

Your Precious Civic Document!

Without a set of ideas and convictions, expressed in the form of a document, neither a small organized group of people, nor an entire nation, can exist for very long in a desired environment of law and order.

That's why, back in September of 1787, the courageous Colonists wrote and adopted the Constitution of the United States, which, with comparatively few amendments, has been a steady and defensive bulwark against complete loss of our liberties.

"We the people . . ." is the wording of the Constitution's beginning paragraph. It is well to remember these most important words.

NOT "WE THE CONGRESS", or "we the federal bureaucracy", or "we the Executive branch", or "we the U.S. Supreme Court". None of these words are used in the introduction to the remainder of that wonderful guarantee of freedom.

This is "Constitution Week", so designated by President Eisenhower, an annual commemoration throughout our country . . . to remind, and remind again our people of the inestimable value of this document to each of us . . . "lest we forget!"

Yet, we need to be aware of the terrible fact that our Constitution (always under attack from without and from within) is no better a protection than is our understanding of it, and our constant alertness to its need for rightful preservation.

'Gee! Haw!' Is Teamsters' Theme

In the recent appointment of a three-man "anti-racketeering commission", presumed to aid in ridding the Teamsters' Union of gangsters, ex-convicts, hoodlums, etc., Jimmy Hoffa probably hopes to maneuver himself into a less vulnerable position.

This move reveals to a considerable extent the mental methods of the Teamsters' president. When cornered, he quickly comes up with another defensive tactic, perhaps expecting to distract his opponent's efforts to win the hour's conflict.

In setting up this new commission, Jimmy Hoffa is overlooking the existence of the three "monitors" appointed some time ago by a federal judge to con-

IT HAS BEEN SAID, "To understand the Constitution of the United States is the clarion call of the hour, a call as dynamic as when Moses wrote the Ten Commandments."

Never in U.S. history has this precious document been under so great attack as today. Many foreign governments would like to see us lose it, in whole or in part.

There are many anti-American organizations in the U.S. that would like to preside over its burial. There even are some men and women in the several branches of the federal government (and in many state governments) who are wittingly, or unwittingly laboring to subvert this fortress of our liberties.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom." Unceasing defense of it ought to be the dedicated effort of every loyal American.

WE SUGGEST . . . INDEED, we implore you to read this U.S. Constitution this week. Let its thrilling theme, its inspiring promises again stir you to renewed praise and appreciation for and of this greatest of all civic testaments.

Its value to us today, as in the days when it was written, surely should cause us to defend it in the same spirit that birthed the final paragraph of our Declaration of Independence, as: " . . . and for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

trol Hoffa's official conduct of his union.

SENATOR McCLELLAN, who heads the Senate Committee looking into union labor conditions, doesn't think the Hoffa commission can clean up the Teamsters' group, unless it starts right in with Jimmy Hoffa.

There's probably little doubt but what the Hoffa commission was thought up and argued for by some of Jimmy's lawyers. Were Jimmy himself above reproach, his idea would be quite acceptable, no doubt. However, the McClellan Senators at least have caused Jimmy, and other labor leaders, to admit that certain labor segments need cleaning out and cleaning up.

prised that the United States military failed to get off its first rocket to hit or circle the moon. Probably the moon isn't, either.

An American dentist says that the American mouth is getting larger. Do you suppose that is one reason why more of us should learn to keep our oral openings open less?

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Statistics from the financial world reveal that a large majority of our nation's "long green" is in the hands of both grass and plain widows.

World scientists say they were not sur-

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GEORGE E. AVERILL
Editor and Publisher

PAUL NEAL AVERILL
Business Manager

GEORGE WM. AVERILL
Managing Editor

F. S. SYBOLDON
Advertising Manager

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

Birmingham Police Lt. Robert Schaula has a most important job responsibility—the traffic safety of the city's 25,000 residents, the thousands of their friends and relatives, and the hundreds of thousands of total strangers who drive over our streets every year.

Last year the traffic fatality record was three times as bad as the previous year. We had three persons killed in accidents during 1957. There were 112 injured. Accidents totaled 715.

In 1956, there were no fatalities, but personal injuries were higher and accidents lower—128 and 656 respectively.

Suburban Sentiment

WEIGHTY DECISION

Why not invent a penny scale

With tactful weight recorder

Whose card reads when you're overweight

"This must be out of order."

—Madge M. Lane

BUT LT. SCHAULA'S CHIEF concern is the drinking-and-driving problem.

Schaula says he's very thankful there've been no serious accidents caused by these drunk drivers.

