

Behind Eccentric's Award Is A Strong Editorial Policy

As you may have read in this newspaper last week, The Eccentric received four 1954 excellence awards in the annual contest conducted by the National Editorial Association. This totals 14 comparable awards won during the past five years.

Quite naturally (and we trust with proper modesty) we are happy to be associated with a newspaper whose policies, and whose community of readers and advertisers, make possible the high level of journalistic efforts we have achieved.

While it is a situation that reflects well upon the talents and efforts of all of us here at The Eccentric, it also reflects splendidly upon the whole atmosphere of Birmingham and contiguous areas who loyally support this community newspaper.

This month, as part of The Eccentric's direct-mail contacts with advertisers, we set forth in a brochure our editorial policy, believing it also may interest you, our Readers, we re-print it for your perusal. It goes as follows:

Your average American newspaper is, of course, a private business enterprise. It is owned by people, employs people, pays taxes, renders a news, editorial and merchandising service to its community. . . . if it doesn't, then it goes the way of all unsuccessful private business.

Fortunately, for The Eccentric and its 85 employees, we are, still safely, a few jumps ahead of the sheriff.

However, a newspaper, because of the nature of its services, has come to be recognized by its readers as a quasi-public institution.

This is because it deals with the entire category of happenings that take place within a community; it publishes a wide variety of articles and stories about the men and women, boys and girls, who populate an area—running all the way from

their dates of birth, their joys and sorrows, to the final obituary.

The newspaper tells them about the activities of their local government, their schools, churches, organizations and a host of other subjects related to their lives. A newspaper, too, must willingly assume the role of leadership in community development, along with people who participate in local projects.

It must be honest in handling the news; it must be as accurate as humanly possible in printing news; it must seek to explain and interpret, in its own editorial columns, its thinking upon a variety of subjects. It must so conduct itself that it wins and holds public confidence. It should ever strive to operate in behalf of the public interest.

We who publish The Eccentric endeavor to meet these qualifications.

We function on the conviction that decency and respect for the rights of others should influence our journalism. We are opposed to the use of sensationalism in our treatment of news.

In brief, we subscribe to the belief that a newspaper is a public trust; though we have title to the equipment and buildings necessary to produce a newspaper in, we are mindful that our readers, really "own The Eccentric" . . . for only through their willingness to accept The Eccentric as a wholesome journalistic influence in this area can it be both a success and a satisfying activity for its owners and employees.

There really is no mystery about the operation of a newspaper.

It is but one of many vocations and professions that engage the time and talent of people.

. . . that's the capsule story of The Eccentric's editorial policy.

To these ends we have been, and always will be, dedicated.

Better Memories Would Beget Better Politicians

If Americans could and would remember the utterances and the performances of past and present high public officials, and be governed at the next election by what they remember, self-governmental processes would improve.

It is because people forget so quickly that politicians can fool them.

Recently Adlai E. Stevenson, defeated by Pres. Eisenhower in 1952, had this to say about the McCarthy-Army hearing: "It was an unwholesome spectacle, detrimental to the nation's dignity and prestige."

Learn to Play Early—Before It Is Too Late!

Sociologists at the University of Chicago have come to the conclusion that it is as hard to learn to play as it is to learn to work. This is one of the conclusions reached by certain Chicago specialists who have been making a three-year study in Florida.

The first report on this study appeared recently in the American Journal of Sociology, which was an issue devoted to the subject of growing old. One of the sociologists, L. C. Michelson, says there is a great difference between leisure time, when one has a job, and when one is retired.

The leisure time, when one is retired, actually loses its appeal as leisure time, since there is no work ahead and, therefore, no contrast making leisure pleasant.

HE POINTS OUT THAT television, rides in the country and hobbies are fine

QUITE RIGHT, MR. STEVENSON . . . but have you forgotten the "spectacles" of graft and corruption that attended the administration of Harry S. Truman? Personally, you haven't; yet you find it convenient "to forget" the mistakes of your own Democratic Party, as you criticize the Republicans.

In this, Sir, you are just like many Republicans who follow the same political behavior.

