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The Birmingham Eccentric

PART
THREE

SEVENTY-FIRST YEAR—NO. 29

BIRMINGHAM, OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1943

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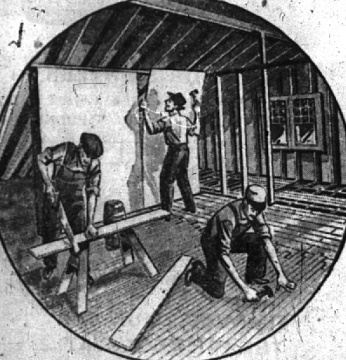
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First Visit to Homeland In 14 Years Is Shock To Leon de St. Nicolas

By Alice E. Morgan

"The condition of France is pathetic," sums up the report of Leon de St. Nicolas, who has just returned from the first visit to his homeland in 14 years.

"Leon," as he is known to the patrons of his Parisian Beauty Salon, together with his family, visited Normandy and other sections of France a short time ago, and returned with many impressions of the country which are often ignored by those going there as tourists. They bring back reports of the plentiful food, beautiful clothes and busy night clubs. Leon affirms all these, but he also visited the people of France themselves.

Earns \$40 a Month
"Food can be had, and it is good," he said, "if you are an American tourist or business man, with a pocket full of dollars. But the average Frenchman does not have this. He is earning about forty dollars a month—not a week, a month—and at that rate neither food nor clothes are plentiful."

"This isn't just the condition of France, of course, but of all Europe. I say 'France' because that is where I saw it, but I'm not making any special appeal for my people, alone. They are all suffering."

"If you walk down the streets of any French city with good clothes, neatly pressed, they know

you are American. They cannot afford to dress like that, like they used to. Clothes, like coffee, sugar, gasoline, and many other items, can be bought through the grey market, but the average Frenchman can only dream of them. There are men, who before the war, were millionaires, now cleaning streets, digging ditches and such things. Just decent clothes are beyond their means."

Plight of Children
"The plight of the children is what made my heart bleed. They are so thin. Their little arms and legs are skinny, and their eyes are way back in their heads. Mrs. Leon and I took some candy bars with us. When we would give a child a bit of chocolate, he would put it in his mouth almost as though he was afraid of it. He'd taste it, and then grin from ear to ear. To see them made my wife cry."

"We ate well all the time we were there, because we had money to do it. France is not re-building as it should, Leon said. They have reached the point of not caring. They feel that, sooner or later, another war will come along, so why bother? Many of the bombed cities are hardly touched by any effort to re-build."

"In England, especially London, we found things much different. They do not close their shops a part of every day as the French do, but work every available second to build their trade up again. They are working to repair the damage to their cities, and there are many places where it is hard to imagine that they ever were destroyed. It is only the newness of the repaired parts that tell the story."

Meager Rations
"There, too, it makes little difference whether you have money or not, you get just as much food, and no more. The fact that they have to import most of their food is probably the answer. Their rations are meager, not like the bountiful tables they are used to. They are working to repair the damage to their cities, and there are many places where it is hard to imagine that they ever were destroyed. It is only the newness of the repaired parts that tell the story."

At Last Minute
With his family, he arrived at the Shannon airport in time to make the flight, only to be denied a place on the plane at the last minute. The British agent of the airlines would give no explanation, and make no statement as to when passage would be available. In Leon's case, it was on the next plane out, but this is not true of everyone.

He told of persons being left stranded there who could speak no English. Young war brides, some with little children, planning to join their husbands in this country were denied passage for no apparent reason. They could not speak English, and their people around them could not speak their language. They were homesick, already, and scared. They did not know how to control their husbands, and had no place to go. True, the airlines takes care of them while they are there, but they are without proper accommodations just the same. Some are forced to wash baby clothes and dry them on the backs of chairs and benches in the waiting room, Leon said.