"But it's dynamite—and the fuse is sputtering and sometime it's going to go off," he shudders.

A glowing and growing part of Lt. Schaula's police work is the year-old teen court.

THIS IS WHERE TEEN-AGE traffic violators are brought (with their consent) to have their cases adjudicated by their peers. The youngsters are harder on their contemporaries than adults would be, Schaula avows.

Penalties range from thousand word themes on safety to suspension of driving licenses for up to 30 days.

The first year (the 1957-58 school term) saw 82 students appear before the court. Thirty of them went to evening safety clinics.

"It's remarkable and strange—we had no repeaters," the police officer emphasized. "And only one violator objected afterward. He thought he was being picked on."



NATURE NOW

Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

'Chirp' of Crickets Is Wings Rubbing

Now on late September evenings the crickets which have been with us all summer continue to fill the air with their "chirping" or "fiddling."

This is a mechanical and not a vocal effort, for the sound is produced by rubbing the file-like edge of one wing against the rough surface of the other. Its intensity is the result of amplification by the sounding board construction of the wing membranes. It is remarkable that it may serve as a challenge to another male cricket or it may be used to please and entice a mate. In any event in the cricket family the female is silent and only the male "talks." However they are ardent at wooing, often keeping up their noisy courtship sounds from dusk to dawn.

THE "EARN" or organ for receiving the vibration of sounds is located in the front legs. Its sensitivity is attested by the difficulty one is approaching a cricket. No matter how cautious the pursuer, the little insect stops his fiddling when one is still many feet away.

If you want to know the temperature, count the number of times a cricket "chirps" for fifteen seconds, then add forty. The resulting figure will be a near approach to the actual thermometer reading. Just why a cricket should gauge its rate of chirping with the temperature is an intriguing question. However reputable naturalists record this observation.

THERE are many species of crickets. We write of our common black or field cricket, Gryllus assimilis. All along to the straight-winged insects or Orthoptera together with such familiar associates as grasshoppers, cockroaches, mantids and walking sticks. The field cricket is used by fishermen as bait. If it should enter your city home it will pay you to cope with its evasive ways, for it can damage clothes, rugs and furs. If you hang your bathing suit outside your cottage door to dry only to find it suddenly full of holes look to the cricket as the possible culprit.

The usual diet of crickets is grass, vegetables and fruit. They also relish sugar, carrion and have been known to eat their own kind.

CURIOSITY these little creatures are sometimes kept as pets, especially in the Orient where they are treasured in elaborately carved cricket cages. Frequently they are bought and sold and vie with one another for prizes.

The life cycle of the cricket is completed during a year's time. In autumn the female lays as many as 300 eggs. These she places in various pockets in the soil using her long ovipositor as a tool. The young nymphs emerge in the spring and pass through several moulting stages before they develop their wings. Feeding, music making and mating follow throughout the summer.

But the individual, as such, is a transient creature. As is common with our insect hoards, most of the adults perish with the first frosts of autumn.

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO
September 18, 1908
"Pontiac they make a brand of ice cream especially suitable for picnic parties. It will not melt in the hottest sun."

"When the library campaign was on, a year ago last spring, the opposition wanted sewers—why then right then—could not wait a minute; and then went to sleep. Well, gentlemen, this is a good time to wake up and get after those sewers. We will help you, but wake up!"

30 YEARS AGO
September 26, 1928
"A telescope to be used by classes in introductory astronomy was installed Tuesday at Cranbrook school. Captain Edwin T. Pollock, instructor in mathematics and astronomy, at Cranbrook, will conduct the classes."

15 YEARS AGO
September 16, 1943
"Lee Jenkins, who operated a gasoline filling station at East Maple and Hunter Boulevard, recently moved his family to Sherman Oaks, Calif. In a brief note this week he says: 'We've bought a home here in a community, we are sure, will prove to be as pleasant as Birmingham. Say hello to all and please forward copies of Eccentric. It hasn't rained here yet, either.'"

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Do We Call Them 'IDIOTS'?

Many of our words and phrases, like our customs, have not only lost their original meanings, they have acquired reverse interpretation. In early English "idiot" meant a private person, one who did not hold office; in other words an average citizen. Then it was given a connotation of unfitness, unqualified to be a public official, hence incompetent; finally lacking intelligence, mentally deficient.

Today, the average citizen calling his office holders and politicians "idiots" completes a neat cycle in reversing the meaning of a word. (Copyright 1956 John Emery Ent. Inc.)

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