

## Have We The Strength of 1776?

"If drunk with sight of power we loose wild tongues that hold not thee in awe," what happens?

During this New Year, we might reflect on these words of Rudyard Kipling. For this is an age of materialism. When we speak of "the standard of living," we think only of more and gaudier gadgets—dishwashers, tail fins, T.V. sets and moon shots.

The standard of living today is a soft, fat one. The question is whether our nation is really stronger with atomic missiles than in 1776 when armed only with the "old queen's" arm, that Gran'ther Young fetched back from Concord, busted.

Could we "take it" this winter at Valley Forge under the conditions which faced Washington and his "ragged Con-

tinental"? Would we continue to fight for independence for seven long years? Every thought today is to reduce work, to take struggle out of our own and our children's lives. But without work, we grow weak, physically, intellectually and spiritually.

Strong fifteen-year old boys are forbidden, by law, to work! And what happens? In the public school buildings in New York City last year, about 160,000 panes of glass were broken by young vandals. Seventy-five fires were set, and 737 illegal entries were made in order to steal or just smash things up.

In older days, "the standard of living" covered more than creature comforts. Moral standards were included. It was "a time when men grew tall."

## From The Eccentric's Point of View...

France's de Gaulle finds it necessary to take on the powers of a veritable dictator, in his efforts to maintain his country as a so-called democratic nation. Why? Simply because the French people are unable, of themselves, to exert those self-disciplines, self-reliances that are necessary to the operation of a democracy. France, whose past was lustrous with glamor and glory, became a semi-decadent people. Too much devotion to the fleshpots weakened her—to which must be added that two World Wars in a generation made her tired. Thus, the rise of de Gaulle. This man, of course, alone cannot save her, cannot bring about a regeneration of strength to France—the people themselves must do that. De Gaulle is simply a contemporary catalyst, hoping to rouse Frenchmen to overcome their drift toward greater civic, economic and political dangers . . . with ultimate loss of personal liberty. A nation, you see, can rise and fall just like an individual can fall prey to his own weaknesses.

Alvin M. Bentley, 41-year-old Owosso Congressman, has become a Republican candidate against Democrat Senator Pat McNamara. The Owosso millionaire thinks he can win. Well, my own guess is that, in spite of Pat's former vocation as a plumber, Bentley won't find the contest a lead pipe cinch.

Personally, we believe that Bentley is doomed to defeat.

Why have Michigan Republican leaders failed to "draft" Cong. Robert P. Griffin, of Traverse City, to oppose McNamara? For Griffin, co-author of the Landrum-Griffin labor reform law last year, is a fighter . . . the type understood by average voters as a champion of policies best suited for the defense of the art of self-government, of freedom from bureaucratic controls. Griffin would really give Senator McNamara a contest!

This month, February, marks the 50th anniversary of the Boy Scout movement in the U.S.A. What a wonderful agency this has proved to be for American youth

. . . not to overlook some of its elders, too, who have benefitted inestimably through their working with the Scouts. May Scouting continue, to the everlasting glory of the inherent capacities for good living that reside in nearly all young people. (This admiration and praise goes for the Girl Scouts, too.)

One fact we should not overlook when we read the ever-increasing statistics about auto fatalities and accidents: every year our population increases, more cars are on the road and more pedestrians walk on our streets. While this affords no comfort to the human side of the subject, it does suggest that the ratio of components that create the disasters may not be on the increase.

To be sure, a score or two of Chicago's policemen did "go wrong", and finally the Windy City's police chief had to resign under fire. Yet, let's not forget that the wrong-doers are but a small part of the entire force—and this ratio is seldom exceeded in any large city where temptation proves too strong for some of its men in blue.

British researchers announce that if you marry at 24 and have at least two children you'll best be able to avoid divorce. Divorcees are double for those who marry under 20, and nearly two-thirds of the total number of divorcees occur among couples with either one or no children.

Over in foggy London some clothing manufacturers have accused British women of keeping their husbands in drab habiliments. Why? Say the women: "Because they look safer that way."

Recently a newspaper reporter asked Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt what she thought about the current crop of Democratic Presidential candidates. "They all look like Vice-Presidents to me," she replied.

