

Not enough church-goers realize the heavy demands they make on their spiritual leaders... demands that these leaders unceasingly exemplify the lofty ideals they profess from the pulpit. Religious leaders always have had tremendous obstacles to overcome in their efforts to fit wings to owls.

BOTH YEAR—NO. 15

# The Birmingham Eccentric

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 1957  
40 PAGES

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

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SECTION A

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## Kirk Fire Damage May Hit \$1 Million



POINTING OUT the damage to a neighbor whose residence adjoins the Kirk in the Hills, construction Superintendent Robert Peden surveyed the still smoldering edifice at 5 p.m. the day after the fire. Dark spots in windows indicate where firemen broke glass to reach flames. At right is the Kirk minister's son, David DeWandt, resting after joining in the clean-up work in the undercroft.

## To Replace Imported Features

By JEAN DAY  
It is expected to take about two months before full extent of the damage to Kirk-in-the-Hills Presbyterian church will be tabulated, members of the board of trustees learned at an extended meeting Saturday afternoon.

They met with architects, representatives of the Edwin S. George Foundation and with the Rev. Dr. Harold C. DeWandt, minister of the church at 1340 W. Long Lake road.  
A full investigation of hidden damages, such as steel roof girders twisted by the heat in the fire last Thursday, is expected to reveal damages totaling \$1,000,000. Stones cracked with the heat and broken windows also are being checked by appraisers.

DR. DEWANT said this week that such features as the hand-hewn beams of oak imported from England will be replaced with the Kirk-in-the-Hills "will be as resilient and lovely as originally planned."  
There is a possibility that the entire roof may have to be removed and replaced. The undercroft was beginning to check damages.

The church was protected by a fire insurance policy which is increasing as construction progressed.

AN ELECTRONIC organ now being used for services in the undercroft was damaged by fire and smoke, but an \$80,000 organ ordered for the sanctuary had not been installed.

The fire, which began in the tower of the church and extensively damaged the roof, set back completion date for the structure at least a year and a half, according to the estimate of Robert Peden, construction superintendent. Original plans were to have the first services in the sanctuary this Christmas. Peden said the sanctuary now probably will not be completed until June, 1959.

Until September, church services are being held in the gymnasium of the high school. There will be a single Sunday service at 10:30 a.m.

DR. DEWANT pointed out to his congregation that the "spaciousness of the auditorium will accommodate the entire worshipping community with real ease as an added feature in consolidated services."

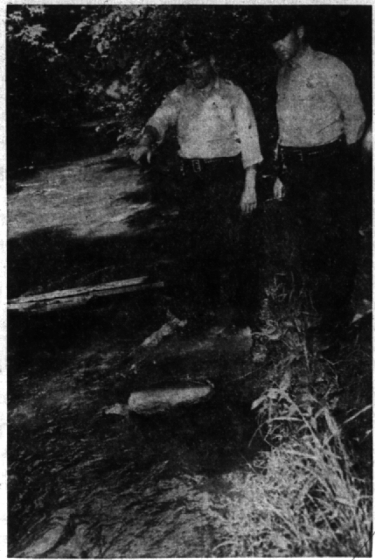
Previously, two services were held each Sunday in the church undercroft.  
Cause of the fire, which was the second in a series of fires in the department since it was founded in 1892, is being investigated by the Birmingham Fire Department.

RALPH HEMMERLY, Bloomfield township fire chief, said the general feeling is that church roof with its 168-foot spire had been struck by lightning although they are unable to find evidence where it hit.  
Questioned whether his department had been hampered by lack of an aerial ladder to fight the blaze, Hemmerly said he felt the aerial ladder should have been "an earthly good" as firemen could not get close enough to fight the fire because of the construction scaffolding.

In fact, he said, a ladder truck was standing by but could not be used.

CHURCH TRUSTEES, noting that there are lightning arrears on the building, have studied several theories on its origins. At Saturday's meeting, fundamental changes in design to prevent recurrence of the disaster were considered.  
Mr. DeWandt's simple explanation that "God hasn't seen his way clear to divest its origin" was most acceptable. Last Tuesday had taken church elders through the building for the first time to view progress. Last Tuesday which is to be the most beautiful in Michigan and one of the most beautiful in the country.

BOATS—MOTORS—SUPPLIES  
1265 & Woodward, MI 7-1215



AS BIRMINGHAM POLICE stood guard Sunday over the spot where the body of Mrs. Lucille George, of 997 Henrietta, Birmingham, was found, Patrolman Gordon Baker points out to Patrolman James R. Cochran the point at which her body lay when discovered by two boys.

