

Griffith's Devoted Service Will Be Long Remembered

Sometimes you know an event is going to happen—yet when it does, you take it with misgiving, because you really don't want to accept the fact that it finally has taken place.

Such is the community's reaction, we believe, to the announcement the other day from Birmingham Fire Chief Vern W. Griffith that come next August 27, he will retire from the fire department after 32 years, 24 of them as chief.

Having come to know the fire chief quite well, we cannot picture him haying his activity up with his fire hat.

HE JUST DOESN'T SEEM like that kind of a guy.

It's been our privilege to spend many hours talking about the Birmingham fire department and learning a lot of its background through these visits.

While the chief said little concerning his own part in the development of the department, it has been easy to spot. He's worked with the men rather than having them work for him. We've seen him tugging a wrench, hot, dirty and uncomfortable in cramped quarters.

We've seen his pride in departmental accomplishments and heard him say, "The fellows are working together. It's a good department."

ON FIRES, WE'VE SEEN the chief step in front of one of his men and enter the building first, the smoke swirling about his white coat. Somehow he seems to be everywhere, checking conditions of the blaze and equipment and the welfare of his men.

We've seen him leave a burning building, red-eyed and gagging, but secure in his own mind that no person was within the circle of the flames.

We've seen him grow sad and depressed at any loss of life, and watched him stand by his department when criticism fell around it. Through it all, the chief ex-

pressed confidence in his men, their judgment and their performance of their duty.

WE'VE SEEN THE CHIEF register his disappointment when the city temporarily rejected his plans for more adequate protection of residents and their properties. We've seen him express his satisfaction when a reversal of their opinion assured an expanded department.

The final decision always found the department ready for the move, with plans prepared, men being trained, the new system organized and ready to function.

TODAY WE SEE HIM bowing out of the official picture, the bigger department nearly an accomplished fact. In his own words, he feels this is the time to leave, when the "new" department is ready to stand on its own feet, the "new" officers ready to take over his duties.

If we have judged him correctly, we know that while his resignation is official and his retirement upon him, the heart of Vern Griffith will remain with the department he has served so faithfully since 1927.

He himself can relax next fall at his "second home" near Lapeer, confident that the community he served so well and so long never will forget him.

HE AND HIS MEN over the years have built a fine reputation, which now is being entrusted to others. Under the new chief, Park Smith, himself a veteran of 19 years with the department, the community is confident this wonderful reputation will be closely protected.

Birmingham and its area has been extremely fortunate because Vern Griffith chose to live and work here. Were public servants as loyal, as conscientious, as devoted and as trustworthy to their municipal tasks as Vern Griffith has been, then most of our remaining municipal problems would only be little ones.

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

The old saying, "Talk is cheap" is what Americans hope will apply to the approaching "Big Four" talk in Europe. In the past, every time our nation talked with other nation's leaders Uncle Sam has committed himself to more spending.

A clique of Michigan State Senators wants to strip the Conservation Dept. of some of its discretionary powers... powers given it by previous legislators. Some of the objections are that the Dept. is wrong in allowing the one-day "any deer" plan, wherein it is the Dept.'s endeavor to keep the herds down to the ability of grazing to keep them alive, especially during the winters. Some holler about the manner in which fish are planted, arguing that "favoritism" is shown. Then there are gripes about the handling of the grouse problem, etc., etc. Indeed, there's hardly anything more controversial in State government than "conservation".

Just why the U.S. Navy acquired a 60-year supply of canned hamburger is difficult to imagine. Anyway, expect the Navy to reply with a lot of baloney.

As we write this, Michigan's Legislature, dominated by Republicans, refuses to provide money needed to add space to the State's overflowing prisons. There probably is nothing this State needs to do more, in the broad interests of humanity, than to expand its prisons and mental institutions. If the average voter could visit some of these overcrowded buildings he would join in a march on the State Capitol. Gov. Williams is only doing the fair and decent thing by asking for the money to do this long-neglected job.

An optimist can be described as a person who takes the pictures in seed catalogues at face value.

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The "Ordinary" Americans

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NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, THEY SAY, YOU CAN'T PLEASE ALL THE PEOPLE ALL THE TIME— BUT THE COMMERCIAL ARTIST ALMOST HAS TO— EVERYBODY HE DEALS WITH SEEMS TO BE AN ART CRITIC—



THIS ARTIST IS WORKING LATE— THE WIFE AND KIDS HAVE GONE TO BED— BUT THE JOB HAS TO BE FINISHED BY MORNING. (ALL COMMERCIAL ART JOBS ARE RUSH JOBS— IT'S A RULE!)

IN SPITE OF THE DIFFICULTIES, SOME OF THE MOST WONDERFUL ART IS BEING TURNED OUT BY THOSE SUPERB CRAFTSMEN OF BRUSH AND PEN.

Turn of the Tide?



HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE

By ALICE E. MORGAN

Currently we are considering ourselves among Birmingham's favored persons.

The past few months have brought us into direct contact with some of Birmingham's "older citizens" and a most wonderful group they are.

We have talked with a number of them and been enchanted by the charm they carry over from another generation.

More, we are fascinated by the outlook they have, the interest life holds for them and the wide range of activities they are enjoying.

We can remember, when we were a little girl, that it was almost an awe to whisper when anyone revealed that "mama (or papa) is past seventy!"

THESE OLD people, deprived by age of their former active lives, sat calmly waiting for the sands to run out. They spent their winters by the stove or radiator and their summers moving from porch to porch to keep in the shade.

