BITS OF BIRMINGHAM

So much of the average person's life is filled with the repetition of routine activities. Well? what is wrong with that? Folks who bear everyday responsibilities have little time for glamorous adventure. Routine need not be drudgery.

EVERY WEEK SOMEONE, if not several someones, call The Eccentric or ask of staff members, "Why is the back part of The Eccentric always first, and the first section always last?" This is the answer: In order for The Eccentric to be received in the first mail Thursday mornings, copies must be delivered to the postoffice Wednesday night. If the addresses were placed on the last section to come off the press (section one), it would delay considerably the paper's delivery to the postoffice. So addresses are put on the first section that comes off the press (usually section four). Therefore, the paper must be gathered backwards to have the address on the outside. The Eccentric believes its subscribers would rather have each week's issue at the earliest opportunity and have to spend a couple of seconds rearranging it, than vice versa.

A FORMER resident and native of Birmingham who left here in 1939, Edmund H. Bunyan, was installed as Worshipful Master of Cedar Lodge No. 60, F & AM, at Clarkston Friday evening. Attending from here were John P. MacKay and Leland Bunyan, members of Birmingham Lodge.

MOVING INTO ITS NEW OFFICES in Bloomfield Hills was practically an overnight shift for MacManus, John & Adams, Inc. It originally was believed it would have to be done in stages perhaps over two weeks. But Birmingham resident Ken McQueen, in charge of MJ&S's production, had things so well organized the move was made swiftly. McQueen had every article of furniture tagged for its exact location in the new office. Employees were given a box into which they placed the contents of their desks. Then the movers loaded everything into trucks, merely looked at the identification tag, then placed everything down in its exact new location. When employees reported for work, their box was on top of their desk, already to be emptied into it.

WHENEVER A GROUP of newspapermen gather together, any entertainment they are provided must of necessity be very good. Such was Banjo King Eddie Peabody's performance at Dearborn Motors' press party last week. A good friend of Dearborn Motors President Tom Farrell, Peabody came to Detroit from Houston Texas', Shamrock Hotel, especially for the party. And when Peabody made his exit, the newsmen tried to get him back for an encore with a sustained burst of applause. When a group of newspapermen is so enthusiastic, it had to be good—and it was.

THIS WANDERER constantly is amazed at the utter disregard our Birmingham drivers have for the traffic signals along Hunter boulevard. Not once, but many times, we have seen these motorists stop at a red light, look north and south on Hunter, and then very unconcernedly drive across both lanes. So far all have been lucky . . . neither police officers nor other cars have happened along.

JERE F. DOROUGH, son of Mr. J. T. Dorough, 32262 Beaconsfield, Beverly Hills, has recently been elected vice-president of the Purdue University Student Union. Dorough was graduated from Lyons Township High school, LaGrange, Ill., in 1950, where he was a member of the glee club and the math club. At Purdue he was chairman of physical arrangements for the mock political convention. He is a member of Skull and Crescent, national sophomore activities honorary. Dorough is a junior in mechanical engineering at Purdue and a member of Delta Upsilon social fraternity.

WHAT WITH CONGRESSIONAL investigations, federal gambling licenses, etc., things must be pretty tough in the underworld, believes Birmingham dentist Archie McNaughton. The other night when he got into his car to drive home, he discovered he couldn't clear the moisture off the windshield. Some petty thief had stolen the wiper blades.

THE CONCRETE MASONRY residence of the T. L. Houles, 7448 Franklin court, in Franklin, is one of the homes pictured in a booklet just published by a national cement organization.

LEE A WHITE, public relations director for the Cranbrook Foundation, was one of the five-member team which Monday night initiated the first group of 18 students into the Wayne University chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, national journalism fraternity. White is a past national president of SDX.

"ENGINE CHARLIE" WILSON, in leaving his GM presidency to become Secretary of Defense under Eisenhower, thus becomes the first resident of Oakland county (and Bloomfield township, of course) ever to serve in a U.S. president's cabinet.

DO YOU KNOW that a Birmingham man has just come forth with a revolutionary type of bathtub, made of fibreglas and plastic materials? A tub of his, weighing only 17 pounds, is stronger than one made of iron or steel, which weighs from 180 to 650 pounds. The man is Carl A. Strand, of N. Adams Rd., and he has spent nearly two years, and plenty of dough, in perfecting the tub. Already he has shown it nationally, and now operates two plants to produce it, one in Ashtabula, Ohio, the other at White Sulphur Springs, W. Va. Strand also developed a steel construction joist called Stran-Steel, which is used extensively in the building industry, and was a pioneer in manufacturing and distributing an over-head garage door. Although he retired briefly from business three times, the love to blaze new trails in the adventure of business has sent him back into activity again . . . "guess I wasn't intended to spend my later years in a rocking chair", he smiles when asked why he doesn't take up serious fishin' as a vocation.

