

Unfair to Compare Village With City

Our first reaction to "Bloomfield Village Residents' letter in last week's Column was, "Well, that's just one person's opinion."

But after a re-reading, we decided the letter contained several statements and conclusions which should not go unchallenged, for undoubtedly there may be some Birmingham residents who might take these statements and conclusions at face value.

THIS VILLAGE RESIDENT suggests the Birmingham city commission, in asking for a new fire station at Adams and Bowers (the bond issue was defeated by only 69 votes at the April 7 election), should have:

- 1) Shown where the money was to be spent.
- 2) How much of it was going for real estate.
- 3) From whom the site was purchased.
- 4) And a "Few other pertinent facts because there are contractors in Birmingham that have estimated a fire station cost at around \$150,000 and a good-sized one."

Point No. 1: the city officials DID tell citizens how this money was to be spent—\$50,000 for additional fire equipment, the remaining portion or necessary part thereof to be used for the actual fire station construction.

POINT NO. 2: None of this money was going to be spent on real estate. A year ago The Eccentric reported the commission's negotiations for the Adams-Bowers site, and in its May 10, 1951, issue said it was being purchased for \$9,000.

Point No. 3: That same May 10, 1951, item announced the property was being purchased from Otto Beier.

Point No. 4: Whether it will cost \$150,000 or \$300,000 to erect the type of fire station that city officials have in mind, still is debatable. When the Birmingham City commission asks the architect for construction drawings and specifications, it should be quite easy to determine what it will cost to erect the proposed fire station.

HOWEVER, IT WAS public knowledge during January of this year that a "boxcar figure" of slightly more than \$300,000 might be needed just for station construction. This high figure was arrived at by figuring the cubic content indicated by the needs as proposed, then applying the highest average cubic construction cost. This admittedly is only a general way of figuring construction costs.

The city commission, the week following the architect's submission of this "boxcar" estimate, spent many minutes discussing the possibility of obtaining this fire station at a much less cost.

A front page story in The Eccentric of Jan. 31, 1952, contained this statement: "Commissioners felt that they should put the amount of the bond issue at \$350,000 and if economies can be made in the building plans, then all the bonds will not have to be sold."

TOO, NONE OF THESE "contractors," as mentioned by Bloomfield Village Resident, volunteered their opinions directly to the city commissioners regarding the cost as estimated by these contractors.

If Birmingham spent \$300,000 for fire halls, and if it constructed only the type that Bloomfield Village has, Birmingham could have 21 Village-type stations, not

merely 7 as "Bloomfield Village Resident" says.

Because the Village spent, according to Dave Anderson, Bloomfield township supervisor, between \$13,000 and \$14,000 for the Village station. This amount, however, provided only four walls and a roof to protect only two pieces of fire apparatus.

NO FIREMEN are quartered there—the Village's firemen are volunteers. If an alarm comes in, they leave their jobs and rush to the fire station. The first one there unlocks the garage, posts on a blackboard the location of the fire, and the truck(s) leave for the fire.

It is a fine arrangement for the Village, and appears to be exactly what they desire. However, Birmingham some years ago decided that a paid full-time fire department would be more to its advantage (although volunteer help still is called in on second alarms).

It also must be remembered that Birmingham's proposed east side fire station would have provision for fire department training rooms and grounds, water department well apparatus repairs, some administrative offices, fire department apparatus repairs, and would be used as a voting place.

IN THE LIGHT of the respective needs and desires of the two areas, we feel it is unwise and unfair to use the Village's costs (or any other municipality's) and declare that what was done there can for a fact be done in Birmingham. It may or may not be the case.

However, any forthcoming construction drawings and specifications will show Birmingham citizens exactly what they would have for their new fire station. It will permit the city commission to add or delete construction details, to make substitutions in them, and also will do a great deal to dispel many of the doubts that a number of Birmingham residents have concerning a new fire station, what it can and would do.

EVERYONE CAN MAKE a correct second guess. It now appears that it might have been more advisable for the city commission to have ordered these drawings and specifications before the April 7 vote.

But there is no need to dwell on the mistakes of the past. Let us keep our eyes on the present and the future and work toward obtaining this badly needed fire station and new equipment.

