

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

Knocking on Wood

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

CHILD HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

IN THESE hot summer days when tanned, nearly all-bare youngsters are cavorting about, this thought has often come to me: I don't believe it is my imagination; I believe that today are far more sturdy and healthy than they were 15 or 20 years ago. This week I ran across some actuarial figures, which bear out my contention, showing a rather amazing improvement even in the last 10 years.

In the "good old days," which were really pretty terrible from the standpoint of health and sanitation, people used to raise their children without the help of nutritional or medical advice. Food for the little ones usually came from the same frying pan and stove kettles in which provender for their elders was prepared, vitamins had not yet been discovered by the rank and file, and the result was skinny-legged children which fell victim to every disease which came along.

Childhood and skinny underpinnings were synonymous, if my memory serves me right. I believe today's children in America are the most beautiful, the most healthy ever seen, physically at least. Here are figures released by Dr. Louis I. Dublin, statistical wizard for a huge life insurance company. Infant mortality in the United States has declined by 45 per cent over a period of 20 years and the death rate among children ages 1 to 14 has declined by 40 per cent.

Peculiar thing about it is that the rate is going still better. In 1929 the infant mortality rate fell 23 per cent, while from 1930-39, it declined 30 per cent. "Equally important, there is no sign of slackening in the rate improvement," the report said. The female of the species is the tougher. The records show that among infants, girls consistently show a lower death rate, one-fifth less than for boys. Age 10 is the healthiest year of all.

The North Central and Northwestern states have the lowest infant mortality. Making others so pleased with themselves that we get what we want without their knowing it. When we won't admit our mistakes we double them.

DEFINITIONS

By HERBERT STALKER

Diplomacy - Making others so pleased with themselves that we get what we want without their knowing it. Error - When we won't admit our mistakes we double them. Producer's Plait - A reader, H. E. B. contributes this one, written, apparently, by some unhappy production man: "YOUR BACK ORDER" Keep your temper, Gentle Sir. Write the manufacturer. Though your goods are overdue, For a month or maybe two, We can't help it, please don't sue. Labor's scarce and metal's rare, Can't get steel, can't get valves. These are facts, we tell no lies. Harry's drafted, so is Bill. All our work is now uphill. So your order, we're afraid, May be still a bit delayed. Still you'll get it, don't vexed. Maybe this month, maybe next. Keep on hoping, don't say die. We'll fill your order by and by. Read - Mind. It is a good thing that metaphors are cheap. A Detroit editorial writer wound up his comment

Local Safety Up to Chief and Manager

This editorial is planned to be published in the works at least on the subject of safety and traffic law enforcement in Birmingham. We are putting the matter squarely up to our Police Chief, who is primarily responsible and next, to the City Manager, who is secondarily responsible for the operation of City departments.

We realize that changes can't be made overnight; that it takes time to plan a real safety program that will do permanent good. It is a "drive" which starts today and ends in a couple of weeks.

The City Commission has expressed more than once its concern over a safety program, and of course, City Manager Robert, too, is interested in the matter. He told The Eccentric this week: "I think the situation can be improved, particularly in work among children to teach safety."

He was asked this question: "Do you believe that there can be a more strict enforcement of traffic ordinances?" The City Manager's reply was: "I think our ordinances should be enforced strictly enough to command respect, for that is the only way to get results."

The Eccentric believes that considerable improvement can be made in law enforcement, for in the past, there has been a "no man's land" where police had chosen to ignore offenses by auto or driver. Referring to accidents which a police officer does not happen to see. Practically any offense can be committed, but the police will not act unless some aggrieved person takes it upon himself to sign a complaint.

There are limitations, of course. Every negligent driver can be prosecuted because offenses can't always be proved. But, that can't be ascertained until an investigation has been made, and the fact is, in Birmingham, investigation of accidents is not a routine procedure. It is a bit of misadventure. Even glaring reports are probably law violations are ignored. For example, Tuesday a driver admitted in writing that he failed to stop for a through street, an accident resulting. It appeared at the police station that no one was hurt, but the driver would be liable unless the owner of the damaged car insisted on it.

Every auto mishap, of course, can not be investigated. But at most had crashes, an accident called to the attention of the police, whether there is reason for or not, an investigation. Our police officers are able men. The whole thing simmers down to a matter of policy. Is the Police Chief going to investigate mishaps in which there is reasonable evidence of lawbreaking and then prosecute the offenders without fear or favor? Or is he going to continue the haphazard, inconsistent policy of the past?

