# 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

### IT MUST BE WHOLESALE

PROSECUTOR Charles L. Wilson is worried about the number of traffic deaths in Oakland County, for since Jan. 1, more than 50 have lost their lives, and for a time, the rate was one a day. What to do about it—that bothered Mr. Wilson, and he evolved the idea that if some one would donate $500, he would gladly offer it in prizes for suggestions. Now I can always use $500, but contest or not, I will gladly donate my ideas on the subject.

If there is any truly regular reader of this column, he or she will probably remember that I have used up space in the past on this subject, for I suppose it might be called one of my pet peeves. That is, it bothers me to think that the American public and its officials think of death only in wholesale quantities. People must die in lots lots before it means anything; a "Titanic" sinks the world is shocked and people talk about it for years, but episodes like the "Titanic" are trivial compared to the 35,000 people who annually lose their lives on the highways.

So, in a nutshell, here is my solution to the problem in Oakland County and any other county.

(1) Make a county-wide survey of the accident record; find out where are the most dangerous spots and concentrate on them, either with better police patrol or by signs, lights and other traffic control devices.

(2) Most important of all is the need for a general, county-wide (state-wide and nation-wide, too, if you please) educational or law-enforcement and prosecution for reckless and careless driving. However, I am not in favor of a mere "drive" for drunk drivers are the dunk. Either lighten up permanently or not at all.

THE REASON PEOPLE DRIVE CARELESSLY IS BECAUSE THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH IT.

The new order of things should be county-wide, otherwise a strict community would be accused of running a "trap."

Too often, police officers are too lazy to prosecute a driver because the other fellow is willing to let him go if he pays for the damages. That is failure to perform sworn duty. For a lawbreaker should be prosecuted and it is one of the police's affair whether the damages are taken care of. Promising to pay and thus evading trial is the same thing as buying off the law.

**Reckless**

Too much careless driving is tolerated when another car is involved. A man who falls asleep at the wheel and smashes into a pole is reckless in my estimation, for your car or mine might well have been in the location of the pole.

Another thing—I think the legislature ought to pass a law similar to the drunk driving law but less severe, to take care of drinking, but not yet drunk, drivers, for there are PLENTY of them. It is unlawful to drive a car when drunk, and not when drinking, and the law should probably stay that way. However, a drinking driver, if he has an accident, or if he breaks some other traffic law, should be prosecuted. If an officer and another witness can smell liquor on the driver's breath—that fact should be proof enough.

Well, Prosecutor Wilson, there are my ideas on the subject and they won't cost you a cent.

**NOT CHOOSY**

The little magazine, "Letters," relates this story about Rob Wagner, now editor of "Script," when he sent his first story to the "Saturday Evening Post." Wagner received this telegram: "May we cut your article into two installments and will $600 be agreeable?" George Horace Lorimer. To this Wagner replied: "Cut it to ribbons but send the six hundred." Rob Wagner.

—o—

From "Typographic" comes this purported annual statement of an unnamed company:

**Annual Report**

To our stockholders: Your officers are glad to report business over the past year has been vastly improved; in fact we almost broke even.

We feel that much of the company's success from June 1, 1939 to June 1, 1940, was due to a more vigorous policy of trying to make the best of it all. It has been the custom of company officers to worry, too much. Under the new policy seventy per cent of our officers have cut their fretting down eighty-six and one-half per cent for the fiscal year.

Your company was able to get a little work done around the plant during the past year by naming six vice-presidents in charge of visits from tax agents, thus saving the higher executives a major amount of time. We built a new wing on the factory in which all data, facts, figures, reports, explanations, and apologies demanded by the government may be prepared and turned out. This plant is capable of answering 50,000 inquiries from Washington per week. Plans are being drawn for an annex in which all summonses to congressional probes can be received, filed, and catalogued without confusion.

**Vice Presidents.**

The company has also appointed a vice-president in charge of nervousness, a vice-president in charge of apprehension, and two vice-presidents in charge of grave misgivings.

