Have you observed the beautiful pictures which the misty, lacey clouds paint the summer skies with these days? When the wind is blowing gently you are able to see the clouds becoming moving pictures on an azure curtain.

The Birmingham Eccentric

PART ONE

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THIS and THAT

By G. R. A.

Observations of the Republican Convention

As I sat through much of the proceedings of the recent Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, I several times remarked to others: "Wonder what old Ben Franklin would have to say if he, too, were here to witness this effort on the part of the several candidates for the Presidential nomination, as they and their supporters seek victory."

From the time, in company with Gov. Sigler, I reached Philadelphia Friday evening, June 18, until I left the City of Brotherly Love seven days later, "America was on the loose". By that I mean that men and women, in a land still free to choose its public officials without dictatorial restraint, utilized about every device and tactic—intelligently, dumbly, nonsensically, with trickery, double-talk, truth and falsehood—to win the majority approval of the 1094 delegates for their specific candidate.

When I say this, I do not mean to decry the system used in our political arena, nor to impugn the personal character and integrity of any candidate. I am willing to admit, as one observer, that the vast majority of thoughts and acts revealed at Philadelphia were on the good side of the ledger; but, too, there were sprinkled into the convention enough of the negative ones to reveal what one might expect in a crowd of 30,000 people—namely, a cross section of human nature that is playing for high stakes in a political battle for great power and patronage and, I must say, the desire to help keep America free.

Vandenberg's Campaign

You who read these lines are, I expect, more interested in the efforts of the Michigan delegation to win the nomination for Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg; from where I sat, I can tell you that Michigan, under Gov. Sigler, merely sought to strengthen Vandenberg's position in case a deadlock should occur between Dewey, Taft and Stassen. There never was any expectancy that the Michigan Senator would ever have a chance to win unless such a deadlock did occur.

Immediately upon arrival in Philadelphia, Sigler was besieged by newspapermen regarding the status of Vandenberg. "Is he an active candidate, Governor? Does he know what the Michigan delegation is doing and does he thoroughly approve it? Are you going to nominate him at the Convention?" . . . and a host of corollary questions were hurled at Sigler.

At no time that followed, so far as I know, during the Convention did Vandenberg make any public statement of being an active candidate; neither, so far as I know, did, during the Convention, make any public repudiation of the Michigan efforts to get him before the Convention.

All of which, of course, added up to a rather weak position for the Michigan supporters of the Senator . . . they were loyal to a man from their State, but actually had no real flesh and blood, publicly-announced by himself candidate to fight for.

Because of this it was practically impossible for the Michigan delegates and other supporters at the Convention to win the votes of other State delegations for Vandenberg.

Michigan's Mistake

Perhaps the most vulnerable position of the Michigan delegation was in the fact that it had not caucused at the right time to determine in advance of the second ballot, when Dewey had 434 votes, Taft 224, Stassen 157, and Vandenberg only 62, so that Michigan could use its second choice to toss into the Convention.

When the second ballot started, and it was evident that Dewey was gaining more votes than his only real opponent, Taft, was, had Michigan "paused" when its name was called, and when all the other States had been polled and Dewey's total revealed at 515, Sigler could have swung the Michigan strength for Dewey (and there never was any unofficial question but what that was the majority Michigan sentiment all the time), and Dewey would have won on the second ballot.

But Michigan's delegation didn't move quickly enough, in my opinion, and thus missed the opportunity of electing, in reality, the next President of the United States.

Dewey Always on Top

There is no question but what Dewey had the best organization behind him, both before and during the Convention. Taft had some experienced politicians with him, of course, but he never had the personal glamour that wins support far outside the circle of his own group. Stassen played a fine hand to the very end of the Convention, and received a tremendous ovation when he appeared before the Convention to release his support to Dewey on the third ballot. Gov. Earl Warren, of California, the Vice-Presidential nominee, is a great man in his own right, with the respect of the Convention, even though he got few votes at the balloting.

It was, in more ways than one, "a hot Convention". Speaking in terms of temperature, that Con-

(See THIS & THAT, Page 2)

No. 11

Property Taxes Are Backbone of City Government

By George Wm. Averill

Despite frequent efforts to broaden the revenue base, property taxes continue to represent the principal source of income which is used for the operation of American municipal governments.

