Voters Should Approve These 3 Amendments

Next Monday's Spring election is not expected to create any new voting attendance records here in Birmingham. But those voters who will cast their ballot on April 4 will be voting on the election of:

Two U of M regents.

A State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

A member of the State Board of Education.

Two members of the State Board of Agriculture.

A State Highway Commissioner.

Two Justices of the State Supreme Court.

Two Birmingham City Commissioners.

Two members of the Birmingham Library Board.

One Constable.

Three amendments to the Birmingham city charter.

* * *

The state-wide contests, as far as Birmingham voters are concerned, will go along party lines, depending on whether you are a Democrat or a Republican.

What will be more interesting to watch, and carry more interest locally, is the two-man race for one of the vacancies on the city commission between incumbent William Martin and political newcomer John S. O'Gorman, Jr. The third and only other commission candidate is Mayor Milton F. Mallender, up for his third consecutive term, whom local "political observers" concede will not have any trouble in retaining his place on the commission.

As in past years, The Eccentric refrains from commenting on this non-partisan race, believing that the voters are sufficiently well acquainted with any commission candidates to elect the best from the group which is running in any particular year.

Mrs. John S. Lambie and Merrill C. Adams face no opposition in their re-election to the Library Board.

No one is running for constable. The person receiving the most "write-in" votes will be elected to this office, if he chooses to accept. Otherwise, the city commission will probably appoint one soon after its reorganization meeting April 11.

However, we believe the three charter amendments should be given an extra word here. The Eccentric favors all three of these amendments as giving more scope to the city manager's office, and permitting administrative decisions that now must come before the whole commission because of charter limitations.

Amendment No. 1 wounld permit the city manager to enter into contracts and make purchases up to $1,000 without commission approval and without advertising for sealed bids, or up to $2,000 without advertising for bids, if the commission by a 5/7 vote approves such contract or purchase. The present limitation is $500 and $1,000, respectively.

Amendment No. 2 would permit city departments to engage in construction projects up to $1,000 without advertising and without commission approval, or up to $2,000 without advertising if approved by a 5/7 vote of the commission. The respective $500 and $1,000 limits also apply to this matter.

Both the city manager and the commission advise these two changes to permit the city to operate with as much ease and efficiency as it could have 10 years ago when routine purchases and construction could be obtained for half the cost that they can today.

Amendment No. 3 would permit the city, in unusual instances, to do special assessment work without having to advertise within the proposed limitations outlined by Amendment 2 above. The city, in the past, has been forced to hold off badly needed improvements of a particularly small assessment district because the job was so little that a private contractor would not be able to submit a bid that was not considerably in excess of the estimated construction cost. Too, there have been times when small jobs have been needed immediately, yet which become aggravated because the city had to stop and advertise for bids that only added weeks to the time the construction could be started.

Every Community Needs

Any community in the United States, including Birmingham, can make progress whenever the majority of its inhabitants are more interested in the general welfare than in envying their neighbors.

The population of any given area, united in common advantages, facing the same disadvantages and seeking methods of growth, can assess its prospects upon the basis of its average inhabitant.

It takes more than natural resources to make a prosperous people. This applies to nations, states, counties and municipalities. The spirit of the people, within certain physical boundary lines, is more important to the welfare of the people than the possession of certain assets which are often deemed advantageous.

You can give a locality an excellent climate and wonderful natural resources, but unless you breathe a common purpose into the life of the area, it will fall far short of what it could become.

The Birmingham Eccentric

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NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish brief contributed material providing it has news value and suggestions are welcomed. Contributions are usually edited superficially so that they conform to general newspaper style. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, 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.

Happenings of Long Ago

50 years ago
March 31, 1899

Birmingham is to have a grand millinery opening of Spring Goods! The scene of this artistic display will be at the National hotel next Thursday, all day and through the evening. Miss Moutier and Miss Hughes of Pontiac, will be on hand to take charge of the affair.

