Editorial Page of The Birmingham Eccentric

A free, responsible and aggressive Press is democracy's first line of defense

Knocking on Wood

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

ONE of the strangest things about the German campaign in Russia was the relative lack of mention about the "Stalin Line" when the fight got under way. Mr. John Public, in the first days of fighting, had not been told by the "experts" of the extensive fortifications on the road to Moscow. Their existence came as somewhat a surprise after the terrific buildup the Maginot Line had been given.

Just why that was so, I can not answer; probably the reason was that most foreign corresponsdents don't know enough Russian to wander far from Moscow, or that Joe Stalin didn't have the kind of press agents which France had.

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Perhaps the Russian campaign will turn out to be Hitler's great mistake. As everybody knows, every human is prone to err, including master minds like Hitler and his General Staff. In a democracy, a statesman's slip is not fatal; in totalitarian countries a blunder may mean the ax. Hitler's Russian adventure may prove costly enough to bring his eventual downfall, for German resources are not unlimited, nor will domain over the Ukraine supply all German needs.

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Defense of Alaska

The reactions of Father Hubbard, the "Glacier Priest," were an interesting reply to the alarmists who see America's doom if Russia loses and the Germans arrive at the Pacific Ocean. Alaska can be easily defended, he said, because of the geography of the place.

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This problem has been bothering me. If prices are maintained and production of automobiles curtailed, who will decide who will get a new car? Will it be first come, first served? Will they restrict the fellow who trades in a car every year with a few thousand miles on it? Will they ask people to keep their cars for three years or until they have 50,000 miles on the speedometer?

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First Come, First Served?

This whole matter of prices is changed with dynamite. Control means new, unprecedented sway over American business, for the matter rests on an economic principle which cannot be escaped.

If prices are controlled, distribution must be decided in some way so that everyone gets a fair chance to satisfy his needs. That means rationing like they have in Europe.

If prices are NOT controlled, they are certain to run away in an inflationary spiral that will result in a deflation after the war.

Control of prices means control of profits, and that entails almost full control of the business machine by the bureaucracy.

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Use of silk for parachutes means fewer silk stockings for Milady, says Washington. What about nylon?

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My barber mourns the fact that since the rise in the price of haircuts, people are resorting to the "stretch-out," delaying by a few days or a week their regular trip to the barber chair. It will be interesting to note whether the increase nets the barbers an actual gain in total income. Barbers are deserting comb and scissors for wrench and tool in the factories, attracted by high wages, I was told.

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That Year in Army

The question of extending the training period of Selective Service men involves two factors: national safety and national honor. From a military standpoint, one year's training is not enough; on the other hand, the inducted men were promised their release after a year's work.

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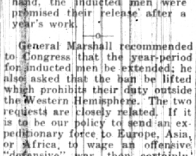
General Marshall recommended to Congress that the year-period for inducted men be extended; he also asked that the ban be lifted which prohibits their duty outside the Western Hemisphere. The two requests are closely related. If it is to be our policy to send an expeditionary force to Europe, Asia, or Africa, to wage an offensive "defensive" war, then certainly, we should permit no soldier to return to civilian life, except, perhaps, those over 30 years of age.



Sees Fewer Strikes

With the involvement of Soviet Russia in the European war, there is every indication that the Communists in the United States will make a complete about-face and that this will be reflected in a substantial decrease in the number of strikes in our vital defense industries.

In April, according to the Labor Department's statistics, strikes reached high-tide when one-half million workers were made idle and 2,800,000 man-days were lost. March saw but 113,000 workers involved in strikes, entailing a total of 1,400,000 man-days lost or 6,400,000 man-days less than the April total.

However, it is by comparison with strike figures for the entire year of 1940 that the April industrial warfare shows up in staggering proportions. For instance 1,100,000 more man-days were lost in the month of April alone than in the entire year of 1940, when 6,700,000 man-days were lost. As already stated, 500,000 workers were made idle by strikes in April; this was within 77,000 of the total number involved in strikes in the entire year of 1940.

