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

THIS MATTER OF MORALE

A LOT has been written on the subject of morale. Some of it has come out of Washington, uttered by people who have implied that only isolationists and "obstructionists" are responsible for it. It would never occur to these people to examine their own records.

Many are disturbed over the lack of "national unity," forgetting that our disunity is a natural and expected result of a great cleavage of opinion among the American people.

People are disturbed about the dissatisfaction in the Army. Everybody wonders why there is still turmoil in Washington over organizing the government's role in defense production.

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Not All-Out

Some seem to forget that the public is behind Britain only to a limited extent, not "all-out." The public-opinion polls show that people in America hope Hitler is beaten and believe that he will be. A majority is behind aid to Britain, but 80 per cent are opposed to a declaration of war and another American Expeditionary Force. The American people are afraid to see Hitler rule the world, but because they believe it is not our fault that he rose to power, the people here have accepted no moral obligation for the present mess and therefore, are willing to help but not to shed blood.

In other words, the American people are concerned with their security, but do not care to mix into Europe's bloody brawls any more than they have to. Whether that is right or wrong is another question.

* * *

Who's Deluding Whom?

Raymond Clapper, the columnist, writing from London sums up the situation this way:

"The realities of our situation obviously are that the American people want overwhelmingly to see Germany defeated but are reluctant to go fully into war unless we are struck at more closely and more directly. That attitude may be wise or unwise, but whichever it is, that is the fact. It is not likely to be changed by arguments, but only by events which may bring the menace closer home to the American people. More and more people here (in London) are coming to understand that this is the American position, **and I don't believe they appreciate us trying to delude them about it.**"

WHO has been deluding the English people about our frame of mind? Those last 14 words are significant, for it indicates that certain Americans have erroneously interpreted the American attitude, and have led the British to believe that we were on the verge of declaring war.

* * *

Another Mistake

Here is another mistake. The interventionists, shocked by this conservative attitude of the country, declare: "The American people must be told of their danger! The nation is in the most perilous hour of its history! Hitler is conquering the world and we must stop him!"

And thereupon, they write fiery articles and give rousing speeches. But the people remain undisturbed, not convinced by this oratory. Why? Right or wrong, they still have considerable faith in the Atlantic Ocean, in our Navy and Army. They listen to the oratory and shut their radios off. "Hitler can't even get across the English Channel," expresses their attitude.

I think that viewpoint can become dangerous, for there is no question but that modern transportation and communication has shrunk the protective value of broad oceans; and further, that the world is too interdependent for one half to live in peace while a modern Attila scourges the other half.

How Peril Are We?

But, the fact remains: We are not in nearly the danger we were a year ago when Hitler had just finished knocking out France. Walter Lippmann, who, by no stretch of the imagination is an isolationist, has this to say about that point:

"In spite of a certain amount of obstruction and uninformed political confusion at home, the American position in the world as a whole has been made much better than it was a year ago. It is so much better that the opportunity now exists to make sure that Japan will not stab us in the back or even commel us to continue to leave the Western Hemisphere unguarded in the Atlantic because we must stand guard in the Pacific."

* * *

Morale, Simmered Down

As I see it, the question of morale simmers down to this:

America needs more truth, more candor, more facts—and less emotion. We want no repetition by our leaders of the draft mistake, telling the boys they were in for a year, and then holding them longer. Our leaders should not get too far out in front of public opinion; in other words, unless a drastic change occurs in the present state of the war, our leaders need make no attempt to work the people up to the state of a declaration of war.

Further, a super effort must be made in Washington to bring order out of chaos in defense production. Too much time already has been frittered away. There has been no coordination, no direction; let us hope that the new setup announced last Friday will be the long-awaited step.

Intelligent planning is needed, for Washington, in seizing full control over all raw materials, has restricted with red tape the very lives of thousands of small business men and their millions of workers.

By producing more weapons, more can be sent abroad and more can be given to our own soldiers. "Simulation" is a joke with the soldiers, and they are disgusted with playing around with phony war machines. That is one reason for their allegedly low morale.

* * *

When the Administration at Washington gets down to earth and down to business, national morale will take care of itself.

THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner

Clouds make your snapshots more interesting and forceful. Here a medium yellow filter recorded this scene just about the same as it appeared to the eye.

Summer is nearing its end and the great cloud masses standing out against a deep blue sky will soon be gone. Given two pictures of identical subjects, in which the sky appears, it is a safe wager that your attention will be held by the one showing fluffy white clouds, and not the one with an unattractive, grayish white sky.