## Police Investigate 2 Women's Deaths

Under circumstances that aroused the curiosity of the community, two Birmingham women died this week.

They are Mrs. Lucille Hesse, George, 68, of 997 Henrietta, and Mrs. Grace LaBonty Brown, 54, of 2043 Yorkville.

Hundreds of passing churchgoers saw the body of Mrs. George being removed from the Rouge river side point near Harmon and Woodward avenues where it was found about 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

CALLED TO THE scene by police, the coroner, Dr. J. Donald Green, later ruled the drowning death a suicide.  
Police said there was no evidence of foul play and no bruises or cuts to indicate a fall. On the shore beside the shallow point where her body lay face down were the woman's glasses, a hat and purse.

The discovery was made by two 15-year-old youths, Bill Phillips, of 1047 Bannaville, and a companion, Dave York. They told police they had decided to take a walk up the river after they finished playing ball in Booth park.

A STEEP, HEAVILY WOODED incline at the spot where the body was discovered rises to the sidewalk on the west side of Woodward avenue, at a point near the Henrietta street residence where she lives with her daughter and son-in-law about 1:30 a.m. She had said she was going for a walk.

LAPONTE IDENTIFIED the body at the site. He told police Mrs. George had been nervous and despondent lately because of eye trouble. She had come to Birmingham from Saginaw only a month before she died. The wife of the late Paul L. George, for the past ten years she had divided her time between her daughter in Birmingham and two daughters in Saginaw. Funeral services were held Wednesday in Saginaw. Arrangements were made by the funeral home.

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## Birmingham High To Graduate 418

### Minister, Humorist Is Speaker

A record class of 418 seniors is being graduated at 10 a.m. today at a commencement program at Birmingham high school.

They will hear the Rev. Laurence H. Hall, British-American humorist, give the commencement address. Mr. Hall is rector of St. Paul's Episcopal church, East Cleveland, Ohio, and a nationally prominent speaker.

A member of a famous English theatrical family, he chose the ministry instead of the stage, and since 1930 has served churches in New York, Cincinnati, and Cleveland.

PRINCIPAL ROSS A. Wagner will present the class for graduation, and Superintendent of Schools Dwight B. Ireland will award diplomas.

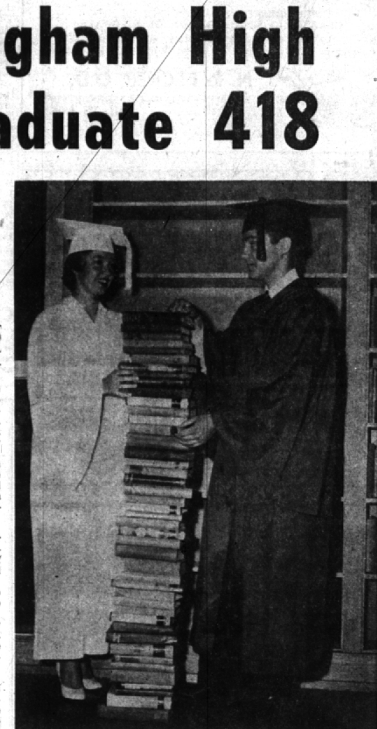
Wagner estimated that 70 to 75 percent of the seniors will go to college.

At baccalaureate services Sunday in the high school gym, the Rev. Dr. W. Glenn Harris spoke to the graduates on "Aspire to Greatness."

DR. HARRIS SPOKE for less than twelve minutes in the unacceptably warm gymnasium. He listed the qualities that are common to all great men. They know who they are, they are realistic, they use what they have, and they know God, Dr. Harris summed it up.

Birmingham high school's graduate list includes Barbara Abbott, a child of Adams, Karen Lee Alpers, Harry P. Altick, Carl Wilhelm Andeer, Judith Anderson, Cheri Anderson, Virginia Elise Backus, P. Archer, Virginia Elise Backus.

(Continued on Page 1-D)



NOW THAT THE last high school textbook has been closed by Birmingham high school graduates Sue Polhemus and Mike Patterson, the two stack their books on end to demonstrate what a lot they've been through in their four years at the school. Sue, who lives at 28515 Franklin, Franklin, and Mike, of 50499 S. Greenbrier, Southfield township, are members of the largest class of Birmingham high school seniors, being graduated today.

