

A Free, Responsible and Aggressive Press is Democracy's First Line of Defense

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Oil for the Creaking Wheel It was the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 14, that the new 14 Mile Woodward traffic signals were in operation. All that day highway department crews worked on the new installation, which will become part of the new master-controlled system along US-10 in Birmingham.

This new light at 14 Mile marked the end of The Birmingham Eccentric's campaign for such a light at that point, a campaign started a little over three years ago—December 5, 1946, to be exact—with an item in the "Bits of Birmingham."

This item read: "With the increasing volume of traffic that is being fed into Greenfield and Southfield roads, across 14 Mile to Woodward, thence north, when will a traffic light be installed at Woodward and 14 Mile to forestall future accidents, this Woodruff questions. Already we have had several rather serious accidents—but few which resulted in serious personal injury, fortunately—and more accidents may be expected. Trailer loads of potatoes have been spilled at the intersection, and many close calls have taken place! A traffic light would be of great assistance here."

Repeated mentioning of this need was made in other "Bits" columns, as well as in these editorial columns. Then residents in the areas served by Woodward and 14 Mile began to make themselves heard in "Letters to the Editor." Soon the Birmingham city commission joined the march.

The State Highway Department began to hear much about this intersection, and tended to deal with the matter as just another one of the many demands constantly made upon the department. We recognize that the department does have many such traffic problems and tries to meet them as fast as facilities permit.

But Birmingham kept prodding the highway department until finally the 14 Mile light went up last week. There's an old saying, "The wheel that creaks the loudest gets the oil." We creaked louder than the other communities and got the oil. That's what we wanted.

Here is a new item that strikes us as something new:

The American Telephone and Telegraph Company, the country's largest employer, recently liberalized its non-contributory pension plan to provide a minimum benefit for workers, upon retirement, of \$100 a month instead of the former minimum of \$50 a month.

The unusual feature of the news is that Joseph A. Beirne, president of a C. I. O. union, which represents some of

the Bell workers, complains that the company has violated the Taft-Hartley Act by increasing the pension while the issue is in collective bargaining. It accuses the company of attempting to undermine the union and asserts that the "myth of collective bargaining" has been torn apart and that "action like this" promotes strikes.

In a word, the company gives to its employees minimum benefits in line with those provided under the Bethlehem Steel "formula" which was the result of a strike. Because it took this step before Mr. Beirne and his associates could demand it, or go on strike to get it, the labor leader flays the company and its officials.

Flash! Self-Help Recommended A group of men, composing the Middle East Economic Survey Commission, have just presented a report to the United Nations, disclosing that they had reached the basic decision that what the Arab East needs is self-help and judicious aid on a limited scale, not a great amount of dollars.

This seems to be a sensible conclusion. It might have some application to other areas of the world where self-help is not being stressed as much as the flow of dollars from the United States.

While conditions in the Middle East are different from those existing in the European countries, there can be little doubt of the efficacy of self-help for all peoples.

In their anxiety to get some of the dollars that the United States is distributing generously throughout the world, it is natural for most people to emphasize proposals which require cash rather than the development of circumstances through the character of their inhabitants.

Different In Argentina Some 700 Communists in Argentina were arrested recently while celebrating the anniversary of the Russian Revolution in their headquarters in Buenos Aires. News dispatches say that 395, including 160 women were given jail sentences of five days. Some party leaders were given fifteen-day sentences and the remainder were freed.

Apparently, Argentina does not go to the trouble of staging an elaborate and costly trial, such as that witnessed in New York when the eleven top Communists were called to face American justice.

The economic crash of 1929 was blamed on the speculators of the nation. Later, under Roosevelt, federal control laws were passed to prevent the same thing happening again. But Mr. Roosevelt, now followed by President Truman, started the whole thing over again by loose and extravagant fiscal policies of government. Inevitably, if the trend continues, we'll have another crash with the Washington, D. C. Santa Claus the chief cause of it all.

The Shah of Iran, a young bachelor, admits that he likes American women. He has met quite a number of them on his recent trip throughout the U. S. A. Romance, of course, knows no international boundary lines and maybe the Shah some day will win and win one of our gals. It's been done before.

