

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Washington and Lincoln brought to public life much of the idealism and faith that Americans invest in their lives. The Birmingham Eccentric has lasted for many years, although the last 80 years of federal government has done much to tarnish the golden sheen.

74TH YEAR—NO. 2

And THAT

By G. R. A.

How About Van Wagoner For One Regency Post?

Although I have, most of my newspaper life, supported Republicans for various offices on the State and federal levels, there are times when I've suggested the names of deserving Democrats for public life. Which brings to mind the name of Murray D. "Pat" Van Wagoner, former State Highway Commissioner and Governor of Michigan, who for some years has lived right here in Birmingham.

"Pat" is a Democrat candidate at the election next Monday for a place on the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan, a position to which he was appointed some months ago.

"Pat" is a U of M graduate. His knowledge of state-supported educational institutions is of a high order. He is also a man capable of being a good regent, I believe.

There are two vacancies to be filled on the board next Monday. Both the Republican and Democratic parties are presenting candidates. "Pat" is one of the two candidates for his party.

Roscoe O. Bonisteel, Ann Arbor attorney and for a number of years a member of the Board, is one of the two Republicans on the ticket.

I'm going to vote for Roscoe who, incidentally, happens to be an old personal friend of mine.

Also, Dear Reader, I'm going to vote for "Pat"—which means I'm splitting my vote party-wise on the regency subject.

WOULDN'T IT BE a nice gesture of neighborliness if many of us Republicans showed the former candidate that he has a pretty good reputation locally . . . that many voters in his home community believe he should be rewarded with a post as regent of his Alma Mater?

Confidentially, over the telephone a few evening ago "Pat" agreed that he'd like to see the name of Van Wagoner on the list of members of Jeffersonian democracy in high places in his political party.

Using television is a powerful means of bringing to the public the actual workings of the Kefauver Senate Committee in its tracking down of gambling and racketeering in the United States.

The use of television at Congressional committee meetings, also, would be a powerful means letting taxpayers learn how this most important part of legislative work is handled.

(It might, too, improve the quality of such legislation for the number of Congress would want his constituency to observe him doing things in the "old-fashioned manner" of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours.")

UN Operates Selfishly
When practical (and thus selfish) politicians dominate the pattern of military maneuvers in time of war, disaster results. That is exactly what has and is happening in Korea.

It only proves that dependence upon the United Nations for military assistance in the preservation of freedom is not a guarantee of victory. There is just too much selfishness, too much inability to arrive at a common purpose, within the structure of such a cosmopolitan group—and as that may be.

In brief, while the idea of a United Nations is good, the inability of human nature to measure up to UN idealism is a barrier to achieving its objectives.

Civic Virtue Lacking
There is no doubt but that the city of Hamtramck has within it a large number of good family people, who work hard. But it is also true that, for civic virtue, Hamtramck has little to boast of.

For example, it has several times elected men to public office who have served prison terms—that's a pretty good indication. We mention this only to suggest how difficult it is to make self-government work in any city.

Which is why, in one major respect, efforts of the United Nations to improve the lot of the citizens of other nations is so currently hopeless.

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AMOS GREGORY REV. DR. ARNOLD RUNKEL LUTHER HEACOCK
LAWRENCE POMEROY REV. ROBERT LAWSON
Examine contents of box sealed away for 80 years. (Joe Wheeler Photo)

Methodists View the Past As Cornerstone Is Opened To Reveal Church History

By ALICE E. MORGAN

A small group of people, 80 years ago, with due ceremony slipped a sealed metal box into a concrete block under the date of "1871" at the laying of the cornerstone for Birmingham First Methodist church.

Their hopes and plans for the future of the church went into that ceremony as they faced the task of constructing their \$20,000 edifice.

Wednesday, March 21, 1951, under the supervision of the Rev. Dr. Arnold Runkel, the Rev. Robert Lawson, Amos Gregory, Lawrence Pomeroy and Luther Heacock, the box was removed and opened, to be transferred to the cornerstone of the new building, which will be laid April 15.

Time, atmospheric changes and hazards have taken small toll of the box and its contents are in an amazingly good state of preservation.

Removed, one by one, they showed the thought which went into their collection by those church members of long ago.

AMONG THE FIRST things removed was an M. E. hymnal, a Bible and a copy of the Disciplinary of 1864, all wonderfully preserved though bearing about them the odor of their long confinement.

Next came a long, hand-written History of Methodism in Birmingham. A history of the church, itself, was carefully written by some long-ago member. A membership list, bearing 141 names, was revealed. A copy of the Big Beaver which was a part of the Birmingham circuit in those days.

The deep community interest in the construction of this building was shown by the presence of communication from the library board, signed by Miss Martha DeWitt. Others were from the Baptist church, the First Baptist church of Birmingham, including "Statistics of the Baptist Church" signed by the Rev. Robert Bird, pastor, at the time the new church was built, and a Mr. J. R. Corson.