* * *

We are told that the Eldred greenhouse came near being the scene of a conflagration last Monday night.

* * *

One of the milk institutions of this place has a different "William". William Hunt has purchased the place from William Parks, but says he will run it in the same good substantial way.

* * *

Say, has anyone found two new oak dining chairs on the road between W. A. O'Neal's furniture emporium and Harmon? If so, just stop in the Eccentric office and we'll tell you the name of the anxious owner.

* * *

Charles A. Brush celebrated his 55th birthday last week by attending a Democratic caucus and announcing himself a Democrat forevermore. He told why, too, but the reason was too long to print here. For full details, contact Chas. in person.

20 years ago
April 4, 1929

A trio of Cleveland, Ohio, men arrested here for drunkenness told Justice Floyd S. Buck that they had had a couple of drinks in Cleveland and "not a drop since." Judging that a couple of drinks go a long way, Buck requested $25 from each man.

* * *

Former Wayne county prosecutor, Robert M. Toms, will be the guest speaker at the weekly meeting of the Exchange club. He has chosen for his topic, "What Kind of Government Have We?"

* * *

Local schools will close Friday for the one-week spring vacation, according to an announcement made by the board of education. This will include Baldwin junior and senior high schools, Adams, Quarton, Pierce, Hill and Barnum.

* * *

The announcement has been made that the resignation of Herbert Synder staff member of Cranbrook, has been accepted. He has been in charge of the English department and athletics at Cranbrook since its opening in 1927, and leaves to become headmaster of the Cincinnati Country Day school.

* * *

Reune Martin and Robert C. Williams, both experienced real estate men, have joined the firm of Walsh, James and Wasey. The local company, which is expanding its activities, is looking forward for a banner year in Birmingham.

5 years ago
April 6, 1944

John E. Mrtz and W. Coit Allee were reelected to the offices of city commissioner at a rather light election Monday. Only 557 votes were cast in Birmingham showing a marked lack of interest, this year, in the happenings of city government.

* * *

Friday marks the date of the city-wide paper collection. City trucks will visit every section, picking up bundles and boxes of paper. Residents are asked to cooperate in this service by having these placed at the curb for pick-up, not later than 8 a.m.

* * *

Samuel J. Duncan, 683 Woodward, has been named chairman bf the local rationing board. Assuming his new duties Monday, he will replace Charles E. Lewis, who recently resigned the office.

* * *

Rita Parisian, nine year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Parisian, is in Redford hospital recovering from serious injuries received Monday afternoon when she was struck by a truck. Dawn Cayton, Detroit, said she was unable to avoid hitting the child who walked into the path of the truck from behind a school bus.

* * *

The local Lions club opened a fund drive here yesterday. They are raising the funds as a part of their project to help those who are suffering from defective vision, veteran rehabilitation, recreational programs, and other benefits which they sponsor.

Have You Met . . .

Former Detroit residents, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Conley and children, Carol and Kenneth who are living now at 32015 Beverly Circle RR 77 Mr. Conley is an Industrial representative with Shaw and Slavsky Company.

Getting Hot, Eh Comrade?

'Economics Is the Farmers' Business', Secretary Brannan Tells His Critics

(Special Story From Our Washington Bureau)

By Esther Van Wagoner Tufty

WASHINGTON—To the taunt "tend your own business", Secretary of Agriculture Charles Brannan is replying "economics is the farmers' business."

Ever since this deceptively gentle cabinet official was made Economic Coordinator by President Harry Truman, he has been saying "farmers are people and to stabilize our economy is most important to them since depressions hit them hardest."

At a luncheon the other day, Secretary Brannan said despite the high prices enjoyed today by farmers, the average farm income for last year was $909.09 as compared to average non-farm income of $1565.00.

Michigan farmers do better.

Positive Emphasis

The farmer is facing today some "unfavorable economics" as everything he buys has gone upward in price, notably tractors, storage facilities, and material for expansion of rural electrification.

