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Local Tax Assessments During the past week Birmingham business and residential taxpayers received something of a shock when, right after the school millage election, they received city notices of increased tax assessments and found that city assessor Elmer W. Haack had upped their valuations considerably.

Not in many years were local taxpayers so ruffled. At once some of the business people got together and began the formation of a Taxpayers Association; for, while the residential owners had their assessments increased an average of 18 per cent, the business folks found most of their assessments upped 100 per cent.

It was unparalleled in the history of Birmingham; in the opinion of this newspaper, it was equally uncalled for, too.

The Eccentric has always been a friend of the needs of government for proper revenues; for nearly thirty years the editor of this newspaper has backed every progressive movement in this community, whether it concerned extension of city services or matters relating to better schools.

Following receipt of their tax bills, individuals and delegations descended upon Mr. Haack; they also called upon the other two members of the Board of Review, Robert K. McClellan and Merrill C. Adams.

Last Saturday Mr. Haack admitted that "perhaps I have made a mistake in increasing assessments so much in one year; the change should have been made more gradually."

Of course he had! All of which brings up a question in the minds of many local citizens: "Does our City Commission, who hire the assessor, have continuous current knowledge of what changes he may have in mind regarding assessments, so that they, the Commission, may represent the people on such matters?"

We are assured by the Board of Review that proper changes in this year's assessments will be made, on an equitable basis. No citizen should object to tax increases, providing they are done equitably to all taxpayers.

Mr. Haack has been City Assessor for 11 years; as far back as last September he knew exactly what his plans were for the current tax valuations, he admitted last Saturday; yet, during all that time, he failed to reveal his plan to any representative of the people—with the result that last week he and his office received severest criticism at the hands of local citizens.

It was, indeed, a case of bad public relations on Mr. Haack's part. Such a situation is, of course, negative in obtaining and holding public confidence. To the new Taxpayers Association we wish success; not as a group who shall

oppose efforts to raise needed local revenues, but rather as a group of people who will cooperate in seeing that fair and equitable assessments are levied upon all of the people, together with the objective of keeping our community solvent and progressive.

Tornadoes Terrific

The tornado which spread death and destruction throughout Western Texas and Oklahoma represents one of the most powerful demonstrations of nature. A witness said that it struck with "a loud swishing noise, like the rush of escaping steam" and that he could see "automobiles, barrels and merchandise of all kinds whipping up the street."

The tornado gets its name from the Spanish language and the word means "a turning about." Often referred to as a "twister," the tornado seems to be a mammoth edition of the smaller whirlwinds that often attract attention on warm days. Whether its destruction is caused altogether by the force of the wind or whether the tornado produces something of a vacuum, causing structures to explode from the inside pressure of the air, is not altogether known.

Some eye witnesses to tornadoes believe that the whirling tunnel bounces along the earth. The record of destruction sometimes indicates that the force dips along the surface but wherever it touches, the destructive force is terrific.

So Henry Wallace wants "to make the Garden of Eden bloom again!" Well, Henry did pretty well with hybrid corn in Iowa—which is reason for so many of his "Utopian Flowers" to look and sound corny, perhaps.

Every home should have within it good music. By exercising judgment, one can find good music on many radio programs. Good music is as necessary to happiness as any other earthly creation.

The Birmingham Eccentric

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NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish brief contributions of material providing it has news value and suggestions are welcomed. Contributions are usually edited superficially so that they conform to general newspaper standards. 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.

Happenings of Long Ago

50 YEARS AGO May 21, 1897

A few miles west of Birmingham, on the picturesque banks of Wing Lake, lives a maiden lady who, 25 years ago, was a beautiful society belle. She had a state reputation as a composer of music and her beautiful landscape paintings are still highly prized. Her parents died leaving her wealthy, but living alone, she brooded, and finally she took to her room. Her beautiful voice which had charmed opera house audiences, now causes little children to curl up in bed when they hear it at night. Horses are often frightened, when passing her house, by newspapers being slid along the roads in the middle of the road, each one containing some kind of cooled vegetables, put out to feed the fairies.

Wes Faint, who has just received a brain fever, took a check, all right and as good as new. "It was reported that I was dead," said Wes. "But you know George, that the last thing I would do would be to die."

In our "News from School" last week an error occurred. The item should have read Miss Carrie Poppleton, salutatorian, and Miss Nora Bassett, valedictorian. Please accept correction, ladies. We have been wondering what the matter with John Sharp lately. Why, didn't you know? A ten-pound boy arrived at his home last Monday and will remain some time.

The removal of the ice house made it possible to improve the grounds at the water works and it has been done. You won't hardly know the place. The Birmingham Survey has contributed a pine for the front and a cluster of evergreens for the back. The world do move.