Photographic films are very sensitive to blue and ultra-violet light, and unless the exposure is very near correct, a blue sky will be recorded in a very light tone. We can, however, be quite certain of rendering the sky in a natural

(Continued on Page 3)

Americans Are "Worshippers"

As a group, the American people are hero worshippers; they have enough inherent love of life and adventure to want to look up to something great and fine—however, at times, they may be mistaken about the thing or ideal they are heroizing. In brief, they want to follow a leader, or leaders, who will take them high upon the mountain, so to speak, where they may glimpse the finer and lovelier environments of this world.

That's one reason, currently speaking, why they elected Franklin D. Roosevelt to a third term; they—at least a big majority of them—still believe that F. D. R. is a great man. But we wonder, today, in the face of all the domestic confusion that exists, if this same majority still thinks F. D. R. is so great; we'll wager that if the Presidential election were held today, a competent political opponent would win over the Squire of Hyde Park. For this Squire, however idealistic he his humanitarian heart, is woefully lacking in essential leadership and executive ability—and the present war emergency certainly proves it, insofar as production for defense goes.

Why, oh why, cannot Mr. Roosevelt entrust some of his great powers in the hands of those he has selected to do the various jobs? The nation is getting disgusted with the unceasing stories of inefficiency, and power-grabbing efforts of many of the President's "inner circle."

Our Churches Grow

It is interesting to report that a larger percentage of the population of the United States maintains membership in the 50 religious bodies of this country.

Figures for 1940 show that forty-nine per cent of the people in this country are members of some religious body. The record shows that there has been a gain in membership and what is more significant, a slight increase in the percentage of the population which belongs to organized churches.

The Yearbook of American Churches, issued under the auspices of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, which was recently published, reveals some interesting facts about the religious life of our people. In 1940, there were 64,301,594 church members in the country, attending 44,319 churches. The total of 250 religious bodies exceeds any previous figure recorded.

Leadership in membership for a single sect goes to the Roman Catholic Church, with 21,284,455 members. The Protestant bodies, as a group, however, have an enrollment of 36,103,984 members. The Jewish church is credited with 4,641,184 members.

First among the Protestant bodies is the Methodist Church, with 7,377,887, followed by the Northern and Southern Baptist Churches, with an enrollment of 4,949,174.

Dr. Benson L. Landis, editor of The Yearbook, estimates that nearly $600,000,000 was contributed to the churches of the country in 1940. The largest beneficiary, according to his estimate, was the Methodist Church, which received $48,601,995. Other leaders were the Presbyterian Church, $42,062,598; the Southern Baptist Convention, $37,136,531; and the Protestant Episcopal Church, $32,451,076.

Dividing Defense Contracts

When the United States began its vast armament program last summer, it was necessary for the Government to go to the large corporations in order to take advantage of existing industrial plants. Speed in the delivery of products was the prime consideration.

There has been considerable criticism of this policy although, in our opinion, the emergency justified the procedure. Nevertheless, the concentration and centralization of industry was greatly increased by the placing of orders with giant corporations.

It has been noted that seventy-one per cent of the first $8,000,000,000 of defense contracts were placed in twenty cities and their immediately adjacent areas, and sixty-eight per cent of the first $10,000,000,000 of defense contracts were awarded to thirty corporations.

The situation has now changed, according to Donald M. Nelson, Director of Purchases, OPM, who says that while speed is still imperative, greater consideration can now be given to decentralization in order to better adjust the economic future of the nation.

NEXT WEEK MARKS the beginning of the 1941-42 school year, and Birmingham's nearly three-thousand students will go back to the classrooms for another nine months. Educating our youngsters is the largest single tax item we get—except for those times, like the present, when we spend more on the international game of slaughter.

BETWEEN 1492, when Columbus is assumed to have discovered America, and 1940, 91 per cent of all these years witnessed war going on somewhere on this earth. Who can deny that the *cause* of war is not the most burning question of all time?

Eccentricities

"How will men look in 1975?" asks a woman writer. Probably just as often as they do now.—Okemah, Okla., Leader.

Once a woman married a man for better or worse, but now she marries him for more or less. —Beloit, Kan., Call.

If you can laugh at your troubles at least you are sure not to run out of something to laugh at. —Kansas City Kansan.

Don't keep telling your bride-to-be that you are unworthy of her. Let it be a surprise.—Detroit News.

Checkbook Can't Take Dad's Place

"There has always been criticism of the young generation," writes James Truslow Adams, noted historian and author, in the Rotarian magazine. "But today," he adds, "the situation is somewhat different. The young are as vociferous in criticizing the older generation."

It is the fault of the older generation, Adams holds, which has accustomed the younger one to expect things on a golden platter. Youth is dissatisfied, and expects everything to be provided for it. The generation now older made its own way and did without most of the things that youth expects to be given without effort.

Youth insists it could do things better than age, yet "Trotsky led the Russian revolution at 38; Mussolini became dictator at 39; Hitler began his revolutionary career at 37, wrote 'Mein Kampf' at 36, and was in power at 44. These men created their following among the young," Adams cites. "It is they (the older men and women) who give youth what opportunities it has. They may not know how to use it, the world—who does? but they are doing their full share to help it go on."

