

**Let's Save This Money** Until next March, the City of Birmingham will be spending over \$20,000 a year just to clean sewers that have become clogged with gravel washed down from unpaved streets. Then, beginning next March, the city plans to spend an additional \$1,000 a month on sewer cleaning by a second crew to the field.

This move is necessary, the city commission decided last week, if the city's sewer system is to provide proper sewer facilities. A sewer is no good if it doesn't work. It can't work if gravel keeps stopping it up.

To continue to pour \$200,000 a month into sewer cleaning is certainly an economic waste, not even justified by the oft-repeated arguments for "village atmosphere." The money now spent on having to clean sewers could be more profitably used by the city to provide permanent improvement of city parks and recreational areas, for instance.

All of which means, to us, that citizens must cooperate in the commission's plan to have curbs, gutters and hard surfaces put on all city streets as fast as circumstances permit.

The commission and other city officials see this point, but they have been having a difficult time selling the citizens on this issue.

### "Operation Squirrel"

"Operation Squirrel," as you may know, is the title given to the Munition Board's stockpiling of critical war materials. By next June, the process will involve something like a half billion dollars.

Uranium, radium and seventeen other materials, however, pose problems of storage such as outweigh the advantages of stockpiling them. Nevertheless, the Board is buying fifty-eight key items and storing them in military depots, private facilities and stand-by defense plants.

It seems to be good business for the United States to use some of its credit abroad for the purpose of acquiring a reserve stock of essential materials, raw or otherwise. Then, in the event of an emergency, the nation might not find itself running short of something that is essential in modern war-making.

Russia's attitude in the Berlin area offers undeniable evidence that Moscow doesn't want to cooperate with Great Britain, France and the U.S.A. in allowing the latter trio to take care of their responsibilities in that part of Germany. Russia doesn't want to cooperate with anybody but Communists, period!

So far, in the current presidential campaign, one notes that tomatoes, peaches and eggs have been thrown at candidates. Maybe it's good that the watermelon season is over.

**A Police Dept. Needs Our Help** Dwight Baldwin and Bud Corella, two employees at the Bell Funeral Home, last week chased, caught and held for Birmingham police two juveniles who had abandoned a stolen car after it crashed into a light pole at Elm and Maple avenues.

Hearing the noise, Baldwin and Corella went outside where they discovered the car with no one around it. After some quick questioning of passersby, they learned two youths had been seen running in the direction of downtown. The two lads then were found by Corella and Baldwin in a matter of minutes.

We hasten to commend Baldwin's and Corella's action to the rest of the citizens in this community. Although Birmingham has policemen, we haven't enough to post at every street intersection. Perhaps more than the average person realizes, a police department depends largely on calls from citizens who know or suspect violations of the law. The police can then begin investigating.

If more people would take an active interest in aiding law enforcement agencies, the crime situation would tend to solve itself. But we can't rely entirely on the uniformed policemen to be "Johnny-on-the-spot." A good share of this burden falls on us as responsible members of the community.

### Same Motive

Some of the Arabs seem to take marriage seriously, if we are to judge from reports of a blood feud which recently occurred in Shafa Amr.

News reports say that the feud arose between two Arab Christian families which disagreed upon the wedding terms of a marriage between the boy of one family and a girl of another. When sixty men on each side started fighting, troops were called out to separate the different families.

Apparently, the argument was not so much about the marriage as it was about the terms of the union. The problem involved property rights. This is the same motive which accounts for the dirty linen that is washed in public in connection with too many American divorce suits.

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Any expression of opinion on the character, standing or conduct of any person or organization appearing in this column is the responsibility of the contributor. The Eccentric will not be held responsible for the statements or opinions of its contributors.

### Happenings of Long Ago

**FIFTY YEARS AGO**  
October 28, 1898

Triple hen stockings are the thing. Just go to L. B. Peabody's and see if they're not.