20 YEARS AGO May 19, 1907

Members of the First Methodist Church of Birmingham, on this, the centennial anniversary of its incorporation, may be happy to recall that it was the first church society to be organized in Birmingham, being the first building erected in 1839 was the first church to be built in Birmingham, and that the first church service was held in the tiny settlement by a Methodist itinerant, whose name is unrecorded. John Hunter, Elizabeth Willets and John Hamilton had built the first brick building here.

Two trackmen of Baldwin High School placed in the University of Michigan interscholastic track and field meet in Ann Arbor last Friday and Saturday. They are David Gaffill, who won the 100 yard race, and George Williams, who tied for third with two other jumpers, in the 100 yard race.

The 16 fires attended by the Birmingham fire department during the week of April 19, 1927, total number of fires thus far in 1927 to 51. The cost to the village of Birmingham of April 19, 1927, with \$150 for the fire drill costs.

5 YEARS AGO May 21, 1922

Patricia Kennedy has been named valedictorian of the 600 Baldwin High School June graduates.

Now that golf balls are so scarce why not reduce the water hazards and cut the rough a little shorter? George Savelian and Joseph Williams of Detroit were arrested at 11 p. m. last Wednesday night at Stoneycroft Golf Club, where they had taken a pack of balls from a pond. The men were armed with a special rake and brought their bathing suits. Each was fined \$20.

Mrs. Henry Nau, 1447 Dorchester, is back from Florida home a little earlier because of gasoline rationing. When Mint's ice cream parlour phoned police, asking them to chase away a couple of spongers parked outside. Dear!! Two complete dance stories make up the dance record being given this Saturday evening at Baldwin High School auditorium by pupils of Yvonne and Genevieve Gay. Patronesses for the evening include Mrs. Maurice Smith, Mrs. E. R. Thom, Mrs. Arthur A. Bull, Mrs. J. A. Bull, Royal Oak, and Mrs. H. E. Tremper.

Role of Rubber in U. S. Economy Told Local Rotarians A composite picture of the rubber industry was presented to Birmingham Rotarians when R. S. Blake, general secretary manager of the rubber branch of the U. S. Rubber Company, spoke before the group.

While many persons may still think that it was announced when the recent war that the United States might have to develop some other type of automobile wheel than a pneumatic tire, that was exactly the case, Blake declared. "Several automotive research experts were busily engaged in an effort to discover some type of substitute just prior to the wholesale development of rayon."

The Japanese staked their empire on a gamble to cut off the U. S. supply of rubber from the East Indies because they knew to what extent it could cripple our nation's transportation system and they nearly succeeded, Blake stated.

"Everyone then realized how vital a part rubber plays in the life of the American citizen," he pointed out. He said that some 52,000 items on the market today depend on the inclusion of rubber to greater or lesser degree, the speaker continued.



People's Column

To the Editor: May 9, 1947 The Board of Education requested, by resolution at a Special Meeting on May 8th, that a letter of appreciation be sent you for the fine cooperation and interest shown in connection with the recent election for extra millage. The allocation of space in The Eccentric given to this issue was very generous and your editorial very timely.

You have contributed a great deal to aid the schools in their endeavor to provide an efficient program of instruction for the boys and girls of Birmingham without the strife and friction which exists in communities where teachers "strike" for higher wages, and children suffer the consequences of having their instructors so emotionally upset in their endeavor to improve their personal situation that the quality of instruction is lowered.

Birmingham will be no more desirable as a residential area, than the schools it provides for its children. It is certainly up to all of us to maintain a high quality of education in this fine area of homes to attract the highest type of person to our city.

DWIGHT B. IRELAND Superintendent of Schools

THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner



Good vacation snapshots such as this are fun to take, fun to keep and look at later on. Why not start a special album for this year's vacation?

WHAT BECOMES OF THEM? A single giant-sized collection, more and more picture takers are using these small albums for selected picture albums.

One friend of mine has individual albums for each of his children. A large picture of the child is on the cover, inside is a year-by-year account story of the child growing up. If a fond gift or uncle is curious about Danny or Barbara or Jim he is handed the album in question and there is the child's picture biography. Vacation trips are another subject which can be handled in individual albums: "Cape Cod—1944", "Yellow Stone—1941". A hobbyist mentioned here before, has an album entirely filled with railroad pictures; the happy picture taker I know of made up a photo album for his wife's anniversary gift, comprising all the pictures of their combined marriage and honeymoon—thanks to having saved his negatives. As for albums, one of the happier trends in recent years has been toward the small album—an album of comparatively few pages in which related prints are stored, rather than jumbling dozens of pictures in

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