In regard to a safety program, we believe that the Police Chief will make it his effort to do something constructive. The Eccentric is ready to give its full cooperation in the way of publicity. But until our City ordinances are enforced reasonably and consistently with equal treatment for all, we expect that our Chief of Police is negligent in his duty.

State Police Move Promptly

Numerous complaints have reached us regarding the last of the measures taken by the State Police in the moving of large convoys of Army trucks en masse from Pontiac and other factories. The officers have been instructed to follow each other closely, disregarding traffic signals, and it remains to be seen whether the measures are likely to result in less proper traffic laws have been taken.

Such a mishap occurred last Friday evening at 8:30 o'clock, when Miss Betty Roth, 19-year-old, of 1600 13th Ave. road, trying to cross Telegraph and on the green light, was struck by an Army truck, resulting in serious injuries to Miss Roth.

Long lines of trucks have passed through Birmingham, with police escort at the front, but none at the rear, and where the lights were ignored; it is thought the trucks were close enough together to make a visible procession, and no mishaps have resulted.

To ascertain whether any remedial action had been taken, The Eccentric this week questioned State Police at the Redford Post, 1905 Northside Blvd. The proper steps have been taken, it was stated. The State Police, Traffic and Radio divisions, have taken the matter up with the Commanding General of the 13th Army Area, and subordinates have been notified with the commands and officers. It is stated that the State Police will be instructed to make a survey of the head truck in front and block the road, falling in behind when the convoy has passed.

The State Police are to be congratulated for their recognition of the hazard to civilian life, and their prompt action which should prevent further mishaps. Prevention of accidents should be given just as important a place in the police program as the arrest of law violators.

The farmers of the nation are supposed to be shouting their satisfaction over increased income for agriculture, indicated by preliminary estimates. The cold fact is the financial situation of farmers in the United States is not what you would expect. At glance at the population figures of the nation show just where the farmers stand in the matter of income.

In 1940 the farm population of the nation consisted of 32,000,000 persons, or about one-fifth of the total population. Preliminary estimates are that this one-fifth of the population will receive less than nine per cent of the national income for the year 1941.

The plight of agriculture is apparent when we reflect that one-fourth of the people of the nation receive less than one-fifth of the national income. This is a position which is a far cry from the position of the farmer in the United States. The farmer is supposed to be the backbone of the nation, and yet he receives less than one-fifth of the national income.



People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications from its readers. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, The Birmingham Eccentric, 1000 13th Avenue, Birmingham, Ala. 35204. All communications should be typed and double-spaced. The Eccentric is not responsible for the return of unsolicited material.

Hopes Revolution Over the Tie

The Eccentric has never before, we think, seen the United States, almost without exception, in the matter of the tie. We would mention that this nation is now to receive a new tie, a tie that is not a tie, but a tie that is a tie. The tie is a tie that is a tie, and it is a tie that is a tie.

Apples Can Be Canned Now

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5 YEARS AGO

Donkey baseball games were being played during the week at the annual... The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications from its readers.

50 YEARS AGO

A curious-looking double-ender deck with guard rails was stuck up on Maple Avenue early one morning. The weapon might have been intended for some terrible deed of blood, but was lost before the act was consummated.

25 YEARS AGO

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THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner

A good camera position, sunshine striking at an angle, and a tree for "framing"—all help make a pleasing news picture. Good shots at home are easy with any camera. How many good pictures of your home do you have in the snapshot collection? And are they really good ones? You know, it's just as easy to take a good picture as any other kind—and much more satisfying.

Most folks make two mistakes in picturing a house. First they choose the wrong viewpoint; second, they tilt the camera upward. A handy way is best for house pictures. Pick an hour when the sun shines at an angle, as this shows up the details—the lines of the weatherboarding, the window outlines, and other features. You do not need to show all of the house in every picture. An attractive doorway or window bay, a gabled end—these alone make highly effective shots. "Framing" is also an attractive feature. Notice in the picture above how the large tree and overhanging branches help to frame the picture above—obviously more attractive than a "head-on" shot.

Eccentricities

An economist who has looked it up, says no scheme of farm co-operation has lasted more than 20 years. Still, there is something in Los Angeles. If he removes his hat in an elevator, it means (1) good manners and (2) a big air transport company will have its first substations here delivered tomorrow. Pauline is the name of the girl who is the national debt up here—Kansas City, Kansas. An Atlanta school teacher, said to one of her own pupils, "I would like to see your father owned the butcher 265, and the baker 330, and the grocer 240, how much would he be worth?" "Nothing," he replied.—Atlanta Tribune.

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