

If only each of us, aware that even  
day or shall live a loved one, or even  
an acquaintance, would remember this  
and then perform for those in our  
circle of friends, or offer to  
them words of kindness, how our own  
and others' lives would be enriched!

77TH YEAR—NO. 29

# The Birmingham Eccentric

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1954

40 PAGES SECTION ONE

Serving the Citizens of Michigan's Finest Suburban Residential Area



## An Editorial

### Our Original Convictions Are Confirmed

Built upon diligent and thorough efforts over a quarter of a century, the Birmingham fire department has an envied record of its ability, equipment and leadership.

Today our department still has that record, perhaps even a better one, since the public learned last week of the conclusions of the special 3-man board of inquiry which investigated a June 14 tragedy here.

Concluded the board regarding the actions of police and firemen at the Cooper fire at 1189 Brookwood: "... members (of the two city departments) were not guilty of any improper or negligent conduct and that they performed their duties with commendable competence ..."

THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC was not surprised to read the board's conclusion. Nor, do we believe, were many of the residents of this community.

Only four days after the fire, The Eccentric—in a signed statement by Managing Editor George Wm. Averill—gave its analysis of the conflict arising out of neighborhood and spectator criticism that fateful night.

In retrospect, it is remarkable to note how similarly The Eccentric and the board of inquiry reconstructed events that night. ... yet The Eccentric's comment was written 3½ months before the inquiry report, and the inquiry report was based only on facts which were brought out by the 48 witnesses testifying under oath.

BECAUSE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S previous record and The Eccentric's state investigation into the fire, it could not believe the department's proud status could be so in jeopardy as the allegations would have it.

We said so publicly in our June 17 issue ... and declined to become alarmed. We chose rather to let the facts speak for themselves as determined by the board of inquiry.

We believe that this community, too, chose to agree with our conclusions ... and quietly wait.

OUR JUNE 17 COMMENT, under the heading "6-Minute Period Seems Heart of Controversy", said in part:

"The Eccentric seems to have narrowed down the controversy to a six-minute period. ..."

"And in these critical six minutes, these seven men raised three ladders, rescued one man, called back for the sounding of a general alarm, broke windows to let out some of the several hundred degree heat, used two booster hoses and 250 gallons of water to further cool down the bedroom so they could continue their search for possible survivors, then equipped with gas masks and having to grope their way through intense heat and smoke, located the bodies of the three victims.

"Admittedly, emotions ran high that night—and each pounding heartbeat seemed to tick off minutes rather than seconds. In anxious moments such as occurred very early Monday morning.

"It is this reporter's prediction that the board of inquiry will find among the opinion and the emotion the facts that the critical six minutes were well spent ... well spent, indeed."

LAST WEEK THE COMMUNITY was reassured that their fire department "performed their duties with commendable competence."

While that important June 14 event was the occasion for a careful re-appraisal of the department's services, it is to be hoped that in the future the city's confidence will continue to be merited through at least annual inspections and examinations to be made through a civilian board, creation of which has been recommended by the board of inquiry as an additional safety measure.

It is to be preferred that progress and growth not be based upon tragedy, but upon searching self-analysis.

### Swipe by Sweeper Is Duly Noted

When Ray Murray went out Monday morning to drive his car to work, he found a little note tucked under the windshield wiper telling him the vehicle almost had been swept away accidentally during the night.

The operator of the city's street sweeper wrote that he had come a bit too close to the car, parked on W. Brown, and that was why the rear left wheel was bent.

Murray had prepared himself for several days of selling real estate via the phone from his office desk.

### Kiwanis Observes Newspaper Week

Observing National Newspaper Week, George E. Averill, editor and publisher of The Birmingham Eccentric, will be the Oct. 5 speaker for the Birmingham Kiwanis club.

He will speak of the growth of newspapers, their duties to the public and the power and worth of a "free" press.

Subsequent meetings of the month will include the report by Kiwanis club president Clifford Wright, who will tell of the convention at Grand Rapids.

On Oct. 12, the club will honor a local citizen at its annual "Flowers for the Living" program. Ladies will be invited to give.