The fundamental lesson will democracy, Adams points out, is that nations come ahead of rights. Class distinctions, always bad, are at their silliest when based solely on age, and today there is a large move on set youth against age.

"It seems to me essential that the generations bridge over the new gulf between them and supplement instead of antagonizing each other . . . In my endeavor the leadership should be retained by age," Adams concludes. "It is as foolish to expect youth to guide and instruct its elders as it is to turn a university upside down and have the pupils instruct the teachers. But youth will not respect or follow age unless it shows itself in both character and wisdom. Money is not necessarily a sign of benefactor. A mere checkbook is not a father."

The First Plastic Automobile

Henry Ford's first plastic automobile has been exhibited to the public, representing the fruit of two five years' research by a group of young scientists, ordered to find out about our "agricultural products in industry."

Mounted on a popular-welded steel frame, the car has a structure made of plastics, said to be superior to steel in everything but tensile strength. The plastic body, weighing more than one hundred metal, weighs nearly 2,000 pounds, while a steel unit of comparable size weighs about 2,400 pounds.

Mr. Ford is confident that plastic bodies can be produced on a practical and economical means, with some savings as a result of fewer fabricating finishing operations.

The pliability of the plastic panel was tested by the auto owner, who hit it with an axe. The plastic panel was unchanged after a blow, but a similar panel of metal with a steel panel cut through the metal.

Robert Boyer, young research chemist, who started the research which led to the plastic car, said that 50 million automobiles, with plastic bodies, would consume 100,000 bales of cotton, 500,000 bushels of wheat, 700,000 bushels of soybeans and 500,000 bushels of corn.

It may be a long road from the production of this "first plastic car" and the use of vast quantities of agricultural products in industry, and we would scarcely advise any farmer to increase acreage to provide the raw materials, but, nevertheless, there is a possibility that the day will come when a new market will be opened to farmers.

FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE the grand music that comes from carillon bells, September is always a looked-forward-to month in this area for then it is that famous carillonneur Anton Brees, of Lake Worth, Florida, gives concerts on the lovely bells that hang in the tower of Christ Church Cranbrook. So, if you wish to be soothed and comforted on some of those nice September evenings, plan to park your car in the vicinity of Christ Church, and let Mr. Brees give you a rest and relaxation from the cares of your work-a-day world.

TWO SWEDISH SCIENTISTS say that they have discovered a method of preventing the annual falling of leaves from deciduous trees. I hope they fail in this venture, for if they do, what will happen to the beautiful fall colors of our trees? What shall we do to replace the grand aroma of burning leaves, and what will the kids have to play and jump into anyway?

The Birmingham Eccentric

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NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be prepared and be in our office before noon on Wednesday. The right is reserved to reject any copy considered libelous or detrimental to the good name of any person, firm or institution. The right is reserved to make a nominal charge for any copy which is not considered to be of a news nature. Because of a lack of space, some news items may be required to be condensed. Also, the publication of any story or item is not to be construed as an endorsement of the statement by the management of the Eccentric. Because of the volume of mail received, it is impossible to read all letters to the editor. 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 any copy printed in the Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

Their First Important Step

People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential if requested. Letters must be limited to 500 words, and must be in the office by Saturday noon for publication the following Thursday.

Favors Completion Of Waterway

Editor, The Eccentric:

We fellows who work for a living want the St. Lawrence waterway completed and completed quickly. It means better markets for agricultural produce, new factories and more work for old factories. It all adds up to more jobs for more of us. It helps our defense program.

In Congress, right now the fight is going on. We know that Michigan emphatically wants the seaway. We wholeheartedly accept the favorable opinions of every President from Taft to Roosevelt.

But against us stand the same old array of selfish interests, throwing up the same old smoke screens and trying to rouse sectional interests against us. They don't want to see the shores of the Atlantic brought right to our State. They want to keep us locked up and to fatten on unjust tolls on our products.

Why shouldn't we fight back? Let's spur on our gang down in Washington. Let's prod them a bit. Let's invest in a penny postcard and tell them in no uncertain terms just what we want and how we want it. It will help to stiffen their backs a whole lot. Right now is the time to act.

J. HENNIGAR
9585 Monica Ave.
Detroit, Mich.

Thinks City Ought To Be Publicized

Editor, The Eccentric:

I'll venture to say that not one American in a thousand, probably ten thousand, knows that there is a Birmingham, Michigan. Maybe this is because our big brother down in Alabama sort of dwarfs us, or because we're so near Detroit. However, I think that it's mainly due to the fact that we don't have an effective publicity bureau. There must be some way to let America know that we exist. Birmingham is a swell place to live, so let's put it on the map.