To Complain Is Useless
"Trying to find out why your passage is held up, or to complain about it is useless. If you say to one of the attendants that you have a business you must get home to, he smiles at you and replies, 'We had businesses, too. What good did that do us?' Their calm is maddening. It's a situation I'd like to see published in every paper in the world until something is done about it. If there is a reason for it, that is different, but I failed to see why it should be done."

Leon said that the trip had given him a feeling of sadness, but that he was very glad he had once more visited his homeland and had seen for himself the conditions there. He added that he felt the salvation of France and other European countries could come only through the rearing of the children.

Adventure Series
Begins October 17
Charles Allmon, roving photographer for the National Geographic Magazine, will open the World Adventure Series Fall program at 7:30 on Sunday afternoon, Oct. 17, at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Allmon's subject is "Away to the South Seas." He will show color motion pictures of native life, and of an adventurous 10,000-mile schooner voyage to Tahiti, the Looe Islands, and the Marquesas.

Banquet Climaxes Baseball Season for Legion Squad

By Duke Layland

Climaxing a very successful baseball season, members of the Birmingham American Legion squad were treated to a very elaborate banquet last week featuring such guests as Ty Tyson, noted Detroit sports announcer, and Tiger rookie, barbers Bill Pierce and Ted Gray.

Playing such teams as Pontiac, Roseville Park and Berkeley, the team finished the season with a record of 13 wins against 3 defeats.

The evening was highlighted with speeches by Tyson; Mayor Milton F. Mailander; Harold Turner, the team's sponsor; Maurice Fitzgerald, team manager and Eldon Aaker, manager of the Birmingham Chryslers.

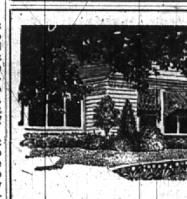
Tell About Tigers
After the numerous speeches, questions were asked Pierce and Gray concerning the Tigers and their various opponents.

Members of the Legion team are John Dixon, Pat Wall, Jack McComb, Walt Eddle, Clay Joyce, Bob Folin, Jim Hakan, Dick Halper, Lucius Jackson, George Elbert, Chuck Ganley, Jim Gamble, Ed Smith, Jim Larkins, Ken MacQueen and Russ Quilhot.

Serving Aboard
Efficient Timer
Donald P. Simetz, seaman apprentice, USN, of 1284 Pease St., is serving aboard the submarine tender USS Orion which has just been awarded the Battle Efficiency pennant and "E" for her general excellence throughout the fiscal year July 1, 1942, to July 1, 1943.

The ward competitive one, is based on overall battle efficiency. Each department of the ship is graded to determine the vessel's final mark in the competition.

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District One Scouts Plan Annual Mystery Hike This Weekend

The annual Mystery Hike of the Boy Scouts of District One is scheduled for the weekend of October 9 and 10, according to Frank V. Powell. The Scouts will gather at the corner of University and Main streets Royal Oak, with the leaving hours set from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Each troop is to come equipped with their own gear for an over-night hike.

According to Powell's announcement, the operation committee has arranged an interesting schedule which will include a giant campfire, games, hikes and church services. The area selected for the camp is deep in the woods, near the lakes, with plenty of room for any and all activities.

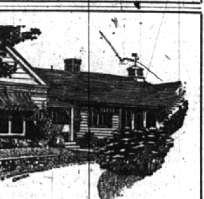
Committeemen in charge include Henry Jenson, Harold Boneman, Joe Stout, Robert Sharrard, John Layton, Roy Dearborn, John Diederich, Glen Emery and Frank Powell.



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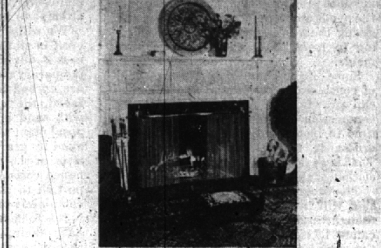
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Have You Met . . .

The new family from Highland Park, Mich.? They are Mr. and Mrs. J. V. Hendrick and Peter and Sandra who are living at 1084 Graefield road. Mr. Hendrick is an engineer with the Chrysler Corporation.

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