

# Is This "The Age of the Shoddy"?

"This was the era, domestically, when everything was half done; the era, in foreign affairs, when nothing was done right because nobody seemed to care enough to exercise the foresight and take the pains to see that it was done right. This was the time when the job on the car was always half finished, the suit came back from the cleaners half dirty, the yardwork was overpriced and underdone, the bright new gadget broke down a week after you got it home, the prices climbed higher and higher as the quality got less and less, and the old-fashioned rule of a fair bargain for a fair price was indeed old-fashioned, for it never applied to anything. The great Age of the Shoddy came upon America after the war, and Everybody Wants His became the guiding principle for far too many."

Thus Allen Drury describes the postwar era, in his remarkable novel "Advise and Consent"—a work in which he uses the vehicle of fiction to present an extraordinarily revealing picture of Washington's political, diplomatic and social worlds.

The accuracy of his indictment is undeniable. Yet, in the immediate postwar years, it was possible to find seemingly valid excuses. The relaxation of war tensions resulted, naturally enough, in emotional and financial excesses. An attitude of "live for today and never mind tomorrow" became general. On the purely material side, the lifting of wartime restrictions on industrial production created an eager and apparently insatiable market for almost anything, no matter how poor the quality or exorbitant the price.

we are floundering as a people." And there lies the tragedy. For the basic strength of any nation is its moral strength. All the weapons, all the productive capacity, all the money on earth, cannot save a people from ultimate destruction if their moral fiber decays, their national character rots, and they sink into an abyss of material cynicism, indifference, selfishness, avarice, greed.

A short time ago the television scandals, centering around rigged quiz shows, captured the national headlines and were publicized the world around. The Saturday Evening Post has devoted a full-page editorial to the matter in which it makes a big and often overlooked point. It offers no excuses for the deceit—"those who have been damned by the revelations deserved to be damned." But, the Post also says "... we believe that the importance of their guilt has been wildly exaggerated, the significance of their guilt almost wholly overlooked. . . . What is important is that we recognize the television scandals for what they are—a symptom of the declining standards of moral behavior in the United States, that twinge in the national belly that warns of deep-seated malignancy in the body politic." And those declining standards, it goes on, can be found in some form and in some degree virtually everywhere—in schools, professions, the labor unions, business and the government.

So much for the indictments. There is a bright side. It is found in the fact that more and more people, in public and private discussion, are talking about the problem, thinking about it, worrying about it. An astute English observer of the American scene observed that the television mess may prove to be of enormous benefit—by awakening the American people to the extent and character of moral decay, and removing the blinders from their eyes. The American people have been awakened to many kinds of dangers in the past, and have met them with wrath, with courage and with understanding.

And that is the hope—that there will be a moral revival in this country, a cleaning of dirty houses. Failing that, everything else is doomed to fail. —Industrial News Review

HAD THIS SORRY situation spent itself in a reasonable time there would have been small cause for worry. But who can honestly deny that the dark picture Mr. Drury paints is still—in the fundamentals, if not all the details—the picture that obtains in this country?

The problem, of course, is a moral problem. The Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Michigan, the Rt. Reverend Richard Emrich, speaks for churchmen of all the denominations when he says: "Everywhere I travel I hear arguments, but I never hear a moral argument, with someone saying, 'this is wrong, or unjust, or dishonest, and I will have nothing to do with it.' I think

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

There are many who defend President Eisenhower's invitation to Khrushchev to visit the U.S. and Ike's acceptance of K's invitation to tour Russia. Also, there are many who oppose, holding that "there's a sharp distinction between negotiating with people and hob-nobbing with them."

As one reads contemporary history, often he is impressed with the inaccuracy of much that is printed. This only emphasizes the need for considerable questioning of histories that have been written many years ago . . . or of contemporary re-writes of histories of older times.

Some people stay away from church because, they argue, "I know that some church members are hypocrites and even sinners." Well, that's like saying that "I'll never send my children to school because too many pupils don't want to be educated."

We all know that the federal government makes surveys about most anything under the sun . . . but when will the U.S. Dept. of Labor tell us how many man (and woman, too) hours are lost every year by taking so much time to read menus and then order the meals?

It rightly has been said that no one is too big to be courteous—though, unfortunately, there are many who are too little.

Time and tide wait for no man, is an old saying. And how modern is this one: Many men have to wait for many women . . . more especially after marriage.

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## ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

For the past 10 years, it's been an Averill family tradition to view the outdoor Christmas decorations displayed in our community.

ideas as there are homes, it seems. Everything from lighted Christmas trees in front windows to elaborately lighted outside trees with their Santas and reindeer.

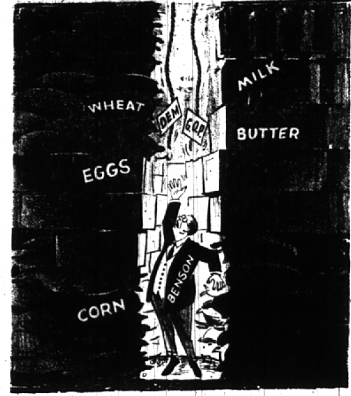
One night last week, we four spent better than two hours driving 25 miles up and down residential streets in Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, and Bloomfield township.