Our cash position is strong, due to a neat system of loose leaf, loose thinking and loose figuring bookkeeping, now quite the rage. We think this means a lot of nice clean fun until we charge auditors.

Summary. The general outlook is good. Car loadings are doing nicely. Boat loadings are firm. Auto loadings are improving. Our stockholders will be glad to hear that after suspending the custom over the last years we have decided to renew distribution of calendars for 1941 to all our stockholders.

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**SIGN OF THE TIMES**

Presumably, America is arming to save democracy, and to preserve the Constitution and Bill of Rights, which guarantees democracy. Thus it was strange to note last week that Miami, Fla., officials had denied the right of assembly and free speech to the America First Committee. Honestly, I sometimes doubt whether a great segment of our population really knows the real meaning of democracy and free enterprise.

**GLAMOR**

Silver slippers Betty wears
To gard her dainty toes.
Tripping lightly down the stairs
Betty puts on trifling airs,
Condescends the priefest rod,
Betty in a gown of blue,
Sash and gloves and roses too.
Off a-mourning she goes
Twinkling all her little toes.
Lovely Betty, silver shod.

HEATRICE McDONALD

**Who Makes the Flag?**

A Pennsylvania worsted manufacturer decided recently to find out how many nationalities were represented in the production of American flags at his mill. He found the various operations were handled as follows: Sorted by an American, carded by an Italian, spun by a Swede, warped by a German, drawn by a Scotchman, woven by a Belgian, inspected by a Frenchman, secured by an Albanian, dyed by a Turk, pressed by a Pole and examined by an Irishman.—Allan M. Trout in the Louisville Courier-Journal.

**Worse**

Worse than a grapefruit that squirts in your eye is one that doesn't.—Detroit News.

THE AMERICAN FAMILY By George

"I come out to the garden to forget war bulletins and what do I find—submarines in the lily pond!"

## Confusion Natural In A Democracy

The state of mind of the American people regarding our nation's part and place in this European war is, of course, confused and somewhat perplexed; but, in a democracy, where every citizen is granted personal freedom of thought and expression, this condition is not strange or abnormal. There is no more confusion and perplexity about this war business than there is about most of our purely domestic issues, including the problems that confront us in State or national elections.

Indeed, our confusion and perplexity is merely the pattern of democracy itself; for, unlike the people who live under dictatorships, we are not compelled to listen only to the State's side of public questions; we are not forced, as in Germany and Italy and Russia, to accept the one-sided propaganda created and released by those in power.

So we make bold to declare—not only to relieve our own mind, but also of as many of you who read this column, and may agree with us—that the state of mind of the people in the United States today is in keeping with the thought pattern of a democracy.

This is not to say, of course, that our national thought pattern is tuned to the facts of the moment; it is not to say that our citizens are sufficiently informed even to cooperate willy and prod toward successful ends the leaders in our country upon whom we depend for realistic defense against foreign enemies.

The thought pattern of a free people moves blunderingly toward a final objective, it is true; that it is, in a crisis, unwieldly and even dangerous against a swift-moving enemy, is equally true. But it is the technique of a democracy, and the price we must pay for maintaining freedom of thought and of expression.

All of which, moves us to the belief that, whatever one may offer in criticism of the New Deal and its bureaucracy during the past eight years, its real leaders have majorly endeavored to keep in the people's hands the sacred rights and privileges of the whole people, as guaranteed under the Constitution.

Perhaps the outstanding evidence of this may be seen in the tolerant attitude of the federal government in dealing with strikes, at a time when every strength we possess should be directed toward the production of defense equipment.

There is, in reality, a fairly thin line between the American concept of freedom and the regime of a dictator—but thin as that line may be, it is, in practical matters, as wide as the oceans, and as free.

The only way that the people of the United States may remain free, in the face of the dictator threat of Europe, is for each of us to impose upon himself those measures of self-discipline, self-sacrifice, that will result in the maximum of effort toward the precision-like methods of dictator countries—countries that, so far as the materials of war are concerned, have proved themselves highly efficient arsenals.

