

## His Place Will Be Hard to Fill

In the recent passing of Harold H. Gasser, the Birmingham community lost its most ardent sports booster.

To other local sports-minded persons, Mr. Gasser's interest in local athletic programs and their athletes was well-known. His activities were not so apparent to those whose interests did not bring them close to the athletic activities of the Birmingham area.

His love and affection for the young people in the various sports played here had to be expressed. This expression was in the form of Mr. Gasser's assistance and encouragement to the young athletes. He performed this both from a material and an intellectual standpoint.

A LISTING OF SOME of his primary accomplishments shows the importance he gave to the young athlete:

An ex-baseball star at Michigan State University, he was so interested in his alma mater that his activities resulted in his election as president of MSU's national alumni association.

## He Is a Very Kind Highwayman

A highwayman stuck up a hard-working citizen.

The citizen said: "I was on my way to town for groceries. Now my wife and children must go hungry until next pay day."

The highwayman handed him some small change with the remark: "We both must live."

"You are very kind," said the citizen. They shook hands and parted. Returning home with some dry bread and a small soup bone, the citizen told his good wife of the kind highwayman.

They were very grateful to him and hoped that whenever they were robbed they would be given aid. And so it happened again and again.

He was one of the founders of the Birmingham little league football program, which now encompasses nearly three hundred boys ages 9 thru 12.

He served on the city's recreation commission in its early years.

He was a member of the Birmingham high school athletic board.

HE WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS of the Birmingham Sideline Quarterbacks club, which devotes itself to the promotion of better and stronger athletic programs locally.

In days when school board transportation was unavailable, he used to drive team members in his own car.

It was not unusual for him to dig into his pocket for such as items of equipment when he felt it would enable team members, singly or individually, to better perform athletically.

The community will have a most difficult task to find anyone who can fill the void he has left.

pened again and again.

IN TIME, THE KIND highwayman got weary of hiding out from the law and decided to run for public office where the pickings would be as good, if not better, but he would have honor and renown.

The robber had a big smile and made a great campaign about the thieves in Government who never did anything for the poor people.

His chief platform plank was: "I believe the people know better how to spend their own money than the Government does. I promise that I will always hand back some of your tax money." He was elected!

## From The Eccentric's Point of View ...

A University of Michigan professor of entomology asserts that "the poet's statement that the female of the species is more deadly than the male" is certainly true of mosquitoes. He, Dr. Roland L. Fischer, states that the male mosquito is harmless, content merely in taking nectar from flowers. His wife, at the same time, is making life miserable for fishermen, gardeners, and any others who are out-of-doors during each year's mosquito days.

Oakland County Republicans have moved their central office from Pontiac to Birmingham. "It is more central," state the GOP leaders. (To people ... or money?)

A posthumous citation award by the U. S. Post Office Dept. to the late Chris Bailey, for many years a Birmingham postal carrier, is announced. To all who worked with him or knew him, Chris was a sincere, hard worker, faithful to every requirement of employee loyalty. His last three years here were lived through, with smiles and good humor, though he suffered from a malignant condition that brought him physical and mental hardship. Chris,

through his counsel and guidance of younger postal employees here, won their respect and admiration. His name, picture and the eulogistic citation could serve a good purpose if, framed, it was hung in the local post office's lobby, for this and future generations to read.

Queen Elizabeth, while in Washington as a White House guest, visited briefly a nearby super-market. She was amazed at the variety of food and other goods displayed. Her husband was, too. Maybe they'll praise the idea back in England ... and this aid that merchandising-backward land to "go modern".

Michigan State Dept. of Agriculture announces currently that marked progress to eliminate the Japanese beetle has been made. Only 183 of the pests were captured this year from the Detroit area ... which previously had shown the existence of many of these tree killers. Let's tip our civic hats to these agricultural experts who, like the loyal and able members of a modern fire department, work like beavers (not like some politicians) for the public good.

## The Last Straw



## NATURE NOW

by Lydia King Frehse  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

## State Ranks Third In Peppermint Crop

Now we come once more to the fullness of our harvest time when the fruits and grains of the earth are garnered. These not only feed man and all that is alive; they also provide many plant-by-products such as flavorings, perfumes and medicines.

