Editorial Page of The Birmingham Eccentric

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

We've Got it; Let's Use It and More

If at any time in the future the Birmingham area needs an example of wholehearted community effort and cooperation, all it has to do is point to the recent United Foundation Torch Fund campaign here.

Gunning for a Birmingham-Bloomfield quota of $82,500, the 400 local volunteer workers reported back with more than $108,000. This was 131 per cent of the quota, certainly a record for Torch Drive worker or giver to be proud of.

The success of the entire metropolitan Detroit campaign can be credited to the people's desire to eliminate the multiplicity of charity drives, and to "Give Once for All."

Lots of people in cities outside Michigan said this type of campaign would not be successful. But it was. The workers were sold on the idea's merits, the general public realized its value. Everyone believed in it—and the goal was achieved.

Birmingham residents can do the same in any other effort. All we need is concerted community effort and cooperation. The recent Torch Fund drive proved we had it. Let's use it on other local interests—often.

Hyenas-Tigers Versus Autos

There are any number of reasons why we prefer to live in the United States instead of some other area, but two of them appeared in the newspapers of the country recently.

(1) A United Press dispatch from New Delhi, India, tells how a pack of voracious hyenas have killed and eaten ninety-seven children in villages near Lucknow in the past few months. Two adults have been slain by the pack, says the dispatch.

(2) The New York Times reports that inhabitants of four villages in Kadah, Malaya, have been terrorized by a band of ferocious tigers. Three men and many cattle have been carried off and the tigers have become so bold that they pursue buses, pawing at the doors and sniffing at the windows.

These dispatches probably send shivers down the spines of relatively safe Americans but the parents of children in the areas threatened by hyenas and tigers probably tell them about the mechanical monsters that zoom all over the United States, at incredible speeds, killing approximately one hundred persons a day.

We have discovered two major problems in connection with television: the first is to get the money to buy the receiving set; after you've got the set, the second problem is to find something on the air waves that you want to see.

* * *

With so many beauty contests every year, it will soon be difficult to discover a likely looking young lady who never has been a queen of something-or-other.

Federal Deficit Ahead

An official review of the Federal budget indicates a deficit of $5,500,000,000 in this fiscal year instead of the $900,000,000 deficit forecast by the President in his January message to Congress.

The deficit is explained by an increase of $1,600,000,000 in expenditures and a prospective decline of $3,000,000,000 in receipts due to a declining national income. The other $900,000,000 represents the deficit predicted by the President last winter.

The prospective deficit compares with one of $1,800,000,000 in the 1949 fiscal year, which ended last June 30th, and surpluses of $8,400,000,000 in the 1948 fiscal year and $754,000,000 in the 1947 accounting period.

While there may be many explanations for the deficit that looms ahead, it should be apparent to the people of this country, and to those in official position, that the United States cannot operate permanently on a deficit basis.

While it is impossible to say exactly how far the national debt can safely go, no gift of prophecy is necessary to state that it cannot go on forever.

6,009 Tax-Free Farm Co-Ops

According to the last official listing of the U. S. Treasury Department, there are 6,009 farmers cooperatives of all types doing business tax-free in the United States.

The Treasury estimates that the Government could collect up to $20,000,000 more in income taxes annually if Congress would plug the loophole which permits the cooperatives to escape the payment of taxes, just like other business enterprises.

The question is certain to receive some attention in Congress. Representative Noe M. Mason, of Illinois, who has made a study of co-ops for the House Ways and Means Committee, says that they go far beyond simply marketing farm products and that they are "big business." He points out that the largest of all American co-ops, the Cooperative Grange-League-Federation Exchange, of Ithaca, New York, has given up its tax-exempt status voluntarily and paid the Government, last year, $928,000 inincome taxes.

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Michigan Mirror

INTERPRETING THE NEWS

By Gene Alleman

What is the Michigan farmer thinking about these days?

The Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan State Grange held annual conventions in recent weeks.

These state-wide organizations wield a powerful influence among farm people. When the leaders speak and resolutions are finally adopted, the result is somewhat of a Gallup poll taken at the Grass Roots on a representative basis.

