

Off-Street Parking Demands Can Ruin Values

"Just how far does the city of Birmingham expect to go in the effort to bring about a perfect state of off-street parking here?" a local business property owner commented to several others last week.

"I believe in off-street parking, and think Birmingham already has gone a considerable distance in this respect," he continued. "However, a currently discussed notion to amend the Zoning Ordinance, requiring a business to provide its own square foot of parking space for every foot of its business area is, in my opinion, not only impractical, but confiscatory."

"Why should a business be required, for example, to provide a square foot of parking space for every square foot of its non-public floor space? For its store room, washroom, or space used for the operation of light mechanical equipment?"

"THE PRESENT ORDINANCE requires off-street parking space to equal the space now used by the public in a business structure. People who own normal small business lots are most concerned about this. The city, too, has a stake in the fullest use of a lot for business purposes; the more the improvement, the greater the tax return to the city treasury."

Those favoring the proposed change argue that some businessmen, when seeking a building permit, state that they will use only a certain space for the public. They

are required to provide, under the present ordinance, a foot of off-street parking for each foot of public space use.

Later on, it is reported, the business has changed the location of partitions, with more space allotted to the public—yet with no additional off-street parking space available.

IT SEEMS TO US that this less frequent problem can be met by requiring a business to furnish a "performance bond" which will be forfeited in case a violation of the ordinance ensues.

This, it seems to us, would not work a hardship on certain types of business which, when their buildings are erected, will allow them maximum value of the land for building construction and use.

Any law, or ordinance that assumes, arbitrarily, that a citizen's word is without value in truth, is contrary to American juridical philosophy. In this light, how can a single formula penalty ordinance be legislated against the honest use of property, whether it be business or residential?

Any proposed change in the present Zoning Ordinance, many believe, should be attended by sufficient public discussion in advance of final commission action. Fortunately, this is the general rule in Birmingham.

Foes of Atom Plants Want to Get at 'em

You frequently, of late, have read news stories about the opposition of some segments of union labor leaders toward the building of an atomic plant down near Monroe.

The labor boys argue that the thing won't be safe—might blow up and endanger hundreds of thousands of lives.

Walter Cislser, head of the group that is building the plant, produces many ex-

amples who say there is no danger.

THEN THERE ARE THOSE who will tell you that certain Socialist-minded union boys oppose the plant because it is to be privately operated. Seems, so the story goes, that they want the government to build and operate it.

Sounds like a live wire issue, doesn't it?

Realize You Are On U.S. Payroll?

"Taxpayer's Dollar", a publication of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, passes on this definition of a taxpayer—"... a person who doesn't have to pass a Civil Service test to work for the government."

That's more than a good gag. A man with two dependents who earns \$80 a week must work 4.9 weeks to meet his tax bill. If he has no dependents, he has to work

8.2 weeks. And, of course, the tax rates rise with almost bullet-like rapidity as incomes rise—and the amount of time a man has to work for the government rises with them.

So, in this fashion, we're all government workers. And we have to do a great deal more work on behalf of government than most of us realize.

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

Lincoln's birthday for 1957 has come and gone. Many speeches, with Lincoln's life as the theme, have been made again at banquets all over the country. The humble and honest character of Abe has been extolled plentifully. Wonder how many lives will permanently be improved because of this birthday celebration. Its greatest impact, we presume, will be made upon open-minded and idealistic youth.

U. S. Senator Knowland, of California, continues to keep his fingers crossed regarding the UN's effectiveness in settling international strife. In this respect he is performing a patriotic service... for certainly there is value in being a constructive critic.

Should an unfriendly nation drop a nuclear bomb on Detroit, it is estimated that its destruction would stop in the vicinity of the 14 Mile road across Oakland county. Thus the remainder of the county is expected to become the place where all who survived would come to. They number about three millions. In the light of this

incredible danger, Americans can be expected to co-operate with their top leaders to prevent the triggering of a suicidal war.

