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PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Asks Worried Parents Meet, Attack Teen-age Drinking, Party Problem

AN OPEN LETTER TO BIRMINGHAM-BLOOMFIELD PARENTS:

Several weeks ago a letter signed by "A University Student" appeared in The Birmingham Eccentric's People's Column, attempting to bring into the open the powerful effect our "sophisticated" way of life has on our sons and daughters.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The student, a Birmingham youth, admitted he had been drinking since he was 17, that it had caused him untold trouble, and he said he felt something should be done in the Birmingham area "to remedy the problem that most people know to exist.")

Surely many of you have been as concerned as I have been about some of the teen-age parties and high school dances that are given in our area.

Some parents make sure that they are present to chaperone the parties, but they themselves offer liquor to boys and girls who are inexperienced with and uninformed about the terrible tragedies which can develop from indiscriminate use of alcohol.

OTHER PARENTS simply are not there at all, in which case "anything goes." Parents of young children will have difficulty believing that such a condition as "A University Student" describes actually DOES exist, but they should face it now, before their children have to make their own decision as teenagers.

Our young people, especially the young men, seem to think that they are asserting their individuality and manhood by indulging themselves in the use of alcoholic beverages.

The tragedy lies in the fact that many of them are not only too young to obtain liquor legally (where DO they get it?), but they are also completely unaware of the dangers lurking in its habit-forming use—for it is habit-forming.

THE INDIANS didn't call it "firewater" without cause. Unfortunately, many of us parents are as ignorant as our children of the deterioration of mind, body, and soul which is brought about by excessive drinking.

We take those hangovers, fits of depression, and all the other unhappy symptoms for granted—never realizing that there is a better way of life apart from this "mad social whirl."

"A University Student" is actually lucky that in two short years he has come to see the error of his ways. Some people take 10 or 20 years—some never realize it.

COURAGE to bring a CHALLENGE like this to the parents of this area, THE BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY THEN RESTS UPON US. Do WE have the courage to accept? Do we dare to TRY for a solution?

This "cry for help" demands action, and it is directed to each one of us who has ever felt that "something should be done" about the drinking problem among teenagers. We know that each adult is responsible to himself, but if the children of our community can receive encouragement to live up to ideals which adults preach, but do not all abide by, our future will be that much brighter.

I do not know of a pat solution, but I am convinced that a group of REALLY concerned parents can work miracles. Situations such as this exist ONLY because we are all too willing to procrastinate—rationalizing away our pangs of conscience with the thought that "really isn't our business. BUT IT IS OUR BUSINESS, because whatever affects our neighbor affects us as well. I have heard of communities which have developed and carried out a teenage Code of Ethics. WHY COULDN'T WE?"

I am proposing a "brainstorming session" for all interested people (parents and/or teenagers, and their friends). I believe that if enough interested local parents and youth get together to discuss this problem, that a good start might be made to solve it, either in whole or in part.

To that end I will be pleased to arrange such a meeting. I can be reached at Mid-west 6-1647 at my home, after six o'clock evenings, and week ends, or during the day calls will be taken at Mid-west 4-2700.

"UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S ALLY"

Animal Shelter Needs Support

To the Editor:

Last Saturday the Anti-Cruelty association, an animal shelter that has served Detroit and its suburbs (within 50-mile radius) for 22 years, burned down. Seven dogs were killed including a mother and her three puppies and others terrified from their experiences are still at large.

The kennels were not fireproof, but it was the best the society could do, without the support of the citizens that it has loyally served.

IF THIS YEAR the shelter reha-

bitated and humanly destroyed 1,900 dogs and cats a month. Without help now, the services will have to be curtailed.

The Anti-Cruelty association knows there are many animal lovers who would like to help if they knew of this disaster and the urgent need for funds.

Every day this society is unable to operate more wounded, sick and abandoned animals will have to suffer.

Detroiters have always responded in answer to an honest call for help. Contributions will be gratefully received at the shelter headquarters, 12609 Joseph Campau, Detroit 12.

THE ORGANIZATION receives no United Foundation support, but relies solely on private donations.

MRS. T. J. DOUGLAS
Publicity Chairman
Anti-Cruelty association.

Directors Thank Volunteers

To the Editor:

Speaking for the board of directors of the Oakland County Society for Crippled Children, I wish to take this opportunity to express appreciation and thanks to the many hundreds of volunteers who so kindly assisted Mrs. Kirkby, society's executive secretary, through one of the most disastrous periods experienced by the Society from Feb. 16 to March 13.

The bursting of a steam pipe completely wrecked the headquarters' interior, ruining furniture, office equipment and most of all, tons of stationary which was then being processed for mailing to 18,000 residents of Oakland county by Feb. 27. This included typed envelopes, letters, brochures and Easter Seals, not much of which could be salvaged.

THEN THE hurried call for volunteers to begin the salvaging operations under the direction of Mrs. Kirkby, the procuring of a duplicate set of all necessary sta-

tionary and seals, all of which had to be sorted, retyped, grouped and ready to be mailed to over 184,000 addresses.

It was a gigantic task, but with the sympathetic help of volunteers, the work was accomplished by March 13. Without this help, it would have been impossible to mail the Easter Seals before Easter, which of course would have resulted in a very disastrous year for the Society.

So we are extremely grateful to the volunteer delegations from Pontiac, Rochester, Birmingham, Ferndale, Berkley, Walled Lake, the Clarkston high school students and the various Rotary club members who spent many evenings stuffing envelopes for mailing.

Man Likes Article

To the Editor:

My sincere commendation to The Birmingham Eccentric for reprinting the article "War Today Means a \$50 Billion Bite". We all need to have the issues spelled out as clearly as they were in your article.

ROBERT M. FRESHSE
Executive Director

Are You a Good Citizen?

To the Editor:

Now that spring is here a very timely complaint on neighbors where do you dump your deadwood cuttings, debris? In the nearest vacant lot? Or are you a good citizen? And neatly place in container for rubbish pick up day?

The department of public works do a very good job. They are glad to pick it up if at the curb on rubbish day. An owner of vacant property is made very unhappy while driving by to view your large investment (vacant lot) to find it is the neighborhood dump.

NEXT TIME you see a well kept yard—look to their nearest vacant lot . . . if their rubbish is there, they probably sweep their

regards to your subscription department for their outstanding service, which counts the most in my opinion.

JAMES J. REID, YNTS, USNR
Key West, Fla.

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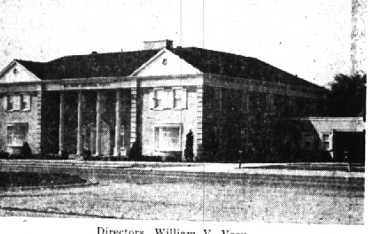
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Salutes Department

To the Editor:

I receive the Birmingham Eccentric every Monday. I have not missed an issue since in the service. You may give my personal

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