

BITS OF BIRMINGHAM

Sitting in a chair in a Birmingham barber shop the other day, this Wanderer overheard another customer seek to "sell" an excellent merchandising idea to the tonorial experts therein. "Why don't you arrange to have one of your barbers, that handsome, a bit round, jolly-like chap, put on a colorful Santa Claus suit the week before Christmas?" asked the customer. "This would attract youngsters from all around, some of their parents, too. Every boy and

girl would just love to have Santa cut his hair and locks. It would bring great joy to the kids' hearts, regeneration of life to you barbers, and lots of new business for 1959. Then, the afternoon before Christmas, you could take Santa over to Shain Park, alongside the municipal Christmas tree, and the Boss Barber could slowly cut off Santa's whiskers. The advertising possibilities of this Yuletide gesture could win national acclaim. The goodwill value accruing to the tonorial trade would be inestimable. Indeed, I can envision this first barber-Santa Claus on national television, and setting an annual pattern everywhere where whiskers grow, and hair needs cutting." When this Wanderer left the place no decision yet had been made. But what an idea!

Garlanded with fruit and spices, a boar's head made a dramatic appearance Tuesday night in Cranbrook's dining hall before students and faculty. Literally stuffed to the whiskers, the enormous head was served up at Cranbrook's annual Christmas pageant and banquet.

A well-known ex-Birmingham resident has come home to play—literally. He's A. Shanley Ross, former assistant cashier at Birmingham National Bank (which merged with the Detroit Bank & Trust Co.). The new bank prevailed upon Shanley to come here from Lapeer (where he's assistant cashier at the First National) to play organ music in the Detroit Bank Hamilton-Woodward branch lobby. So today (Thursday) and next Thursday, from 2-3 p.m., Shanley will play familiar Christmas tunes. He's a popular church organist, used to play during Christmas season in the Bham National lobby, too.

On a shopping expedition Friday night, this Wanderer asked to have a package delivered to The Birmingham Eccentric. The clerk hesitated for a few minutes, then questionably asked "Is that an establishment for old people?" Just goes to show that with a name like ours, you've got to have a good sense of humor.

Birmingham area residents will have another opportunity to see pictures of Japan and Afghanistan by artist Whitney Kent at the Whitney Galleries, 508 Park street. Managers of the gallery have had quite a time keeping the name situation clear. The artist and the gallery people are not related. Mrs. Kent is the sister of Mrs. Samuel Walker, 1859 Yorkshire. Just to make it more confusing, Mrs. Walker's daughter's name is Whitney, too.

Blonde, Blue-Eyed Beauty Is Key to Fruitful Plot

By BETTY PAYSNER
Special Writer

Screen star Inger Stevens was our accomplice. Not that this blonde, blue-eyed beauty has criminal tendencies. It's simply that her ingenuity provided the means to carry out a plot.

It was the afternoon of December 3. There was an ominous overcast of heavy fog, of course.

"In room 2515 of the Sheraton-Cadillac, we were chatting with Miss Stevens while joining her in a snack of grapes from the hotel's complimentary fruit tray. We learned about her rise from modeling and TV commercials six years ago to lead roles in "Man on Fire" with Bing Crosby and "Cry Terror" with James Mason.

THEN CONVERSATION turned to fascinating Yul Brynner, star of her newest movie "The Buccaneer," opening at the Palmes on Dec. 17. Miss Stevens' one-day stop in Detroit was part of the cross-country promotion of this film.

More and more money is being spent for construction in Birmingham. Builders have already spent \$300,000 more during the first 11 months of 1958 compared to the same period last year.

Permits worth \$1,712,347 were issued during the first 11 months of 1957, but permits totalling \$4,010,348 have already been issued this year.

THIS IS a net gain of \$304,001. Better yet, Building Inspector Andrew P. Butt expects the month of December to increase that gain. November permits totalling \$29,190, and included the new \$140,000 post office service building.

Also included is the new apartment house being constructed at 2525 E. Maple.

Expressway-type highways and bypasses will provide Michigan residents and communities with gains far in excess of any losses they will accrue, Dr. Frank Suggitt reported, today.

Suggitt, head of the Department of Resource Development of Michigan State University, made his observation as a result of a study to determine the effects of bypasses and expressways for the Michigan Good Roads Federation.