According to statistics recently released by oysters, your chance to find a pearl is two in a million. And that's a lot of stews to mess around with, too.

So They Say...

Adolphe Menjou, listing well-dressed men of California: "Each of these men stands out as an oasis in an otherwise bleak landscape of fading elegance on the part of the average American male."

Carlos P. Romulo, Brig. General, Philippine Ambassador to the United States: "The peoples of Asia must recognize that their only hope to remain free depends on their joining hands with those people dedicated to the defense of human liberty."

The Birmingham Eccentric

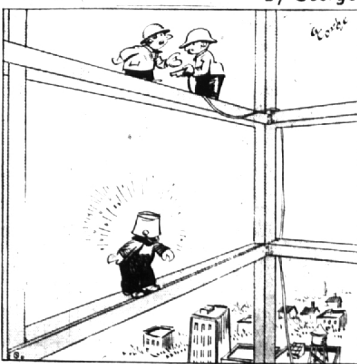
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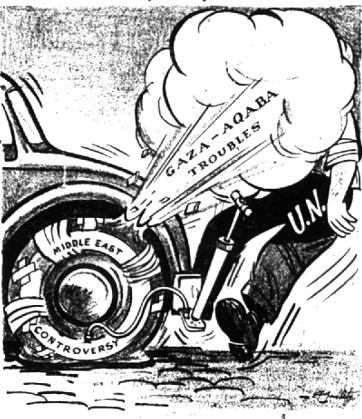
Ticklers



"I don't see why the boss got so sore when I accidentally dropped that old rivet pal; after all, we wear helmets!"

By George

If the Pump Only Holds Out



NATURE NOW

By Lydia King Frehse
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Trees May Retain Ancient Habits

On late winter walks in a woodlot or on drives along a country road we often note the presence of broadleaf trees which retain a goodly share of their leaves. To this observer the habit seems most prevalent among young oaks.

The leaf serves as the food-making factory of the plant. On deciduous trees it completes its work with winter's approaching and drops to the ground. The growth process is temporarily arrested and the tree remains in a dormant state until the new leaves appear in the spring. Coniferous trees also lose their leaves, but with a few exceptions (e.g., yew, spruce and tamarac) this is a regular and conspicuous change.

For a clue toward explaining these leaf-habits, one must look far into the geologic history of trees. The earliest conifer stems from ancestors growing in the Coal age swamps. They had already reached their climax some 150 million years ago in mid-Mesozoic times.

Having survived the vicissitudes of waxy varnishing soils and climates for all these millennia their present day descendants yet bear testimony to their adaptive ways by their thick bark, restrictive branching habits, their moisture conserving needle-like leaves and their presence in widely diverse habitats.

By contrast our deciduous trees are mere infants. As members of our most recent plant group, the angiosperms, they had their beginnings in mid-Mesozoic times but did not reach their oldest sudden climax until the beginning of our modern period, about 60 million years ago.

An estimated 40 million years preceding the advent of our modern period, there arose in Cretaceous times one of the most critical periods in the history of the vegetable kingdom. It was during this time that the flowering plants (angiosperms) won their race with

the conifers (gymnosperms) until today our world is one dominated by flowering plants instead of conifers.

SINCE IT IS the former which supply us with the major portion of our life's food, comfort and beauty, we cannot estimate the importance of this major transformation. It was the triumph of the more efficient seed enclosed in its protected ovary over the primitive naked seed of the conifer.

These deductions are made from the fossil record. Some 100 million years ago on Ilesoo island off the west coast of Greenland (which then had a semi-tropical climate) there grew a large flora of flowering plants including early tree species of oak, sycamore, magnolia and laurel.

WITH THIS ANCIENT lineage in mind, paleobotanists have theorized that the earliest broad leaf trees growing in a warm climate with no drastic changes probably all had the evergreen habit and shed their leaves gradually throughout the year.

This habit is still followed by our tulip poplar, which although bare in winter, sheds throughout the summer, and by the laurel, magnolia and live oak families of modern period, about 60 million years ago.