While approving present federal support program for agricultural commodity prices, the Farm Bureau delegates were highly critical of federal subsidies. Generally speaking, the farmer would like to see these abandoned. He fears the ultimate result of a regimented farm economy under the Brannan Plan.

* * *

On state issues Farm Bureau delegates urged a two-cent a gallon increase in the present three-cent gasoline tax to finance better roads. They urged Governor Williams to include a road plan program in the forthcoming special session early in 1950.

Construction of toll superhighways, state financing of pre-strike votes by unions, socialized medicine, colored oleomargarine, billboard construction on highways, and dual control over state fairgrounds all were opposed by Bureau delegates. President of the Michigan Farm Bureau is Carl E. Buskirk of Paw Paw, re-elected to serve his fifth consecutive term.

* * *

W. G. Armstrong, master of the Michigan State Grange, sounded the keynote before the Grange annual convention recently when he declared that constitutional diversion of Sales Tax revenue back to home governments left the state of Michigan with one of three choices: To shift some of the cost of public services back to home governments, to cut sharply into state of Michigan services such as for colleges and hospitals, and to levy new taxes to avert an inevitable deficit.

* * *

The levying of a new state tax would be a further step towards inflation by adding further cost to commodities and surpluses. Economists are already pointing out that the grant of company-paid pensions by the U.S. Steel Corporation, Ford Motor Company and other big industrial concerns will have the equivalent effect of another round of wage increases as far as production costs are concerned.

* * *

City consumers may be complaining about food prices. They know that farm prices have dropped 13 per cent for the first nine months of 1949 compared with the same period last year.

While non-farm income was up approximately one billion dollars in September, farm income was down one billion six hundred million.

* * *

The Michigan farmer knows that farmers generally have shouldered nearly all the price decline so far, while wages to store help and other middleman agencies have continued to go up. Farmers get only 48 cents of the consumer food dollar today as compared with a high of 55 cents 18 months ago.

Before the war the farm share of the food dollar was around 40 cents. In the low depression years farmers received only 32 cents.

* * *

The economic squeeze facing the farmer is that the cost of farm operation is apt to remain steady and possibly increase during the next few years, while prices for farm commodities steadily decline. Lower profits thus appear to be inevitable.

You can't blame the Michigan farmer for wondering what is ahead and perhaps favoring some kind of government planning and controls whereby the postwar slump in farm economy, following World War I, may still be averted.

* * *

The Michigan farmer also is concerned over our steady path to inflation through constant deficit financing. This apprehension may be summed up by the following illustration:

If the 3,900,000 farmers who own and operate their own farms were to convert their land, livestock and equipment into cash, the net result would be 91 billion dollars cash, only enough to operate the United States government for seven months!

That doesn't make sense to a man close to the ground as a dirt farmer.

Happenings of Long Ago

50 Years Ago
NOVEMBER 24, 1899

It looks like chickens for Pontiac this Thanksgiving. The sheriff has nearly 300 which he captured along with the man who captured them. No one has yet claimed the chickens. The county will keep the man but they would like to return the poultry to the rightful owner.

* * *

A fine strip of cement pavement is a great improvement along premises of J. M. Clement on Pierce street. More of our local people should be as civic minded.

Charles W. Moore has accepted a prominent position on the new Farmington power house. It will take him nearly all winter and the electric people did a good service for themselves when they secured Chas.'s services.

* * *

Aug. Wenzer hasn't done a thing to the P. L. Sullivan farm but increase it in value immensely by trimming and cutting out small trees, brush, etc. A new coat of paint on the house made Aug. as happy over his new home as can be.

* * *

Miss Sophia Blackmore of the Singapore Mission was greeted by a large congregation last Sunday at the M. E. church and her remarks were listened to with the deepest and most flattering attention.

—o—

20 Years Ago
NOVEMBER 27, 1929

Harry Brooks, Baldwin high school alumnus who lost his life a few years ago in the interests of aviation will have a living memorial dedicated in his honor. Baldwin students will plant and dedicate a 40 acre tract of land in his memory. This reforestation program has been widely adopted by schools, and was deemed a fitting tribute to an outstanding student.

