Readers Comment on New School

Parking Meter Revenues Drop

Going over Police Chief Ralph W. Moxley's report that $1370 in nickels had been plunked into city parking meters in one July week, Birmingham city commissioners Monday night asked Moxley about new all-day parking meter locations.

Moxley said parking revenues had dropped about $20 in the week since 74 all-day meters were transferred from lot 1 to the city's three other lots. Some all-day parkers were now using the other lots, Moxley said.

The $1370 was taken in by city meters during the week July 11-18, according to Moxley's quarterly parking meter survey. The police chief said July revenues were below July, 1957, and that the major reduction was in shopper parking, "due to present business conditions."

B'ham 4-H Girls Capture Prizes At County Fair

Thirteen members of the suburbanite 4-H club of Birmingham won prizes in competition at last week's Oakland county 4-H fair in Pontiac.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Russell Pickering, the group boasted a perfect record of 10 blue ribbons in as many entries in the clothing division.

First place winners were Janet Adams, Diane Barber, Carol Brodie, Sharon Brodie, Linda Doffer, Judy Eastburn, Linda Haack, Jean Horton, Sue Koneke and Lois Saylor.

Foods division prizewinners were Janet Adams, Carol and Sharon Brodie, Linda Haack, Sue Koneke and Priscilla and Sarah Snyder. Beverly Adams and Sarah Snyder won photography awards.

An adult 4-H group, the Bloomfield extension group, won second place recognition for its exhibit on kitchen utensil storage.

Represents B'ham

Representing Birmingham junior achievers at an Aug. 17-22 conference at Indiana University will be Hene Mae Dorey, 18, of 559 E. Southlawn. Selection of delegates was made on teenager's JA accomplishments.

Position

(Contined from Page 5-D)

mingham high school principal since he came to Birmingham 15 years ago. Prior to that, he taught chemistry, mathematics, and English as well as heading debates and directing dramatics at several schools in Ohio.

Following somewhat in her father's footsteps Becky, who is a member of Future Teachers association, hopes to become an elementary grade teacher.

An only child, Becky will soon join her parents in moving from their present home at 1605 Webster to their new home on Dorchester road.

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Facts

(Continued from Page 1A)

struction are $100,000 and $146,000, respectively. Cost of the site survey was $2,000 and test borings $1,000.

All these items total $4,800,000, as per architect's estimates. As previously stated, some may be less when bids are in and accepted.

This total figure, then, represents the estimated cost of the school, to house a maximum of 1,500 students, to be reached in 1961. The actual anticipated Sept. 1959 enrollment, (when the school will be ready for occupancy) will be 1,250, according to Supt. Ireland.

BASED ON AN enrollment of 1,500 students, the per student cost of the entire junior-senior high school project amounts to an estimated $3,200. To provide for an additional 500 students, bringing it up to 1961's enrollment of 2,000, add $186,000 for construction of ten new classrooms. This, then, would reduce the per student cost to $2,707.

The previously constructed Birmingham high school, to house 1845 students, cost $3,850 per student. It was erected in 1950, with additions made in 1953-54-55. Admittedly, costs were some less then, but information furnished The Eccentric today reveals that costs are down as much as 25 per cent from recent highs, due to craft trades' employers cutting costs in order to keep their basic organizations together.

Related only to the cost of the enclosed building which houses all phases of the school except outdoor athletics, $3,286,000, the cost is $2,190 per student. This figure, of course, cannot be accepted as the real cost to the taxpayers; they must foot the bills for every item in any project, whether inside or outside buildings.

Figuring classroom costs, without taking into consideration all the related study halls, library, special science, art, and collateral rooms is unrealistic. So, to adjust this method of determining classroom costs, the school authorities consider the 28 classrooms as averaging 900 sq. ft. each; adding up the square feet in other educational rooms both large and small (but excluding the cafeteria, boiler room, corridors, toilets, administration offices and maintenance rooms) and dividing by 900 square feet, resulted in using the equivalent of 158 classrooms to be divided into the total project cost or $30,379 per room. However, dividing the building cost alone by 158 comes up with an average of $20,759 per classroom. The national average is $20,000 per classroom. By using the above method, useable square feet of library or classroom is considered equally costwise.