A man is not a woodman merely because he has an ax to grind.

Dec-Jours of Europe NETHERLANDS, COLORFUL LAND OF BIKES AND WINDMILLS, IS ALSO NOTED FOR THE CLEANLINESS OF ITS TOWNS AND VILLAGES. ONCE EVERY WEEK MAIDS SCRUB THE SIDEWALKS IN FRONT OF THE HOUSES. YOU DON'T NEED TO SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO TRAVEL IN EUROPE, BECAUSE YOU'LL FIND FRIENDLY PEOPLE THERE WHO KNOW AT LEAST A LITTLE ENGLISH. AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING GUIDES ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE AT LOW COST. SWITZERLAND, NOTED FOR ITS WINTER SPORTS, HAS 26 CANTONS OR STATES AND 6 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES—FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN, AND ROMANSH. ALTHOUGH THESE STATES DIFFER FROM EACH OTHER IN POLITICAL, SOCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND LINGUISTIC WAYS, THEY FORM A UNIT IN FRIENDLY NATION.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN To the Editor: I wish to commend The Eccentric for its untiring efforts toward getting rid of the traffic light at 14 Mile and Woodward Avenue. It was one of the most dangerous intersections in this area. Only two days before the light was installed a man was struck by a car. Fortunately, he was not seriously hurt. It is necessary for me as well as hundreds of other Beverly Hills residents to use 14 Mile road to reach Woodward. Now the gleaming red and green lights are a most welcome sight and no doubt will be the means of saving lives and preventing accidents and even fatalities in the future. Again accept my thanks for your efforts in seeing that a well-needed job was completed. ROBERT R. ALLEN, 17560 Birwood. Have You Met . . . The new family from Postville, Me. and Mrs. Arthur F. Blacklock and son, Teddy, now living at 1739 Stanley? News copy submitted early necessarily is given priority over late items. The "early bird" usually gets the space.

Happenings of Long Ago 50 Years Ago DECEMBER 22, 1899 What is a sweeter, nicer or more thoughtful gift for a close friend than a pretty, low and habituated by a pair of amusing gold fish? Whitehead and Mitchell can supply you for 25 cents each. Mrs. Joe Farmer met with a painful and serious accident Sunday. She was standing on a chair arranging some papers on a safe when the chair tipped throwing her back across the room with considerable force. A doctor was summoned quickly and treated her efficiently. On this Friday evening H. P. C. Stewart of Detroit will give a concert in the M. E. church in the village of Royal Oak, assisted by a number of ladies and gentlemen who are proficient musicians also. A very pleasant evening is anticipated. Mrs. Tracy Randall has been called to Centerville by the serious illness of her father, Miss Minnie Hunt has been engaged to take her place at a teaching school in the high school until such time as she can safely return. Rabbit hunting has been indulged in by our gamblers during the past week and a number of bunnies have been trapped and ferreted out, also. 20 Years Ago DECEMBER 23, 1929 A fest of snow on 24 hours proved a very welcome visitor to Birmingham, even though the Christmas season is upon us and always looks better in snow. Traffic was almost at a standstill in the area and the needed snow removal equipment could be brought into use. Elmer S. Wiseman, athletic director of the Adams junior high school, has resigned his position as director of the Flint YMCA. He will have his position in the Y. M. C. A. association on Jan. 24. Dr. Burton Mitchell was elected president of the Oakland County Medical Society for the coming year at their dinner meeting last Thursday. Dr. John S. Labie was named vice-president. Following the dinner two doctors were accepted into membership. Next year members of the Birmingham golf club will be able to play nine holes on either side of the river. The new course has been completed across the River Rouge. Previously the two courses here are arranged that a player found himself constantly going back and forth across the river, or fishing out lost balls. Christmas candles are glowing in the windows of most of our local homes and stores these evenings. It gives a certain air to the air and a certain glow to the good deeds and acts of kindness which have been prevailing here of late. We, editorially, are proud to say the good works of our village do not halt with the passing of the Christmas season. Laurin B. Miller, director of the Bureau of Governmental Research, local government, state and local government in Michigan has risen to the second rank that nearly all of the jewelry, valued at about \$1,000 had been recovered. After seven months' leave of absence, Joe Lemke will resume his duties as manager of the Kroger Super Market. He left the store last May because of ill health and in July underwent a serious operation on the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. Russel Berger, city treasurer, reported yesterday that collection of winter county and school taxes in Birmingham appeared ahead of those of the previous year. He said that 95 per cent of the total amount had already been received against 16 per cent in 1943. The Oakland county camp and hotel committee has just sent a letter to Birmingham congratulating the members of their various clubs for their generous support of the drive for gifts for veterans. They report that a total of \$250 packages were sent to service men and women from Birmingham.