This leads us to the theory that the oaks have never quite lost their evergreen tendencies. The layer of cork cells which in the average tree shuts off the food supply of the leaf causing it to fall, does not always develop and the leaves remain drying on the tree throughout the winter.

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
March 1, 1907

"Hurrah for John Bedlow, of Bedlow, 'Hip! Hip! Hurrah!' The Southfield members of the Bloomfield, Troy and Southfield Hunting Club, were most hospitably cared for, last Thursday, by Mr. and Mrs. Bedlow, who invited the boys down, for a good time all the afternoon and evening. During the afternoon, blue rock and rifle shooting were indulged in..."

"One of the choir girls caused quite a commotion at the St. James church, last Sunday, by fainting during song service. Nothing serious, but the excitement was intense while it lasted..."

"If you should happen to notice shortcomings in this week's issue of this great moral engine, please remember that the head type setter, Miss Olive Denison, is enjoying a severe attack of The La-Grippy-Grip, enough the fair victim says, to last until next Christmas..."

30 YEARS AGO
February 24, 1927

"Showing at the Strand Theater was 'Scarlet Letter' with Dorothy Gish, and 'The King in 'Tilts of Kentucky'..."

"Mrs. Charles J. Shain was re-elected president of the Community House..."

"The Princess Elizabeth, baby daughter of the Duke and Duchess of York, is being cared for by her grandparents, the King and Queen of England, while her parents are on their Australian tour..."

15 YEARS AGO
February 26, 1942

"Few meetings in the history of Birmingham schools have been as eventful as that Tuesday night when these important steps were taken: (1) The creation of a new central junior high school in the Barnum school building was authorized, to replace the separate junior highs now in existence. (2) An effort was made to get the City Commission to aid the school district in extracting itself from an approaching financial crisis. (3) All senior high students must take physical education courses. (4) The ban on hiring married teachers was rescinded..."

"This suburban community of homes and gardens is to become even more garden-minded as the war goes on, with an emphasis on vegetables, it appeared this week type setter, Miss Olive Denison, is enjoying a severe attack of The La-Grippy-Grip, enough the fair victim says, to last until next Christmas..."

Playing at the Birmingham theatre was "The Man Who Came to Dinner" with Hette Davis, Ann Sheridan and Monty Woolley.

"THE OLD TIMER"
A friend is someone who walks in when the rest of the world has walked out."

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

"Come the revolution", and the boys are wont to say, I wouldn't object to becoming commissar of the anti-billboard section of the bureau of streets and highways.

It's not because I want to eliminate a competitive form of advertising. It's just that I would like to do away with what to me is an objectionable phase of that advertising.

This phase is the one under which billboards seemingly are used to mar many scenic spots along our U.S. highways.

WHY WED' EVEN HAVE a sponsor for "old Faithful" geyser in Yellowstone National park if the government would only permit billboard space along side it!

However, I'd not go so far as the Birmingham city commission is considering—banning of all new billboards anywhere in the city.

But controlled use, yes. So, I'm pleased to note that the Union Oil Co., a west coast firm, has cancelled all its outdoor advertising, effective immediately. This after 27 years use of billboards.

BOARD CHAIRMAN REESE H. TAYLOR said two factors caused this change. "First was the traffic hazard, which a great many experts have indicated billboards tend to increase," said Taylor. "Second is an apparent and growing resentment on the part of many people and residential communities to obscuring our natural beauties with this type of advertising."

"As a company serving the motoring needs of the public, it did not make good sense for us to continue to use an advertising method which was apparently becoming offensive to many of our customers and prospects and which, in the opinion of experts, represented a hazard to them."

FOR SURVIVAL, IT MIGHT not be a bad idea for billboard companies to adopt some sort of trade-win code of good sign location principles. Similar to those the newspaper, radio, and TV industries have regarding use of their mediums. It would make a much nicer ending to the story about "Beauty and the Billboards."

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