The only other alternative is for the imposition of discipline and sacrifice upon us by our own government; this is not the fundamental American way. To prevent it (and we believe our leaders do not want to impose it), each of us must assume those qualities of good citizenship that will result in straighter thinking, more unselfishness, greater willingness to pay defense taxes, and the corollary character items that have made America the best place upon earth for the development of free human beings.

## "Any Two Of Them"

William S. Knudsen, director of the Office of Production Management, is not pessimistic about the ability of industry to provide what the nation requires for its successful defense.

He insists that we have more productive capacity than "any two countries in Europe that you can mention" and while he doesn't know whether we "can supply the whole world with armaments," he is sure that "we can take on any two of them after we get started."

JOHN BARRYMORE, the clownish actor, owes so much money to creditors that a Los Angeles court controls his weekly earnings of $6,700.00. Funny, isn't it, why a chap whose private life is anything but an example for domestic happiness, should earn so much money; yet, perhaps, it isn't so funny after all—for merely earning money isn't difficult to lots of people. The humble cottage with a happy family in it is far beyond the reach of even a Barrymore whose first name is John.

EVERY TIME the Michigan Legislature has met in recent years an effort has been made to legalize dog racing in this State. Those behind such legislation are people who want to make money out of the gullible public. Enactment of such a bill would, in our estimation, be further proof of the lax and loose morals of our Legislators who, in times like these, ought to set examples of real statesmanship for the rest of us to follow.

## *Armchair Philosopher*

**DEFINITION OF A PROPHET**

The prophet is the individual who takes the best from the past and weaves it with the stimulating factors of the present, always retaining a forward look. He has a genius for sifting out the outworn elements of religion which have become a curiosity for alert men and women. The prophet is usually with the minority fighting against the status quo; but in almost every instance he is fighting on the side of destiny! Usually the prophet is today's heretic and tomorrow's saint!—Thomas S. Kepler.

## Mother's Day

Nearly everybody in the United States will join in the celebration of Mother's Day, which occurs on the second Sunday of May.

We hope that the people of Birmingham will reflect upon the debt they owe to individuals, to their mothers and pay tribute to the loving service that had much to do with making them human beings.

In observance of the special day there is no use to become foolish. Let us recognize that there is no miracle that lightens the load of care or the burden of worry that weighs down the average mother. To be good mothers they have to give up many of the pleasures that life offers and their unselfishness is consequently more notable.

We hope that all living mothers, for one day at least, will be happy in the thought that their children honor and love them and they will be remembered, as they should, by their sons and daughters.

For mothers who have passed on, there is nothing that we can do but that their sons and daughters should not fail to recall their memories and pay tribute to their goodness.

## The Army Welcomes Religion

It is interesting to report that the Army, spending $12,000,000 to build five hundred chapels in forts, camps and cantonments in the United States.

The staff of chaplains connected with the Army has been expanded to take care of the spiritual needs of more than one million soldiers now in service. Also, than eight hundred chaplains were added to the Army last year, making nearly one thousand available to conduct religious services and minister to the spiritual needs of the American Army.

Twelve million dollars may not seem like a large sum to spend for spiritual purposes in connection with the billions which are being expended for the purposes of war, but it is refreshing to know that the officials of the Government and Army recognize the importance of religious services.

Soldiers and sailors, the editors, bankers and business men, require the solace which comes from religious services, designed to minister unto spiritual needs.

## Wrong in 1938; Right in 1941

Three years ago sixty-four per cent of the people of the United States were of the opinion that the entrance of this country into the World War in 1917 was a mistake, according to a poll of public opinion by the American Institute of Public Opinion.

In April 1941, a similar poll showed that only 39 per cent of those interviewed believed that our entry into the last war was a mistake.

What happened to change American opinion? Nothing but the devastating demonstration of Nazi military efficiency and the general realization of the rottenness of the nazi regime and its activities.