Happenings of Long Ago

Michigan Mirror INTERPRETING THE NEWS

By Gene Alleman Saving of tax funds to the extent of several million dollars as proposed by a special committee of the Michigan State Senate headed by Senator Colin L. Smith, Republican of Big Rapids. The committee has asked Governor G. Mennen Williams to submit a series of recommended welfare bills across to the legislature in the forthcoming special session tentatively scheduled for March, 1950. In Detroit alone a survey disclosed that 1,862 welfare recipients were illegally receiving public funds in Detroit alone for the coming fiscal year will be approximately \$2,000,000. This coming year, the estimated adoption of uniform relief policies in all 83 counties of the state. Relief claims would be required to pay back money to the state when financially able; residence requirements would be tightened; and other changes made to improve liability of relatives for supporting kin while on public relief. The mounting spending of public funds for welfare purposes during the current period of post-war prosperity has perplexed a number of legislators. As the State of Michigan matches welfare spending in each county, this fiscal year the total cost of public welfare has become big business. If Governor Williams declines to present this issue to the special session in 1950, the report of the committee will wait one year until the general legislative session in 1951. Former President Herbert Hoover declared at Washington before the National Reorganization Conference that federal state and local government expenditures were "more than 30 per cent of the national income." The Congressional Quarterly, an independent research publication, has estimated that the 81st congress appropriated \$46,485,597,921 and also obligated the federal government to an additional outlay of \$4,497,413,318 in contract authority. During 1948 of 18 years federal government has incurred an annual deficit. Postwar inflation, like a sleight thief in the night, has robbed everyone of 41 cents of a 1939-cent dollar. Detroit is among causes the dollar to buy less and less; public services have less and less; and the dollar is being devalued. It is a vicious cycle: More spending, more inflation, more dollars needed to catch up, chasing power declines, so more spending. Sometimes the foreign trade statistics of the United States tell a tale that few would search for in 1947. In 1947, when the USSR was "induced" to buy very little in the way of goods, negotiable to Albania and Yugoslavia in certain industrial products suddenly rose quite a bit. The result was an apparent local need. We now have the complete statistics for the entire year 1948, and all experts to these three countries show a further contraction. This is, of course, regrettable for general reasons, but it might also go to show that our authorities are not only not only aware of the economic effects of the exports of our industrial production.

"Any Way You Slice It" BY HAL P. BUEHRG

It has been more than four years since the final gun sounded, ending World War Two. In August of 1945, a day that is recorded in history as V-J day arrived, and by Christmas many tired, weary and hearsey soldiers were dreaming of home and friends with the assurance of seeing them again in the near future. Not many of them were released in time to be home for Christmas in 1945, but by the holiday season of 1946 nearly all who were able had been discharged and reunited with their family and friends.

That is one story, but there is still another. I had it told me last Saturday. It wasn't related in narrative, because those who are able to tell it don't particularly want to. However, when you're in the right place at the right time, the full facts of the story unfold just as surely and accurately as if someone were telling it to you.

As we mentioned before, this is the fifth Christmas since the ending of the war, but there are many, many service men who have not as yet been able to return home. They are the injured. Men who paid a terrific price for America's right to enjoy Christmas and all other things that free people enjoy. Some of them will be away from home for several more Christmases and some of them will never return. These soldiers are at home now, the home that will be their's for the rest of their lives, the veterans' hospitals of our nation.