The present Birmingham high school at (Lincoln and Cranbrook roads) square foot cost was $13.75 for construction only. The proposed high school sq. ft. cost is estimated at $15.50. This reflects the increase in construction costs in the interim, states Dr. Ireland.

USING ANOTHER formula by excluding the spaces and the costs of all non-educational areas, and counting each room as one, regardless of size, the equivalent number of classroom spaces totals 75. Dividing 75 into the total building costs of $3,286,000 results in a per classroom cost of $43,813.

Realistically, of course, this per classroom cost should be divided into the over-all project cost of $3,800,000, which gives $64,000 per classroom.

However, it should be remembered that, in the adding of future classrooms, the cost of each will be much less, due to the fact that the numerous collateral facilities for a 1500-student school will not cost as much as the original per classroom figures given here.

The present Birmingham high school per square foot cost was $13.75. Classroom cost was $46,000 per room. Dr. Ireland reports that on April 15, 1956, the Ann Arbor Board of Education stated its per square foot cost of construction was $17.71.

IN ANSWER TO our question for details of the space usage percentages of the 212,000 sq. ft. in the buildings for various branches of study, the following data was provided by the architects:

ACADEMIC: (classrooms, study halls) 24.3%.

SPECIAL CLASSROOMS: (includes commercial, home-making, arts & crafts, shop & drafting, printing, journalism classroom and laboratory, music, speech, radio & stage) 18.3%.

SPORTS: (includes so-called indoor-outdoor pool) 17.7%.

ADMINISTRATION & MAINTENANCE AREAS: 6.7%.

MISCELLANEOUS: (includes cafeteria, kitchen, corridors, entrances, toilets and storage) 33%.

The above percentages, remember, cover only the uses of the buildings; outdoor athletic facilities are excluded from these figures.

Another important thing to remember in analyzing the cost of a school's classrooms (the same relates to a commercial building or a home) one necessarily must take into consideration the costs of every other building facility, whether educational or utilitarian, because classrooms alone do not constitute the whole modern school facility.

TO TEACH, MAINLY, the traditional "three R's", a school building would cost a great deal less. It is up to the individual taxpayers, through collective action, to determine whether they want all the so-called "extras" (some of them spoken of as "frills") that result in additional school costs, with necessary higher taxes to pay for them.

Supt. Ireland has often said that ". . . we who operate the local schools, who determine official policies, merely respond to the curricular demands made upon us by the men and women who support our public schools".

During the past 10 years voters in the Birmingham public school district have voted for school bond issues totalling $22,200,000. The dates and amounts are: $3,100,000 on Nov. 7, 1949; $3,300,000 on Nov. 17, 1952; $3,500,000 on June 14, 1954; $5,500,000 on June 13, 1955; and $6,800,000 on June 10, 1957. Most of this has been spent on new buildings, additions to existing buildings, sites, etc.

TO OUR QUESTION: "When do you expect to ask the school district's taxpayers for approval of another bond issue, and what do you expect it will be?", the answer from Ireland stated: "The date of a bond issue depends entirely on the growth in the school district. The Board of Education has tried to take care of growth in two-year periods. However, current growth trends have fallen off to the point that it looks as if the two-year cycle will be broken. Need will determine the amount of construction to be included in the next program. Need is directly related to growth".

"How much unused bond issue funds will you have after paying for this new junior-senior high school?" was another question we asked. The answer is: "This question is difficult to answer because it is impossible to predict future bidding or to anticipate the use of the contingency funds. It is estimated that all costs on the new school will run to $4,800,000. The Westchester Elementary School, service building, rehabilitation of Baldwin, and the present high school drainage may take the remaining funds in the bond issue."

(NOTE: In next week's Eccentric we will present information relating to the school district's academic and athletic activities and policies. We do suggest, however, that you clip this issue's published data for future reference.)

Million Dollar Palaces . . . Closed in Summer

To the Editor:

I accuse the Birmingham board of education of shortchanging the taxpayers of this community and the citizens of tomorrow when it denies them the right to a summer school education.

A friend of mine recently informed me it was necessary for her son to attend summer school in Pontiac. After verifying this with the Birmingham board of education I found it to be the incredible truth that there are no summer school classes available in the Birmingham school system!

