

Don't Get Home Fires Burning

Where is a fire in a home most likely to occur? Safest bet is in the cellar or basement—provided there is one.

We have commented from time to time in the past on home fires—why they happen and what can be done to eliminate practically all of them.

And since we are right in the middle of Fire Prevention Week, this is another excellent time to discuss it again.

If just one Birmingham family is spared the tragedy that fire brings—everything from death to loss of family possessions—our words will have been fruitful. Next to a careless automobile accident, an editor least likes to have to report what happened as a result of a carelessly-caused fire. Neither is necessary.

A RECENT STUDY MADE BY an insurance company shows that more dwelling fires originate in the basement than in any other room.

As may be expected, the kitchen comes next, followed by bedrooms. Parlors and living rooms rank fourth, while arrearages, closets, halls and attics as a group come last.

In the basement, a defect in the furnace or other parts of the heating system is the

ranking cause of fires. However, nearly as many blazes start from rubbish heaps, oil-soaked rags, or hot ashes.

Defective or amateur electrical wiring and appliances are responsible for a third group of basement fires.

THE COOKING STOVE is the number one menace in the kitchen and most often starts a blaze with the assistance of a careless cook. Curious children may also start plenty of trouble and tragedy in the kitchen when they are able to reach the family match containers.

Toasters, mixers and other kitchen electrical appliances easily become mechanical assassins when they get out of order, or have frayed cords.

Smoking in bed is the one big reason why bedrooms stand in third place as a location for home fires. An estimated 90 per cent stem from this source.

Thoughtless smokers also start the greatest number of living room fires, either while supposedly wide awake or while dozing peacefully on the divan, or in an easy chair.

Don't forget, however, that thoughtless smokers are bad actors in any room. Each year they are responsible for at least thirty per cent of all home fires.

Academic Gowns Slop Soup

Graduate students at Princeton University, it is reported recently, are up-in-arms (literally and figuratively) about having to wear academic gowns to dinner. These gowns are equipped with long, flowing sleeves, and the students declare that said cloth drags through their soup, mashed potatoes, applesauce, cauliflower, gravy, etc., etc.

But the dean says he won't budge from his demand that they wear the academic

gowns . . . and now what will happen? It seems to us that Princeton, of all institutions of higher learning, ought never to have such a problem.

With Prof. Einstein on its campus, perhaps this learned mathematician may be able to solve the problem. . . for certainly, to date, Emily Post can't.

Personally, we believe the warring students are at least hygienically correct in their stand!

Breach of Freedom

Dr. Marek S. Korowicz slipped out of the hotel rooms of the U. N. Polish delegation recently at 5:15 a.m. in the morning and met with the leader of the anti-communist organization in New York.

Dr. Korowicz is the fourth prominent Polish refugee to escape from the Communists in recent months.

The statement issued by Dr. Korowicz on the day after he fled from Communist tyranny is especially damaging to the Communists.

He stated: "I am very happy to be free in the free world. Life in Poland was a nightmare. Yesterday, for the first time in seven years, I have been able to say

what I truly think."

THE RUSSIANS ARE no longer able to conceal the serious difficulties which beset them in Poland, and perhaps in Czechoslovakia.

It was only recently that a member of the Polish delegation inspecting truck arrangements in Korea refused to board a plane taking him back to Communist territory, and asked asylum in the United States.

Coming a few weeks after this act, the flight of Dr. Korowicz in New York is an emphatic demonstration to the free world that conditions are critical in Poland at the moment.

When the Frost Is on the Pumpkin . . .



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
October 2, 1903
New kids, honestly, what would you think if your mothers should quit their homes immediately after supper every evening and traipse the streets, giggling and laughing until 10 and 11 o'clock at night?

J. Roy Blakelee is the latest businessman to put in a phone and this was made necessary by the continued growth of his business which will probably continue to grow more because he has a phone.

Mrs. Flora Beattie is saving her Woodard avenue house right plumb in two. She will move the rear part along side of the part unremoved and in less than a month will have two pretty homes to rent at popular prices.

On Sept. 23 Francis Havenor was very pleasantly surprised by his little playmates, it being his eleventh birthday. Games were played, refreshments were served and when they were going home they all wishd Francis a happy birthday.