Most of us are aware of this fact and as I will show you, some folks do not forget. For the most part, however, a majority of people go on about the business of living their lives, which includes the enjoying of Christmas and all of the other holidays, without giving much thought to men who are still in the process of healing their wounds sustained in a conflict that is now only a page or two in a history book to most of us. Remember how we used to pray, that peace would be restored to the earth during the Christmas seasons and through the years of 1943 and '44? Sure you do. So why not, just for old time sake, this Christmas season include in your prayers one for the fellows who are still paying the price of victory.

Certain people of our community have not forgotten them. I know of only a few, but there actually are many who did a little something to help recuperating servicemen at Michigan's huge Percy Jones Hospital at Battle Creek, to enjoy this Christmas. There are others who did a whole lot. One of these is Mrs. Sheldon R. Noble of 13 Mile rd., who for a number of weeks has received gifts from various sources in the course of her Red Cross work and has gift-wrapped about 350 of them. Eleven small radios were collected by the Red Cross ladies and large quantities of Christmas decorations were also gathered from around the community and outlying areas.

A few days ago they were all loaded into one of the Oakland County Chapter Red Cross station wagons and taken to Percy Jones. The vehicle was loaded to capacity and when it arrived in Battle Creek it was delivered to The Christmas Committee at the big hospital.

At building 17, which is ordinarily a recreation building, a smiling sergeant came out of the front door as the station wagon rolled to a stop. He surveyed the load of gifts and his smile grew broader. Then he led the way to where the big boxes were to be stored until Christmas. Building 17 is about 120 feet long and perhaps 30 feet wide and believe me, it isn't being used for recreation purposes these days. It is so piled full of gifts and other Christmas materials for the Percy Jones patients, that there was scarcely room for the Oakland County Red Cross boxes. The tags on the boxes showed that they had come from all types of organizations all over the state. The American Legion and VFW, of course, had furnished plenty. The Red Cross also furnished a huge amount as would be expected, but service clubs, church organizations and other small groups had given a large proportion of the things that were there.

It was hoped by the Christmas Committee at Percy Jones, that gifts valuing in total from two to three dollars could be given each patient. The sergeant in charge, who seemed to be tickled pink over the developments, proudly confided that each one would actually receive about seven dollars worth, because of an unusually heavy barrage of donated gifts.

The amount stated does not include gifts like the eleven Red Cross radios that were sent from here. This type of gift is not given to any individual, but to various wards and rooms where several can enjoy them. The gifts are all sorted and gone over by committees so that each patient gets the correct amount and things he especially wants. The ward nurses have the final say as to who gets what. For instance, a man who at the moment has an over abundance of shaving materials will be sure not to get another batch that he won't thrill him a bit. He will be given stationary or a fountain pen that he can use. Another man who is low on toiletries will get that type of gift to give him a boost.

The committee was especially pleased to get the new radios. The smiling sergeant said the ones in most of the rooms are in rough shape. They are used a great deal, you know. The fellows are enjoying television at the hospital these days, too. A new Grand Rapids station is providing the telecasts and the hospital has several television units obtained in several ways. The much-mentioned sergeant that received the local gifts, stated that before he was assigned to his present duty, he was over in the information section at the main building. A little old man came up to him one Sunday afternoon and asked about the new television setup. He was shown around the building and he saw how much the fellows were enjoying this type of entertainment. Then he expressed a desire to donate a couple of new sets. The sergeant explained that each of the units that were being used cost from six-fifty to seven hundred dollars. "That's okay," he said, "where do I go to take care of the matter?" He was shown, and before he left, he had written a check for fifteen hundred dollars for two more television sets for the boys at Percy Jones.

Sure, many people remember the boys who paid the price, but many of us don't. Maybe, next Christmas we'll all remember. When some extra special gift arrives, such as the two hand-knit robes valued at fifty dollars each, they are also given out with much care and good judgment. Gifts of this nature are given to extreme cases. The robes will be given to fellows who will have to spend the rest of their lives in a wheel-chair, and the rest of the gang won't mind a bit.