Your scribe recently observed the harvesting of peppermint, one of Michigan's unusual crops. Its capital centers around Grant, Mich., in Newaygo County where it vies as a staple crop with the not so fragrant onion.

HERE WE SAW fifteen farmers currently harvesting 1,000 acres of this plant, several varieties of which grow principally on muck and sandy loam soils. In the United States the state of Washington leads in production with northern Indiana and southern and western Michigan next in turn. Our own state has some 10,000 acres devoted to this unusual crop.

The farmer plants his mint rows using stollens or runners from established stock or he may set out young plants. The growth is vigorous and persistent and is nourished by fleshy root-stalks which when established are difficult to eradicate.

BY THE END of the second season the plants have spread to cover the ground like any meadow crop. Weeds are first controlled by row cultivation but when the mint is established this work must be done by hand. For best results fields are re-planted on an average of every three years.

Peppermint has many enemies among them rust and verticillium wilt. Both of these are caused by microscopic fungi whose kind are arch enemies of many other plants. The fragrant peppermint oil of

commerce is found in the leaf glands. Harvest time begins when the plants have attained their maximum growth and in Michigan may extend from September into November.

AFTER CUTTING and partial drying in the field the oil is distilled by passing pressurized steam through great tube bags with the harvested plants. The resulting water and oil is then cooled in condensers. Collected in suitable receivers, the oil floats on the surface while the heavier water settles to the bottom.

To see these peppermint "still" in operation is an interesting experience but the farmer is motivated by the current price of five dollars per pound. An average yield of 40 pounds per acre makes this a profitable crop.

Two is produced the popular peppermint oil of commerce which is used in medicines, for flavoring and in the manufacture of perfumes and soaps. Sixty times as much candy and chewing gum are flavored with mint as with wintergreen, the next most popular plant flavoring.

SEVERAL VARIETIES of peppermint (Mentha piperita), are grown commercially, each selected for a particular habitat. The plants reach a height of from one to three feet, their opposite leaves and lavender tubular-shaped flowers as characteristic of their family as is the square stem.

To this group of generally aromatic plants also belong many weeds such as heal-all, bergamot, catnip, nettle, pennyroyal and motherwort. Our common salvia is one of the showiest of the cultivated mints and our herb jars are filled with numerous members of this family in good standing in the kitchen.

All in all we should be the poorer without the versatile mints which sweeten our summer gardens and lend a lingering fragrance to many a secret haunt along meadow, stream and woodland.

## ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

To what degree has new housing construction kept pace with economic growth in Birmingham? How does the local home-building rate compare with that in other communities?

With the returns all in, tabulations have just been issued by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics on the number of new, non-farm dwelling units authorized in the past year. Nearly 7,000 localities across the country are listed.

In Birmingham, the amount of home building was proportionately higher than in the United States as a whole. The 158 dwelling units begun or authorized locally were equivalent to a rate of 0.5 per 1,000 population. Public housing is not included.

THIS WAS ABOVE the national rate of 5.5 new units per 1,000 people.

The report shows that it also was above the North Central States rate, 5.0 per 1,000.

Throughout the nation, home building declined in the year. The 1,120,200 housing units represented a drop of 18 percent from 1955. Only one state, Florida, came up with an improvement. Nevada had the biggest dip, 43 percent.

IN BIRMINGHAM, in line with this general trend, there was a drop. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows a total of 158 units locally in 1956 as against 225 in the prior year.

The failure of the nation's home-building industry to move forward in step with most others is viewed as an anomaly. Its sharp decline occurred in the midst of general prosperity.

Some explain it as being due to a temporary saturation of the market but most experts, who feel that the demand for housing is still strong, differ.

## Two Hurt in Troy Auto Collision

TROY—Gertrude Hearn, 32, the night of Oct. 24 when her Thompson car swerved over 740 Owensdale, Troy, and Robert cars collided on Rochester road.

Thompson, 38, 140 Dakota, Clav. Thompson was ticketed for driving without due regard to traffic while a collision.

The other reason usually offered for the recession is tight money. Although some deny this, most builders go along with the opinion. They note that the drop coincided with the first move by the Federal Reserve to tighten money.

