

Spring Offers
About this time of year the youngsters of Birmingham are prone to turn to their elders and inquire into the mystery that surrounds the natural beauty that delights us all in the spring.

The hard-pressed adult, with a hazy knowledge of the sequence of the seasons, will go into a disquisition about Summer, Winter and Spring. He will dwell, no doubt, upon the burst of leaf and bloom that transforms the landscape as winter passes on.

Without going into the scientific explanation and without knowing too much about the revolution of the sun around the earth and the inclination of the earth's axis, we pause long enough to welcome the advent of what is perhaps the loveliest exhibition of nature.

The dead hand of Winter loosens its grip upon the earth and the vegetable world stages the greatest spectacle that man ever witnessed. The elixir also affects animals and men as physical bodies appear refreshed for earthly existence.

When we witness the apparent resurgence of vital forces, we are prone to seek a moral and to grasp a hope. All that is certain, however, is that the inexorable laws of nature continue their inevitable procession, inviting men and women to enjoy the delightful experience and to seek an understanding of its fundamental cause.

Naturally, as nature dresses herself in this hemisphere, we like to think that human beings will refurbish their habits and brighten the areas upon which they dwell. Men and women feel the urge to challenge nature in a contest of beauty. In fields and gardens they begin to plant, expecting to reap the harvest that attends their efforts. House-cleaning, house-painting and the beautification of towns and cities seem to be the logical enterprises for us as nature paints a panorama of riotous color and bloom.

Honoring 10 years of service in Birmingham, Presbyterians last Sunday held open house at the church for their revered pastor, the Rev. W. Glen Harris. Although Dr. Harris continually points out, whenever he has the opportunity, the grandeur of that nation to the south—Texas—we know Birmingham holds a cherished place in his heart; this is evidenced by his interest in, and efforts for, the community.

The congregation, itself, is to be commended for sponsoring such a civic testimonial. A man who knows that his community service is appreciated is thereby spurred to greater efforts; that is human nature.

People's Column

March 16, 1948
To The Editor:
Just a note to thank you for the "assist" on our recent badminton exhibition at Cranbrook.
While my letter that gave you the original information was literally true in that we were bidding for publicity to help the ticket sale, nevertheless we appreciate the story you published. It is not only helpful to the exhibition, but also brought to light several badminton enthusiasts who are newcomers to Birmingham. These people had made inquiries trying to locate a badminton group, with no luck.
Your story put them on our trail—another example of how the community paper renders useful services.
From all comments overheard since—all of which have been enthusiastic and none adverse—the exhibition was a big success all-around, and your boost was not misplaced.
G. W. D.

March 19, 1948
To The Editor:
My attention has been called to a recent issue of the Birmingham Eccentric containing statements by Mr. Joseph A. Byrne, Birmingham postmaster, relative to duties and working conditions of rural letter carriers.
In as much as these statements were intended to be informative and as such, published in your newspaper, it would seem within the scope of the Rural Letter Carriers' Association to point out certain errors and omissions in the articles as published.
Regarding the article's statement to the effect that regulations do not require rural carriers to work "any certain number of hours" in the performance of their duties, it should be pointed out that for several years, rural routes have been operating under separate and distinct classifications. Routes serving strictly rural, out-state areas are for the most part classed as light routes, and are usually within a 40 hour week.

usually allow to complete their duties within a 40 hour week.

We trust you have contributed your share to Birmingham's 1948 Red Cross fund drive. If last Friday afternoon's rumor had been true—that a tornado was heading this way—it could well have meant that the Red Cross right now would be using some of those funds in caring for the homeless in this area.

Fortunately, only a high wind was noticed. However, our annual contributions could be made in thankfulness that the elements spared us.

Here's a Novel Week!
The people of the United States are long-suffering in regard to various weeks which are specified for almost every conceivable human enterprise. Nevertheless, from India comes a new one—the "Restore Women and Children Week," that India and Pakistan will jointly observe.

The idea behind the week is to encourage both sides in India to do what can be done to recover women and children abducted in recent communal rioting.