The Oct. 26 meeting will see the Birmingham club hosts to Key and other Kiwanis clubs from throughout the state. The two groups are planned especially for high school and college students.

### Bloodmobile Date Set by Newcomers

"The trouble with blood," commented a member of the Newcomers club, preparing for the Bloodmobile visit to Birmingham Oct. 20, "is that when it's needed, it's always needed immediately and often in large quantities."

"The trouble with disasters, sickness or accidents is that they strike whenever, wherever and without warning. If our town, or our neighbors were so stricken, most of us wouldn't hesitate a moment in offering our blood for their aid."

"But the trouble with us is that until the moment of crisis is apparent, we don't feel the need for giving blood."

WE DON'T realize that the blood we would receive in emergencies is the blood of the donors on the spot, except in a few old cases. The blood we would receive is the blood which has been donated by some stranger at an earlier date, and held in a blood bank until our need, or that of someone else, arose.

The bloodmobile will be at the Community House from 6:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with a goal of 200 pints.

At the September meeting of the Birmingham Democratic club it was voted to retain the present board of officers until after the November election.

Mrs. Dorothy K. Roosevelt, director, presided over a meeting which featured committee reports covering a two-year period and a discussion of plans to aid the coming campaigns.

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JAN CULLEY AND ROCKY  
Popular Swingin' H pair (Eccentric Photo)

### Junior Horse Show Boosts Polio Fund

"We Ride for Those Who Cannot Walk" has been adopted as the slogan of the Birmingham-Southfield-Bloomfield area's Swingin' H Riding club for the horse show it will present Oct. 3 at the Ivory polo field, 8 Mile and Lahser.

The entire proceeds of the 1 p.m. program will be turned over to the Emergency March of Dimes.

Polio patients have a deep interest to the Swingin' H youngsters, one of whom has been a victim of the disease, with another having had a relative stricken with polio.

THE SUNDAY EVENT will include competitive riding for club members, the square dance on horseback which they have been rehearsing for many weeks and a number of special acts by professional western showmen.

For the past several weeks the club members have been raising "expense" money by selling advertising and getting businessmen's backing for the trophies and ribbons to go to winners.

Club members include Nancy Vogelsang, Don Dawson, Kaki Roberts, Mike Smith, Jan Culley, Sam Reeve, Adrienne Erlandson, Chuck Erlandson, Sally Streby and Kiki Stark.

### Consider 2nd Low Bid On Streets in Quanton

A week's delay in the award of the contract for resurfacing of streets in Quanton Lake Estates was asked by city engineers.

They asked City Engineer L. R. Gare to check further into the qualifications of the second-low bidder, Don Wells, Inc. of Detroit.

Commissioners indicated they were dissatisfied over the performance of the low bidder, Detroit Concrete Products, in constructing the Eton parkway courts.

CONCRETE PRODUCTS bid was \$22,095.75, while Don Wells bid was \$22,554.75.

This low bid was about 16 per cent below city estimates, said Gare. The contract calls for an Oct. 31 completion.

The resurfacing will be the initial step in total surfacing and drainage improvements. The commission has indicated.

Streets involved are Lake Park, Puritan, Pilgrim, Fairfax and Safford, all between Maple and Oak.

### Eastside Fire Hall Awarded B'ham Firm

Birmingham's eastside fire station will be built for \$105,581.53 under contracts awarded this week by the city commission.

It is well within the city's estimated cost of the building, and will leave about a \$20,000 cushion for landscaping, construction of driveways, and other details to complete the station, according to administrative assistant Jack Walker. Total estimated cost is \$125,500.

The principal contract went to the Chidus Construction Co. of Birmingham, which bid \$96,896. A contract for tiling the station, in the amount of \$8,500.58, went to the only bidder, Beland-Stark Brick Co. of Detroit.

The association board approved a \$225,000 bond issue for two new fire stations. The other station—at Chesterfield and W. Maple, already under construction.

The eastside fire hall site is at Adams and Bowers.

### Committee Session Tonight

By GEORGE WM. AVERILL

A marathon closed-door committee session may be in prospect for city commissioners tonight when they meet to discuss:

A proposed off-street parking lot for city commission to be built on business;

A hearing table regarding a proposed municipal parking lot on Pierce street south of Merrill; and

Addition of an ordinance requiring businesses to provide off-street parking facilities.