As item after item came from the box, names familiar to Birmingham showed up. The present church was revealed—Corson, Hunter, Bird, Pearson, Allen, Davidson, Hirshey, Robinson, Utter, Shain, and others.

THE BUILDERS included a copy of the "Missionary Advocate" showing the presence of the area placed in the box were the Detroit Free Press, Detroit Tribune, Detroit Post and Pontiac, Jackson, all dated 1871. There was also a copy of the "Christian Advocate" signed by the Rev. Robert Bird, pastor, at the time the new church was built, and a Mr. J. R. Corson.

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CONSTRUCTION SUPERINTENDENT REMOVES BOX
John J. Dams opens cornerstone laid in 1871

Merrill, Barnum, Parks, and a number of others.

There was a gentleness and reverence in the touch as present church officials removed the items, opened them carefully and spoke softly of them.

There was a restrained eagerness as they reached into the box for further items and a far away look on their faces as they read the old, familiar names.

Many were the names of men and women whom they know today, sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters of this courageous little group which, 80 years ago, started their big adventure.

DR. RUNKEL said these items would be carefully examined during the next few days by himself and church officials. Some will be added to the contents of the sealed box which will take its place in the cornerstone of the new church at Pleasant and Maple. Some will be carefully copied for church records—all will be preserved and become an integral part of the history of the Methodist church in Birmingham.

put a halo" on Cooper appeared in the Eccentric a year ago, and was written by Advertising Manager Hal P. Buege. A native of 1935 has referred high school basketball games in southeastern Michigan.

In commenting on his article, Buege stated it was written in Birmingham during the 1949-50 season.

BUERGE SAID, "When I wrote the article, I was aware of Cooper's shortcoming by an important phase of coaching—that of congenial relations between himself and basketball officials and rival coaches.

"No mention was made in my article of Cooper's sportsmanship and much of the article was devoted to team personnel itself. I ignored the sportsmanship angle purposely. The nature of the article did not warrant mention of it.

He emphasized, "I am surprised that the opinion of a part time columnist could stand in the way of efficient handling of school personnel problems by school authorities in any city in large Birmingham. After all, by Ireland's own admission this week, Cooper was a problem for the school board for six years, or three years before I even wrote my article."

Charter Change, Bond Issue, Sale of Lots To Be Voted on Monday

Blaze Damages Kitchen of Fox And Hounds Inn

A blaze of undetermined origin gutted the kitchen of the Fox and Hounds Inn, Bloomfield Hills last Thursday afternoon.

The fire has necessitated the temporary closing of the dining room while repairs to the kitchen are underway.

Firemen from Bloomfield Hills, Farmington townships and Brook departments battled the flames during the afternoon.

THE CHIEF STATED that the slate roof of the kitchen was badly damaged and will probably have to be completely remodeled. Most of the equipment in the kitchen, including refrigerators, were damaged.

The dining room and snack bar were untouched by flames. The manager of the Fox and Hounds Inn, John Ingleson was vacationing in the west at the time of the fire and his brother George was acting manager.

Damage has been estimated at approximately \$25,000. This blaze was the second in the past several years at this restaurant. Extensive damage resulted from a fire in 1943.

Although the dining room is closed, the snack bar is open as usual.

Birmingham Masons Plan Dinner-Dance To Note Anniversary

Birmingham Lodge No. 44, F. & A. M., will note its 100th anniversary this year, highlighting a year-long observance with a dinner-dance at the Community House on Apr. 17.

The committee planning the several anniversary events headed by Ralph A. Main. Others are Percy G. Burnett, finance; Emerson C. Brown, entertainment; and music; Raymond H. Green, banquet; Dalton H. Lamb, invitations; William W. Jones, reception; and John P. MacKay, yard.

Main stated that several special programs were planned as a part of the lodge meetings, with the dinner-dance as the big event of the year.

Tax Assessment Roll Reveals Fast Growth Of City in Past Year

The 1951 Birmingham tax assessment roll shows an increase of \$4,999,300 in real and personal property over 1950 figures, most of it due to new buildings.

The report of Elmer W. Haack, city assessor, showed 5,155 dwellings in Birmingham were accommodating 5,867 families. On a per-family average of 2.1, this represents a population of 18,187 for the city, or an increase of approximately 3,000 persons since the national census last summer.

In addition to the four city commission vacancies to be filled from among the 10 candidates (whose biographies and opinions on current local civic problems appeared in last week's Eccentric), Birmingham voters next Monday will be asked to:

- 1) Approve one city charter change;
- 2) Endorse the sale of certain city lands;
- 3) Authorize the issuance of \$99,000 in bonds to improve W. Maple between Chester and Linden;
- 4) Decide on three amendments to the state constitution;
- 5) Vote for two regents of the University of Michigan, a state superintendent of public instruction, a member of the state board of education, two members of the state board of agriculture, and two supreme court justices;
- 6) Two members of the Birmingham library board, one justice of the peace, one associate justice, and one constable.