## Greece Will Live

The fate of Greece, defeated by the combined power of Italy and Germany, should not be needlessly deplored.

The Greek race, throughout the world, holds its head high. Once more the soldiers of the tiny nation have demonstrated their worthiness of great ancestors and have placed humanity in their debt through the example that they have set for other free men to emulate.

No reproach exists for the armies of Greece. Their heroic struggle against overwhelming odds has added glory to an illustrious history. In the better days that are to come there will be a new Greece, with the honor and respect of mankind.

To the Eccentric credit of Detroit's sense of eventual justice let it be recorded for future politicians to read: criminal acts of men in public office on the Fourth City does not pay. The law eventually catches up with those who betray the public trust. This is seen in the recent conviction of 23 Detroit and Wayne County officials, from former Prosecutor Duncan C. McCrea, Sheriff Thomas A. Wilcox, and Mayor Richard W. Reading, to the list of lesser lights who await sentence.

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, The Eccentric printed a story about the Bloomfield Hills police radio, relating that our sister city on the north operated its own station, and got better service at less cost than did Birmingham with its contract with Royal Oak. We wonder if our City Manager has ever investigated this chance to save the taxpayers some money.


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Guide for the week.

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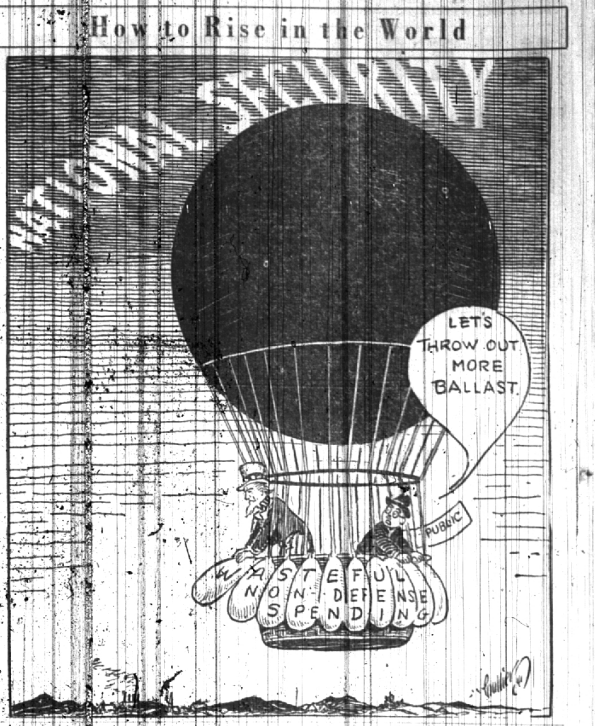
NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have local value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesdays. The staff is pleased, however, to make such editorial changes in the work submitted 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.

## How to Rise in the World




## *Happenings of Long Ago*

**50 Years Ago**
**April 30, 1891**

The Eccentric had been informed that the Saturday night show at Lindner's Hall was to be a strictly moral entertainment, and that no one need be afraid to attend.

Will Wright has been made a member of the Detroit Baseball Club and one of the Board of Directors. With the Birmingham ball players, the pennant was already in view for Detroit.

Montgomery Gilchrist, 8½ years old, died at his home in Birmingham. His death was caused by heart trouble, aggravated by a severe attack of grippe. He left a wife and a large circle of friends to mourn his loss.

Mitchell, of Whitehall and Mitchell, was driving in all his spare time to ride down the "treacherous" bicycle, and was taking all the falls, tumbles, and headers necessary to make it good ridden.

**25 Years Ago**
**April 28, 1916**

Ladies of the First Presbyterian Church, Detroit, realized $139.04 with a Supper and Parcel Post Sale on April 13. All 62 members of the society worked very hard to make the evening a success. The profits were given toward a new church.

Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Newman announced the engagement of their daughter, Gertrude, to David B. Anderson. Mr. Newman was to be married in June.