Manager Mitchell of the Telephone company has promised a 60 drop switchboard soon. This is necessity arising from the constantly increasing number of telephones being installed in homes and business places here.

30 YEARS AGO
October 5, 1923
Offices of the village clerk and village treasurer will be closed Thursday afternoon in future. Official sanction on this was given at the Monday meeting of Birmingham village commissioners.

Consideration is being given on the opening of Ann street between Frank and Daines. A positive decision will probably be reached next week. The cost is estimated at \$6,000.

Birmingham's school board has announced the purchase of playground equipment costing in excess of \$1,000. Such equipment

was requested last year by the PTA but since no budget was set up, purchase was delayed.

While the work goes on securing rights-of-way for the wider Woodward project, steam shovels are busy just north of Bloomfield Center preparing the ground. Trees are being removed and other rough work done ready for the major project next spring.

Birmingham's most dangerous intersection, Woodward and Maple, was the scene of another two-car crash-up Tuesday. Both cars were badly damaged but drivers and passengers escaped injury.

15 YEARS AGO
October 6, 1938
Plans are under way for the third annual comedy exhibition of Halloween. The city-wide party has become a regular part of the fall in Birmingham, enjoyed by young and old alike.

State archers will hold their annual meet at the Lincoln-Cranbrook area Sunday, starting at 9:30 a.m. Simulated hunting conditions will prevail with archers moving "animals" as deer, lions, tigers and other big game afield for the expert.

Police are checking bicycles near to issuance of license tags by City Clerk Irene Hanley. Tags purchased from the clerk will be attached to the bicycle at police headquarters.

Congressman George Dondero, in a recent address here, said a strict "hands off" policy should be adopted by the United States as far as the European situation is concerned. He declared the squabbling of other nations had nothing to do with this country.

Special contributions are being sought by the American Red Cross for assistance to the 40,000 persons suffering from the floods, fire and wind storms which struck the eastern coastal states Sept. 21. A fund of \$500,000 is being sought by the national headquarters.

HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE

BY ALICE E. MORGAN

Two of the so-called "women's magazines" in their current issues have been long and loud with wonderful praises for two large cities and what they have done for the kids on Halloween.

The idea they put forth was tried with marvelous success, in a little town we called "home" some 10-15 years ago. The idea was to give the kids a good time at Halloween and to keep them out of trouble. Unlike Birmingham with its parade and parties, the town we lived in wasn't big enough for that sort of thing. Too, the circumstances were entirely different.

There were two factions in that little village—the town kids and the country kids. Centered in the heart of a dairy area, the town kids started a "contest", seemingly to prove which group could be the most cunning.

COME HALLOWEEN and the town kids invaded the country, upsetting wagons, driving tractors into swamps, ruining hundreds of gallons of milk, chasing dairy cattle, meeting up grain stacks and in a few isolated cases, firing fields.

The country kids came to town and the result was equally distressing. They smashed windows in stores, literally pulled gas pumps from their stations, snaked porches of homes, ruined cars and left liberal donations of decaying fruit and vegetables along with decaying cats and other small animals as souvenirs.

Since the country kids outnumbered the town kids and could confine their activities to a much smaller area, the little villages began to cast about for a way to bring the whole thing to a more or less peaceful halt.

The main street was divided. Windows on the north side were allocated to the town kids, windows on the south to the country kids. Merchants stocked up on show card paint and soap, donated to the groups who wanted this window space for displaying their art.

It was announced that businessmen from other communities would judge the work on Halloween, windows would be left painted for a week and prizes would be awarded at the theater.

NATURALLY, the kids wanted their work to survive. With no fuss or conference, they went to work, doing their paintings and drawings and obeying an unwritten gentleman's agreement that no damage would be done in either sector.

Some of the pictures were beautiful. One outstanding thing to come from the country was a drawing of an art teacher by the board of education. Another was a genuine picture of a town kid, dressed for the work and talents of their former foes.

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

Michigan Bell Telephone Co. couldn't have picked a more hectic time than last week to have its new Birmingham manager, Albert H. Warner, take over the local duties of the late Walter Fauser.

