

"Old Age" Produces Great People

A recent analysis of achievements of four hundred famous men throughout history, men whose accomplishments came in the fields of politics, government, painting, military life, writing and other categories, is highly encouraging to all those who think they are growing old.

The study revealed that more than one-third of the four hundred famous men achieved their greatest accomplishments after they passed the age of sixty. Another surprising twenty-three per cent scored their greatest success in life after they had passed the age of seventy.

IN OTHER WORDS, more than half of

the four hundred men achieved their fame after they were sixty or seventy years of age. Eight percent of the four hundred made their greatest mark in life after they had passed the age of eighty.

Putting it another way, those who hope to make immortal marks in the record of progress by the human race, are handicapped if they seek to do so before they are sixty years old. Of course, the four hundred men analyzed may not represent a true picture, but this is certainly indicative of the surprisingly large number of famous men who achieve their fame at somewhat advanced age.

Labor in the Legislative Saddle

The Nov. 4 election easily shows that labor leaders made much progress toward their efforts to gain control of legislative seats in Congress and many state governments. This means, of course, that they will endeavor to obtain more legislation dominantly favorable to labor, less to business and industry. If labor is able to effectively control more legislation, it can be expected to pair up with much of labor's vocal and printed "hate propaganda" that has been leveled at American business and industry. This enmity can continue for quite a spell.

EVENTUALLY, however, it will defeat itself, as American standards of living and social and political freedoms are shackled by the power-hungry labor-politicians who may dominate the scene.

Ground Observer Corps Disbanded

The Secretary of the Air Force recently announced that by January 21st the U. S. Ground Observer Corps will be deactivated. Some 230,000 active civilian volunteers have been manning some 16,000 observation posts during the past year in carrying out this program.

For a number of years it has been apparent that the Ground Observer Corps is limited in its capability. Although there were fifty filter centers throughout the nation, and although many patriotic Americans served faithfully for nine years, or less, and although the intentions were good, science and the modern age has surpassed the capacity of ground observation.

FROM THE DAY that the first missile was successfully flown, it was obvious that

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

If president Eisenhower were to receive a million letters from citizens who approve his demands upon congress to cut out un-

The Birmingham Eccentric

Published every Thursday, at Birmingham, Mich., in the Eccentric Building, 220-224 North Woodward Avenue Telephone Midwest 4-1100

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ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

Tomorrow night, millions of Americans will ring out 1958 and ring in 1959. The magic hour is midnight.

That's when you celebrants will kiss the wife or sweetheart "Happy New Year!", and then look around the room to find someone else you can help welcome in the new year with.

Some smarties will get a head start. They're the ones who start at 11 p.m. by joining in long distance and remote control with the New Year's celebrants in New York's Times Square.

THIS GETS THINGS PRIMED for

Suburban Sentiment

IT ISN'T HUMANLY POSSIBLE

All the while that Autumn blows
Fido's lucky mother knows
Everywhere that Fido grows
So do Fido's winter clothes.

— Allen Fitzpatrick

necessary federal expenditures, and if an equal number of letters were sent to members of Congress on the same subject, there's no question but what much of the taxpayers' hard earned wages would be saved. Will you be one of the million?

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Michigan's own 12 a.m. party an hour later.

Then comes their participation in Chicago's Loop noise and nonsense at 1 a.m. Detroit time.

And at 2 a.m. these happy hunters are whooping it up with Colorado crowds in Downtown Denver.

And finally—if they still are on their feet—the last of the Mo-hic-lans wind things up in Union Square with the San Franciscans.

One New Year's celebration usually will satisfy the hardiest.

BUT IF THIS ISN'T ENOUGH, the let's-do-it-often type can look forward to these occasions:

On January 14, by switching to the Gregorian calendar, there's another New Year's.

In March, the Iranians celebrate a slate wiping on the 21st.

Then in the autumn the Jews celebrate their New Year.

And in India, there are many different religious groups. Each marks the beginning of their year on a different date.

Watch Out, Baby!



NATURE NOW By Lydia King Frehse
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Fire Is More Than Light and Warmth

Now with the holiday rush behind us we may find time to draw our chairs within the encircling warmth of our firesides, there to read and perchance to dream away an hour or two.