Birmingham wants the end result. If a few mistakes are made in the process, or a few decisions are not quite accurate, as we progress, that should not stop us from working toward and reaching our ultimate goal.

The Birmingham Eccentric

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ONE THING OR ANOTHER

PEDESTRIANS CAN PREVENT ACCIDENTS

A personal note to the young Birmingham mother who, at 8:30 a.m. last Thursday morning, walked diagonally across the Woodward-Mable intersection from the southwest to the northeast corner: (you were hatless, your long black hair fell to hide the collar of your orchid-colored, three-quarter-length spring coat.)

Perhaps you have no regard for your own personal safety as you walk about the city's streets, taking dangerous risks by not using the normally accepted pedestrian crossings.

BUT WHY don't you have more concern for the life and safety of that little boy of yours, who couldn't be more than three years old, and whose hand was clasped trustingly in yours as you made this hazardous crossing?

He loves you and trusts you. Nothing you do is wrong. He undoubtedly thought you were crossing the intersection in the proper manner. You know you didn't. If you weren't aware of it, perhaps you should wait till later in the morning when you have fully awakened before venturing

across the city's highest traffic volume intersection.

Why be so careless and risk an accident, when the police may have to record an "manslaughter and suicide"—the murder of your son and your death by your own foolish action?

The section of West Mable, between Woodward and Pierce, ought to be labeled "The Promenade." It is a glorified crosswalk, made so by the pedestrians who refuse to use the marked walkways at the commonly recognized crossing points.

Many motorists feel while passing through this area that it is like driving across a crowded ballroom floor.

It might be advisable for city officials to consider erecting the installation of chain barriers to prevent or discourage indiscriminate crosswalks, and channel it across at the proper locations.

There is no doubt but that truth eventually will triumph. But that

much sooner if more people would only agree on what is right.

Just who invited Soviet Russia to that original UN planning conference in San Francisco? And why?

Have you ever wondered just what the condition of the Birmingham city commissioners must take before they can be seated at the commission table and thus become eligible to participate in discussing and voting on official city business?

Here it is, as contained in Ch. III, Sec. 31, of the city charter: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States of America and the constitution of this state and endeavor to secure and maintain an honest and efficient administration of the affairs of Birmingham, free from partisan distinction or control, and to perform the duties of the office of (city commissioner) according to the best of my ability."

Every elective or appointed city officer must take this oath. It is

While Congress Fiddles



Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned from Old Files of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background of The Birmingham Of Today.

50 YEARS AGO

April 25, 1902

Sunday are busy days now in Birmingham. Our streets are well thronged all day long with people from Detroit and other points just walking along and seeing things and admiring our village.

The paragraph in The Eccentric last week in regard to cutting corners was to call the attention of people to a careless practice. Many lovely lawns and yards are being spoiled by people who are too lazy to walk an extra five feet to the corner and are wearing paths across carefully tended sod.

Off for the ball season started Howard King this week. He will play with the Lansing club in the state league. We predict a successful season for the team and for Howard.

Miss Mollie Smith is having part of her pleasant home on Saginaw street overhauled. Carpenter Carter is in charge of the job and when completed all will be fine. Miss Mollie also intends to give the house a coat of paint. Finished, it will make a lovely setting for a lovely little lady.

Lou B. Wisner, grand lecturer of Michigan, will visit Birmingham Monday evening, at a special communication Friday evening. A full attendance is requested. Work on the Master Mason degree will be presented.

20 YEARS AGO

April 28, 1932

Plans are being completed for a May Day health conference at the municipal building. Directed by Dr. W. Lloyd Kempf, village health officer, the conference will have all local doctors participating. A similar conference a year ago when 171 children were examined.

The village of Birmingham is hiring a dog catcher—in catch dogs at 50 cents per head—in an effort to rid residents of the nuisance of wandering dogs. Commissioners hope their action will reduce the annual total of ruined gardens.

Birmingham teachers will again be forced to reeve half their

two-week's pay in scrip, L. M. Randall, business manager for the school system said yesterday. He said negotiations were still under way for a payroll loan.

Birmingham Boy Scouts will take part in the jamboree to be held at Camp George on May 14. Troops will compete in several Scout activities with prizes for the winning outfits.