The City of Birmingham is no exception to this rule. This method accounts for 60-70 per cent of the money which permits the city to function.

The 1948-49 city budget, for instance, amounts to $615,575. Of this amount, $419,645 will come from property taxes. The remaining $195,930, or about 32 per cent of the total, will result from non-tax revenues, such as parking meter money, parking and traffic fines, permits, various state monies which are returned to the city, and other assorted sources.

Who Figures It Out?

Now we get into the particular city office which figures out just how much Mr. or Mrs. Birmingham pays in the way of personal and real property taxes. It is the city assessor's office.

The city assessor is the gentleman appointed by the city commission who establishes the city tax rate, who figures property evaluations.

Now it is not the purpose of this article to discuss the merits, pro or con, of assessing procedure nor of figuring the city tax rate. Those are subjects upon which hardly anyone can agree in all their ramifications. Nor is it intended, in this article, to other than mention briefly such matters as special assessments and how they are determined. These will be taken up as fully as possible in special articles later in the series.

Rather, this article and the one next week are designed merely to describe the general, over-all functions and responsibilities of the assessor's office.

Work Begins Early

Before the first Saturday in May of each year, the assessor's office prepares an assessment roll. This roll gives the description of each parcel of real property in the city, its assessed value and the name and address of the owner to whom the tax bills are to be sent. The name, address and assessed value for each personal tax assessment is also on the roll.

Work on this roll is begun almost immediately after the completion of the one for the preceding year and continues throughout that year. Names and address are changing constantly; property frequently is divided or combined and this means writing new descriptions. For all new buildings, alterations or additions to existing buildings, detailed data is compiled.

As previously stated, the method of assessing property cannot be covered in detail in this article. However, the method used in Birmingham is the same as that employed in practically all of the surrounding communities, and includes the latest assessment technique.

Assessed Per Foot

Generally, it can be stated that land is assessed at various amounts per front foot depending upon its value, taking into consideration the width, depth, shape and any other factors that affect the value of each individual parcel of land.

Buildings are cubed, classified and valued at a unit price per cubic foot. Buildings are depreciated for any detracting factors and old buildings are depreciated for age. Naturally, a great number of unit prices are used depending on the size, kind, type, class and quality of construction.

In other words, a brick house has a greater unit price than the same size house of frame construction. A larger brick or frame house has a larger unit price than a smaller brick or frame dwelling. So, too, might a well-built frame house have a larger unit price than the same size brick house which appears put together with paste and a prayer.

The city assessor and two qualified private citizens and electors make up the board of review. This board meets on the second Thursday in May and remains in session for three days in order to review and correct the assessment roll. Persons who desire to discuss their assessment with the board of review may do so at this time.

Only 14 Protest

If an assessment should be raised $100 or more over what it was the previous year, the assessor's office mails notification of this fact to the property owner concerned. After the assessment roll for 1948-49 was completed, over 500 notices were mailed out advising owners of increased assessments. Only 14 persons appeared before the board in regard to these real property assessment increases.

The assessment roll, as approved by the board for the 1948-49 year, totaled $20,987,280. The actual value of the property assessed was estimated at approximately $63,000,000.

NEXT WEEK: Why the city assessor causes city and school tax notices to be mailed to Birmingham residents.

Youngsters Flocking to Barnum Pool

May Investigate Possibility of Morning Classes

Although there has been no formal registration for city's summer recreational program this year, every indication points to new attendance records, Frank Whitney, recreational director, stated this week.

"We won't be able to give a complete picture of our present program, from the standpoint of statistics, until the end of the season," Whitney explained. "At that time we will be able to figure up daily attendance records to see exactly how many youngsters enjoyed each phase of the program."

But the first two week's operation evidences a substantial increase over last year, Whitney said.

"For instance, over 70 beginning swimmers have been reporting for some classes at the Barnum pool," he emphasized. "This has tended to handicap some of the instructional methods. If class sizes continue to run as large as they presently are, we will investigate the possibility of instituting morning swimming."

New Pool Equipment

In addition to the expert water lessons, the pool has been adequately stocked with life rafts, kick boards and underwater goggles for the use and enjoyment of swimmers, Whitney said.