T.T.S.
"THE YOUNG SQUIRT"

Happenings of Long Ago

50 Years Ago
Sept. 3, 1891

The new drinking fountain at the depot was causing much favorable comment. It was, apparently, the beauty spot of the town.

Misses Jennie and Cornelia Pickering, of Pontiac, were visiting their cousin, Miss Viola Pickering in this village.

On Thursday last, Charles Pressel, of Troy, wedded Miss Lizzie Most of the same town.

Miss Nellie Smith, assistant at The Eccentric was showing off a new Clipper bicycle. The machine was the gift of a dear, wealthy, and good aunt.

Miss Mame Cannon of Southfield road gave a tea-party for her friends, before she departed for her school duties for another year.

A party of five ladies from Detroit, not a few of them friends of Mattie Baldwin of this place, stepped off from the train one day last week and walked to Orchard Lake and did it, too, all alone and without any man being in it."

The last boxers dance of the season was scheduled to take place Thursday evening at Frank Hoyle by Brooks's orchestra. No rooms had been spared to make this last dance the greatest success of the season.

Mrs. William Goodman and son, Willie, were visiting Mrs. Lamp of this place.

Eli Brooks, of Denver, Col., enjoyed a visit with his sister, Mrs. Ed Chenfeld, at Troy last week.

Mr. William Satterlee and his daughter, Mary, left last week for a five-month trip to California.

25 Years Ago
Sept. 1, 1916

Over 20,000 persons witnessed the pageant presented by Bloomfield Centennial" in Pontiac last week. Among the outstanding floats was the one represented by Bloomfield. It represented the interior of one of the first log cabins built here in 1818. The furnishings were all hundred years old, adding to the effect were the Misses Floyd and Helen Shawg, who were busy knitting and spinning, and Messrs. Ralph Conyell and Russell Witney, who were all so in nature. Donald Plumstead and Russell McGory were the real barefoot boys of the early day. Credit is due Miss Sarah Sly, chairman of the township committee.

Mrs. Ada Wiley and daughter, Grace, have returned from a visit with relatives in Algonac.

The Eccentric office and the local banks were to be closed on Labor Day.

Lynn Allen was reported to be enjoying life at Crystal Lake.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Losche were camping at Gilbert Lake.

Mrs. H. W. Smith and daughter had left for a visit to Spokane, Wash.

On Sept. 4, the stone road between Detroit and Pontiac via Birmingham was to be opened for public use on that very day the State Fair also opened.

Mrs. William McClelland, of Ann Arbor, was visiting at William Hagerman's home.

Lee Lowry and father recently sold their home in Detroit and expected to move to Big Beaver Crossing during October.

A quiet but attractive home wedding took place last Thursday evening when Miss Leota Fern Uptegraff, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Uptegraff, of East Maple avenue, became the wife of Earl G. Potter, of Highland Park. The Rev. Fenton O. Fish officiated. Attendants were Miss Frances Potter, of Flint, and Charles O. Beck, of Highland Park. Marguerite Sanford and Mary Medbury were ribbon girls; Evelyn Schumacher and Maxine Sturgeon, flower girls, while the bride's brother, Master Gerald Uptegraff, was ringbearer. Mr. and Mrs. Potter left for a northern trip on the lakes and were to be at home to their friends after Sept. 10, at 305 East Maple avenue, Birmingham.

5 Years Ago
September 3, 1936

Eliot Coryell and Thomas J. Ward recently proved their mettle as seamen and navigators when their 24-foot cabin cruiser broke its cam shaft gear in a rough sea on Lake Superior, forcing the two, who had set out on a fishing trip, to ride the turbulent waters for several days in a disabled craft. They were rescued by Coast Guards.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond L. Pointer, recently disclosed news of the betrothal of their daughter, Beatrice Flo, to Stuart A. Carpenter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Carpenter, of Royal Oak. The wedding date was set for Oct. 1.

A pilgrimage to Birmingham gardens was being planned by the local unit of the Women's National Farm and Garden Association. After the tour the group was to gather at the home of Mrs. W. A. P. John of Tooting Lane, for a garden tea.

Members of Birmingham's Young Republicans Club met during the past week to organize for the coming year. The membership of the club numbered about 150.

FOR LONELINESS

Mortals act foolish, but what does
it matter,
I talk to the dog and my little
silk cat,
And the hens and my brown banty . . . all of us patter,
Mortals act foolish, but what does
it matter,
The pullets and hens are delighted
to chatter,
And today kitty told me that
she captured a rat,
Mortals act foolish, but what does
it matter,
I talk to my dog and my little
silk cat.

—Beatrice McDonald

I would rather be able to appreciate the things I cannot have than to have the things I cannot appreciate.—Elbert Hubbard.

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