(As we said at the beginning of this column, if Americans had longer memories, all politicians would have to be fairer and more truthful in asking for votes.)

No longer are these escapes a way to get away from the hustle and bustle of daily living, but they become living itself. If in the mind of the individual concerned, he has some hobby which he considers work, then the situation might be changed entirely.

This latest study, like many earlier ones, indicates that Americans now dedicated to the task of making a living, should spend some time and effort developing worthy hobbies.

All of the research in this field indicates that those who learn to play, while they are working, are better suited for retirement than those who have never taken the time to learn how to spend their leisure time.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Eighteen French premiers have come and gone since the end of World War II . . . which only proves that France's domestic affairs are in a state of great confusion. And this condition exists when in-

ternational matters are so mixed up and dangerous that every free nation needs all the domestic stability it can muster to meet each day's problems. From all we can learn on the subject, the basic problem in France is one of a lack of plain, old-fashioned morality. Too many Frenchmen, of all classes, have acquired the "gimmie" attitude, and are leaning upon the willing need of governmental paternalism for economic survival.

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No Surplus Problem



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 July 1, 1904

Those young men who go to the schoolhouse and spit tobacco juice all over the steps, had better cut out before they are caught. A word to the wise is sufficient."

"The fishing in Wing Lake seems to be better this year than ever, in spite of the fact that it is becoming more popular as a fishing resort. It has been suggested that it might become necessary to stock the lake on account of the number of bass that are taken out, but the supply seems to be inexhaustible."

Mrs. Mary B. Cooper announces to her many friends that she will not be at home Monday next, the 4th of July, as she departed the day previous for Fraser, Macomb county, where all is of "highly dignified" "sleepiness" to avoid the carnage of a Birmingham 4th."

"One day last week the children and grandchildren gathered around Mrs. Viletta White and celebrated the good lady's 90th birthday in a right royal manner. There were four generations present and a beautiful lunch was served. The old lady told a few stories of early Michigan life, and when a dance was proposed Mrs. White took the arm of her granddaughter, Viletta Douglas, and indulged in a two step, much to the surprise of those. They don't all dance at the age of 90."

30 YEARS AGO June 27, 1924

A wedding of extreme local interest was performed when Mrs. Hazel E. Smith, bride, and Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Wendorff became the bride of Richard Lawler, Mrs. Lawler's clerk for several years. Lawler is night patrolman in the village police department.

In a communication from M.A.C. News Service was received the fore part of the week that James Baynes, Linton A. Carter and Leigh Smith, local men, were arrested on Monday, June 16, at

the 65th annual commencement of the Michigan Agricultural College.

With a terrific electrical storm raging outside, more than 150 Birmingham High school alumni greeted old friends and classmates at the third annual reception in the Baldwin auditorium, last Friday evening.

Mrs. Ralph G. Moulthrop of Yorkshire road and Mrs. G. P. Raynald of Tooting Lane and Bonnie Briar were joint hostesses at a farewell dance for Mrs. G. M. Dweley of East Maple avenue held at the Oakland Hills Country club last Saturday evening. After the dance Mrs. Moulthrop entertained the guests at a buffet supper in her home. Mrs. Dew Dweley and her children left Sunday for Southport, Maine, to be gone for the summer.

15 YEARS AGO June 23, 1939

Thirty-four members of the class of 1921 of Baldwin high school held a reunion dinner at Springdale Park on Saturday. Dinner was served in the clubhouse, and a series of events was held and prizes were awarded.

Polar Gas and Oil Company is opening a new branch in Birmingham at the corner of Woodward avenue and Georgia street. The grand opening will be Saturday, when customers will be given two pounds of sugar or a package of cigarettes.

Mrs. Sheldon B. Noble of Birmingham will become the first woman to head St. Dunstan's Guild, following the election of officers by members of the board of directors.

St. James Episcopal church will be the scene of the wedding of Miss Beth Ranney and Richard M. Coons on Friday evening. The popular bride-elect is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford H. Ranney of Adamson avenue in Detroit, formerly of Birmingham, and is widely known here. Mr. Coons is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde M. Coons of Greenwood avenue.

HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE

BY ALICE E. MORGAN

Now that everyone else—or nearly everyone—has had his say about the Birmingham fire department's handling of the Gouper fire, we have a comment.

One question that comes to mind is: Do these people think so little of the department that they believe the men do not do as fine a job as they possibly can?

Remember these men go out, day after day, are your neighbors and mine. Remember they have their own wives and children waiting for them at home. Remember they have the pride of their profession as well as their responsibilities as protectors of your life and property. Remember that some of the men in the department may be the personal friends of the others involved.

CAN YOU rightly think of all these things when you accuse those men of laxity on their jobs? A good share of our time, since July 1, The Eccentric staff and seven years ago, has been spent on the "fire department beat." We have been in daily touch with these fellows and came to know a number of them quite well. We are inclined to that we followed them (at the required distance) on quite a few fires. We've seen them in action and in our humble opinion, they have been doing an outstanding job all down the line.

WE HAVE SEEN these men risk their lives—in one case when one of their own already had died on the job—in protecting the property of their fellow citizens.

These men in the department naturally are the first to object when they are accused of negligence, especially when human lives are at stake.

It's a pretty hard accusation to make, especially in view of the excellent record that our local department has.

Check with the officials there and find out how many fires might have resulted in fatalities had they not been on their toes. Ask them how many times they have, through prompt action, gotten to homes in

ONE THING OR ANOTHER

School district elections are notoriously known for the few persons who vote in them compared to city and state elections (which are nothing to brag about voting-wise, either).

But even at that, it's hours before the school election ballots turn in their precinct tabulations.

What an easier method it would be if school districts could arrange to rent municipal voting machines for a day a year.

See where attempts still are being made to put fluorine in drinking water.

Granted that fluorine may be wonderful for preventing cavities in teeth—but why can't the stuff be packaged and sold and put in drinking water by the householder?

I can't see why municipalities should go into the business of acting as retailer for fluorine manufacturers or salesmen.

No more so than for Parke, Davis & Co. or Upjohn or Squibb & Co. for any of their aspirin tablets or vitamin pills.

And if fluorine is good in drinking water to prevent cavities, wouldn't vitamin A for the eyesight and calcium for good bone structure also be wonderful to put in the water supply?

And then where is this thing going to stop?
 Seems much better not to let it get started.

Practically all of the owners of those lots fronting on E. Maple, in the block immediately west of Coolidge, would like the city to rezone them to business. The zoning now is single family.

In fact, the city has consistently been turning down petitions for such rezoning on the basis that only half of the presently zoned business areas in the city actually is being used for business. So the city sees no need for having more business zones

By George Wm. Averill

for quite a while yet. Besides, that neighborhood overwhelmingly opposes any neighborhood shopping centers. Say the residents, they want to go to the central business section to shop. They don't want any alleged "convenience" right in their area.

ALL THIS BY WAY OF preface to a comment on a situation which took place a week or so ago before the city commission.

Commissioners tentatively were deciding what six city-owned lots (all of them in that controversial eastside block) should be used for if voters approve their sale at the Aug. 3 primary.

City Manager D. C. Ebert held out for their use as residential properties. City Assessor Elmer W. Haack, explaining he was talking as a citizen and not as a city employee, said it was his opinion the lots could best be used for business purposes, especially the three on E. Maple.

Haack explained he owns property in that block, would like to see it rezoned to business.

HE INTIMATED THAT should the city refuse again to make such rezoning, one or more of the property owners will take the argument to court.

At the present time, no one could expect the city to say other than "no" to the idea of rezoning. It is to be remembered the city is involved in defending single residence zoning on a triangle of land north of Maple, between Eton and the railroad.

How the state supreme court, decides that appeal probably may pre-determine what the city's action will be on the block in which Haack's property is located.

From here in Birmingham, it looks like the state court can make a great many citizens happy by overruling the county circuit court's decision that the triangle should be used for business.

The other alternative is to make only a very few Maple frontiers pleased.



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