He added that practically all playgrounds have seen a great number of neighborhood youngsters already participating in the various phases of the recreational program.

Because of the large turnout for craft classes at Barnum junior high school, Whitney this week was forced to set up another schedule by dividing the boys in one group and the girls in another.

Chryslers Tighten Grip on 2nd Place With Sunday Game

By Bob Berges

The Birmingham Chryslers tightened their grip on second place with an 8-5 victory over Jim Robbins' Independents Sunday evening. The contest was not without excitement as the Jim Robbins club tied the score with four runs in the last half of the eighth and the locals forged ahead with three in the ninth.

Phil Taylor, Chrysler's starting twirler, did a good job on the mound until he tired and was removed after passing the first two men in the eighth. Taylor also was one of the hitting stars with three singles in four trips, driving in two runs.

Dean Rogers, a southpaw, replaced Taylor and was yanked by Manager Eldon Auker after issuing two more straight walks. Jack York came in from left field to take over the hurling chores. He issued two free passes which connected with a long fly, tied up the ball game.

Waste No Time

The Chryslers didn't waste any time in the ninth however. Dick Costigan reached second on Bob Delamielleure's error and stole third. He was held on third while Jim Ferns grounded to short and Bernie Bourgeau was hit by a pitch. Costigan romped home with the winning run on John Kalmanek's single to left, Bourgeau taking third.

Just to provide insurance, Kalmanek stole second while Bill Eade was striking out and both runners came home on Eddie Miller's single to center. Miller was thrown out stealing to end the inning. York retired Robbin in order in the ninth after his arm was warmed up and received credit for the victory.

Coming Games

Chryslers vs. Royal Oak Collegians, Saturday, July 3, 8:30 p.m.

Chryslers vs. Eaners, Sunday, July 4, 1:00 p.m.

Chryslers vs. Village Market, Tuesday, July 6, 8:30 p.m.

All makes of inner spring mattresses repaired. ROYAL MATTRESS COMPANY. PHONE B'HAM 1-0782. —Adv., tf

Mom and Dad, Can You Still Recall the Old Fashioned 4th of July?

By Alice E. Morgan

Dad and Mother, remember the way you used to celebrate the Glorious Fourth? The night before you tagged around after father or grandfather, asking them over and over again if they thought it would be a nice day tomorrow. Finally, you did go to bed at parental insistence, but seldom did you go directly to sleep.

The next morning you were awake early and hopped out of bed to scamper to the window. There you cast anxious eyes toward the sky. A few clouds and something that felt like a good-sized chunk of lead took up a good share of your stomach. But let the bright blue and a clear morning sun greet you, and the chunk of lead turned into a whole flock of butterflies.

No Dawdling Today

You rushed through your dressing and dashed down the stairs for breakfast. No dawdling this morning. Instead, mother had to tell you to stop bolting your meal. Then came the chores. You helped sweep the walk (or if you lived on a farm care for the stock). You knew full well there would be no fire crackers until the morning work was done. You knew, too, that everything had to be ship-shape for day's guests—aunts, uncles and cousins who gathered at the family home to spend the day.

Finally a buggy came over the hill, and before it reached the house, a Model T passed it, leaving the horses rearing and snorting in a cloud of dust. It turned in your yard and Cousin George, slick in his city clothes, stepped out. Cousin George, that wonderful figure who would take charge as the darkness gathered and the time came for the rockets and Roman candles arrived.

Boxes, Boxes, Boxes

He began removing boxes and bags from his car. Boxes and bags

full of fire crackers both great and small, cap pistols, rolls of caps, cones of red fire, pin wheels aerial bombs and some very special crackers that soared into the air with loud bang, then spread into a picture of the Flag, Niagara Falls, or Custer's Last Stand.

Cousin George became a pretty important figure in your eyes, right then. He never let on that you were pretty important to him, too. His girl was coming up from the city pretty soon, and he'd had a chance to show his daring and finesse with these pyrotechnic displays he'd planned. A show he could not put on in the city where the houses were so close together.