THE CITY CHARTER change would permit the city, at its own discretion, to participate in any special assessment district but not to a greater extent than 25 per cent without a vote of the people.

This is the present maximum, but the amendment would remove the requirement that the city must participate to a minimum of at least 15 per cent, under present provisions.

Commissioners want the change so they can require entirely new subdivision developments and any newly annexed areas pay the entire cost of city streets, water main and sewer improvements, rather than having the city-at-large required to pay 15 per cent.

They have publicly stated that the present 15 per cent city share in special assessments will, as a matter of commission policy, still apply to the present maximum in presently built-up city areas.

THE CITY MUST obtain the voters' consent to set certain city-owned lots along Elton, Melton and Hereford which city officials declare are unproductive in the development of a major park in the northeast corner of Sheffield and Elton.

Proceeds from the sale of these lots, the city commission said, would go toward the development of this park.

The \$99,000 general obligation bonds issued to aid in the reconstruction and relocation of W. Maple between Chester and Linden.

If passed, according to present city engineering department plans, the bonds would be used to soften the curves and permit the use of the new Rouge bridge which has been constructed, and reduce the hazard at the Southfield-Maple intersection.

THE BOND ISSUE does not provide any funds for work on the Merrill cut-off, commissioners emphasize.

State Proposal No. 1 would require the state legislature to meet every year. Presently it meets each two years, but may be called into special session in alternate years to consider only those matters contained in the governor's call.

State Proposal No. 2 would provide a \$600 bonus to survivors of those in military service who have died between June 27, 1950, and the end of the present national emergency.

State Proposal No. 3 would authorize salaries of supreme court justices to be increased after election of the judges, so that justices serving concurrently may receive the same salaries.

OF THE STATE offices to be voted upon, the Republicans have nominated these persons: Roscoe O. Bonisteel and Leland D. Dohr for the U of M board of regents, Lee M. Thurston for superintendent of public instruction, Charles W. Burns for the state board of agriculture, and Forest H. Akers and Frederick H. Mueller for the state agriculture board.

The Democrats propose Wheaton L. Strom and Murray D. Wagoner for the board of regents, Edgar W. Waugh for the public instruction board, Lewis McGinness for the education board, and Hiram A. Sackett and Mrs. Raymond Starr for the state agriculture board.

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Nine of Birmingham's 10 candidates for city commission spoke at the League of Women Voters rally at the Community House Tuesday evening. H. Ben Ruhl, re-elected by a letter challenge, the moderator, Mrs. Howard Liversage, explained that family plans had forced him to cease any campaign activities.

Other candidates, Bruce Booth, Roy Letourneau, Ralph C. Minor, Richard Owen, Harold Webster, Richard Patterson and Vincent S. Lewis, all spoke at the rally at the Community House Tuesday evening. H. Ben Ruhl, re-elected by a letter challenge, the moderator, Mrs. Howard Liversage, explained that family plans had forced him to cease any campaign activities.

LLOYD COOPER

about it, there was no reason for me to be the one to upset the apple cart.

He emphasized, "I am surprised that the opinion of a part time columnist could stand in the way of efficient handling of school personnel problems by school authorities in any city in large Birmingham. After all, by Ireland's own admission this week, Cooper was a problem for the school board for six years, or three years before I even wrote my article."

City Voters Reminded Of New Voting Sites, Absentee Deadline

Miss Irene Hanley, city clerk, this week reminded voters of absentee ballot applications deadlines in any city in large Birmingham.

Applications for an absentee ballot must be received before 5 p.m. March 31. The application will be made by each individual wishing to vote in this manner.

She also reminded voters of absentee ballot applications deadlines in any city in large Birmingham. After all, by Ireland's own admission this week, Cooper was a problem for the school board for six years, or three years before I even wrote my article."

Residents of precinct 5 will no longer vote at the Ball Function at the Little Torrey school at the new Torrey school just south of Lincoln.

LWV Rally Presents Local Candidates At Informal Meet

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HE HAS RESIDED

in Birmingham since 1945 and was a Birmingham village attorney from 1921 to 1923 and attorney for election in Detroit from 1903 to 1945.

Gaffi is a graduate of the Detroit College of Law. He is married and has two sons. He is a member of the Michigan State Bar and Detroit Bar Association. He has served as assistant general attorney and general attorney in the Detroit, Grand Trunk Western Railroad and Detroit and Toledo Streetcar Lines, road until his retirement in 1945.

Council Election

The Birmingham PTA Council will hold its annual election of officers at 8 p.m. in Room 102 of Caldwell High School, April 2. A report on the progress of the Little League Baseball activities in the city will be given.