LITTLE DOUBT APPEARS to exist in any circle, however, that a big boom in housing is but a few years off. The Senate Housing Subcommittee states that there will be a need of 2,000,000 new houses a year in the 1960's, when our big population growth is due.

Birmingham's amount of this new home-building will continue to decline. If any significant population gain is forthcoming, it will be because of multiple housing—new terraces and apartments.

Bloomfield township, Troy and the proposed cities of Westwood Village and Southfield will continue among the metropolitan Detroit leaders in new home construction.

THEIR RATE OF GROWTH, which has been high in the past decade, should go even higher in the next few years.

Lack of municipal services—sewers and water—has been holding back considerable areas from development. But with the construction of the Evergreen Interceptor, lateral sewers will be available to new developments. The South Oakland water authority is completing details for supplying additional amounts of water to Southfield.

The anticipated acceleration of new home building in the townships and new cities soon will bring up these problems: traffic, road conditions, recreation, police, fire and assorted others.

Such is the way we are supplied with work for our tomorrows.

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## FOR THE BIRMINGHAM AREA'S BETTERMENT, THE ECCENTRIC URGES:

- Improvement of Birmingham's Parks and Recreation Facilities
- More Streets Permanently Improved Cleaner Birmingham Streets
- Make 14 Mile and 16 Mile Roads Improved Trunkline Arteries
- Continuation of Best Possible Types of Area's Subdivision Growth
- Construct Big Evergreen Interceptor Sewage Outlet for Entire Area
- Development of Necessary Offstreet Parking to Accommodate Shopping Public

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GEORGE E. AVERILL  
Editor and Publisher

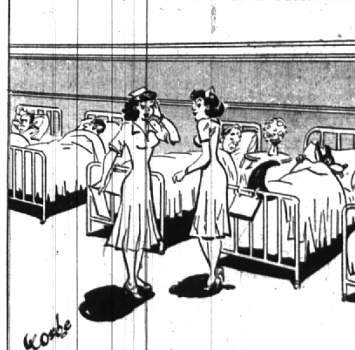
PAUL NEAL AVERILL  
Business Manager

GEORGE WM. AVERILL  
Managing Editor

GERALD E. JEHLE  
Advertising Manager

## Ticklers

By George



"I've been told we have a wolf in this ward!"

## 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  
November 1, 1907  
"The Traphagen cemetery in Holly township is to be vacated, and the poor fellows who were supposed to enter eternal rest quarter of a century and more ago, will move again."

"Increased cost of materials and cost of living has caused Birmingham blacksmiths to take notice, and now the price of horse-shoeing and tire-setting is on a par with butter and eggs."

"Pontiac doctors now charge mileage for their country patients—an addition of 50 cents per mile being added to the regular price per trip, which has also been boosted."

30 YEARS AGO  
November 3, 1927  
"The Birmingham Eccentric will issue a daily newspaper during Prosperity week. The Eccentric feels that the extra service to people of Birmingham is a necessity in view of the fact that Prosperity Week will be the largest event in the history of the village and that everyone will derive a direct benefit from it."

"Despite the fact that doorbells in Birmingham had a severe workout, that the streets were overrun with various sorts of apertions, and that a small crowd of bold, bad bandits were taken to the police station for a more or less severe lecturing by the officers after a street light had been broken, Birmingham emerged from the Halloween festivities of Monday unscathed."

"Brick work of the new Quanton School, at Chesterfield and Oak streets, will start this week, following the laying of the floor

within the last few days. Work on the new \$250,000 building has been proceeding rapidly because of the good weather."

15 YEARS AGO  
October 29, 1922  
"Goblins and witches will fit through Birmingham streets Saturday night when the youth of the City gather 'round again for the 8th annual Halloween celebration."

"Imagine some of our well-known coffee drinkers getting along on one cup a day! Some people need at least two cups in the morning before they know what day it is."

J. H. Hill, returning from Washington, says that the May flower hotel served coffee by the pot to customers, and that there seemed to be no shortage in the stores there."

"Chewing gum is harder to buy nowadays—yes, people are trying to hoard that, too, buying a half dozen packages at a time. When the candy salesman calls, A. J. Bodine says he no longer lists what he wants, but, instead, asks what he can get. That will be the practice in a great many lines until the war is over."

"Success is a ladder which cannot be climbed with your hands in your pockets!"