AS FOR COLOR: from the single color used to spotlight a special decoration or feature of the house, to the multi-colored spotlights and strings of bulbs strung across entire house fronts.

WHAT WE SAW GAVE US an inward glow. There's nothing like seeing the attractively-lit Yuletide welcome which we feel these decorations demonstrate.

There doesn't seem to be a community which makes so great a use of outdoor decorations as does the Birmingham-Bloomfield area. It's a wonderland of lights.

## You're Not Quite Reaching Me



## NATURE NOW

### Many Animals Enter Winter Hibernation

Now in the still cold of winter, many animals have entered a long sleep called hibernation. Breathing and heartbeat are all but extinguished and the bodily functions are reduced to a kind of stupor that is akin to death.

The woodchuck is typical of our hibernating mammals. In early autumn he eats enough extra clover and grass to cover his body with a thick layer of fat which is stored just under his skin. This is his food supply during the hibernating period. He then selects a site, preferably on the hillside of a farmer's wood lot, where he digs a slanting burrow ten to 25 feet long and two or three feet below the surface. The structure slopes sharply downward and then upward where it ends in a chamber of comfort. Frequently several tunnels branch out from this cavity, one of which acts as a back door escape.

ON A DAY in October the woodchuck or groundhog "boles up" for the winter. Legend says he emerges Feb. 2 to make a weather observation. If he sees his shadow, he will return to his burrow for another six weeks sleep. The fact is that he may leave his burrow briefly, often to seek a mate but he returns to it until late March or early April.

BATS HOLD the record for long hibernation with a seven-month period spent hanging head down in a cave or other secluded hide-out. Chipmunks, skunks, raccoons and bears are lighter sleepers. Sometimes a bear will hibernate under a hollow log or tree or even under a snow bank. His fat which weighs only eight to 18 ounces are born during this

## Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

**50 YEARS AGO**  
January 7, 1910  
"On New Year's day the MBA lodge held the first of its series of social meetings in their hall in the Ford building and it proved to be one of the most enjoyable and successful events of the season. About 50 including members and their invited friends, with games and social conversation whiled away the dying hours of the old year, and with laughter and dancing welcomed in the year 1910."

**15 YEARS AGO**  
January 4, 1945  
Ice was good on Quanton Lake Friday—so hundreds of young people participated in the Ice Carnival, cosponsored by the YMCA and the Baldwin high school student congress.

"The Sunday school of the First Presbyterian church held their annual meeting at the church . . . The stepobitan views have attracted many who perhaps would not have otherwise come."

At 4:20 a.m. Pfc. Francis Allen awoke, smelled smoke and then: 1) awakened his wife, 2) led her safely from their second floor apartment, 3) aroused the first-floor occupants, 4) phoned the fire department, 5) ran barefooted through the snow to get a ladder from a neighbor's home, and 6) climbed into a second-floor window and aided by firemen, brought out his two small children.

"Mrs. Algrim gave Carrier No. 1 a big load of cabbage and a sack of beans for New Year's."

**STRICTLY FRESH**  
Some executives who complain they don't know whether they are coming or going, should take another look. Perhaps it's just because they're standing still.

**30 YEARS AGO**  
January 9, 1930  
Birmingham's proposed 1930-31 budget of \$451,000 has brought demands from Village President Harold T. Ellberg for revisions to reduce costs. He also wants the public to be permitted to hear commissioners discuss budget provisions.

Why don't scientists investigate why coat hangers multiply so fast in dark closets.

A New Year's day accident at Woodward and Oak streets cost the life of a 10-year-old Birmingham girl.



A Franklin "fact-finding" committee will present its report on possible village incorporation at a public meeting early in February.

Most people who enjoy cranberry sauce twice a year, won't have to start worrying until they sell cranberry cigarettes.

Saturday will see a new F. W. Woolworth store open in the Briggs building, at Woodward and Maple.

Is it that we're growing older, or are they making calendars smaller lately?

Birmingham's new construction in 1929 totalled \$2,437,614, according to building inspector Donald C. Egbert.

## People's Column

### Liked Teen's Story On U-M Med Center

To the Editor:  
Through our clipping service we have received an article by Elizabeth Meese, SHS student, which appeared in your paper of Nov. 27, 1959.  
We would like to compliment Miss Meese on her clarity and accuracy in telling your readers about the facilities here at the U-M Medical Center.  
Enjoyed the article very much.  
WILLIAM BENDER, Jr., Editor, Health Sciences Relations

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VALUES TO \$70	<b>\$58<sup>75</sup></b>	VALUES TO \$95	<b>\$78<sup>75</sup></b>

## SPORT COATS

VALUES TO \$39.50	<b>\$29<sup>75</sup></b>	VALUES TO \$50.00	<b>\$39<sup>75</sup></b>	VALUES TO \$60.00	<b>\$44<sup>75</sup></b>
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## Dickinson's

Wabeek Building Birmingham Saginaw at Lawrence Pontiac