* * *

Members of the Metropolitan club will have some 80 news "boys" on the streets of Birmingham Saturday, Dec. 7, as they conduct their annual fund raising drive. The proceeds of the drive are used to assure needy children of a Merry Christmas.

* * *

Scores of children unofficially opened the ice skating season last weekend at Quarton lake. The exceptionally early winter weather sent many others onto nearby hills with sleds and skis. Evening sessions were held on local links, lighted by the headlights of skaters' automobiles.

* * *

Howard C. Looney, 26, of 608 Purdy will leave Friday for New York where he has a position as junior radio inspector for the city. He will begin his duties there on Dec. 2. A graduate of the University of Michigan, Purdy has been with the engineering laboratory of the Ford company at Dearborn two years.

* * *

Clare H. Ogden, city attorney, has been instructed by the city commission to proceed with the necessary steps to acquire property for a proposed alley from Frank to George street, between Woodward and Ann.

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5 Years Ago
NOVEMBER 30, 1944

Roy R. Carkner of Detroit has purchased the Chrysler-Plymouth sales and service located on S. Woodward and operated by the Jack Doule Motors. Carkner has leased the grounds and buildings and says he plans to enlarge the latter with a 40 foot addition on the east side as soon as possible.

* * *

Peter Freeza has returned to the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Freeza, 611 Ruffner. He has been confined to St. Joseph Mercy hospital since Aug. 15 when he was critically injured in an automobile accident.

* * *

The Retail Merchants association will have its annual children's party at the Birmingham theatre on Saturday morning, Dec. 9. The program chairman is Howard Holah, manager of the theatre who will plan a program of special movies. The youngsters will all receive the customary gifts of candy and fruit.

* * *

Representatives from Port Huron, Mt. Clemens, Hazel Park, Ferndale and Birmingham high schools met Monday evening to perfect plans for the new athletic league for the schools. They will compete in baseball, basketball and football, as well as track. A trophy will go to the winning school each year.

* * *

Harold Watts, Birmingham's own football hero, who plays center at the University of Michigan has earned an honorable mention on the All-Big Ten conference this year. His coach has pronounced his play as superior and says he has upheld his part of the game splendidly throughout the year.

Internationally Speaking

By Eugene Hess

Sometimes even an optimist is inclined to think that we are moving backward instead of forward in international trade.

Our business with the Republic of Korea is being carried out on a strict barter basis. Either the barter is direct, and as such must be officially approved, or it is on a so-called delayed basis.

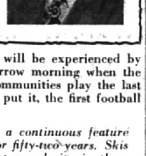
If the latter is the case, American commodities are sold in Korea against won, the local currency, and later Korean goods or raw materials are bought for the available credits and exported, with government approval, to this country.

Let us hope that this ancient system makes no headway elsewhere.

A Tough Opponent

"Any Way You Slice It"

BY HAL P. BUERGE



The sports climax of the entire year will be experienced by Birmingham and Royal Oak fans tomorrow morning when the high school teams of the neighboring communities play the last game of the football season, or, as some put it, the first football game of the basketball season.

This cold weather classic has been a continuous feature of the two schools athletic programs for fifty-two years. Skis and toboggans had not gained present popularity in those days before the turn of the century and it was only natural that boys in the two towns should want to indulge in some type of winter sport, thus the Thanksgiving football game.

Birmingham plays the role of David in annual drama and Royal Oak is the perennial Goliath. Knowing the enrollment of Royal Oak high school is three times that of the Birmingham institution, many newcomers to the community and rank outsiders who become interested, often ask, "how did Birmingham ever get talked into this?"

On the face of the matter it does look kind of futile, but when you stop and consider the record, the Royal Oak giant has only six more victories to its credit than our little sling shot artist. An unusual number of the contests have ended in ties. This was not always due to the fact that the teams were evenly matched. It was oftener due to the fact that the weather man, the great evener, had made it nearly impossible for either team to play their normal brand of ball. So, many of the games ended in low scoring or no scoring ties.