The advantages of being a city, rather than a village, was the topic of C. W. Smazel, assistant secretary of the Michigan Municipal league when he spoke at the Methodist Men's club meeting Friday evening. He recommends both Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills incorporate as cities.

5 YEARS AGO

May 1, 1947

To save crowded conditions for voters, 242 registered names have been taken from precinct 6 and shifted to precinct 5. Miss Irene Hanley, city clerk, said the move was made to keep voters within the "500 to each machine" classification.

Birmingham residents are diving into "trunks and boxes" this week, getting clothing 20 years ago to wear to the "Founders Frolic," the event which will mark the quarter-century period of the Birmingham Community House.

Carl G. Wonnberger of Cranbrook school, has been named president of the Michigan Council of Teachers of English. This is an affiliate of the National Council.

Among the "summer spots" which announce openings this week are the Forest Lake golf club and Walled Lake park. Both have undergone reconditioning during the winter months and are promising a more complete service for patrons.

Harold H. Gasser, 768 Suffield, has been named to the city's recreation board by Mayor Ralph A. Main. He was selected from a list of three candidates presented by the board of education. The five-man board will meet this week to map plans for the coming summer's activities.

HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE

BY ALICE E. MORGAN

Bike Inspection

For the first three Saturday mornings in May lawn areas around the several schools within the city, and the play area near Graefield terrace, will look like a convention headquarters.

As a matter of fact, it will be a convention, of sorts. A safety convention, which will feature certain members of the Birmingham police department, Kiwanis club and a good share of the city's youngsters.

It will be the annual inspection of bicycles, an enterprise sponsored by the Kiwanis, under the direction of Lt. Henry Timm, club member and police officer.

Most of the kids in town will be there—big, little and tiny, and they'll have their pride and joy of the average youngster, in for a "physical."

THE MEN will check brakes, wheels, the condition of the bike frame, steering and the like. They will make sure the vehicle is safe for your boy or girl to ride on the city streets. If there is little riding to be done, they will see to it that lights work properly. They will also inspect the "warning device," be it horn, buzzer or bell.

While at the "lot" each bike will be set up with Scotchite re-treaded tires. This new type is being used this year, new type is more weather resistant and has a greater visibility at night than that former used.

As an additional service, licenses will be issued if needed during the inspection hour. Birmingham

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

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

To the Editor:

At long last, someone has decided to do something about the parking problem in Birmingham. Your recent editorials should stir our city commission to some definite action.

The parking situation is becoming impossible in the city and the commissioners concern themselves with spot on the commission room walls. Good sound spring housecleaning... but let's clear up a housecleaning job which concerns many, many more people. If a large civic parking lot is not planned and constructed soon, merchants in Birmingham are definitely going to lose out to business located on the outskirts of town.

Why don't these merchants join together and do something about it?

I'VE LIVED in Birmingham for many years and never before have I debated whether to drive my car or walk. I often feel that I decidedly save time in walking because one must really play a game of "musical cars" to find a parking place in the downtown area these days.

What's wrong with opening up the whole block of Hamilton for parking space? Someone is going to complain whatever locale is chosen and already these homes are surrounded by business. Let's get on with a decided plan before it's too late.

Why not pave the civic parking ground and forget, for the present,

the paving of residential streets? Certainly city commissioners could meet to more opposition than they have in many of their recent projects.

(Mrs.) ELISE M. GOODE
647 Woodland

To the Editor:

In my book the prize for inconsideration, discourtesy, lack of grey matter and plain stupidity goes to the nit-wit who picks up his fellow-worker daily and blasts his auto horn early in the morning before most of the otherwise peaceful neighborhood has awakened.

Get him elected to Congress, I say—he'll find he had a lot in common down there. We DO have this type—unfortunately—but we shouldn't have to tolerate them—bleat their pointed little heads.

A NEIGHBOR.

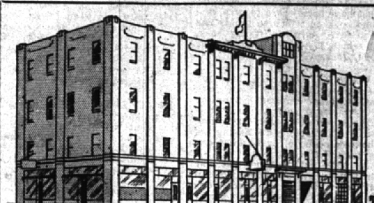
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