Economic Coordinator Brannan's motto puts the emphasis on the positive "Don't plan for a depression; plan for stabilization." And that's "not just the business of bankers and business men." To him, "it's the people's business" and the government, at every level, should know "where we are going economically and do something about it."

Some of His Proposals

Briefly, here are some Brannan-approved proposals to prevent "the major depression we could not withstand" in today's world "where communism flourishes best amid economic chaos": extension of rent control, credit restrictions, export controls, taxation of a kind favorable to stabilization, debt management, extension of commodity exchange regulations.

Other "stabilization" proposals included in the President's message are wrapped up in the Economic Stabilization Act of 1949. That deals with administration; production and supply; temporary prority and allocations until production catches up; prices and wages.

It's quite a job for this man from Colorado, Charles Brannan. He is a one-man clearing house for the Council of Economic Advisers, the congressional joint committee on the economic report, and the White House.

Have You Met . . .

Mr. and Mrs. William R. Farrington, formerly of Detroit, and their sons, Stanley and Bobby who are making their home at 550 Suffield now? Mr. Farrington is a mechanical contractor with the Farrington Company.

Michigan Mirror

INTERPRETING THE NEWS

By Gene Alleman

Our State of Michigan may be on the verge of bringing about a fundamental change in United States governmental policy. Eight legislators have joined in an unprecedented move to initiate a constitutional amendment that probably would slow-down the ever-increasing centralization of authority in Washington.

The 16-section proposal is quite complicated. Among other things it would distribute approximately 29 per cent (or about $8,000,000,000) of all federal tax collections among the various states, mostly on a per capita basis. It would also set aside approximately five per cent of federal income for payment of the national debt. In order to plug all loopholes, many restrictions are written into the proposal including limiting the number of new states that can be admitted to the union, placing a floor under the gold content of a dollar and specifying that a minimum deduction of $600 be allowed for each individual and his dependents for income tax purposes.

Purpose of the amendment is to put a stop to the procedure whereby the U.S. government collects tax money and distributes it back to local communities minus administrative expenses. If the plan were in operation, Michigan would receive an estimated $315,466,936 from federal sources, as opposed to the $58,582,526 in federal-aid received last year. This would make a sizeable dent in the half billion dollars now being spent by the State for all purposes.

Congress should not lose sleep worrying about this amendment taking effect over night. First, two-thirds of the states must pass a resolution asking for a convention to consider the amendment and then three-quarters of the states must ratify. Whatever the outcome of this drastic proposal, however, it will have the good effect of stimulating discussion on the vital issue of federal aid to states.

* * *

Governor Williams has written a letter to governors of the 47 other states urging them to join him in a petition to congress. He seeks an extension of the deadline for payment of service men's readjustment allowances which give unemployed veterans $20 a week for as long as 52 weeks. Williams claims that veterans are the "first laid off and the last to return to work" because they lack seniority. He also says many of them have not yet acquired enough employment experience to qualify fully for unemployment compensation benefits. More than 21 governors have replied that they would favorably consider action in their states to urge Congress to extend the program.

An unusual feature of Monday's election (April 4) is the little understood method of nominating and electing justices of the Supreme Court. Eight justices serve eight-year terms, two being elected at the spring primary in odd numbered years. The unusual feature is that candidates for the judicial posts are nominated by party conventions but run on a non-partisan ticket. This results from a constitutional amendment approved by the people in 1939 which specifies that all judicial elections must be non-partisan. The two incumbent justices running for re-election are (s-h-h-h!!) Democrats.

* * *

Senator George N. Higgins says that 400,000 of the 680,000 used car-transactions in Michigan last year were between individuals or small operators who escaped the sales tax. He wants to substitute a three per cent "title-transfer" tax that would have the advantage of being applicable to all private sales. This could add as much as $12 million to the state's general fund. Sounds almost as painless as a tax on castor oil.