## This and That

by George R. Averill

To most laymen, the scientific dispute over whether or not continued H-Bomb tests will threaten the safety of mankind is very confusing. Learned minds on this subject do not agree on the imminent danger. So what is the answer? A very simple one, revealed centuries ago on the shores of Galilee... similarly from the lips of many wise men and women, many of them of other religions, too. The answer stems from the all-encompassing protection within the whole meaning of LOVE. (And LOVE is a substance of man's best and spiritual self; this substance, when properly applied to the materialistic facets of living will dissolve and cause to disappear the mammothian human drive that spill blood in international strife—not to overlook domestic evils.)

Amiel, great Swiss philosopher, said, "to know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom, a most difficult chapter in the great art of living." Billy Graham certainly is laying down the law of Biblical rectitude in his New York evangelistic meetings. He mentions by name most of the bad, evil and nasty things many persons think, say and do. What a challenge to other churchmen in the New York area when Billy concludes his activities there.

Just before his 70th birthday a previously miserly businessman gave 10,000 dollars to charity. "It's a sort of religious experience," he explained, "a sort of insurance for eternity." An

## East Maple Detour To Be Posted Monday

Motorists traveling East Maple will find themselves using a six-week detour around the Adams-to-Hunter portion, starting Monday.

The route will be: Adams to Bowers, Bowers to Woodward, Woodward to Maple.

It will be clearly marked, said City Engineer Grover Serenbetz.

Starting Monday, the street will be temporarily closed to traffic through, said Serenbetz.

During the first of July, when the paving contractor moves in, it will be blocked at all times until the street is finished, he said. To assist traffic movements during the Maple repaving and widening...

## Girl Testifies In Murder Case

Charged with murder in the first degree, James Dixon Shepherd, 36, was bound over for arraignment at 1:30 p.m. Monday in Oakland county circuit court.

Oakland County Prosecutor Fred Zieman said after the examination Wednesday morning before Judge John J. Gaffin in Birmingham municipal court that Shepherd's trial would probably not be scheduled until September.

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IN CROSS EXAMINATION, Pence repeatedly asked witnesses their impressions of Shepherd's condition when they saw him immediately after the stabbing. Sgt. Glenn Foltz, first policeman on the scene, described Shepherd as being in a daze. Moxley said in his opinion Shepherd was under the influence of liquor, but admitted under cross-examination that he had seen few men under the influence of drugs. Reports on chemical analysis of contents pumped from Shepherd's stomach later have not been received.

Admitted into the record was a statement Moxley took from Shepherd after the stabbing. It is reported he had taken tranquilizing pills and remembered nothing about the crime until he saw the body of his school teacher bride of only a few months lying on the floor.

Moxley stated that Shepherd told him before he made the formal statement that Mrs. Shepherd had kicked him in the groin, and that he nearly blacked out. The next thing Shepherd remembered, according to Moxley, was seeing his wife's body.

## Pick Chas. Adams as Vice-Chairman Of UF Drive Here

Appointment of Charles F. Adams, 6139 Dakota Circle, Wing Lake, vice chairman of the United Foundation's Birmingham-Bloomfield-Franklin region, was announced today by W. T. LaRue, region chairman.

Adams, vice president and executive assistant to the president of MacManus, John & Adams, Inc., will be responsible for helping LaRue, also of Birmingham, and merchandising manager of Cadillac Motor Car Division, direct the overall activities of this fall's UF fund-raising campaign.

Active with the United Foundation for several years, Mr. Adams was on the UF special events committee in Detroit in addition to his new appointment. During his tenure he devoted considerable attention to Junior Achievement activities and previously was a member of the executive committee of the Birmingham YMCA.

## Burgum's Letter Makes It Official

Possibilities for appointment to Birmingham's plan board are being deliberated this week by city commissioners.

The officially received Monday night William H. Burgum's letter stating that his business prevents him from being considered for re-appointment. He has served since 1951.

In noting Burgum's letter, Mayor William Roberts stated: "We're sorry to lose him. He's done a wonderful job."

Chairman Bennett Root has just been elected to the Birmingham school board. He is one of a group of two new planners who must be discovered.

## Hills Schools Join Fee-less Few

Parents of Bloomfield Hills high school students will receive a welcome bit of pocketbook relief this fall as Junior will no longer have to hit Dad for \$2 for lab fees, nor will Sis need homemaking class fees.

Upon recommendation of Superintendent Eugene L. Johnson, Bloomfield Hills board of education voted Monday to abolish class fees, becoming one of a few districts in the United States to operate without them. Eliminated are fees for chemistry, physics, typing, homemaking, and gymnasium lockers \$3 fees for shop, and \$1.25 fees for art.

All makes of inner spring mattresses... ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY... 6, 7, 8-A