He handed you bags and boxes as the team plodded into the yard and the younger cousins spilled out like peas from a pod. All day long you children amused yourselves with cap pistols, playing cops and robbers or cowboy, and throwing the torpedoes against the stonework of the root cellar out back.

Down by the River

Later you all took the crackers and went off down by the banks of the river. You built little dams of mud, stuck them full of the little sizzlers and howled with glee as they spattered mud all over the place. The larger ones you put in small piles of stone then ran like crazy as soon as you lit their short fuses. Some you'd place under a tin can, after a careful look around to see none of the grown-ups were around. They considered that too dangerous for boys and girls to do.

Now and then, from across the lots, you'd hear another faint bang, and you'd know your schoolmates were entertaining their cousins from Detroit or Pontiac, too.

Finally your father's loud call broke into your fun, and you all tore back to the house. There, on the lawn, were the tables literally groaning under their loads of food. During this brief lull the old dog came out from under the porch to shake the dirt out of his coat, get a drink, and enjoy a few choice tidbits slipped to him by the grown-ups who frowned when you fed him at the table.

Ice Cream and Watermelon

The climax of this part of the day came when dad took the bur-

(See MOM & DAD, Page 2)

Fire Protection for Basements More Important

City commissioners Monday night questioned the logic of Birmingham's building code which requires fireproofing of garages attached to a house by a breezeway, yet permits installation of basement furnaces without adequate fireproofing of the first floor immediately above them.

This discrepancy was called to their attention by O. W. Levring, 459 S. Adams, who expects to move into his new home at 1582 W. Lincoln on or about August 1.

Levring asked the commission to amend the present building code which requires a garage to be protected by a plaster coat when connected to a dwelling by a breezeway. He explained that a number of surrounding communities had eliminated such a provision from their codes, since experience had shown such fireproofing was not necessary because of the comparatively few garage fires.

Two Such Fires Since 1929

Birmingham's experience since 1929 has shown only two garage fires resulting from automobiles stored in them, City Manager Donald C. Egbert said.

"The fire department sees no reason why people should have to go to the extra expense of plastering the type of garage," Egbert said. "The department is more concerned with adequate fire protection in basements, where most fires start."

The manager pointed out that the present city building code does not require fireproofing of the first floor joists immediately above furnaces, a place where a majority of house fires start.

Might Get Demerit

Egbert said the city might receive a demerit mark from the state fire insurance rating bureau should the city drop this garage plastering provision from the ordinance. The bureau has not indicated whether it still considered such fireproofing necessary.

The commission referred the request to Egbert for further study and report, which will also include a recommendation on the possibility of better basement fire protection.

Police See Braund Robbery As Work of Professional Gang

Bloomfield Village Police are checking the robbery of the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Braund, 3440 Bradway.

The robbery, which took place Friday evening, was discovered when the Braunds returned from spending a few days in the northern part of the state. Entry, police said, was gained through a window of the library, after which the thieves opened all the doors in the house for a rapid exit in the event their work was interrupted. The telephone wires were also cut.

The house, according to the police report, was thoroughly ransacked and they believe the work to be that of professional housebreakers. Articles of clothing, both men's and women's, household linens, a movie projector, two revolvers and a rifle and a recording machine were stolen. The latter was a wooden cabinet about 30 inches high. The thieves also took $1,570 in currency but left Mrs. Braund's watch, which was lying on a dressing table.

Police who have been working on the case for the past three days said that the loot was removed by backing a car across a vacant lot adjoining the house for easier loading.

C of C Moves Into New Quarters on East Maple Avenue

Today the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce office will open its new quarters at 350 E. Maple.

Executive Secretary Charles Mortensen said the new building would be larger and newer than its former office on S. Woodward which will be better able to serve local citizens.

Since January, when the chamber began functioning, 6,800 auto and trailer plates have been sold, saving an estimated 3,000 trips by Birmingham residents to surrounding communities for their auto tags, Mortensen said.

The office also has handled 850 title and license plate transfers.

During the 1947 July Fourth week end, 22 Michigan persons were killed. The recent three-day Memorial Day week end saw 15 persons lose their lives.

"This clearly shows that if drivers try to do a good, careful job, casualties can be sharply reduced. However, 15 lives is still too high a price to pay for carelessness. Speeding too fast was a contributing factor in six of the fatal accidents," he said.