In 1940 there were 2,508 strikes. In 1939, when there were 2,613 strikes involving 1,171,000 workers, the total number of man-days lost was 17,812,000. The record for April of 1941 alone comes almost within one million of being one-half that of 1939. In 1937, when there were 4,740 strikes involving a total of 1,860,000 workers, 28,425,000 man-days were reported as lost. March and April of 1941 accounted for nearly one-third as many man-days lost, 9,200,000.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports, and that office is the authority for the foregoing figures, 2,199,274 to be the average number of man-days lost in April in the years 1935 to 1939, a period which includes the strike-infested years of 1939 and 1937. Hence the man-days lost in April, 1941, amounted to almost four times the average figure.

CINQUAIN

Reading
In bed by the
Night lamp invites countless
Bizarre insects in to share the
Brightness.

—Beatrice McDonald

—o—

One dollar out of every $25 spent at retail trade in the United States is spent in Michigan.

Up To Our Juries

While expressing sorrow for the victims of aerial bombs in war-torn lands, let us not forget the hundreds of Americans who die terrible deaths every day in automobile accidents.

This is a fearful price for a nation to pay for speedy transportation. Naturally, some citizens will be killed on the highways, due to causes that are not preventable. This does not excuse us in ignoring the death of those who die from human carelessness and individual acts that are reprehensible and criminal.

Most of the American States have competent highway patrolmen. They do their best to make highway traffic safe for everybody. Frequently, they arrest speeders and, at times, they apprehend drivers operating vehicles under the influence of alcoholic beverages. Formal charges are made against the offenders and many are convicted and punished.

It happens occasionally, however, that one who violates the highway law demands a trial before a jury, and the men sworn to try the case, out of sympathy or other maudlin excuse, turn loose individuals that they are convinced have violated the law. The jury in such cases exercises its right and there is no appeal from the verdict rendered.

Frankly, a man, or woman, who sits on a jury, in a case involving the operation of a motor vehicle, by a driver under the influence of alcoholic liquor, has a responsibility to society. He, or she, should not hesitate to join in a verdict that will speak the truth, regardless of what happens to the accused. Other citizens, using our highways, have a right to protection and it should not require a fatality, upon the main street of a town, to create a sentiment that demands enforcement of the law.

"Safe For Democracy"

The dedication of the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson as a national shrine ought to remind Americans of the leadership of this great war President whose pathetic attempt to "make the world safe for democracy" was sabotaged by his own people, who repudiated him and made light of his slogan.

With the threat that the Axis powers, led by dictators, may seize control of the world, and with the knowledge of their attempts to destroy freedom and liberty, the American people are now beginning to understand what President Wilson had in mind when he sounded the slogan that has been derided by many Americans.

It was highly fitting that President Roosevelt, who served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy under President Wilson, and now leads the United States as it faces the grave peril of today, should take part in the ceremony and applaud Wilson's "judgment and faith."

Mr. Roosevelt took advantage of the occasion to warn the world that the American people had fought before and were "ever ready to fight again" for the existence of "democracy in the world."

ALL THIS CHATTER about the United States now applauding Russia's fight against the Nazis, when we all know that our people bitterly oppose Communism, is just a lot of chatter. If our country is pledged to help Britain in the common objective of defeating Hitler, and if Russia now is fighting Hitler, then Russia is helping Britain and us to defeat Hitler; that's the way the situation adds up. So we don't get any satisfaction out of bickering about the ideology involved, so far as Russia is concerned. When you are fighting a big bully, and along comes a wolf that will bite only the bully, you don't shoot the wolf. We can still hate Communism and also hope the Russians will raise the devil with Hitler.

SOCIETY NAVAL NOTE: We see by the newspapers that some of the United States naval vessels and their crews are now stationed at Iceland; the boys will enjoy their northern tour, so far away from the summer heat in tropical waters.

COST OF COLLECTING GARBAGE in Birmingham will almost double for the next year, according to a new contract just signed by City Manager Egbert. The cost of filling garbage cans, too, is on the increase.

UNLESS YOU ARE REASONABLY AWARE of the problems of your city, your State, your nation, and have at least a sprinkling knowledge of international affairs: unless you add to this information a personal willingness to discuss, and vote when elections roll around, you are a *PART-TIME CITIZEN* in the last great self-governing nation upon this planet earth!

AN AMERICAN INVENTOR has been granted a patent on a horn that cannot be blown except when the car is in motion; he wants to eliminate traffic-stop and curb tooting. It's a grand idea—but the inventor failed to remember that your average person wants to blow his own horn as often and when he pleases.