Now and then a really daring soul ventured forth to make a garden or even visit relatives a few miles away.

Today, in Birmingham, these older citizens are gay and as lively as crickets. They think nothing of solo jaunts to the south or west for the winter, and happily take off for northern resorts during the hot summer months.

At home they are busy, often leaving their sons and daughters behind as they follow hobby trails.

MANY of them meet together at the Community House for work and social activities. They do all kinds of sewing and knitting for the poor and the ill. To expand on a passion is an experience one long remembers.

Conversation is fast and fascinating.

These men and women are aware of all the world events, are up to date on style, science and the like. They're sharp and happy.

Others we have talked to are spending their hours sewing and knitting on their own projects. One lady has a "hobby" of knitting afghans for hospitalized veterans. Some make toys or repair broken ones, for children in homes or whose parents cannot buy new ones.

THIS WEEK we feature a lady whose hobby gives her hours of work and joy which is passed along to others as she makes gifts from her African violet collection. Her eyes sparkle as she talks about her hobby.

Many of our older citizens have gardening as a hobby and spend long hours in their vegetable and flower plots.

Some, turning to painting to occupy winter hours, some are writing.

One of the one we know best, is "past 21" and up to her ears in housework every day. She's happy maintaining a home and asks nothing more of life than to see us happy.

THERE ARE hundreds more like her.

One of the growing awareness in this country of proper provision for the older citizen, it just seems that Birmingham may well place itself in the class of being an example community. We've never seen a happier group of older people anywhere.

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

May 28, 1915

Charles Dennis of Houston, Texas, is home in Birmingham for an extended visit with his mother, Mrs. C. McStay. Tuesday of this week closely following his arrival his two horses and a Spitz dog.

Both equines are of the Smart Set, and the dog is Spitz all over.

Mrs. N. T. Shaw and children, Master Harold and Miss Helen, are having a royal visit with relatives over in the King's land, Ontario. Meanwhile the doctor is nearly disconsolate and his face lengthens daily.

Miss Emline M. Mitchell celebrated her tenth birthday anniversary by a theater party at the Lyceum, Detroit, Wednesday and further keeps up the celebration with a birthday party Saturday next.

30 YEARS AGO

May 22, 1925

For the first time in the history of Boy Scout life in Birmingham, a court of honor was held Wednesday evening and seven boys received their first class pins. They were Leland Gunn, Pennock Wollaston, Walter Guthrie, Ivan Haack, James Winborn, Gerold Uptegraff and Floyd Daugherty.

Albert Guthrie, son of Mr. and Mrs. Marion Guthrie of South Woodward avenue, was elected to the presidency of the local H-Y at a meeting Wednesday.

Charles G. Reynolds, five-month old son of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Reynolds of Lincoln avenue, was one of the prize winners in the letter babies show held last week at the Pontiac City hospital.

15 YEARS AGO

May 23, 1910

Dr. Augustus W. Ives, 1088 Southfield, is "utterly mystified" by the first time in Saginaw county of a small kit bearing his name in a wrecked automobile. The kit contained a hypodermic needle and morphine. Dr. Ives, who hasn't practiced since 1923, cannot remember ever holding the container he told the Eccentric.

William A. MacLeod, June 1938 graduate of Baldwin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. Carr, 18105 Kurova avenue, received his corporal's warrant in the National Guard last Monday night.

Last Saturday, Birmingham dedicated its new post office; a week from Friday, on May 31st, it is expected that the new \$155,000 structure will be open for business.

ONE THING OR ANOTHER

By George Wm. Averill

Some people have scoffed at the "Michigan Weeks" activities which emphasize the importance and variety of products, people and places in the Wolverine state.

I can only speak for myself, but in the two "Michigan Weeks" held so far, I have learned quite a bit more about Michigan as a result of this special promotion.

There are 7 million of us Michiganders— I know of no better way for us to get to know our state and to understand each other better.

If Birmingham's mayor pro tem, Jim Allen, ever is in the vicinity of Tustin, Mich., chances are he will drive past the little town hall to see how his pine tree is thriving.

Tustin townspeople had him plant it there last week as part of his activities as exchange mayor during "Michigan Week."

Pedometer tests show the average Michigan housewife in a year walks more than 2,500 miles, equivalent to hoofing it from Detroit to San Antonio with a side trip to New York City thrown in.

Seems to me that this New York City side trip consists primarily of too many walks to the back fence.

The few waste paper containers now on corners in the Birmingham business section look so lonesome. It

would be nice if they could be joined by quite a few more. Too, it might help the cleanliness of the downtown area.

Fifty large city school districts (over 10,000 pop.), which constitute only 1.1 per cent of the total school districts in Michigan, last year educated 573,591 students, or 48.82 per cent of all students in the state.

Educational authorities thus are questioning the sense of maintaining 4,532 school districts when better than 80 per cent of them have shown a total decline in the number of students enrolled.

What a difference a way makes.

Politicians have their different ways of expressing themselves.

For instance, like the letters received by the city of Birmingham last week from Senator Bill Bloomfield and Rep. Dick Van Dusen.

Both were in reply to resolutions passed by the city endorsing two legislative proposals.

Said Bloomfield: "Senate Bill 1280 has been presented to the Governor for his signature and Senate Bill 1352 is still in the committee on taxation..."

Here's the way Van Dusen put it: "Senate Bill 1352 is dead and Senate Bill 1280 has passed both chambers and is on the governor's desk awaiting signature."

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