A cry of "favoritism" was made against the city commission last week by a small group of northeast Birmingham residents, who intimated Eton road was to be opened as a favor to a building contractor. We dismiss this charge as merely the outcry of property owners who inwardly don't want an assessment against their property. We haven't the slightest reason to believe the commission plays any favorites. These people should see how the commissioners endeavor to disqualify themselves from voting on a particular issue whenever a commissioner believes he has the slightest connection with it.

It's getting so these days that you can't judge a man's bank account by the size of the automobile he drives.

The Birmingham Eccentric

Published every Thursday at Birmingham, Mich. in the Eccentric Building, 25-223 Third Woodward Avenue.
Editor and Publisher: GEORGE R. AVERILL.
Business Manager: GEORGE W. AVERILL.
Advertising Manager: HAROLD P. WILSON.

Entered as Second Class Matter in the U. S. Post Office at Birmingham, Michigan, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
(For Oakland County) (Outside Oakland County)
One Year \$1.00 One Year \$1.50
Six Months .75 Six Months .95
Three Months .40 Three Months .60

The Eccentric is a member of National Editorial Association, National Press Association, and American Press Guild.

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 style. Any corrections or changes in the copy, 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.

usually allow to complete their duties within a 40 hour week.
There are approximately 2,500 rural routes, located usually in metropolitan or suburban areas, which are served by rural letter carriers. Under the Bureau heavy route classification, concerning the number of hours to be worked by carriers under this classification, I have at hand a communication from the president of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association from which the following statement is quoted:
"Recently, I had an hour's conference with one of the officials of the post office department in regard to the Bureau heavy route situation. I explained to him your request for further information in applying the forty-hour week to such carriers."

"It is the policy of the department to extend relief to those overburdened carriers to the extent that their work week shall not be more than forty hours. Every effort is being made by the department to bring this about. The department is authorizing extra auxiliary help in the form of clerical assistance, establishment of new routes, and the extension of city mail routes and foot service to reduce the boxes served by the rural carrier."

I am advised that postmasters of all instances included, or should be, are requested by the Bureau route carriers have on file statements from the department similar to the above quotation.
Regarding the statement in the newspaper article relative to provisions of auxiliary help, I refer you again to the above quotation. Furthermore, all postmasters are requested by the department to submit requests for auxiliary help well in advance of the Christmas rush season. This request is made in the form of a letter, including, estimates of auxiliary help needed for all rural routes. I am aware of no instance in which was not provided with auxiliary rural help, unless it was requested.

The statement made by Mr. Byrne that this auxiliary help is the responsibility of the rural carrier would seem to be in error in view of the above statement. The only responsibility of the carrier in this regard would be to submit a statement of his auxiliary needs to the postmaster. It is the responsibility of the postmaster to see to it that carriers

Happenings of Long Ago

FIFTY YEARS AGO
March 25, 1898
Last Saturday Chas. Shuler fell into the cellar while tearing down the old Leach building, banging and bruising himself quite a bit. So much so, in fact, that Doc Campbell had to patch him up.

All intelligent and progressive women are invited to attend the free lecture which will be given at Library Hall by Mrs. Anna M. Lyon Tuesday evening. She will speak on "Nervous Women."

Owing to the fact that Miss Hodges is ill she will not be able to carry out her plans for the wedding April 11.

Miss Minette Hunt wishes to inform her friends that she is prepared to make, trim and remodel their hats any time now. She will assure you ladies of the latest styles, even in old hats.

We are glad to learn that Mr. and Mrs. Alex Pease, who are here but winter for Fletcher, Wash., are well pleased with their Western home.

The Memorial services held for the late Frances E. Willard in the E. Church Sunday evening were impressively interesting and appropriate.

There will soon be another blacksmith at Beddow.

True or not, we don't know, but we hear that Harry and Oscar Miller have bought the Prindle farm.

Andy Davison is going to move into his mother's home real soon.

TWENTY YEARS AGO
March 22, 1928
Keeping the contest in the family, Jack Mills defeated his twin sister, Peggy, in the sixth grade spelling contest at the Hill School Friday. They are the children of Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Mills of 132 Puritan road.