We Cannot Agree

Last Saturday while attending a meeting of the Michigan Press Association, one of the outstanding publishers present, in the course of a conversation declared that

> "Our country is headed for the same fate that befell France. We have been led into a war by a lot of false issues and there is nothing you can do about it nor anything that I can do about it. We are going the road in the very same place, but just how we cannot know."

In the Sunday issue of The Detroit Free Press, its distinguished publisher and editor, John S. Knight, is discussing future possibilities for the graduating students of our colleges, normal and universities, expressed a similar pessimistic view. He sums up his opinion of observations with the following statement:

> Now, there is nothing particularly cheerful about the outlook for young men and women about to embark upon their lifetime work. That is why we decline to proffer any advice to the generation which will succeed us, other than to suggest that, as compared with the rest of the world, the blessings of such democracy as is left us to enjoy may be worth protecting.

When such pacifistic, logal thinking Americans have been quoted, expressed these alarming views of gloom, help but be alarmed, but we cannot accept the almost hopeless position they take.

They are right, indeed, when it comes to emphasizing the seriousness of the conditions confronting our country. They are right about the trend of the times, but surely in our land, where such ideals as we have always cherished still prevail in our hearts, in a land where we have in the past overcome conditions as grave as they are today, in a land where opportunity for the individual to progress as far as human effort, initiative and ability permits, has not entirely disappeared, there must be some hope for the young people of the oncoming generation.

We frankly admit that some of the public leaders of our present generation have made terrible mess of things, but the heels of the boys they have brought about can be fought in the due course of time.

No one believes that any American with a degree of intelligence will long stand for the "leveling" process being imposed upon our workers through so-called mass collectivism, an idea imported to America during the early days of Stalin and Mussolini and just now flourishing at its height in our country.

Why should there be the slightest reason in this free and independent land of ours for the worker to sell his birthright and his manhood in order to gain that which is his—just as for honest effort? Maybe they have to do it "over there," but in doing it, they lose everything. Here, that is an American problem for Americans to work out in the American way.

Crack-pots can rise about the sins of individualism, but the country was built on individualism, still believers in the rights of the individual and it will never goosestep to the whip-cracking of political fourflushers and would-be dictators.

We are optimistic about the future. But we do have some big jobs to do. Spineless public officials must be relegated to the places from whence they came. Even though they must stand alone at times, we should have and must have men in high legislative places who are not afraid, men who are willing to dare and to do, men who are willing to be something more than mere sex-men and messengers for Hitler, who want something. Bickering and selfish aims must be abolished and the gulfs must be more severly than ordinary crooks.

We must relegate the foreign way and restore the American way in the conduct of both private and public affairs.

We must awaken America to a full realization of all that has transpired in recent years to wreck our ways of life.

What a tremendously big and important field there is for the youths of America today—a field filled with golden opportunities of leadership in the right to go forward with America in the AMERICAN WAY.

No, there is no use in being pessimistic when we see so much that can be done and so much that must be done to restore our country to the position of world leadership it has always occupied, to drive from it all the false and foreign isms that have been injected into our public affairs, to lift our country from its bended knee, and to make America cry out against the land of the free and the home of the brave! Plymouth (Mich.) Mail.

WORDS MISSPELLED in print often prove humorous. Many a chuckle took place a few weeks ago in a certain Michigan town when their home newspaper carried a bank advertisement in which the institution offered the public "Baby Blonds."

The Birmingham Eccentric

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

The Eccentric is a member of the National Editorial Association, Michigan Press Association, Community Press Club, and Oakland County Press Association.

NOTE: The Eccentric was founded to publish stories of events which happen in the community and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be in the office before noon on Wednesday. The right is reserved by the editor to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and to the required by laws of the state. Business notices will not be accepted in the correspondence columns, and those other than members of the staff will be rejected. Correspondents are requested to write plainly and to confine themselves to the facts. Scandalous or libelous matter concerning the character, standing or conditions of any person, firm or association which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be promptly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