ISN'T THIS RATHER shocking in view of the boastful article in last week's Eccentric describing luxurious sport accommodations such as tennis courts, football fields and an enormous swimming pool with bleacher space to accommodate 2,000 spectators in the new Junior-Senior high school?

Just how long must we continue to support country clubs instead of schools? I want my tax dollar to educate the children, not to make Johnny Weismullers out of them. Haven't we had enough of this unnatural emphasis on sports which are social rather than athletic? How about educating them?

IF OUR NEIGHBORS in Pontiac, Clawson, Berkley, Highland Park, etc., can keep their schools open in summer why can't we? Doesn't Dr. Ireland consider it worthwhile to open up our million dollar palaces for summer education to students who may desire education?

Just why does our School Board subordinate learning to sport programs? I think most taxpayers are getting sick and tired of courses in baton-twirling, social graces, etc. and want a return to good old-fashioned learning.

HOW ABOUT IT, Dr. Ireland, are you going to let them down? And when will students be given the privilege of using our costly and fabulous edifices of "learning" in the summer if they so desire? Perhaps their extreme and modern design renders these buildings useless in hot weather. Is that the case, Doctor?

A LIFE-LONG RESIDENT

Faces Larceny Charge in '59 Car Photo Theft

BLOOMFIELD HILLS — A 25-year-old bakery delivery man faces a charge of larceny from a building in the theft of a photograph of the 1959 Dodge from a studio here.

James Crain of Pontiac, employe of a Birmingham doughnut shop, is scheduled to appear in circuit court in Pontiac Tuesday. He waived examination when arraigned in justice court here Monday.

Bloomfield police say Crain allegedly stole a photograph of the auto from New Center Studios, 70 E. Long Lake, Aug. 1. He attempted to extort as much as $3,500 from Charles Carson of Huntington Woods, owner of the firm, by threatening to turn the picture over to General Motors Corp.

POLICE WERE staked out last Thursday night when Crain picked up the money at a secluded spot in Bloomfield township.

His license number was taken by officers and the man was arrested the following morning at the Birmingham shop where he worked.

Police believe the man took the picture while delivering coffee and doughnuts to the studio.

Bloomfield Has Second Traffic Death of 1958

BLOOMFIELD — Bloomfield township recorded its second traffic death of 1958 last weekend.

A 29-year-old Detroit man, John Armstrong, died early Sunday in St. Joseph Mercy hospital, Pontiac, following a two-car collision at 1:30 a.m. Saturday at Square Lake and Telegraph roads.

Armstrong's car, township police say, was rammed in the rear by one driven by Gerald Ford, 34, of Inkster. Ford and a passenger, Marjorie Ballenger, 21, of Livonia, are both in critical condition in St. Joseph hospital.

Bloomfield's first fatality was at Square Lake and Franklin roads just a short distance away.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Last week The Birmingham Eccentric invited readers' comments, pro and con, on the proposed new Birmingham junior-senior high school. Below are letters received in response. Further explanation of details mentioned in the letters can be found in a story on P. 1-A of this issue, and in the school's floor plan published on the page opposite this one.

People's Column

Writer Wants Schools, Not Country Clubs

To the Editor:

I was both interested and staggered when I read of the new $4,800,000 high school to be built soon in the Birmingham school district.

It has often been said that "nothing is too good for our Birmingham children", and I am sure in many ways that may be true:—however—

There is a limit to all things. It used to be the sky, but now that Sputniks and Explorers are being projected into space, I suppose that the sky's limit has become less definable than formerly.

THE QUESTION that comes to my mind in connection with this new school are many. Among them are the following:

1. Does the construction provide for a comfortably cool school during the often very warm spells in May, June, September and October?

The $2,500,000 (more or less) school at Lincoln and Cranbrook roads, which was thought to be "the last word" at the time it was built, was unbearably hot in many places during these months, in fact the temperatures have been known to reach over 90 degrees. The faculty were reassured, when this fact was discussed, that it "would be just as hot in a corn field."

2. Are the teachers going to be allowed to have the proper filing equipment in their rooms for their papers and pamphlets which many of them accumulate for "enrichment materials" in their teaching?

IN THE $2,500,000 high school the faculty were not permitted to have filing cabinets because they did not fit into the interior decoration scheme.