For there is that about an open fire which is more than light and warmth. There is color and sound and movement in the leaping flames. Somehow these have the power to make us at one with our racial heritage. And who is to deny that in such a contemplative moment man may recall the emotional urges and satisfactions which are his by right of his common humanity?

But what is this leaping flame which has played so important a role in the life of mankind? Fire is heat and light, which is the result of a rapid combining of the oxygen in the air with the combustible substances in the fuel consumed.

In order to ignite a fire the substance to be burned must be raised to its "kindling temperature," a point at which it will rapidly unite with the oxygen in the air. We use kindlings and shavings for this purpose because they present more surface, and therefore more oxygen is accessible in proportion to the amount of wood exposed.

The kindling temperature of various substances differs. Dry wood and gasoline are easily ignited. Hard coal and coke are difficult to ignite. Phosphorus has such a low kindling point that it will burn at normal temperatures and must be stored under water.

MATCHES are made by combining phosphorus with combustible and oxidizing materials such as

potassium chlorate, salt peter and red lead. When a match is "scratched," enough heat is generated by friction to cause it to ignite. Safety matches contain the phosphorus in the scratching material on the folder.

Life is energy and its source is the sun. When you watch a log burn you are witnessing a release of energy which may have been sealed in the living wood hundreds of years ago. This was accomplished by photosynthesis, the food manufacturing process which takes place wherever the sun shines on a growing leaf.

The tree then stores its surplus starches and sugars in its woody tissues. When ignited by fire, this energy is released in the form of heat, light and gas. The remaining ash, smoke and unburned minerals are by-products of combustion.

WHEN COAL is used as fuel the energy released is that stored in buried plant materials turned into carbon and other combustible substances by the pressure and heat of some 300 millions of years of living and dying. When fire consumes, we see in action the universal law: "Energy may change its form, but it cannot be destroyed or lost."

There is that about a fire which calls into play man's primal instincts, self-preservation, parental responsibilities, the challenge and satisfaction attendant upon his association with his fellow men. In the end, fire represents the flow of energy from sun to man, a continuous and never-ending stream which is as life-giving as it is mysterious.

And now my warmest good wishes to each you who have shared with me the varying moods and manners of another year. Because "Nature Now" is your column, each of you has a share in bringing to life the words which appear here from week to week.

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO
January 1, 1909

"The wedding of Miss Mabel Todd, of Troy, and Chas. Porteous, of Royal Oak, last week was the event of the season. Over 300 guests were present and left gifts enough to load a wagon. Success to the happy couple!"

"Say, who stole the \$10 ostrich plume?" Disaster is close on the dastard, and unless it is returned this will be a surprised community when the drop comes!"

38 YEARS AGO
December 28, 1920

"A baby boy was born Christmas Day to Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Baker at 135 Webster avenue. He arrived at 2:20 p.m. at the residence."

"Miss Suzanne House, the attractive daughter of George W. House of the Hills, made her bow to society last Thursday evening at a ball given by her father at the Book-Cadillac hotel."

"Influences in Birmingham during the week has remained about the same, according to Dr. A. F. Lewis, health officer. While it is not of a malignant nature this year, as it has been in previous years, the pneumonitis is immediate case."

15 YEARS AGO
December 28, 1943

"This Wanderer was having his shoes shined in a local shoe repair shop the other day and overheard two little girls, who were peering into the shop's stock of shoe laces, converse thusly: 'So this is where the kids are getting those fancy checked shoe laces.' 'Yes, this is them.' 'I wonder if boys wear them?' 'Sure they do,' said the second. 'Bobby wears them.' 'Yes, the first little girl, but he's a big guy.' Moral of the story is that if you are in the third or fourth grade and want to impress

the girls of your grade with your virility, don't wear brightly colored, checked shoe laces."

WHY?



Do We "Give the Bride Away?"

When the clergyman asks, "Who giveth this woman to this man?" his question goes back to times when girls were married for money, not love. Primitive custom of pledging daughters for so many seeds, animals, amulets or bead ornaments evolved into European marriage by purchase.

In early England, before a wedding could proceed, father and son-in-law had to agree to the "wed" or contract had been met, that he had been paid in full for his daughter. Today, when girls marry for love—not money!—father "gives" his daughter in marriage.

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