Eccentricities

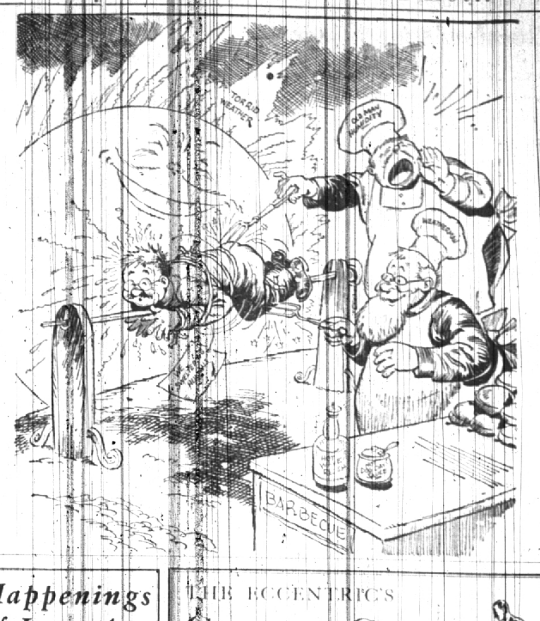
Hitler says he made Germany what it is today. Is that a boast or an apology?—Buffalo Times.

A tourist is a person who thinks a farmer wouldn't care if somebody took a dozen ears of corn.—San Francisco Chronicle.

One of the greatest mysteries of nature is the narrow, crooked, rough and tortuous path a dollar has to traverse to get to you and the wide, well-paved and inviting way that is there awaiting its departure.—The Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

In these days of war seasoned troops may be said to be those mustered by the army and peppered by the enemy.—Brunswick (Ga.) News.

They're Red Hot! R-R-Red Hot!!



Happenings of Long Ago

50 Years Ago
July 9, 1891

T. R. Merrill, from Des Moines, Ia., visited his parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Merrill, of Birmingham, over the Fourth.

A boat trip to Mackinac Island, $13.00 round trip, was suggested by The Eccentric as something in the way of a nice summer excursion.

Mrs. Blomberg and her sister, Mrs. Lanahury, passed the Fourth at Orchard Lake, and on their return home, while they were boarding the train at Pontiac, some villain picked open both of the ladies' pockets. Mrs. Lanahury lost $8.00 and Mrs. Blomberg a smaller amount.

Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Quick were spending three weeks at the East. While absent from Birmingham they were to visit the famed watering resorts in Maine, and to make a tour through the White Mountains and Boston, Mass. Mr. Quick also planned to attend the annual meeting of the National Association of Ordway Baggage Agents.

The season has opened for the famed summer resort, Orchard Lake, and the steamer there was doing a thriving business.

25 Years Ago
July 7, 1916

Miss Harriet C. White and Harry A. Mudge were united in marriage at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey White, Sr., on Williams street, last Thursday. The Rev. H. H. Bleecher was the officiating clergyman. Sarah Metcalf was the maid of honor and Mr. Rudd's brother, Albert, was the best man. Marian Mudge acted as flower girl and Master William White was the ring bearer. The young couple left by motor for an extended trip to Buffalo.

William C. Reynolds, 73, oldest resident, looking down the streets on the Fourth was heard to say, "Say Heck! I've seen the street filled at this 'ill' of things filled with automobiles, then racing horses with tall kinds of vehicles and today these same streets are choked with autos."

The Pythian Sisters were selling popcorn Saturday evenings at the corner of Hamilton and Woodward avenues.

Miss Pearl M. Pelham has been appointed for the Second Annual Chautauqua from the Redpath Bureau and called the university of good things. The talent scheduled to give the daily sessions is second to none.

5 Years Ago
July 9, 1936

James E. Valentine, Worth street, 81 year old resident of Birmingham, died Monday morning from pneumonia contracted following an automobile accident on Thursday in which he suffered a fractured left arm and a possible skull fracture.

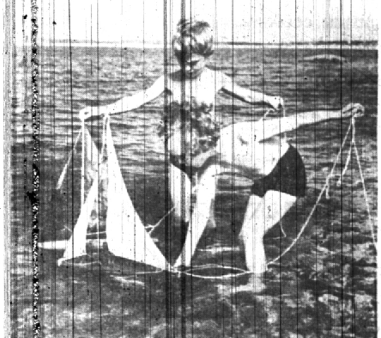
Frank Tillotson, prominent Detroit banker and well-known resident of Bloomfield Hills died July 4 in a Detroit hospital.