For three days last week, the local exchange had just about everyone who knew the least bit about telephone operating mechanics trying to figure out why there wasn't any dial tone at intermittent intervals.

Things started happening Monday morning. When many receivers were picked up around town, there was no dial tone. Thus, the calls would not be placed.

Paul Westerby, chief switchman, and his crew immediately began checking for the trouble.

But there are in the local exchange the staggering total of 144,491,500 connections where two or more wires come together. Of course, only a small percentage of these could be involved in last week's trouble—it had to be some main part of the equipment.

Just when Westerby or his men were nicely started on locating the trouble, it corrected itself and the entire exchange again was functioning properly.

Then blooey! the same thing again—no dial tone.

So Westerby and his gang started in at the point they had previously left off. An hour later—everything started working again.

This on-again-off-again situation continued for three days, with the main equipment being tied up for a total of several hours each day.

Finally the trouble spot was found—it was a faulty condenser in a marker group. A new condenser was put in, and there has

been no trouble since. (A marker group is the apparatus which enables calls to leave the exchange.)

"It looked like Grand Central Station over here as people were kind enough to drop by and tell us 'something' seemed to be wrong," Warner explained.

SPECIAL BULLETIN: Warner called Monday and stated: "It's still with us! It apparently isn't all the fault of that condenser. We've narrowed the trouble down to an hour and a half in the mornings. We're checking now to see if the additional equipment we have put in recently may not be throwing an extra load on this particular marker group. We're doing everything we can, as fast as we can, to correct the situation.

It will be another five weeks before the new Kresge store on West Maple will be ready to open to the public.

Included in its modern decor will be three 4x10-foot photo murals of familiar Birmingham landmarks.

Horace Greeley, one of America's most famous early journalists and founder of the New York Tribune, always insisted that the word "news" was plural.

Once he wired a correspondent, "Are there any news?"

"To which the correspondent replied, "Not a single one."

Whether you consider it "news" or "a new" The Birmingham Eccentric is eager to accept either or both . . . and we are always as close to you as your telephone.

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From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Now that U.S. Senator Joe McCarthy is married, it will be wonderful to watch the possible change that married life may bring to him. Perhaps he will not be so militant in his examination of certain witnesses.

We hope that the Bricker Amendment, limiting the treaty powers of the Presidency, will be added to our U. S. Constitution in 1954. This will prevent actions in the UN, for example, from superseding the will of our own people. Let us keep the United States a sovereign nation, untouched and unchangeable by the majority actions of other governments.

Perhaps it is true that the one book that contains the world's largest collection of short stories is the well known dictionary. Alas! though, how comparatively few people read it.

Rarely will you find two people who agree on a majority of the manifold facets of life and living. Why expect them to? Is it not a basic essential to progress, mentally or technologically, that honest disagreement is the father of improvement?

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Recently we were eating some kidney beans with two other men. One of them sprinkled sugar over his portion, another used vinegar, while the third resorted to salt and pepper. Yet each enjoyed his own recipe. After all, individuals are individualistic!

People do not like to have their idols shattered. This is true whether it relates to a great person or a principle of government. Perhaps the UN would win more support and understanding if its leaders were to admit, openly and often, that its principles are high, but its operators are not too far above low.

Do you realize that in 1900 only 4.5 per cent of the college-age population in Michigan attended college? By 1970 the figure is expected to reach 32 per cent—proof that the opportunity for higher education has vastly improved.

Over the period of 20 years, between 1932 and 1952, the increase in births in Michigan doubled. This statistic offers eloquent proof of why more money is needed to operate more schools in this state. Certainly the student growth right here in the Birmingham area reveals this fact.

Practically all members of Congress are required to act like politicians when they run for election. Alas! too many of them continue in that role after being elected!

So They Say . . .

True D. Morse, Under-Secretary of Agriculture: "People must be able to distinguish the statesman from the demagogue."

Dr. James Elder, Washington State College psychologist: "Smoking in cold weather makes the feet even colder."

RAIN OR SHINE, I SIMPLY FLIP A SWITCH ON MY ELECTRIC CLOTHES DRYER AND MY WASH IS DRY IN MINUTES!

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