A PICTURE AND STORY of the Birmingham Rotary club's recent Armistice Day presentation of its peace memorial to the city will appear in a forthcoming issue of The Rotarian, international publication of Rotary, Karl K. Krueger, the magazine's editor, has informed The Eccentric.

NEWS FROM HOME may be a bit late in arriving at the Antonio Monforte home in Lima, Peru, but in will undoubtedly be welcome. Mrs. Monforte, the former Frances Ritner of Franklin, has been issued a gift subscription to The Eccentric this from her parents, Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Ritner, for Christmas. Incidentally, another far-away subscriber is Dr. John Ormand, now serving in India as a medical missionary. As with all such Christmas gift subscriptions, The Eccentric sends along a nice card telling who is making the gift.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Ex-Board Member Says New Schools Not 'Luxurious'

To the Editor:

A letter appearing in the Peoples Column of Thursday, December 11th, complaining about school taxes and roundly condemning the Board of Education for its expansion program and type of schools recently erected, impels me to challenge some of the statements expressed by this writer.

The views expressed could wrongly influence the opinions of newcomers to our area, in whom I am particularly interested as my work is calling on these newcomers to welcome them to Birmingham. Almost without exception I find that they have chosen this community to take advantage of our unusually fine school system.

FIRST I TAKE exception to being classified as an "unhappy old-timer". My husband and I came to Birmingham 28 years ago with a family of small children, who started in kindergarten and graduated from the High School. After they were grown, I was elected to serve a four year term on the Board of Education.

During this term of service, the new High School was projected, and from a background of first-hand knowledge concerning the construction of that building, I would like to correct the impression that extravagance characterized the decisions of the Board. Architects have a uniform and stated fee, which our architects received.

Birmingham was most fortunate in having in our locality, interested architects known nationally and internationally as men of vision and integrity, authorities on over-all planning so needed in a fast-growing community. Bids were taken at a particularly auspicious time, effecting great economies. Figures are readily available to prove the point that the unusual design is proving less expensive to maintain than any of the other buildings.

THE HIGH SCHOOL cost 85c per cubic foot, and with furnishings 96c per cubic foot, which is almost ridiculously low. It is stream-lined, simple and very functional with absolutely no frills, furbelows, carved stone ornamentation, etc. Most certainly not "flamboyant and blatantly luxurious" as described by the writer. Insurance rates are greatly reduced as there is practically no fire hazard.

The Torry school has outside exits from every room, a feature particularly desirable for little children. The children at Torry love it—airy, light and comfortable and simple in design. They are proud of it and none have been reported as dissatisfied with their home surroundings because they have the features at school which little children need. The beauty of the schools is their newness and simplicity.

THE DRAPERIES for the high school cost $1900.00. The invoices are on file for perusal by anyone interested in seeing them. None of them are lined—none are hand loomed, as stated. They have good design and color. None are draw drapes. They were hung mostly for color effect and to relieve the bareness of large window spaces in a bright way.

Considering the fact that one pair of lined draperies for a large picture window may cost from two to three hundred dollars, this figure seems unbelievably low.

Every effort was made at the time of the recent bond election to get out a full vote. The PTAs published, at their own expense, a very comprehensive brochure, circulating it through every possible channel to stimulate interest and get citizens out to vote. To insinuate that the Board or any small group of voters "pushed through" the authorization to build necessary school facilities is entirely unfair.

WHEN ADJOINING smaller school districts, at the request of the State Superintendent of Schools, were annexed to the Birmingham district, enabling all young people in the area to have the well rounded program that only a large High School can provide, they were voted in by the citizens of each district. Previously their children paid tuition to enter our High School.

When the schools became crowded and tuition pupils could no longer be accepted, it became an educational problem all over the State, and about 500 districts were asked to consolidate into approximately 50, Birmingham annexing those best located geographically to its corporate limits, as transportation problems had to be solved also.

AS EXPANSION was scheduled to go to the west, districts to the west were the first to be annexed. At the time of these annexations, each district assumed full responsibility for their share of the bonded indebtedness, which they had never done before. At the present time 33% of the students in the Birmingham High School reside outside of the corporate limits, and 40% of the operating expense is assumed by them.