TONIGHT'S private session, according to Mayor Charles Renslow, is destined primarily as commission to discuss with City Assessor Elmer W. Haack his proposed and complicated assessment formula, by which businesses in the central business district would pay its share of the proposed Pierce lot.

Allegedly agreed to by representatives of SW quadrant businessmen, Haack's formula would give various weights to such considerations as floor areas, present use, distance from lot, etc.

Commissioners several weeks ago determined the necessity of the parking facility. It is presumed that the date of hearing on the assessment rule could be decided upon tonight if the commission agreed that Haack's method, when applied to several actual business properties, seems in the commission's estimation to be fair and equitable.

A MUCH touchier subject is the proposed off-street parking ordinance, which tentatively calls for an expanded present and new business parking areas to meet one square foot of parking space for each square foot of floor area used primarily by the public.

This suggested ordinance, which was discussed some months ago by the city commission after considerable public disagreement over its terms, is considered as an integral part of the proposed ordinance of municipal parking facility.

In hearings before the plan board, officials and businessmen could not agree on whether all, part or none of the present business parking areas should be made to provide parking.

IT IS believed by several local businessmen that the commission's final decision on this particular ordinance will be a decisive one. It is one of the principal keys to whether the city will be faced with a radical revision of its parking laws of inequality.

To require some to provide parking and not others would be discriminating, these property owners have charged.

REOPENING OF W. Maple Seen This Weekend

Opening of the center 22 feet of newly paved and widened Maple, between Linden and Glenhurst, is hoped for Saturday afternoon, according to City Engineer L. R. Gare said.

The side strips probably will be opened for traffic by the end of next week, said Gare.

STRICTLY FRESH

A burglar in Sandwich, Ill., tried a trick wherein he used several sticks of dynamite to blow off a lid of the coffin in which he lay. He fled with bruises, but almost was missed "ham."

In honor of his town, maybe?

If it's the hot air that will come over the radio between now and the November elections could be stored for winter use, the nation's fuel companies would all start bankruptcy proceedings.

Local group of singers in Vancouver, B.C., advertised that their first practice would be held at the

I DON'T HEAR WITHIN

"Hate of Hearing Club Hall." Some should have thought of this happy solution to a painful situation many years ago.

### THIS and THAT By G.R.A.

#### DADDY AND HIS LITTLE GIRL

(Many thoughts have been written about the traffic dangers attending the movement of children on streets and highways. Here is something I have come upon that eloquently fits the subject, written by an unknown author.)

Today my daughter, who is 7 years old, started to school as usual. She wore a dark blue dress with a white collar and had on black shoes and wore blue gloves. Her teacher spanked, whose name is Coet, and she was in the porch and whined his canine bellow in the fully of education as she waved goodbye and started off to the hall of learning.

Tonight we talked about school. She told me about the girl who sits in front of her, the girl with yellow curls, and the boy across the aisle who makes funny faces. She told me about her teacher, who has eyes in the back of her head, and the dress in the school yard, and about the big girl who doesn't believe in Santa Claus.

WE TALKED about a lot of things—tremendously important things, and then we studied spelling, reading, arithmetic—and we bed.

She's back there now—back in the nursery sound asleep, with "Princess Elizabeth" (that's her doll) cuddled in her right arm.

You guys wouldn't hurt her, would you? You see, I'm her daddy. When her doll is broken, when her finger is cut or her head gets bumped, I can fix it—when she starts to school, when she walks across the street, then she's in your hands.

SHES A nice kid. She can run like a deer and dart about like a chipmunk. She likes to ride horses and swim and hike with me on Sunday afternoons. But I can't be with her all the time; I have to work to pay for her clothes and her education. So please help me look out for her. Please drive slowly past the schools and on busy thoroughfares—and please remember that children run from behind parked cars.

Please don't run over my little girl.

There is little question but that many Michigan citizens believe the game of bingo to be a rather harmless form of gambling. That's why this proposition will be on the ballot as a proposed State Constitutional Amendment (See THIS & THAT, Pg. 8, Sec. 1)

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