Another thing I have noticed is that the majority of Birmingham's victories came in the early days of the rivalry, when the two communities were more of a like size and the schools had an approximately the same number of students. When the series started, back in the good old days, the two towns were just wide spots in the road. By now Woodward Avenue is wider than the spots used to be. Both cities have developed greatly. Royal Oak took to industry and commerce and Birmingham real estate and country clubs. Soon the land of the Acorn had far exceeded the home of the Maples in size. The land of the Acorn began producing plenty tough nuts, good football prospects. Up here, we turned over a new Maple Leaf, not so good for football. Culture took over. Kids start to school very young. By the time they reach 18, a fine age for a senior football star, they are half way through college.

Many rival high schools have seniors graduating at the age of twenty. Many Birmingham students are through college by then, all anxious and eager to launch their careers by starting at the bottom. That is, providing it is the bottom of the top. That's another story and we won't go into that.

How many of you realize that Birmingham did not have enough football players out for the sport this season to play their reserve schedule? It was cancelled for the second straight year. About 50 boys reported to Coach Vincent S. Secontine, one of the finest high school coaches in the country, at the beginning of the season and by mid-season he was working with only 28 boys. That's a very low number for a class "B" school.

As Secontine says, the 28 boys who are playing out the season and the ones who have been sidelined by injuries, are comparable to the best found anywhere, but what the heck happened to the rest of them. Most of those who quit the squad, did so before the heavy contact work started. Secontine says the calisthenics were purposely strenuous, so the boys could go through the season of rough football without too many injuries. The way it turned out, the undermanned Maple squad has had more than its share of hurts. Birmingham plays a schedule of big schools and needs a big enough squad to match manpower with manpower. Where is it going to come from if squads keep dwindling from year to year.

Sure, Secontine makes them work hard. Sure, he wants them to train and keep in shape to play the Herculean schedule he and the squad faces each season. If Birmingham wants to play in the big league, the coach must have the material. Otherwise we will have to return to a schedule of smaller schools and get by with average size squads and average coaching. It's a bitter pill to have to swallow isn't it? And it's half way down right now.

I don't know all of the reasons why Birmingham boys don't go out for football in the usual numbers for a high school the size of Baldwin, but here's one that it typical and it's true. One fine prospect came out for the team, according to Secontine, and quit after the coach made his training routine known to the squad. There was to be no dating. A few days later the coach noticed that the boy was missing from the roster and had turned in his uniform. A phone call to his home revealed that Jr. didn't think he could make the team this year anyway and he didn't want to give up dating during the three months of the season, so he quit . . . but he'd be out again next year when his chances of playing would be better. Quote, Secontine—"skip it!"

Airlines Anticipate More Business Because of Increases in Rail Fares

(Special Story From Our Washington Bureau)

By Bill Levin

WASHINGTON—Eastern railroad heads have acted pleased with this week's go ahead signal from the Interstate Commerce Commission on another fare increase.

But the ones really happy about the news were airline officials, particularly those in the air coach business.

They point to a statement by a high-ranking Civil Aeronautics Board official that "it is not fear but fares that keeps people out of the air." And now, with railroad coach rates topping air coach fares everywhere east of the Mississippi (if eastern railroads proceed with their fare-increase plans), travelers operating on a budget—and that includes most of the population—may head for the nearest airport, rather than the train depot.

Airlines Make Sizeable Gains

This doesn't mean airlines expect to handle more passenger traffic than railroads in the near future. By the last count, domestic airlines of this country had received far less than two per cent of the total passengers carried by common carriers of the nation while the railroads and the buses carried over 98 per cent of the total traffic.

But even without the newest rail increase, second since the end of the war, airlines have already made sizeable increases in passenger traffic.

Take, for example, the New York-Chicago run of Capital Airlines, prime advocate of air coach service. Figures show a 4400% increase in the number of passengers carried by that airline between those two spots in August, 1949, as compared with August, 1948—before the low rate air coach service was inaugurated.

Rail Passenger Traffic Down

As for railroads, in the first seven months of this year, the latest period for which statistics are available, the number of revenue passengers carried in coaches by eastern railroads declined to 97,957,976 from 139,106,565 in the corresponding period last year, a drop of 24.1%

Certainly such figures add fuel to the dissenting opinion of ICC Chairman Charles D. Mahaffe, who suggested the "time has arrived for railroads to experiment with reduced fares rather than with further increases."