Moxley listed these tips for motorists:

Have the car checked to be sure it is in good operating condition.

(See SPEED, Page 2)

Speed Holds Key to Final Total of Holiday Accidents

With all indications pointing to the heaviest traffic on record over the coming July Fourth week end, Birmingham's new police chief, Ralph W. Moxley, today warned motorists to be doubly sure to drive extremely careful if they use the highways next Saturday, Sunday or Monday.

"Speed holds the key to how accident-free Michigan highways will be," Chief Moxley declared. "Speed is a contributing factor in two out of every five traffic accidents. The greater the speed, the greater the chance of death."

Moxley assumed active direction of the Birmingham police department today. He succeeds John W. Hackett, whose retirement becomes effective today after heading local police enforcement for the past 18 years.

Get Early Start

"If you are driving to visit relatives or plan on going to your summer cottage, you should get an early start to avoid congested traffic. And take plenty of time getting there," Moxley suggested.

Department Honors Chief Hackett

Police Chief John P. Hackett, whose retirement becomes effective today, was feted by members of the Birmingham police Department yesterday, and presented a travelling bag as a token of their esteem.

WE LOSE A DAY THIS WEEK

Since the July 4 holiday will be observed here next Monday, July 5, it will mean The Eccentric's editorial staff will have one day less this coming week to gather and prepare editorial copy for next week's issue. This was the case over the Memorial Day weekend, too.

Therefore, it will mean that news items should be submitted by the end of the week, or this Saturday, as far as possible. Otherwise, it may be necessary to shorten considerably, or possibly leave out, items which are received here on Tuesday. We never like to do this, but it can readily be seen that no one can do two days' work in just one day.

PLEASE BRING OR PHONE IN YOUR NEWS BY THE END OF THIS WEEK

Modernization of Plan Commission Ordinance Asked

Birmingham's 20-year-old village plan commission ordinance should be completely revised and brought up to date to incorporate recent Michigan legislative action regarding municipal planning commissions, Mayor Milton F. Mallender recommended at Monday night's city commission meeting.

He suggested the new ordinance should provide for a seven-man board, rather than the present five-member commission, and that an attempt should be made to tie in the workings of the plan commission closer to present city activities.

"We have come to the point," Mallender said, "where we've got to think about reorganizing the present planning ordinance. It presently lacks close contact with the city commission and such important city departments as the DPW and engineering offices. I would also like to see a seven-man commission, or two more than the present ordinance provides for."

1928 Ordinance

The planning code under which the city is currently operating was established June 25, 1928.

Mallender in no way criticized the workings of the present board. Rather, he, mentioned the recent legislative enactments from Lansing which now permit city plan commissions to consider, by broaden their activities, especially in permitting them to work together with surrounding communities in attempting to solve mutual problems. Such legislation also permits local municipalities to cooperate with, and benefit from, recent metropolitan planning groups such as the Huron-Clinton Recreation Authority, Metropolitan Planning Authority of Detroit, and similar groups.

In the light of these recent Lansing provisions, Mallender said he was of the opinion the present Birmingham planning ordinance did not meet all the state requirements.

The old ordinance should be redrafted and replanned rather than attempting to patch it up," the Mayor suggested.

Citizen Committees

He said he would like to see the new ordinance provide for a number of "citizen committees" which would aid the regular planning board.

"We have many persons in this town who have special talents. While they would not have enough time to devote to serving on the board, they would have time to meet once or twice a year to go over important matters which relate to their special business field," Mallender said. "In this matter, Birmingham would be greatly aided by advice from specialists who are interested in the character and development of the community in which they live."

Mallender called upon any citizen, group of citizens or local organizations to present to him in writing their suggestions on what should be written into the proposed new planning ordinance.

He set a deadline of two weeks in which to receive these suggestions.

More Citizens Join Move for Bumpy Streets

B'ham Highlands Area Also Wants Lots of Chuckholes

Residents in the Birmingham Highlands subdivision, reversing a previous stand, this week joined certain residents living along Oak, Shirley and Arlington streets in advocating bumps and holes and other general "village atmosphere" characteristics rather than permanently improved streets.

