

## Knocking on Wood

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

### MODERN KNIGHTS

Reports from various rumor-centers of Europe have it that the Nazis are running short of airplane pilots. This may well be the case, for these modern knights in aluminum armor are bearing the brunt of the battle on every front, just as our ancestors in casque and breastplate, with lances and swords, led the attack in another age.

Even in those days, the mortality among the mounted soldiers was not so serious as it must be today in the air corps of each country, where the finest young men are chosen for service in the air. One wonders how long it will take Germany to replace the brains and brawn which Dr. Goebbels has so recklessly sacrificed to further his bloody ambitions.

**Most Apt Observation.** Winston Churchill created this war's most brilliant observation when he said that "Never have so many owed so much to so few," speaking in tribute to the British aviators who stemmed Germany's all-out effort to gain control of the air over England in September, 1940.

So far as our American air force is concerned, it has been an arduous and successful war. The Navy is already hunting down submarines in the North Atlantic, and there was talk in Congress last week of the United States setting up an air base in England so that our planes could help guard American merchantmen as they sped toward these shores.

If there is anything that makes one's blood boil it is to compare the activity of these young pilots with the sort of selfish men who stage silly wildcat strikes and jurisdictional squabbles; and those

## Who Wants The Truth?

The search for truth is the greatest activity of the human mind. It is often shackled by the tendency of individuals to become wedded to convictions that become dearer than truth itself.

Let us assume, for example, that some man in makes a great discovery, hitherto unknown to the world. It is epochal, we assume, and the thinker announces it to the world.

One would expect human beings to receive the information with open minds, test it by logic and experience and then embrace it with enthusiasm. Unfortunately, that is not the way of the world.

Here is what would likely happen: Some people would think that it might interfere with their business profits. They would denounce the discoverer as a communist immediately.

Others would see in the enunciated principle some challenge to their established positions in economics, sociology, religion, or other fields. They would pounce upon the thinker with all the glee of a dog chasing a rabbit.

So the process would go for decades before the truth would find itself welcome on the globe.

Readers may think this is far-fetched. They should read what happened in earlier ages to the great men who attempted to lead the minds of men along new paths of truth, in the field of science or religion. They should remember that human nature has not changed very much in the ages since man began to walk the earth.

Now, there is nothing to be gained by denouncing human beings for being fools. All that any individual can do, for himself or herself, is to resolve to be open-minded, to eagerly await the revelations that are yet to come, and to stand ready, upon proper occasion, to discard the fondled half-truth for the truth that is eventually destined to make men free.

## How to Educate Yourself

This editorial is addressed to middle-aged individuals who feel that their educational opportunities have not been as complete as they would have liked.

Conscious of the lack of training, some people bemoan the lost days and sink into a state of semi-procrastination, without making any effort to become better informed. We would call their attention to the fact that there are only two requisites to a good education, reading and thinking.

There is no person in Birmingham of any age, who cannot become a self-educator. A year or two of intelligent reading supplemented by a little thinking; stop the habit of taking opinions from anybody and begin trying to study some problems for the purpose of making up your own mind.

To the individual who does not know where to start we would suggest beginning on a subject in which you are interested. If it is the war in Europe, read about it and then read some more. If it is a technical subject that entrains your imagination, ask advice from some person who knows something about it. Get a book on the subject and, if it takes six months, read it until you understand it.

There is really little excuse for a man or woman going into old age and sink into a state of semi-procrastination. Even if you have only a half hour a day, take advantage of it and begin to acquire new information. Never mind about the better education; make it your business to improve yourself.

We know many excellent individuals who have failed to take advantage of their own leisure time to read and learn but who constantly lament that they are not "educated." The matter of becoming well-informed does not hinge upon a college degree; it is a matter of reading and thinking. This is a question of decision and determination.

THE UNITED STATES government is anxious to have every citizen buy defense stamps and bonds. "No amount is too little," thunder the nation's leaders; this means, as we see it, that every dollar possible must be obtained to pay for the defense expenditures; well, our excellent way for the leaders in Washington to provide more dollars is to cease spending money for unnecessary purposes.

BIRMINGHAM'S ESSENTIAL SPIRIT of friendly neighborliness was again demonstrated last Tuesday evening at the Community House when a reception was held for all who have taken up residence here within the past year. The idea was originated four years ago by Mrs. Julia Lally, Community House hostess. At these receptions new residents not only meet their townsmen, but local officials, heads of various organizations, they glimpse, even in one evening, something of the complexion and spirit of Birmingham.

## Eccentricities

A bride is a young woman who goes ahead and invites guests to the luck dinner before her husband gets back from the shooting trip.

Then there's the middle generation—the one that raises the younger generation for the older generation to worry over.—Detroit News.

A banquet, we believe, is a showy sort of meal where the speaker asks a lot of food he doesn't want and then proceeds to talk about something he doesn't understand to a crowd of people who don't care to hear him.—Capper's Weekly.

"How many black keys on a piano," asks a quiz program, "do you think a piano has without children or one with three little kids?"—Grand Rapids Press.

## Russia and The U. S. A.

Credit for personal courage belongs to Rev. William F. March, pastor of Pontiac First Presbyterian church, who last week told a Birmingham audience that "there is no such thing as religious freedom in Russia." The clergyman spent a month in Russia during 1930, and said first-hand opportunities to see what the Soviet has done to religion and religious leaders.

