

"More Serious Students Needed"

Debate over American education, with special emphasis on the high schools, has been running hot and heavy for several years. Practically everyone seems to believe that something is seriously wrong—but, naturally, there are wide differences as to what should be done. Proposed solutions run a wide gamut—better pay for teachers; still more elaborate school plants and facilities; federal aid; major changes in curricula; special schools or classes for exceptionally bright students, and so on.

Since the Sputniks flared off into outer space, the controversy has intensified. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Folsom has held up that only one out of every three or four recent high school graduates has been exposed to even a year of chemistry or physics, or mathematics beyond simple algebra. Russian secondary school graduates, on the other hand, have taken five years of physics, four of chemistry, and big doses of mathematics. So the question is: What's wrong, and what can be done to remedy matters?

THE WALL STREET Journal sent its reporters to talk to school officials, teachers, and others throughout the country. As was to be expected, many of those queried stressed the need for better teachers and better schools. But the answer did not stop there. As the Journal puts it: "... the teachers themselves are worried mainly about the students—their lack of interest in science and math, their hesitancy to take courses in these fields."

A New York physics teacher said: "The majority of youngsters today prefer to take the softest classes they can find," and added that his school only had about half as many physics students now as 10 years ago. A San Francisco educator said much the same thing: "... our big problem isn't a shortage of teachers or facilities, but a shortage of serious students

"Join Up—Or You Can't Get A Job!"

Senator Karl Mundt, who is a member of the McClellan Committee investigating labor racketeering, has come up with an important discussion of what is needed in the field of labor legislation. On the basis of clearly established facts, he says, there is an urgent need for laws to protect the dues paid by the members; to strengthen democratic procedures and processes within the unions; to bar gangster control of the unions; to keep union funds out of politics, and to deal with the "pernicious problem" of secondary boycotts "... wherein unions by remote control seek to paralyze and stalemate the economic activities of a community or a company far removed from the scene of labor strife and entirely outside of the disputed conditions."

Then Senator Mundt deals with what he considers the basis of labor abuses. It is compulsory unionism—the closed shop or union shop, under which a man has the choice of joining and paying dues, whether or not he wants to, or starve.

with the aptitude and interest to get the most out of their work."

HOW CAN SUCH a situation exist in our enormously expensive school establishments? In answer a Detroit teacher told the Journal: "The elective system has reached the point where students can choose almost anything they want." So they choose easy courses instead of tough courses, and get the same credit. On top of that, there are all manner of academic frills which divert students from academic work—driver training classes, cooking classes, citizenship classes, etc. And school administrators, too, have been misled by the frills with the result, according to the Journal, that school funds have been diverted "... from basic academic needs to athletic programs, social events or other 'non-essentials'."

What all this adds up to is a belief, held by many informed people, that money alone is not the solution to this country's science education problem—though, of course, there is no doubt that more money is needed in many cases, both to attract better teachers and to improve school facilities. There is an urgent need to re-examine and re-assess our school systems, particularly in regard to science teaching. That is going on now, the Journal reports, in numbers of places—and there's a little doubt there'll be more and more of it.

NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED as basic requirements to raise the U.S. scholastic standards is the need for more families to surround their growing children with a real desire to learn. This desire needs to be cultivated in the atmosphere of self-disciplines made manifest in the home—first by parents through precept and example. Like its elders, most youth will take the path that stretches ahead; if it be one marked "Path of Least Resistance," can youth be blamed too much for traveling it?

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

That new spring hat shown in the newspapers, worn by a lady whose first name is Mamie, looked right nice on her. Now that Ike's hat no longer can be a political symbol, why shouldn't Mamie's continue to be in the lime-light?

The differences of opinion about what branch of the nation's military service should develop and control certain phases of missiles, etc., is but evidence of human nature. To be sure, there's no doubt but

what each branch of the service wants to "stay in business"; still there are honest differences ... and where is a Solomon to adjudicate the arguments? That ancient sage's only democratic counterpart is the President himself.

Heaven and the traffic police forbid the development of a motor car that can negotiate the highways without human hands steering them. One-armed drivers are bad enough.

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Now He Needs Help!

YEARS OF SERVICE



NATURE NOW

by Lydia King Frehe
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Insect Pupa Stage -- Miracle of Nature

In last week's column we said that highly developed insects which have complete metamorphosis pass through four distinct stages: the egg, larval, pupal and adult. We mentioned the monarch, one of our commonest butterflies, as an example.

Beginning in early summer the eggs are laid on the underside of a leaf of milkweed or dogbane. When these hatch into caterpillars (larvae) they are already surrounded by abundant food supply. Therefore they require no highly specialized sense organs. Nature asks only that the gluttons, slug-like and stupid, gorge themselves. But to become an alert and highly specialized adult the butterfly must be capable of securing a mate and of finding a suitable place to deposit its eggs, thus insuring the continuation of the species. To accomplish this it must pass through the pupal or quiescent stage. This transformation represents one of nature's miracles.

ON A LATE MORNING in July the caterpillar shed his skin and the stuff of his life hangs pendant from the underside of a leaf, encased in a pale green, coffin trimmed with golden nails. In the case of a butterfly the pupa is called a "chrysalis." During the next 10 or 11 days, most of the former larval tissue disintegrates into a creamy material. The corresponding adult tissues of the "but-ter-fly" are built up anew from small groups of cells called "histoblasts" which have been kept apart for this purpose but which remain dormant during larval life.

These now multiply rapidly, feeding up on the creamy material resulting from the dissolution of the larval cells and the body fat.