Military Planners Advocate Removal of Defense Industry to Inland Areas

(Special Story)

By Joseph Dear

WASHINGTON — Inadequate Alaskan defenses may deprive states from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Coast of a major portion of their industries, it was learned here today.

Planners in the National Military Establishment are advocating removal of defense industries from those border states to inland areas for security reasons. The Air Force, for example, has already proposed that the Boeing aircraft plant be moved from Seattle, Wash., to Wichita, Kan.

Boeing has been located in Seattle for many years and is one of the largest employers on the West Coast. It is understood the military is considering similar proposals for some Michigan industry.

An Open Secret

It is an open secret here that Alaska is virtually undefended and undeveloped. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, Army Chief of Staff, recently said this northern outpost had inadequate defenses. His admission is backed by Ernest Gruening, governor of Alaska.

Both Lawton and Gruening blame housing conditions for the defense situation. There is not enough housing in Alaska to quarter troops in sufficient numbers to insure America's security in the freezing Arctic. Result: military planners are advocating a withdrawal behind the Rockies.

It is to combat this kind of thinking in the military establishment that a group of congressmen and senators have organized an "unofficial defense committee." The committee is headed by Senator Warren Magnuson (D-Wash.). Among its members are Senator Homer Ferguson (R-Mich.) and Congressman Fred Crawford (R-Mich.).

Want Alaska Fortified

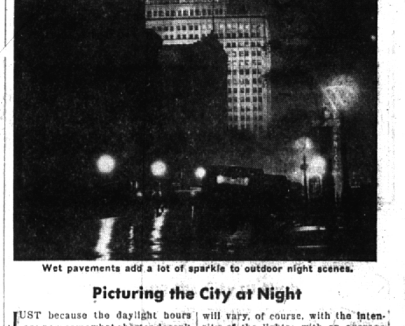
The stated aim of the committee, according to Magnuson, is to persuade the military to "fortify and develop Alaska as the key to the Pacific Coast defenses, and to do whatever is necessary also to prepare the Great Lakes region . . . against attack."

But the angle that really has the senators hopping mad is a military policy that, apparently has already written off Alaska as defenseless. The lawmakers assert that if Russia now has planes which can fly to the West Coast and Great Lakes areas, it won't be long before they have planes that can fly to Kansas, too. Defenses should start at the borders, no past the Rockies, they argue.

Have You Met . . .

Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Shirk, formerly of New York City, who are now residing at 746 Graefield Court? Mr. Shirk is a commercial photographer.

THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner



Wet pavements add a lot of sparkle to outdoor night scenes.

Picturing the City at Night

JUST because the daylight hours are now somewhat shorter doesn't mean that your hours of snapshooting must be curtailed. In fact, the long dark evenings open up a brand-new realm of fascinating picture taking. The city takes on a new look when all the lights come on, and those sparkling lights can make some most interesting pictures for your album.

The skylines of the larger cities are most attractive when the lights come on in early evening. The bright neon sights of the theater and shopping districts can register their flashing messages on your film, too. The headlights of automobiles moving through a busy intersection can trace their movements in artistic flowing patterns.

The smaller towns also offer possibilities, for just as in the larger cities, there are street lights and lighted store windows and busy intersections to record. These lights will take on even more sparkle if you photograph them after a rain, when the wet streets reflect the lights over and over again.

Any camera that is capable of simple time exposure can take outdoor night scenes. The exposure will vary, of course, with the intensity of the lights; with an average lens opening of about f/11, the exposure may run as long as three or four seconds to a full minute. If you have a very fast lens, around f/3.5 or better, and use fast "pan" film, you can sometimes take snapshots around the more brilliantly lighted store windows and theater marquees. Always use a tripod or set the camera on something solid for time exposures and snapshot exposures slower than 1/25 of a second.

If you are bothered by the lights of passing automobiles while you are making your time exposure, you need only to shield your lens until they pass and then continue the exposure. Avoid strong lights in the foreground if you are interested in recording more distant objects. Moreover, remember to compose your picture just as well as you would any daylight shot.

If you have never taken outdoor pictures at night, try a few test shots to guide you in taking future pictures. Pictures of the city lights are fascinating and add a new touch to snapshot albums.

—John van Guilder