We wish to report that a Royal Cornucopia in a garden in a suburb of Birmingham has been found blooming in its yard last week. Doubtless, since the season's first snow fell Wednesday evening.

Dates have been planned for the Modern Novel club program, from November through March. A list of the newest and best books will be read and discussed by the members during these five months.

Hon. and Mrs. Charles V. Babcock were honored at their home last evening by neighbors gathered to help them celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. The celebration was presided over by Mr. M. D. Dugher, in behalf of the many neighbors and friends present.

Birmingham has an admirer. Rev. Joseph McCracken shows us a clipping taken from a Mr. A. J. Iowa, paper of a story which his brother sent to the editor there. The story had been written by a Birmingham man. There was nothing but praise for our fair hamlet.

**TWENTY YEARS AGO**  
November 1, 1928

Frank Cozzen, son of Sen. John Cozzen, was injured in a head-on crash in Bloomfield Hills last week. The other car pulled into the traffic circle, according to police, and fled after the crash. Examination showed that none of the young man's injuries were serious.

No trace of the armed bandit who robbed the Parkside gas station at Martin and Southfield roads last week has been seen. The bandit entered the place just after several customers left, and escaped with

### Certain of Dewey Victory, Washington Bureaucrats are Looking for New Jobs

By Elizabeth Carpenter

Special to The Birmingham Eccentric  
WASHINGTON, D. C.—This nervous town of politics has already elected Dewey in simple terms as the next President of the United States.

In drawing-rooms, at the Press Club, and in government offices, when the President is mentioned, they refer to Mr. Dewey.

This is amusing, for the Democrats have not left town. They still fill every nook and cranny of the Nation's Capital which they have invaded sixteen years ago.

To say the only man in town who thinks Harry Truman can win is Harry Truman himself. But that is not the man who is looking for a new job. He is full of Truman friends and supporters.

But every poll shows a Dewey sweep. So the town is getting ready. The Presidential campaign train, candidly they confess, "I need to make contacts with the men around Dewey who'll be running the White House come January 20."

Several organizations are already planning (in great secrecy) farewell parties for the Truman victors.

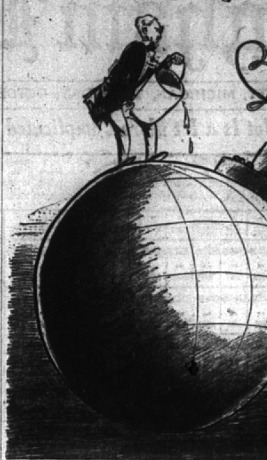
Looking for New Jobs  
Federal job-holders are looking for new jobs. The certainty of a change in administration has given many a bureaucrat pause.

Many are leaving to go to positions with private industry. Others, who want to stay in Washington, are being asked to resign by their superiors.

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The PTA of Adams School is planning a "Fun for All" party Nov. 5. The big event of the eve-

### Bucket Brigade



### No. 28: Special Assessment Districts

**Improvements Made By Subdivider Carry No City Obligation**  
(This is the last in the series of articles which The Eccentric has been presenting describing the activities of various city departments and responsibilities of the various city officials. This final article deals with "how and why" of special assessments.)

By George Wm. Averill

The description, "special assessment," causes most taxpayers to wonder, "Why can't the city pay for this project out of tax money—heaven knows it collects enough every year!"

If you think the city presently collects enough tax money to include special assessments, "you ain't seen nothing yet" compared to your tax bill if this amount were figured in. But any explanation of that point is beyond the purpose of this article.

The city of Birmingham assesses property owners for four types of construction: streets, sewers, sidewalks and water mains. All are assessed according to benefit to the particular property owner.

It should be noted, however, that the city assumes no obligation for projects put in by the subdivider and for which the city has not previously assessed. Putting it another way, if the city has at any time ASSESSED your property for a street, sewer, water or sidewalk improvement, then it cannot be assessed again for the same type of improvement.

