



# BITS OF BIRMINGHAM

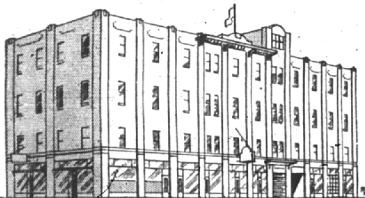
**BIRMINGHAM'S ONE-MAN CRUSADER** against serving meat loaf luncheons at the Community House is Local Michigan Bell Manager Walter Fauser. In fact, whenever he discovers that meat loaf is to be served at Rotary Club luncheons, Fauser tries to get the kitchen to serve him fried eggs or anything else but meat loaf. He laughs at the time he outsmarted himself in this respect. "I was told we were to have meat loaf at Rotary one Monday, so I deliberately skipped lunch and came in just in time for the program. I was to be a guest of Hi-12 that same night, and figured we would get a real meal in the evening. I discovered the Rotary club had been served Swiss steak. At Hi-12, the meat loaf was served. But by that time I was so hungry I ate all of it. And it was good, too."

A **SUITABLE PLAQUE** is to be placed inconspicuously on the city's Peace Memorial at the new high school saying it was given by the B'ham Rotary Club, Club President Clarence Villet disclosed this week. He also said consideration is being given to landscape plantings around the memorial.

DESPITE A TREMENDOUS increase in mechanization, the average farmer still does 60 per cent of his work without benefit of any power other than his own muscles, according to Thomas A. Farrell, president of Dearborn Motors, and a Birmingham resident. "Today, we see more than 4½ million tractors on American farms. And all told, farmers are using more than \$14 billion dollars worth of equipment," Farrell says. "Certainly this is progress. Yet, there is much to be done. "An independent authority on farm management has stated that the average American farmer is actually working for less than \$1.00 an hour.

There can be only one explanation for the American farmer. Power has not yet been applied to enough of the jobs that make up the complex business of farming. The average farmer still does 60 per cent of his work without benefit of any power other than his own muscles."

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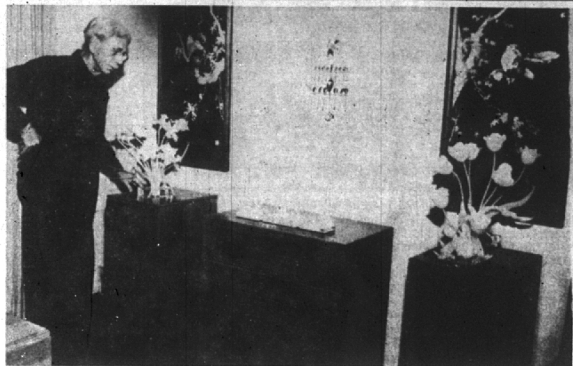
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Alas! we have become a nation that has too much forsaken the quiet reading of good books, be they fiction, adventure, or biography. We do not appear to have the time to devote to a few solid hours of communion with great literature.

# The Birmingham Eccentric

SECTION 2

Wednesday, December 24, 1952



**JOHN SCHURMAN EXAMINES HIS WORK**  
Plastic pieces are unbelievably life-like

## Brooches or Tables —He Has Made Them From Bomber Turrets

By **RUTH ANNE SILBAR**  
Special Writer for The Eccentric

Instead of making plowshares out of swords, John Schurman, of 1646 Northlawn, makes flowers out of bomber gun turrets.

This is a hobby he has been working in plastics for four years, molding, carving, and engraving it into objects of breathtaking beauty and delicacy. In the Schurman home are not only bouquets of frosted plastic flowers, but endless items both practical and decorative made from plastic which Schurman gets at government surplus stores. Most of the plastic material he uses comes from gun turrets of the B-17 bomber—discarded periscopes of LST's.

With the use of his wife's electric roaster, Schurman heats, bends and molds the plexiglass and then cuts it to the shape he desires. The tools he uses are few and consist principally of an electric hand drill, a polish and grinding wheel and a small lathe.

"I don't believe in having a lot of tools for this kind of thing," Schurman said, "because I feel that I would lose originality if I did. It would look too much like a mass production job. I devise most of my own tools and discover various kinds of effects by doing so. I don't even go to see how other people work in plastic, because then I might follow their methods."

THIS HOBBY is a stimulation to Schurman's imagination and involves various kinds of techniques and skills from designing to engineering.

Before he retired five years ago, Schurman was an industrial architect and a member of the firm of Albert Kahn, Inc. He had to use most of the skills in his work that he is now using in his hobby.

In the Schurman living room are two tall plastic lamps on plastic and tables made by Schurman. The bases of the lamps are of clear, solid plastic, decorated with solid plastic sculptured birds. The lamp shades are engraved with beautifully designed panels of birds and flowers within a graceful and intricate scroll border.

THE LAMP shades are backed with sheet aluminum which brings out the design on the panel. The whole effect is one of delicacy and intricacy. No color is used in these lamps, the effect coming from the contrast of light against dark.