Better than before. "OTHERS SAY that the bypass has caused them to work harder to get local trade, but once they got it, they found it more dependable and easier to serve."

He said some road-oriented businesses will fold up. In the long pull, however, Suggitt predicted great gains for most businesses

Suddenly the phone rang. "5:15 at the train station, O.K.," Miss Stevens replied to the caller. Swiftly she rose from the bed on which she had been resting and changed from a coral and white print bathrobe into a smart navy suit she had doffed just five minutes ago.

SHE TOOK no time to apply make-up. Mascara is the only cosmetic she uses when not performing or posing for pictures. "It's been hectic all day because of bad weather," she remarked. "Since flights are canceled, I'm lucky to get a train to Chicago."

"I guess it's all part of this business. My father, who is an education professor, directed college plays."

"OFTEN I FEEL pulled in other directions," she mused, stepping into navy opera pumps. "I like to write and paint. And I'm very interested in working with disabled children. An aunt of mine has a

child who was born with a brain injury. I'd like to be of help. "People who have only one vital interest are fortunate in a way. There just isn't time for everything I'd like to do."

To our comment that she is known to spend time baking fabulous chocolate cakes, she smiled saying: "Yes, I cook. It's funny what's included in one's publicity."

PUTTING THE bathrobe in a stunning tan suitcase, she continued discussing her publicity. "The stress on my Swedish birth is very tiresome. I'm proud of my Swedish heritage, but my family came to the U. S. when I was 10. I spent most of my life growing up in a small Kansas town, and I certainly feel American."

After closing the suitcase, she paused for a few grapes from the complimentary fruit tray. Thinking it a shame to leave the luscious-looking fruit, we suggested she take it with her.

"I won't be able to carry it," she answered. "But why don't you take it?"

IT JUST SO happened we were going directly to dinner at the apartment of a fellow Eccentric reporter and her two healthy, hungry roommates.

But how could we smuggle the fruit basket out of the hotel without looking like a flier?

"There must be a paper laundry bag in the closet. Put the basket in it, was Miss Stevens' quick and clever solution.

With much hilarity, the booty was concealed. Gratefully, we swore we would never forget her.

"That's all right," she laughed. "Some day when I'm down and out and no one cares, I'll come to you and say 'Remember the little actress who helped you pilfer a basket of fruit?'"

But we're certain no such day will come. Inger Stevens is on her way to the top of the bunch.



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INGER STEVENS

Wieland Is Elected Exchange President

William A. Wieland, owner of Wieland's Interiors, 523 N. Woodward, Birmingham, was elected president of the Birmingham Exchange club, Dec. 2.

He will replace the present club president, Richard J. Wilson. Other officers elected were: James Mattison, 1st vice president; Robert L. Owen, 2nd vice president; George Scott, secretary-treasurer.

Elected to the board of control were Arthur Lake, John Townsend, Fred Pierce, Harlan Ritts, David Fairay and Roger Blackwood. The new officers will take over their duties Jan. 1.

Construction Figures Show Big Increase

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Unusual Custom

The Armenians eat boiled spinach on Christmas Eve because they believe Mary ate the vegetable the night before Christ was born.

Road Study Indicates Gains Exceed Losses

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and communities. The communities will see immediate gains in a number of ways, Suggitt said.

"Relief from traffic hazards and congestion will be the first and most obvious effect of diverting through traffic to a bypass. For local residents this will make a community more desirable."

"IN SPARTA, for example, local residents petitioned the State Highway Department to relocate M-37 around town in order to get rid of through traffic. They held a special election on the question and it carried by a 7-1 margin."

"Improvement of parking for local residents and people who desire to shop will be another immediate effect of the bypass. It is already apparent that most home-town folks need even more parking space than is available in many communities, so this situation will improve."

"AS POPULATION continues to increase, expressways will hasten

the already-underway decentralization of some major cities. Communities within fifty miles of a major city, or central city, will become commuter cities, or suburban satellites. Some of these communities will be shocked in the next decade to find that housing and commercial developments have doubled the size and tax valuation of the town," Suggitt said.

He said that the city of Brighton, which is located at the junction of U.S. 16 and U.S. 23, is in the middle of such growth at present. The city of Portland, located between Lansing and Grand Rapids, off U.S. 16, is another one of many which can expect major growth in the not too distant future, also.

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