If the processes of inflation continue very much higher, more and more of us will have to become high fliers in order to buy things.

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## ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

Why all this excitement over Jack Parr? He's walked out on past programs, and we'll all live to see him do it several more times—if his network bosses don't get tired of his act in the meantime.

That's just the kind of guy Jack is. Temperamental. Unpredictable. Personally, he's got the right to rebel at his network's censorship of his program, whether its over stale jokes about British water closets or his personal opinions about newspaper columnists like Dorothy Kilgallen.

On the other hand, Jack should realize the network has every right to censor anything he does or says on his program. Jack is working for NBC. And a boss has the right to set standards for his employees. He's a poor boss if he doesn't! If he figures W. C. Jones are not to be used, the only acceptable thing for Jack to do was to quit.

Thousands of people each week quit their jobs because of differences of opin-

ion with employers. But it is reserved only for the public personality to have a public stage upon which they can quit in a grand publicity gesture.

And that's just par for the course.

It's been more than three weeks' now that the Argentine navy has been trying to sink (?) two unidentified submarines in its territorial waters. This situation is beginning to take on the appearance of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

Our Michigan legislators for the second year in a row have tackled our state fiscal dilemma. How many of us "taxpayers for the second year are going to sit home and remain silent on how WE as individuals feel about THIS tax proposal or THAT financial solution?

Apparently, lifting a pen or licking a stamp is a greater task than paying any old kind of a tax!

## Everybody's Trophy



NATURE NOW by Lydia King Prehse  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

## Nature Molds to Fit Every Environment

Life's first law is self-preservation. To fulfill this demand nature has adapted the body of every living thing to fit advantageously into its particular environment.

So that it may function most successfully, a duck's foot is webbed to aid in swimming. This adaptation is characteristic of our large group of birds which depend for food upon their ability and swiftness in the water.

Another of our water birds, the penguin, has abandoned flight in exchange for increased swimming power. Its webbed feet are so sturdy that it can walk about on ice in the open position when it comes ashore to breed and rear its young.

THE VIRGINIA RAIL is a bird with unusually strong legs equipped with long toes to paddle over mud and marsh vegetation. The ring-necked pheasant, like our domestic fowl, has three long toes equipped with sharp pointed claws for swift running and for scratching for food in the ground. In addition, the leg of the cock shows a sharp spur which serves as fighting implement.

In order that he may groom his feathers and rid himself of lice the whip-poor-will has a comb-like claw on his middle toe. Perching birds such as the sparrows have long flexible feet with sharp pointed claws to perch and to lock in step on the branches of trees.

IN WINTER the ruffed grouse develops fleshy fringes on its toes for walking in snow. Since the woods are thick with ice living by climbing trees in search of insects, its foot shows a reversed fourth toe for clinging to vertical surfaces.

Carnivorous birds like the owl and the osprey have strong curved claws for grasping and tearing to bits the live flesh which is their food.

ANOTHER interesting adaptation of nature is the shape of the bird's bill. No finer weapon could

be devised for the murderous ways of the hawk or osprey than its strong, sharp and sturdy down-curved bill.

The parrot, which eats fruits or seeds, has a distinctive beak. The upper mandible is hooked and curved; the lower is shorter, deeper at the base and scoop-shaped to hold fruit juice and pulp.

The now rare limpkin of our Florida swamps has a long stout bill, its tip is deflected to one side enabling it to force its way into the mud snails upon which it feeds.

Such seed-eaters as the finches and grosbeaks have short stout bills which serve well as instruments for finding and crushing seeds which are their chief food.

PELICANS ARE large fish-eating birds with extremely long heavy beaks. The upper mandible is hooked, the lower is hinged and provided with an expandible pouch for storing food which is later fed to the young.

The bill of kingfishers, terns and gannets which catch food by diving underwater are sharp and pointed. Frequently the edge is roughened so that the fish may be held more securely. The puffin, another fish-diver, has a very odd bill large enough to hold several victims.

The mallard duck has a bill equipped with strainers for sifting bottom debris from a corner. The woodcock searches the muddy flats for worms and other small crustaceans using his long sharp and sensitive bill as a probe. Woodpeckers are characterized by straight sharp chisel-like bills used for following out their nests and for digging insects from the bark of trees.