The children of Bloomfield School will present a short play, "The Unhappy Princess" soon. The play is the work of Ruth Stanford, 12, of Oakland Road.

J. E. Welch, owner, announces the opening of his new riding school. Welch has purchased a carload of fine saddle horses and feels sure that local riders will enjoy this recreation to the fullest.

A series of articles are being started in the Eccentric this week written by Mottimer Neff. Neff is in Europe, and will arrange an article each week to keep the home folks informed of his whereabouts.

THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner

FROM time to time in these columns we've talked about the wisdom of taking close-ups, about the impact which a close-up picture often has, and how it can be used to raise the question of making close-ups a box-type camera. "Sure, close-ups are fine," the children say, "but my box camera manual says, 'Only subjects eight feet and farther from the camera be photographed sharply.'"

The best answer here is to use a device called a close-up attachment, an inexpensive supplementary lens which comes in several sizes and snaps in place on the front of the camera. With such a lens it's possible to use a box camera 2 1/2 feet from your subject.

The use of such a lens will not affect exposure in any way. It merely permits you to focus close in, to get an image that fills your negative. The one important thing to remember here is: compose your picture carefully. For the viewer of a box camera shows the picture

close-ups with a punch are possible even with the simple box camera when a close-up attachment is used.

Close Close-Ups

You get working at a greater distance. Consequently, when using a close-up attachment, it's necessary to tip the camera up so your subject is placed on the negative. A few trial shots will show this.

Similar supplementary lenses are also available for folding cameras and for miniature cameras. These are the strongest of them making it possible to shoot from as close as six inches.

One word of warning should be given, however, about the use of such attachments: always measure its lens-to-subject distance with a ruler or tape, with the normal box camera, just as in everything between eight feet and infinity will be in fairly sharp focus. But working close in with a close-up attachment, the depth-of-field is small. An error of six inches in your lens-to-subject distance may mean a fuzzy picture.

—John van Guilder

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'Tis Washington

By The Duchess

He's a little dictator. . . That chairman of the House Rules committee who will not allow the rest of his colleagues to vote on Universal Military Training.

But Congressman Leo Allen says it's his job to look over the bills . . . the good and the bad . . . and decide those to go to the House for debate. To him, this is a "bad" bill. Half his committee would vote to send it to the floor. Even if the committee were not evenly divided, an unwritten rule prevents discussion of any bill by the committee until called up by the chairman.

The Illinois Republican isn't calling. The Red Cross drive is on again. The Red Cross has asked for higher donations. Commodity prices increase; but the needs of the Red Cross do not decrease. Last year's quota of \$60 million is not enough.

In a plea for bigger contributions, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal told a pertinent story. A middle-aged civilian got badly hurt and building a submarine during the war. His only son was killed in action and his son-in-law was killed.

But the day he got out of Walter Reed hospital, with only \$40 of his stomach, he called on his friend Secretary Forrestal and asked to be sent back overseas. "Haven't you done enough?" Forrestal asked. "There is no such thing as 'enough,'" was the reply.

The best show in town costs nothing. The British and Americans really started the idea of setting up bureaus abroad where reporters, lecturers, or anyone could quickly get facts about a foreign country.

Today, most countries have some such agency. The Soviets do, too. But it operates in reverse. Recently Soviet Russian information officials were asked these 3 questions among others:

Molotov's answer: Zhdanov's military experience, Vishinskiy's background. The Soviet Embassy referred the call to the Information Service which "must get such information from Moscow" and Tass News Agency claimed "no facts."

Democracy struck Japan. It's impossible for Americans to understand the depth of the reverence the Japanese gave their "Divine" Emperor, the Son of Heaven. But no longer does the man-god introduce himself as "We, the people of heaven, the Divine and Heavens descended ruler." It's now, "We, the people of Japan."

Today Hirohito's last act as man with little power even on earth. Two of his cousins know it. One, Prince Higashikuni, has just opened a grocery. Another, Asakura Kuni, owns a hardware store and hires some of the certain old favorites of the royal court.

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