The end tables have graceful curved legs and frames (made from the ribs of the gun turret) which hold a plate glass table top. Schurman has designed several tables of this kind, including a coffee table and a small table especially adapted to hold a small radio.

Various kinds of what-nots have also been designed out of the plexiglass by the former architect. While they are interesting in themselves, they do not detract from the treasures they display.

PARTICULARLY, this is true of the spoon holder rack Schurman designed to display Mrs. Schurman's collection of spoons.

On the walls of the Schurman home as well as on the dining room table are bouquets of frosted plastic flowers he has made.

Some bouquets are of iris, or roses, or daffodils or, as on the dining room table, a mixed bouquet.

All are life-sized exact models of the real flowers which Schurman grows in his garden during the growing season. In making the flowers, Schurman carves the plastic petals and leaves and puts the delicate veining of the plant. Using a Bunsen burner, he heats each petal or leaf slightly and shapes and twists it to form the shape he desires.

AFTER HE makes the stems, rounding them out on his grinding wheel, he cements the various parts of the flower together. For the finishing touch, he blows the dust of the plexiglass cuttings into the stems for the pollen.

When Schurman first started working with this modern material, he used color in the various small objects he made.

Now he seldom does, although in a recently completed lamp, the shade of the lamp is resplendent in a design of colored parakeets and greenery in the Audubon manner. It is one of Mrs. Schurman's favorite lamps. Schurman is continually creating new objects for his home and for his friends. He has made fish lures by the dozen which he has given to friends who like to fish. He has made cigarette holders and given them away as gifts.

FOR HIS home besides the floral spray decorations, lamps, tables and what-nots, he has made cigarette cases, book ends, clock cases, paperweights of various kinds and decorative plaques.

On his front lawn is a bird feeding station which the birds seem to like because they are always able to see whether or not Schurman has put food on the plastic feeding trays for them.

It does not disturb Schurman one whit that sparrows are his best customers, for he claims that they are extremely interesting birds.

Of course, Mrs. Schurman has plenty of examples of her husband's handiwork in the form of jewelry. One lovely piece is a pin which looks like a white orchid.

Time will never hang heavy on the hands of the imaginative and creative Schurman. He can work in his beloved garden in the summer, watch and feed his bird friends in the winter, and at all times create and construct something useful and beautiful out of plastic.

News copy submitted early necessarily is given preference over late items. So the "Early Bird" usually gets the space.

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### PLAY IT SAFE!

**Be Careful,  
Be Safe—  
Be Merry!**

Christmas season is supposed to be the most joyous of the year. Let's all make a special effort to keep it so by checking off in your own home the following:

1. Furnace and chimney—Has it been cleaned by a competent service man this year? Does the smoke pipe from the furnace to the chimney have rust spots and holes on the under side? Is all combustible material, wood, paper, furniture and the like a safe distance (at least five feet) from the furnace and smoke pipe?
2. Cigarettes—Always a potential fire hazard—Provide suitable ash trays and have that last smoke before going to bed.
3. Matches—They have heads

but no brains. Keep them away from children.  
4. Gasoline, naphtha, paint remover and other highly flammable liquids have no place in the home. Not a safe home. Keep them outside.

5. ELECTRICAL equipment—Check all worn cords. Use only 15 Amp fuses in the lighting circuit. Purchase new cords and other electrical appliances bearing "National Board of Underwriters" approval.  
6. Ashes—They hold heat and have started fires as long as 48 hours after removal from the furnace. Use nothing except metal containers for ashes and keep these containers away from wood partitions.

7. Fire extinguishers—Have a good approved fire extinguisher handy at all times. Know how to use it and be sure it is recharged or checked at least once a year.

8. Decorating materials—Be especially careful in wrapping and unwrapping Christmas packages. The light tissue papers are highly flammable and even the ash from a cigarette will start a fire that can quickly get out of control. Re-

### High School Sets Basin Street Ball

The annual New Year's Eve dance will be given December 31 from 9:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. at the Birmingham Community house.

The band will be Jerry Comeau's five, whose specialty is jazz, but they have arranged lots of numbers to fit the theme of the Basin Street Ball.

Tuxedos will not be required and free refreshments will be served. There will also be a very mysterious door prize.

Heading the committees are Doug Colwell, general chairman; Dave Gilchrist, publicity; Bob Thalacker, decorations; Bob Appleford, refreshments; and John Campbell, tickets. The dance is presented by the Black and White club.

move this material from the house as quickly as possible when unwrapping presents.  
**PLAY IT SAFE**—an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of ashes. Birmingham Fire Department



THE SPIRES OF FAITH REACH HIGH  
this Christmas

It is good for us, at Christmas, to look through the stained glass of our churches and the vaulted arches of our cathedrals . . . to the temples and mosques of the world . . . Look not for differences, but for likenesses . . . and we will find them . . .

And, finding them, realize the full meaning of Christmas in Good Will to all men . . . There are many nations, but one world . . . Many creeds, but one faith . . . many men, but one God. We value our world only as we value the rights of all nations . . . We respect our faith only as we respect the beliefs of all creeds . . . We will live in peace under God only as we live in Good Will with all men . . . our brothers.

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