After living for 23 years in Birmingham, I am now a resident of Troy Township. Inasmuch as the writer mentioned this area, I would like to say that Troy Township has a brand new high school, quite contemporary in design, which cost well over half a million dollars.

I am told by school authorities here that they consider this only a beginning to the solution of their problem, as they have eight elementary schools feeding this High School. All residents of Troy, including the industrial areas mentioned, pay taxes to this school district.

THE PROBLEM is not a local one—it is state and country-wide. State figures show that in former years from ten to twenty-five thousand children entered Michigan public schools annually. Last year 70,000 were entered. Birmingham had 800 kindergarten children knocking at her doors for admission.

If providing decent and adequate educational opportunities has become a "fetish" of the American people, more power to those of us who choose the children as the objects of our special devotion. We have given them a pretty confused world to straighten out in their generation.

As I see it, our moral obligation is to stand solidly behind our Boards of Education who serve in a selfless way and without any remuneration, the communities in which they live. They welcome constructive criticism based on a konwledge of the facts.

OUR HIGH School has been written up in national educational magazines, architectural magazines, newspapers, as a model and a marvel of accomplishment by our community.

Surely education is the only solution to the complex problems of our time and can we do less than provide the very best for the money that we can get?

MRS. NORMAN LYLE
2675 E. Maple Road

A Near Neighbor Has Kind Words For B'ham Police

To the Editor:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I just wrote to R. W. Moxley, Birmingham Chief of Police.

I thing when a group of men in public service do an outstanding job they should receive a little praise once in a while.

We have only lived in your community a little over a year and the first day I got pinched for speeding on Adams road. However, I also received a nice lecture as to why.

Next, one of our boys lost his wallet in the movie and a cop lent him a nickel to call home for help. There have been a dozen instances and I for one appreciate it. Here is the letter:

"DEAR MR. MOXLEY:

"We live in Bloomfield township just north of East Long Lake road, Birmingham, Route 2, they call it.

"Last Saturday evening, about 6:30, a frantic mother called, because her daughter, age 10, had gone to the movie in Birmingham with our son, age 10, and her husband could not find them to bring them home.

"I guess little girls generally go where they say they are going unless they are with little boys who always say they are going to one movie and inevitably show up at the other.

"I had hardly hung up the phone after trying to reassure the mother when our doorbell rang and our son was delivered by a Birmingham cop. Another officer had taken the little girl home because she lived in the opposite direction.

"NOW I DON'T want to say anything nice—but—I don't know any community anywhere that has as nice a bunch of police officers as Birmingham has. They are kind, considerate, polite and DO THEY DO THEIR DUTY! I sometimes think they not only have radar to control speeding but another gadget that rings a bell and lights a light the second a parking meter expires.

All kidding aside, we are glad we moved to Birmingham and the Birmingham police are one of the reasons we are glad.

Thanks for bringing our boy home, he spent his bus fare treating his girl, I was told.

DEAN H. ROBINSON
3340 High Meadow

Another Taxpayer Protests 'Frills' In School System

To the Editor:

I am in thorough agreement with Mrs. Schjolin's letter printed in last weeks' issue.

For a small, unadorned five-room house, my taxes for the year amount to over $500. Seems like too much in return for hard water, destructive dogs and weeds.

The distinguished school board and its head dig down into the taxpayer's pocket as though there was no bottom. Sure, we need good conscientious teachers who are well paid, but why all the frills while we have only the bare necessities of life?

As Mrs. Schjolin so ably pointed out, why not spread the burden over a laregr area and ease the burden on us who have carried the load for years? The people who voted three million dollars more are likely politicians and non-property owners.

What happened in Washington in the big election should happen right here in Birmingham. Such taxation is cruel and morally wrong!

A frustrated taxpayer for 40 years,
R. K.

Taxpayer Wants Greater Economy In City Schools

To the Editor:

I am a hundred per cent in favor of the write-up in last week's Eccentric, "Taxpayers to Feel Pinch Next Year", by Mrs. H. Schjolin of Cambridge Court. My reply is:

Does the school board have the authority to make a law as follows:

"Whether you are a property owner or not you can vote to improve schools"?

I say the taxpayer pays all the school taxes and should be the only voter to improve schools.

Is it fair for old people to save for their old age and then be compelled to educate other people's children until they have used up all their money and have to end their days in want?

I graduated from Birmingham high school in 1900. I did not have any swimming pools or busses to come and get me and take me home from school like they have today—and what have you?

I received just as good an education as the children get today. It seems an unnecessary expense, to me, the way schools are run on such luxurious lines and I think something should be done about it to economize.

CLARA ELLEN BENEDICT
352 North Woodward

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