THE FEET and bills of birds act as utensils and weapons. Their great versatility indicates the variety of food taken by them and the specialized methods they use in securing it. The sample I have written about bills and feet could also be noted about other bodily adaptations such as eyes, tails or bodily coverings.

This nature molds her creatures that they may function more perfectly, each in its own particular environment.

## Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

### 50 YEARS AGO

February 25, 1910

"Notice is hereby given to all fishermen that no circumstances will anyone be allowed to fish in Gilbert Lake. We own all the lands surrounding the lake. CHARLES L. KNOWLES, RICHARD MOREHEAD, BAYLIS BROS."

"A jolly sleigh load of young folks went from here to the home of John Fatchett's for an oyster supper, Monday evening."

"Solomon Monroe and Mrs. Victoria Robinson were united in marriage . . . Saturday afternoon. The happy pair left at once for their new home in Southfield. . . . The bride was gown'd in a white net waist and a black silk skirt, and they stood on a white fur rug while being married."

### 30 YEARS AGO

February 27, 1930

A woman who, aided by her husband and two sons, defrauded a local store of \$600, was given a suspended sentence in Birmingham justice court on condition she return to her Tennessee home. Her husband received a 2 1/2-to-five year sentence to Jackson prison.

Village and township clerks took a look at their election registration this week, and said it looks like only a few qualified voters will be at the polls for the March 3 primary elections.

Birmingham public library counted its books, then said this week it has "more than 12,000 volumes."

There'll be further lengthy delays in the decision whether to allow an elevated highway between

Maine was once the property of Massachusetts, which bought the other state for about \$5,000 in 1677 from the heirs of Ferdinando Gorges, who had received the land as a gift.

Everybody got into the act of making macaroni. The Chinese are believed to have invented it . . . the Germans supposedly introduced it into Europe . . . and now the U.S. has the largest macaroni industry in the world.

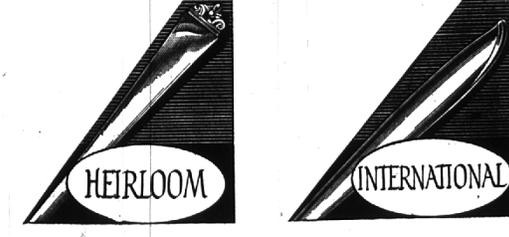
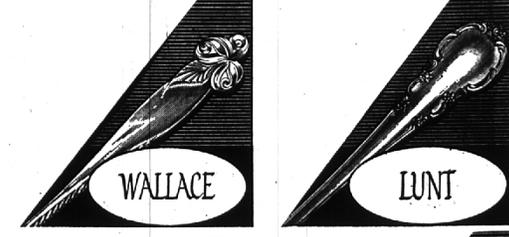
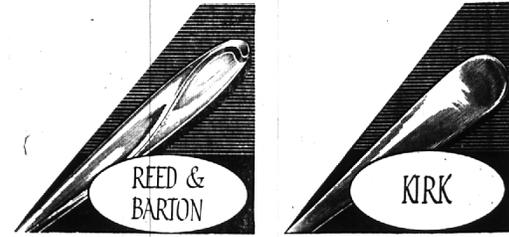
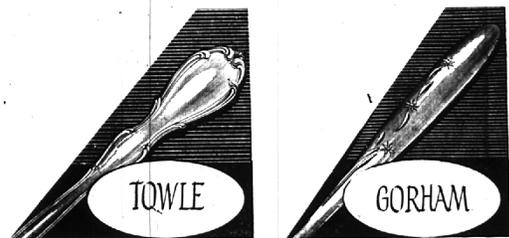
## The Old Timer



"Many a boy is the kind of kid his mother wouldn't want him to play with."

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## STRICTLY FRESH

It's funny how warm friends can cool to each other after a heated discussion.

The only trouble with a lot of teachers today is that they don't outgrow their pupils.

## YOU AIN'T MY DOLL



Future anthropologists listening to music of the 1900's may label this the "rock" age.

Some popular singers just can't seem to rise above their own treble.

Best part about a boxer's life is that he can still count up after he's been counted out.