The hidden and complicated process could be likened to the conversion of an automobile into a small airplane. There might be approximately the same amount of material involved but the conversion would require a complete reconstruction of all the parts. In the meantime the vehicle could not be used.

SO IT IS with the insect. During the change from chrysalis to adult, locomotion ceases, feeding is suspended, respiration is reduced and the pupa hangs quiescent.

But hidden from our eyes the enclosed cells are in a feverish state of activity. They are about their business of producing wings, legs, eyes, antennae, mouth-parts, appendages and internal organs for the adult insect.

NATURE HAS given the pupal case many forms and guises, most of them protective of its helplessness. That of the apple-leaf sewer hides in a neatly folded leaf. The Cecropia moth encases itself in a felt-like covering, while the pupa of the sphinx moth looks like a shiny jug with a handle.

During its larval life the silk-worm carries about a case of silk covered with spruce needles, thus enclosing itself therein. Some caterpillars pupating under water make for themselves a case of small stones, others use slender sticks and bits of leaves arranged in spiral form.

The pupae of certain wasps are encased in cells of mud or paper; those of the honey bee in hexagonal cells of wax. Ants hide their pupae in tough, white oblong cases which look like grains of rice. The caterpillar of the Southern tobacco worm makes an underground cell for its pupa, while that of the round-headed apple looper prepares a wooden tunnel in which it seals its pupal case.

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
March 6, 1908
"The Epworth League will hold a social at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Quorton, Tuesday evening, March 10. A good program will be given; a debate on the question, 'Should Women Vote?' will be presented. All should come."

"This is a little matter that some of our subscribers and advertisers have seemingly forgotten about. To us it is necessary in our business. We are very modest and do not wish to speak about it."

"Cole and Johnson in their musical comedy, 'The Shoo Fly Regiment' will be the attraction at the Lyceum for one week, commencing next Sunday afternoon. Among the big song hits they have written are: 'Under the Bamboo Tree', 'The Congo Love Song' and 'The Maiden with the Dreamy Eyes'."

30 YEARS AGO
March 8, 1908
"The Metropolitan Orchestra of Detroit consisting of 30 persons will give a concert in the Southfield Methodist church the evening of March 16, according to an announcement. The concert promises to be one of the greatest musical treats ever given in Southfield."

"Miss Jessie Bonstelle, famous Detroit dressmaker, is to be the speaker at a dinner tomorrow night at the Lone Pine Inn by the Rotary Club of Birmingham."

"B. J. Morrow was elected first president of the newly-formed Lions club of Birmingham at the luncheon yesterday at the Chan-

teau Tea Room. The Lions club is an outgrowth of the Young Men's Service club which has passed out of existence."

15 YEARS AGO
March 4, 1923
"Correction: In last week's paper, a typographical error made it appear that your ABC and D blue stamps are good in March. This is true except for the D stamps. They are NOT good in March. Thanks to you, eagle-eyed reader, who brought this to our attention."

"Is it legal to keep chickens within the city limits? This question arose at the City Commission meeting Monday night. The commission revealed that there is no city ordinance prohibiting the practice, which would indicate that chickens are OK unless subdivision restrictions prohibit them."

"Mrs. L. H. France of Lathrup boulevard was hostess Monday night to a group of women whose husbands bowl that night. Another group of Townsmeets went night-clubbing following bowling."

"The Old Timer"
"Most of the stumbling blocks people complain about are under their hats."

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

They're several hundred feet of color film in a Birmingham desk drawer that was produced for only one showing.

At least, the producers, directors and cast have commonly agreed that it is such a special-type movie that it should not be shown the general public.

And I agree with them. The movie is a 20-minute comedy, an exaggerated collection of typical (?) scenes in government life.

If you have a sense of humor and some knowledge of governmental functions, you'd get a great laugh from seeing the film.

But human nature being what it is, there'd be some hard-noses who'd protest if any municipality even thought of satirizing government functions, let alone actually do it, whether on film or any other way.

So that's why this particular film had only one showing—to the employees themselves and their very close friends.

Too bad, too. I know you'd enjoy it.

If more of us burned less midnight oil and used more of the daylight, we'd be much further ahead.

Sociologists have been evaluating the type of man and woman who comprise the population of this new American phenomenon, suburbia, exurbia or whatever you call it.

The man, say these experts, is above average in his desire to be above other people. He needs to dominate people, to influence others. His sex standards are less strict. He is vain and self-interested. He doesn't mind newness and variety. His aggressive needs are above the average.

The exurban woman, say those who've been evaluating her, is more willing to talk about sex than are her sisters in the other areas. She likes to examine the motives of other people. She likes to be the center of attention, and likes new and different things.

That's what they're saying.

Regardless of our individual income level, we all must live below our yearnings.

Friends of the Kenneth A. Berridges sometimes wonder why the name of the former owner of their home occasionally crops up in newspaper stories and the address used is the Berridges'.

The Berridges bought their 577 Westwood home 2½ years ago from Lt. Gov. Phil A. Hart and his wife, Jane. The Harts bought it in September 1949. But when Phil was elected to the state's No. 2 spot and Gov. William's understudy, the Harts rented their home here for a couple of years. Then sold it to the Berridges.

But under our state constitution, an elected official does not lose nor gain a residence by virtue of his employment by the federal or state government.

In other words, Phil Hart can (and he does) maintain the 577 Westwood address in Birmingham as his legal residence. That is why he has been voting at Quorton school (now it's the Chesterfield fire station).

If he is successful in his senatorial campaign this fall and wins the election, he still can maintain this residence here. If he loses, he'll have to get another state or federal job quick-like ... or find a new residence.

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