Hoover Commission reports continue to emphasize the immense size of our national economy. Their report on the Department of Commerce, for example, reports that Uncle Sam has spent some $30,000,000,000 over a period of 30 years and now has some 39,000 federal employees engaged in administering the government end of the transportation industry. Some figures indicate the breath-taking size of this industry. The U.S. has more than 227,000 miles of railways which haul more than over 600 billion ton-miles of freight every year and operate 70 billion passenger-miles. There are about one-and-a-half million miles of surfaced roads, traveled by some 40 million vehicles. Air services operate more than seven million passenger-miles annually and there are 27,000 miles of improved inland waterways.

* * *

A new postwar high has been reached in the level of Michigan's relief load, according to W. J. Maxey, State Welfare Director. He reports that 3,000 new cases were added in February, bringing the total number now receiving relief to 36,500.

Have You Met . . .

Mrs. Catherine Benson, formerly of Royal Oak, and her daughter, Joan who are now making their home at 1208 South Bates? Mrs. Benson is bookkeeper for Diehset & McCutcheon, Hudson Dealers in Birmingham.

1949-50 School Calendar Decided Upon by B of E; Classes Resume Sept. 6

The calendar for the 1949-50 school year has been decided upon for the Birmingham public school system. The first scheduled event for the new year will be the pre-school conference on Sept. 1 and 2, followed by the opening of school on Sept. 6.

Elementary school pupils will report at 9 a.m., of that date, and be dismissed at noon, with the full class period going into effect on the second day of school. In the secondary schools, pupils will report at 8:30, to be dismissed at noon. Faculty meetings will be held during the afternoon hours of the first day in all schools.

The Michigan education association convention is scheduled for Oct. 6 and 7th with all school classes being omitted for these two days. The next school recess will be at Thanksgiving. Schools will be dismissed at the close of the school day on Wednesday, Nov. 23, and reconvene Monday, Nov. 28.

Midyear Commencement

The Christmas vacation will start with the closing of schools on Dec. 22 to Jan. 2, when classes will be resumed. The midyear commencement has been set for Jan. 26, 1950, with Jan. 27 designated as the last day of the first semester. The second semester will begin Jan. 30.

Schools will close on Apr. 7 for the Easter vacation, reopening on Apr. 17. They will also close on Memorial Day, May 30.

June commencement exercises will be held June 22, with the closing of school for the summer vacation the following day.

Report cards in the elementary schools will be released as follows: first period, Nov. 16; second, Jan. 27; third, Apr. 19 and fourth, June 23. In the secondary schools the dates will be first period, Oct. 26; second, Dec. 7; third, Jan. 27; fourth, Mar. 22; fifth, May 10 and sixth, June 23.

Teachers' pay periods were also accented, with the first scheduled for Sept. 14, and the final check due the last day of school, June 23.

People's Column

The Eccentric welcomes letters for this column. All letters must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request. Letters must be limited to 500 words.

The Eccentric of March 24 had some references to the Northeast Home Owners Association. At one time that association was very active under the vigorous leadership of Mr. Elmer Gove.

Mr. Gove retired from the office of president about 1942. The association has been dormant since that time. The president who was elected to succeed Mr. Gove has not called any meetings of the directors or the membership.

As far as can be determined, he is still president as there have been no meetings to elect his successor.

The residents of this area should not depend upon the association to protect their interests. It is definitely inactive.

JAMES H. BARRETT,
720 Kennesaw,
B'ham.

Have You Met . . .

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur E. Cone and daughter, Tally who have moved from Pontiac to 1763 South Bates? Mr. Cone is merchandising manager of hard lines for Sears Roebuck & Company.

