Ray Bechtold quickly, boy—before the
other gets the jump on you, eh?)

VERNON W. GRIFFITH, Birmingham fire chief,
warns parents to be careful of Christmas light-
ing; he and his boys don't want their holiday
festivities interrupted by having to put out any-
body's house-on-fire. And the people, them-
selves, Sir, join you in this wish!

WHO, AT CHRISTMAS time each year, is more
over-burdened than your Postman? These blue-
clad chaps, with or without whiskers, certainly
make dandy Santa Clauses.

BIRMINGHAM'S LEAGUE of Women Voters
has been increased since rate of juvenile
automobile drivers, last week passed a resolu-
tion favoring the age limit raised from 14 to
17 years, except in cases where the need is ab-
solute. We salute the ladies for their interest
and resolution. One need but spend a time
on wheels to witness the danger that banks when
the enthusiasm and recklessness of many of our
juveniles steer the motor car.