In all special assessment districts, except those for streets, the city-as-a-whole contributes not less than 15 per cent of the cost of the project. This is required by the city charter. In the case of streets, the city-at-large also pays for the cost of the project.

There are "direct" and "indirect" benefits in these assessments. A "direct" benefit is one which benefits the property owner on a particular street. The "indirect" benefit usually results from an improvement on a side street which improves the main street.

Improvement of the street directly in front of your house is a direct benefit to you. You will pay the exact per foot cost of the improvement, where it is passed in front of your property, minus, of course, the city's required charter participation. This procedure applies to water and sewer services.

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### Metcalfe, Harris to Address Faculty Here

Dr. Dwight B. Ireland, superintendent of schools, announces that John Metcalfe will be the guest speaker at the general faculty meeting of Birmingham teachers on Nov. 15.

Most observers seem to think that division will not be repeated until the people can see in black and white the disastrous effects it is having on the state.

"Judgment of the writer of the 'Michigan Mirror'." The taxpayer is yet to be convinced that school, city and state government needs cannot be adequately financed out of present taxes.

As long as inflation keeps bouncing and taxes keep mounting, everything may appear to be rosy at Lansing. What appears to be in trouble is inevitable.

Proposal No. 3 on the special ballot would permit the state legislature to fix the salaries of state elective officials. The constitutional salary of Governor Kim Sigler, as set according to 1900 standards, is \$5,000. The same sum is earmarked for the attorney general.

The 1909 constitution also fixes the salary of secretary of state, state treasurer and auditor general at \$2,500 a year.

How does Michigan manage to do as simple as this? For example, what is meant by the term "composition—a word I seem to stumble on often in reading about picture-taking."

According to Webster, composition is the practice of combining the parts of a work of art to produce a harmonious whole. In simple terms, it is the art of putting things together so that they are pleasing to the eye.

Perhaps this can be more easily grasped by a glance at today's illustration. Here we have two pictures of the same subject, cropped in different ways. Because of the way they are cropped, the picture at the right is more pleasing. The action is contained in the print, whereas in the picture at the left, the rider appears to be galloping out of the picture at a fast clip.

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### Michigan Mirror

By Gene Allman  
Next Tuesday—Nov. 2—is the day.

Voters of Michigan will decide many important matters by the democratic principle of majority action. Ballots cast may reach the 2,500,000 mass of voters.

Citizens will have an opportunity to vote for president, vice-president, Governor Sigler, and congressmen. They will choose state officials for two-year terms, together with members of the state senate and state house of representatives.

Furthermore, five constitutional amendments and two referendums are up for consideration—a lengthy but somewhat confusing responsibility. This column will endeavor to explain, in a non-partisan way, the major issues on the SPECIAL BALLOT. We assume that you have made up your mind before the election, and your preference of federal and state officials.

Ballot proposal No. 1 was approved by the Michigan state legislature to avoid the expense of experience after the 1946 election. The Georgia governor-elect, Governor E. W. Carr, took office, and a bitter dispute developed as to whether the lieutenant governor should take office or whether the legislature had power to appoint his successor.

This proposed amendment would fix the succession of officers as follows: governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor general and state treasurer.

So far, we have not heard of the lieutenant governor's resignation. Constitutional lawyers concede that the present charter is not clear.

Ballot No. 2 calls for repeal of the sales tax diversion amendment which is now running 12 per cent of the sales tax back to local units of government—public schools, cities and townships.

In the fiscal year ended June 30, 1948, the state collected \$184.6 million in sales tax revenue. School revenues have been boosted thus to \$112.5 million.

Jack Green, Lansing Associated Press writer, forecasts that repeal of the sales tax diversion amendment will be defeated by popular vote.

Comment by Henry Stufken, director of the Michigan Survey, a state taxpayer organization: "So long as sales tax revenues keep rising 10 or 20 per cent every year, the state may be able to forestall drastic measures."

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