3. Are the offices for the counselors going to be large enough for counselor, parents, and pupil all at the same time if the occasion arises for that need?

In the high school on Lincoln road in some of the counselor's offices it was a bit difficult fitting more than two persons into them.

4. Is the library to be functionally designed with the guidance of American Library Association standards and "know-how"?

In the $2,500,000 high school the library is merely an architect's dream into which visitors step and "aw" and "ah", overcome with its beauty. As for a practical or functional thought having been put into it, there was no sign of one displayed.

AS FOR THE choice of furniture, it apparently was a combination of architect's and interior decorator's suggestions with no understanding of library needs.

When one of the architect's was asked where the running water was to be placed he thought that a drinking fountain was signified. It was merely a sink and water for paste mixing, etc., which was desired, in fact, sorely needed for book processing and many other "jobs" which are done daily in a library.

5. Is there a sizeable initial fund to be established for the purchase of books for the new library?

In the other high school shelving was immediately provided for 40,000 books, a number considerably beyond the needs of the school. Many of the shelves stand empty as no initial fund was established other than the regular yearly amount per pupil which was low, at that, by A. L. A. standards for such a deluxe school.

ONE HALF the shelf space would have taken care of the shelving needs for years and the money could readily have been used for books.

6. Are the auto mechanic rooms, print shop, drafting rooms, art rooms, etc., a realistic size for their needs or do they cover acres as they seem to in the other school?

7. Has the home economics department been set up with guidance from those who know home economics needs and requirements?

In the high school on Lincoln rooms spread out over a tremendous area were built and equipped then two or three years later I understand a wholesale revamping was necessary to make the rooms more practical.

AND AS FOR the apartment including a full size bathroom complete with tub—there has always been the question—why the tub?

8. To return to the academic—have the science rooms been planned efficiently as science laboratories and class rooms should be or are the science instructors going to be wishing that they were teaching in one of the good old schools where science rooms were really made for science teaching?

THESE ARE ONLY some of the questions which might be raised by the tax payers in connection with this new school.

Just one more question at this time: How many schools could be built for the same amount of money if we were really building functional educational institutions to provide the atmosphere for disciplined, business-like learning instead of building country clubs by which the younger generation may become softer and softer as they are fed on more and more pap?

MRS. EUGENE MURPHY
Franklin

People's Column

4 Million Should Build 2 Schools, Writer Suggests

To the Editor:

Enclosed is a clipping from the Detroit News, Sunday, Aug. 10, 1958, of a description of a new junior high to be built in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, to accommodate 725 students at a sum of less than one million dollars.

Birmingham plans to build a new junior-senior high school for over four million dollars, available through a bond issue. I suggest that we build two new schools with this huge sum of money or less. We should build a new senior high school over near the present Derby Junior high to take care of the students in that area, and then build a new junior high school (at Thirteen Mile and Evergreen site) near the present Birmingham high school, to take care of the students in that area—then we would not have to bus students such great distances as we do at the present time.

IT SEEMS that we now have many grade schools in the Birmingham school district, but we cannot take students from all these grade schools and put them in one senior high school, so I sincerely suggest the two new schools be built at the sum of one or two million each school (if we have the four million available) or even much less, such as Grosse Pointe is doing.

We need less elaborate schools, but more classrooms, textbooks and teachers.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Robert E. Bratton
3580 Wooddale Court
Birmingham

People's Column

'Amen' Added To Criticism Of New School

To the Editor:

May we add our "Amen" to Earl Cannon's letter published in the August 7 issue of the Eccentric. I tried to write a letter to express my reactions to the pictures and information given about the planned high school in southwest Birmingham, but could never have put them so succinctly as he did.

One additional point that bothers me is the checker-board plan of classrooms that looks as though it would be the most expensive to build possible arrangement, and the most impractical to work in possible that anyone could dream up in some architectural nightmare.

WE DO HOPE you can put some pressure on the powers that be either thoroughly justify the whole set-up and make us taxpayers know we're getting our money's worth, or else scrap the plans and re-do them with some reasonability in them!

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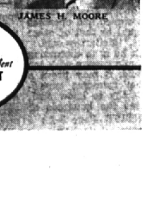

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