One of the first series of the "Excursion Season" appeared this week when F. J. Watkins sent 20 of his Sheland ponies to Belle Isle to take care of early visitors.

Mrs. Elmer Rogers entertained the Brookfield Club at her new home last week.

**5 Years Ago**
**April 30, 1936**

Thomas Navin and Betty Spinning were named valedictorian and salutatorian respectively of the 1936 graduating class. Both had made an all-A average all through high school. Thomas, Betty, and twelve other students were appointed to the national scholastic honorary society.

Forbes S. Hazell was elected president of the Rotary Club this week. He was to take office in June.

George Wellington Smith was sponsoring the fourth annual kite contest, which was scheduled for May 16. Kites were to be judged on originality, workmanship, flight and altitude.

**May 2, 1891**

M. K. Taber, A. A. Whitehead, George Mitchell, and Mrs. E. L. Leonard had made plans for carbing in front of their respective homes. It was hoped that others would follow the example followed freely by other citizens.

**25 Years Ago**
**May 1, 1916**

Free Postal Delivery from house to house started on May first. The postmaster reported that "over half" the residents of the town were participating in this service. Around a 500 mail boxes had been erected.

An unknown man was struck and killed almost two miles south of the village when he was hit by a northbound Michigan City Limited. The "about ten years" old, apparently stepped in front of the car on purpose. His body was unidentified.

**5 Years Ago**
**May 7, 1936**

Carol M. Rochon, of Washington, was elected to the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association of the association's 14th biennial convention in Colorado Springs.

Madeline Isabel Davis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Marley Davis of Oakhook farms, was to marry John W. Blanchard at her home on May 14.

## *People's Column*

The Eccentric does not necessarily endorse the opinions or statements made by its correspondents in this column. Letters must be signed by the writer, but the name will be withheld if desired. Letters must be in the office of publication not later than noon Wednesday to insure publication in the issue of the week following.

**VFW Announces Coming Poppy Sale**

To the Editor:

America's national defense preparedness was accented to a much superior degree for the 20th annual Buddy Poppy distribution of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, which will be thrust out the week preceding Memorial Day, May 30.

The Sale here will be conducted Saturday, May 24, under the auspices of City of Birmingham Post No. 2445, V. F. W.

The V. F. W. Buddy Poppy has long been recognized as America's memorial flower," Commander S. H. Wilkinson of Post No. 2645 V. F. W. said today in announcing the forthcoming poppy distribution.

"Until this year, the V. F. W. Buddy Poppy has always been identified with the immortal poppies of Flanders Fields, in the World War. But today, with another world war raging across the seas, and with American boys and men donning uniforms to defend us against foreign aggression, the poppy has a deeper meaning than ever before. It reminds us of the sacrifice of the last war, of the thousands of men who died in that war; of the thousands of others who are today hopeless invalids as a result of that war. It reminds us, too, of the debt we owe these men—and perhaps of the debt, we may, in the future, owe to still more thousands who are in our Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force today."

For 20 years, the Buddy Poppy has provided the Veterans of Foreign Wars with one of its principal sources of revenue for its nationwide program of veteran relief and welfare, Commander Wilkinson said. He stressed the fact that the sale, in all its ramifications, is entirely non-profit-making. Every cent of the proceeds, here and elsewhere, is devoted to local, state and national service and rehabilitation work among disabled veterans and their dependents, and the widows and orphans of veterans, he explained. One of the principal beneficiaries of the proceeds is the V. F. W. National Home at Eaton Rapids, Mich., where this organization cares for more than 200 children whose fathers have died as a result of war, he explained.

E. K. LEWIS,
Post Publicity Chairman

**Majestic**

"The blueprints for a single battleship weigh about 2,000 pounds," and removing them from the lining of an old hat, in the spy novel, is a majestic sight.—Detroit News.


SIGNATURE LOANS TO SALARIED EMPLOYEES WITH SATISFACTORY CREDIT RATING

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