It was only several weeks ago that these Birmingham Highlands citizens, or a representative group of them, went along with City Manager Donald C. Egbert's recommendation for hard surfacing of 10 streets in their area.

These streets were Devon, Radnor, Avon, Bryn Mawr, Wellesley, Berwyn, Argyle, Golfview, Glenhurst and Midvale.

Regularly Spaced Chuckholes

Whether it was the same group as had previously appeared, or whether they were the "opposition" element not represented at that time, Monday night's meeting clearly demonstrated they saw no reason whatsoever in having their streets permenently improved.

"All we need is oiled surfaces with regularly spaced chuckholes" several persons explained during the meeting.

Although the initial project called for permanent surfacing, Egbert Monday evening recommended to the commission to merely oil the roads for the time being, since the city did not have the $24,000 to put into the work as its share of the estimated $84,000 job.

Mayor Milton F. Mallender, who for several years has been trying to enlist the cooperation of local citizens in a street improvement program, calmly tried to explain the commission's views on permanent vs. dirt streets.

Spend Thousands of Dollars

"We spend thousands of dollars a year cleaning gravel out of sewers," he said. "We spend other thousands of dollars scraping roads and patching them up. We have faced with a quarter of a million dollars worth of additions to our present sewage disposal plant simply because of the gravel that gets into the workings out there. It's only practical, from an economical standpoint, to have hard surfaced streets."

The audience calmly listened to his argument then went back to insisting that the area still wanted holes, bumps and the "village atmosphere".

The commission returned the assessment roll to the city assessor to refigure on the basis of a temporary roadoiling job.

Other Street Projects

A number of other roadoiling projects were confirmed by commissioners: Park, Hamilton to Oakland; Chester, Martin to Lincoln; Stanley, Brown to Lincoln; Watkins, Brown to Lincoln; Frank, Southfield to Bates; Wallace, Southfield to Stanley; Worth, Oakland to Madison; Madison, Worth to Adams; Larchlea, Maple to Lincoln; Pleasant and Fairway, both below Lincoln; Chesterfield, Oak to Lot 138 of Lingeman's sub.

Also approved was the necessity of oiling Glenhurst, Midvale to Lincoln. July 26 was the date set for the hearing on the assessment roll for permanently surfacing Arlington and Shirley. That same evening the commission will meet to consider the advisability of creating an assessment district to pay for improving the north half of Bates street with curb, gutter and pavement.

We'll Trust MPSC to Look Out for City

Birmingham city commissioners believe the Michigan Public Service Commission can be trusted to preserve the citizen's rights when it comes to matters of public utility service.

So stated Mayor Milton F. Mallender Monday night when he suggested that Birmingham have no part in the legal proceedings planned by Ferndale and Detroit to prevent the Michigan Bell telephone company from having its rates adjusted upward.

The Bell proposal is now before the MPSC for action. Ferndale and Detroit spokesmen had asked Birmingham to join in a suit to prevent such an adjustment.

Allee Reappointed to Recreation Board

W. Coit Allee, 756 Henley, chairman of the city recreation commission, has been reappointed to a five-year term on the board by Mayor Milton F. Mallender. A former city commissioner, Allee was instrumental in the working out of the present recreation ordinance and establishment of the new board.

Sudden Storm Douses Lights in Village, Drops Tree on Car

Six or eight homes in Bloomfield Village were without lights for about three hours Monday evening after the flash storm, accompanied by high winds and considerable rain, struck this area. Edison linemen finally located the trouble, a lateral line which swaying branches had brought down.

Howard Gillard, 455 W. Frank, had just gotten out of his car to open the garage doors when a 16-inch box elder was blown over, pinning the car to the ground. Birmingham police, who were immediately called, located the city forester who attached a cable to the tree so it could be pulled up sufficiently to permit the car to be driven out from underneath.

Stores Will Be Closed July 5

Practically all local business establishments, as well as all City of Birmingham offices, will be closed next Monday for the observance of July Fourth.

To compensate for the Monday closing, most businesses plan on remaining open next Wednesday all day instead of closing in the afternoon, Charles Mortensen, C of C executive secretary, said this week.

The city commission meeting will be held next Tuesday night, July 6.