Internationally Speaking

By Eugene Hess
International Market Analyst

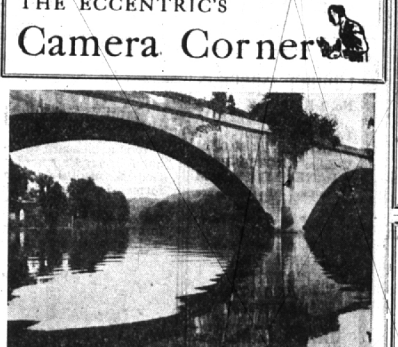
Some Americans are apt to forget that our situation in Japan is getting more and more strained. At present the so-called liberals are in power in Japan with an absolute parliamentary majority. There is no immediate danger of any communist upheaval in Japan. But this present political stability depends on the belief that the United States Army will stay in Japan for quite some time to come. Here we have another problem, the solution of which baffles the imagination. The Japanese are at present a defenseless people and are undoubtedly worried about what Russia could do to them and would do to them, if it ever gets a chance.

All Loveliness

Across the years it comes to me tonight,
The loveliness of quiet memories
That I along the years had counted lost,
Glorious priceless things I treasured most.
Tonight they are as vivid as the dawn,
As sure and beautiful as moon and stars
In midnight skies . . . and as the evening sun
Kindling the heavens when a day is done . . .
As sure and beautiful as moon and stars
This precious treasure-trove of bygone hours.
All lovely things live on and on for aye.
The mind could never lose them, nor the heart
Relinquish them . . . for they become a part
Of all we are or ever hope to be.

—BEATRICE McDONALD

THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner



Karl E. Root

PICTURE OF THE WEEK. A box camera in knowing hands can produce superlative pictures and this one, titled "Bridge of Flowers," helps to prove it. Of course, the photographer also had a knowing eye for composition and the exact effect he wanted. The camera used; was a Brownie No. 2, equipped with the regular lens. It was taken without a filter on Verichrome film with the largest available stop opening. This would be the equivalent exposure of f 12.7 at about 1/30 second. Two important elements in its success were the use of a tripod and brilliant mid-day sunlight. Although it gives the impression of what used to be called old world charm, it was actually taken at Shelburne Falls, Mass.

* * *

Because it is inexpensive and simple, without the chromium gadgets that Americans associate with quality and swank, the box camera is often scorned as a beginner's plaything. This is largely nonsense.

The box camera, whether it's a Brownie, an Ansco Cadet or any other variety, can take first-rate pictures if given a fair chance.

Naturally, it has its limitations. It is a bedrock camera with a universal (fixed) focus and a shutter speed of about 1/25 second. It won't give you the needle sharpness of an expensive lens, nor does it have the ability to stop motion of a fast, precision shutter (assuming you know how to use them). Without a portrait attachment, it won't take subjects closer than about 8 to 10 feet. Its exposure is designed for a high average of good results with average subjects in average bright sunlight.

Keep the Lens Clean

The lens of an inexpensive box camera is, of course, less efficient than that of a higher priced camera. Therefore, it is even more important to keep it absolutely clean for maximum efficiency. Always have a sheaf of lens tissues handy and use them frequently.

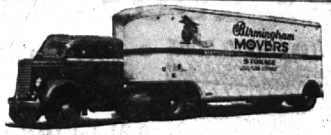
Because of its rather slow shutter speed, the slightest movement of a box camera will blur the picture, so use a tripod whenever possible. If that isn't feasible, steady the camera against a tree or fence or rest it on a solid object. If you have to hold it in your hands, press it tightly against your body, hold your breath and slowly squeeze the trigger (don't punch it).

In bright sunlight, ortho film like Verichrome or Ansco Plenichrome will give good results. On dull days, and in poor light, one of the faster panchromatic films will produce good detail in pictures that would be failures with the slower films. But don't use the fast films in bright light without a filter or your negatives will be overexposed.

Filters for Box Cameras

Just because it's an old box camera doesn't mean that you can't use filters with it for special effects, such as distinguished clouds or a dark sky background. A light or medium yellow filter used with pan film on bright days will give you excellent results. With some box cameras you can buy filters that fit over the lens. With others you may have to hold the filter in front of the lens with two fingers.

Many box camera experts who boast a long record of good pictures never feel the need for any other camera. You may. When you do, you'll find that mastery of the box camera gave you a headstart in basic photography that you'll never regret.



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