Rev. March's comment was occasioned by the recent utterance of President Roosevelt that the people of Russia do enjoy religious freedom. The President's statement, said Rev. March, brought forth much criticism from clergymen and others in many sections of the United States.

We think it perfectly good Americanism for informed men to criticize the statements of public men, whether they be the President or a county highway overseer; that is, why freedom of thought and speech are guaranteed by the Constitution.

However, aside from the religious angle of Russia, as adherent to Americans, do not think, in itself, should cause one to refuse to go to Russia in the latter's fight against Hitlerism.

After all, this war is worldwide, and the wrongs that will affect Hitler are not mere religious and academic discussions; men, gunpowder, food, ships and airplanes are involved, and what we need. So, admitting that Russia is what we have been told for years it is, nevertheless the enemies of Hitler do need to gang up together in a common front in the march toward ultimate victory.

Not knowing Russia to be a land of religious intolerance, it seems to us that we run, and must fight along with her and Great Britain in this present emergency.

P. N. By fighting, as yet we do not mean the quaking of our soldiers across the sea.

## Labor on Dangerous Ground

The government of the United States is, and has been for some time, in a position to regulate business, big or little, in the common good.

It likewise goes without argument that the government should be bigger than any labor union or labor leader, and that it should be able to regulate labor whenever necessary in the common good.

Labor has received much in the past few years from a favorable administration. The present has been somewhat criticized by some of the labor leaders, and it is not surprising, labor is self-satisfied, if it attempts to take advantage of its new power to subjugate national defense.

The Eccentric is cognizant of the selfish attitude, often exhibited by laborers, but is consequently sympathetic with the general cause of labor in the United States. As a consistent friend of labor we feel it necessary to call attention to the mounting tide of public opinion against strikes in the defense industries, especially when the nation is at war with Germany.

## The Navy Asks for Men

The United States Navy is making an interesting experiment in an effort to attract more young men to the service. The navy is now under construction. An extensive advertising campaign is being undertaken in the hope of attracting the attention of men who wish to enlist in the Navy.

There are many advantages available to a young man who enlists in the Navy today. Not only will the sailor be paid for his time, but, very often, he will be instructed in a skill that will open new avenues of employment after his naval education period has been completed. To earn and to learn at the same time is a combination not often found.

INSTEAD OF AGING, CONGRESS of having abdicated its responsibilities so often, why not, as critics and voters, admit that the many of us have forsaken the duties of freedom and women in a democracy? For Congress, always, reacts to the pressure of the folks back home. If there is any such pressure, then Congress simply reacts to the pressure of citizens, whether that be the radical element of the New Deal or other "pressure groups" who want special consideration.

CITY MANAGER Donald T. Eckert last week made his annual suggestion that the city look for additional underground water supply again next year. Due to Birmingham's continuous increase in population, this project, like taxes, "is always with us." The only alternative is to go to Detroit for water—an expensive and literally distasteful solution.

OF COURSE.

THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

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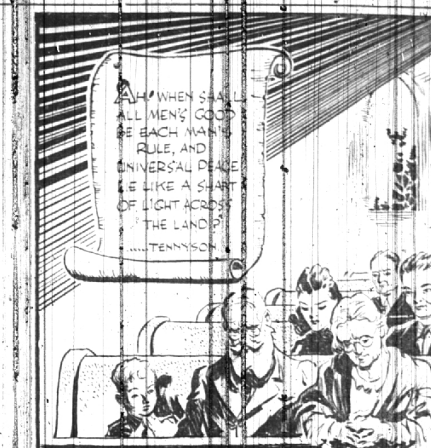
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## Armistice Day—1941



ARMISTICE DAY—1941

## People's Column

The Birmingham Eccentric is pleased to receive the following contributions for the People's Column:

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## Happenings of Long Ago

50 Years Ago  
Thursday, Nov. 5  
The Birmingham Eccentric was founded on Thursday, Nov. 5, 1891, by Mr. J. H. Eckert.

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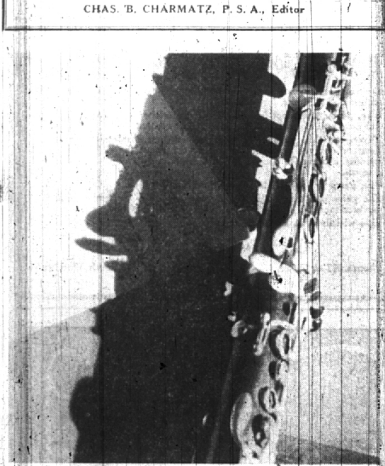
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## THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner

CHAS. B. CHARMATZ, P.S.A., Editor



Ray Russell of Grosse Pointe creates a shadow photo caricaturing "Ted Lewis."

ABOUT RAY RUSSELL Ray has progressed in just a few years to a point where his work is much in demand by advertising agencies, and magazines, recently have illustrated stories in Fortune, Saturday Evening Post and Popular Mechanics.

Just for fun, he likes to make weird photographs of shadows, making the shadow represent an animal or caricature or shadow resemblances of other objects.

(Continued on Page 6)

## SHAIN'S PRESENTS

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