Several parties had been given in honor of Mrs. Wiley Blom, of Chicago, who was visiting her sister, Mrs. Robert N. Woodruff, of Franklin.

September 5 was set as the date for the first dog show of the Oakland County Kennel Club. The show was to be a benefit meeting exhibition for all breeds and to be conducted under the auspices of the American Kennel Club. It was to be held at the Birmingham Athletic field at the Detroit School for Boys.

The Show was to include at least 500 breeds of dogs.

THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner



"PICTURE OF THE MONTH"

The best pictures of children have been published in play. Rose [illegible] Vesey of Bay [illegible] N. Y., paved the way for this [illegible] by giving the [illegible] to snapping pictures of [illegible] Popular Photography [illegible] Prize Photo [illegible] has been awarded to [illegible] Martin [illegible] magazine. [illegible] captures a [illegible] Spies [illegible] Zeiss Ikon [illegible] Contax camera [illegible] fourth annonium [illegible] Sunspan film.

FLASHLIGHT SHOTS

Pictures taken with flashbulbs [illegible] especially when [illegible] made [illegible] because the [illegible] are not the best [illegible] for newspaper reproduction [illegible] this reason the lighting [illegible] and there is [illegible] Hence The Eccentric, we [illegible] flashlight pictures when [illegible] possible because the [illegible] are not the best [illegible] for reproduction, [illegible] get them with the ordinary [illegible] lighting which results [illegible] finer tones.

The camera boys on the metropolitan papers have the same [illegible] in view and they carry elaborate [illegible] which allows them to [illegible] bulbs at one time. [illegible] however, that can't be used [illegible] when you grab a picture on the run [illegible] there's no time to monkey with [illegible] and multiple flashes.

Many have need of the [illegible] dinner head and shoulder shot, and invariably the subject to fail at the last [illegible] see him before the [illegible] Graphic, mounted on a [illegible] A couple of photoflood lights [illegible] then turned on and we try to [illegible] the lights as would a portrait photographer, although [illegible] for contrast, while [illegible] portrait [illegible] works for good [illegible] plus softness.

We [illegible] Super Pan Press film because [illegible] speed and because [illegible] does not use film for all [illegible] There are better films for portrait work, of course. An exposure of 1/25th of a second with lens at f. 4.5 does the trick.

Why use an f. 4.5 aperture when ordinarily at such close range, only part of the subject will be in sharp focus?" you ask.

Well, as a matter of fact, it does not make a great deal of difference. However, the eyes and the frontal plane of the face are the important part of the physiognomy; the ears and back of the head do not count, and interest in them is lessened by causing them to be out of focus. Focus your camera on the points of spark in the eyes; they are the only part of a person's face which are sharp and easily picked out. (That was good advice at Bunker Hill and it still holds good!)

—o—

Ever Use Flash Powder?

On our Speed Graphic camera, the flash is synchronized with the focal plane shutter and therefore a bulb with a long peak is necessary. We have found "Wabash 40,000" to be satisfactory.

Somewhere around the house, I have an old-fashioned flashpowder gun and a bottle of flash powder. A charge of that equals a half dozen bulbs, although it is more dangerous to use. It come in handy taking night pictures of crowds from a vantage point that is high.

—J. H. H.

DEFINITIONS

By HERBERT STALKER

Cheerfulness

Steadily exhibited, a sure sign of the self-conqueror.

Girth

The bigger it gets, the quicker we go. A straight front means a clearer head.

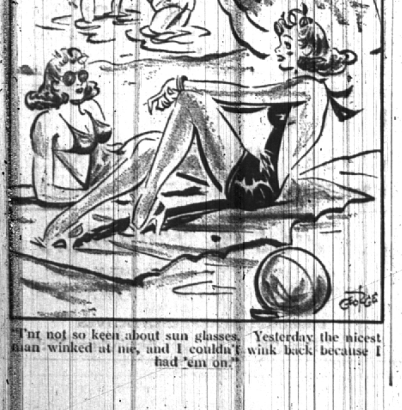
Hose

If only the leg kind would last like the lawn variety, that would be something!

Ideals

All but "fast colors" fade out in the rays of the realistic sun.

THE AMERICAN FAMILY . . . By George



"I'm not so keen about sun glasses. Yesterday the nicest man winked at me, and I couldn't wink back because I had 'em on."