

When Is A Poll Not A Poll?

Gertrude Stein once confounded readers by writing a poem which told them, "A rose is a rose is a rose." Many Americans, unwittingly borrowing from Gertrude, believe that a poll is a poll is a poll.

There is too little inclination to distinguish among the various polls which purport to tell what Americans are thinking about this or that. Let it be reported that certain truths are warranted by a poll or survey of public opinion, and that self-same public tends to accept the findings as gospel.

This is an unhealthy state of affairs, especially when it comes to political polls. It should be remembered that polls, having been wrong more than once in the past, may well be wrong again. It should also be kept in mind that not all polls deserve the same amount of respect and trust.

POLLSTERS LIKE to think of poll-taking as a science. It is not yet that, but accuracy can certainly be increased to a great extent by following "scientific" techniques. The phrasing of questions is of vital importance, and so is the method of selecting those to be questioned. Other points of significance are the number of persons questioned, and the number of interviewers in proportion to the sampling.

If the pollsters want public acceptance of their findings, they ought to make public certain pertinent information. This should include identification of the person or organization responsible for a poll, the geographical area covered, the number of persons interviewed, the number of interviewers. Other items come to mind, but disclosure of these would do for a starter.

'Souping-Up' The Good Old Tunes

"Danny Boy" is one of those delightful songs which has an engaging melody and is easy to sing. In simpler years it was a great favorite when the family gathered around mother at the piano. Ever though sophisticates may have deemed it unduly sentimental, still it was a sweet number. It fitted nicely into the barbershop quart repertoire and the Saturday night band routine.

But if what the modern tunesmiths have

done to "Danny Boy" is a foretaste of what is coming, the disk jockeys will force nearly everyone out of the house. These "modernizers" have produced a souped-up version of "Danny Boy" which everyone over 25 must find unendurable.

We didn't think such distortion was possible. No old song is safe. They'll even be giving "Home, Sweet Home" the treatment—if they haven't already done so.

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

Yes, the undesired steel strike is over... and perhaps history will record the fact that, in the final analysis, it was not won by anybody. Why? For the simple reason that in the wake of the strike's settlement another inflationary rise will take place; American currency will become cheaper; the pensioner and fixed-salary worker will be hurt financially; and the high cost of U.S. labor will serve to increase foreign-made goods to compete with American products. Another why? wages, when increased, without accompanying increased productivity of goods, only makes existing goods cost more. So how, then, can higher wages result in purchasing more food, clothing and shelter?

Quite a fuss was made recently by Michigan Supreme Court Associate Justice Eugene F. Black when he dramatically declared himself in favor of officially opining that a majority of "Yes" votes over "No" votes (not a majority of all the votes cast in an election) on the question of holding a State Constitutional Convention should mean "go ahead and convene". Black made his open statement during a hearing on a plea by labor boss Gus Scholle that the present apportionment of State Senators should be declared unconstitutional. Black's statement astounded his colleagues, as well as many others in and out of official Lansing. Well, anybody who knows Gene Black very well should not be surprised at any pattern of "trail blazing".

The Birmingham Eccentric

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ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

Some weeks back, I was in a group which heard a Birmingham resident, Paul L. Penfield, talk about his hometown—past, present, and future. Penfield probably knows more about our town and this part of Michigan than do most people. He's lived in Birmingham for 30 years. He likes to study old records and papers, and has accumulated a great deal of knowledge of these parts.

WITH HIS COMMENTS on local history, Penfield displays a chart of Birmingham's past and predicted populations. It wasn't until the 1900's that Birmingham began to show appreciable percentage increases in population. In the '30s, the rate slowed wa-a-y down. Here's the past 99 years' figures, as presented by Penfield:

Year	Population	No. of Adm'l Increase	Per Cent
1860	550	—	—
1870	628	78	14
1880	733	105	17
1890	899	166	23
1900	1170	271	30
1910	1607	437	38
1920	3694	2087	138
1930	9639	5945	160
1940	11,196	1557	17
(Est.) 1950	15,467	4271	38
(Est.) 1960	25,500	10,033	65
(Est.) 1970	32,000	6500	26
(Est.) 1980	34,000	2000	6

These estimates are made by the company for which Penfield is advertising director—Detroit Edison Co. Edison's predictions, the record shows, have not been more than 5 per cent off.



Reception Committee by Lydia King Frehe

NATURE NOW Ailanthus Tree Gift from China

In winter when most of our deciduous trees are barren of leaves and fruit, the ailanthus clings tenaciously to its clusters of long-winged seeds. It is one of the most common of our city trees. Originally a foreigner, come to us from faraway China, it is now naturalized in the eastern United States and is abundant in the lower part of our state. The ailanthus is not a choosy member of the tree tribe for it will grow anywhere within its range. If a seed falls in some back alley, it will take root and establish itself in the most sterile soil and adapt itself to sun or shade. It flourishes in crowded tenements sending down long, a 1 1/2 inch roots in some cases. One of its habits is to produce runners which grow up under the most adverse conditions. On the other hand it is a plant which can take its place on some tended lawn where it soon becomes a handsome shade tree. The ailanthus will grow rapidly to a height of 40-60 feet developing a trunk two to four feet in diameter. Its spreading loose crown is made up of alternate pinnately compound leaves, the latter adorned with 11 to 41 leaflets. Except for its larger and coarser appearance, a young ailanthus might be mistaken for a sumac. However, with the coming of autumn the difference is soon evident as the leaves take on its characteristic scarlet color. LEAF FRONDS Three feet in length often grow on the mature tree. The flower clusters appear as male and female, each kind borne on its own separate tree, so that the seeds are present only on the female tree. As summer advances, the flowers develop into large clusters of yellowish to red-dish-brown seeds with the latter developing midway at the widest part of the winged dispersal mechanism. Unfortunately the term "Tree of Heaven" is not a complimentary one but comes from the ill-scented male flowers which "smell to heaven". So objectionable is this odor in June, when the flowers come into bloom, that only the female is planted, because it is free from this objection. THE HISTORY of the ailanthus goes back to 1751 when seeds were sent from China to England by Jesuit missionaries. It quickly adapted itself to its new home but the leaves did not provide a satisfactory food for silk worms as was hoped. This tree was introduced to the United States by way of Philadelphia, Rhode Island and New York states. However it came into disfavor until nursery men learned to plant only the scent-free female tree. The beauty of its unfolding leaves is one of the delights of springtime. In early autumn when the leaves are already bare the ailanthus clings late to the greenness of its leaves and its burnished flower clusters. DRIVING THROUGH Detroit on this winter morning, we were reminded once more of the hardy habits of the ailanthus for its flower clusters still adorn the bare branches. But the wind-blown seeds finally taking root in many a crack or crevice which other plants would scorn. The short-lived habit of the ailanthus can be attributed to the fact that it soon develops a hollow trunk and on a day of high winds a tree having every appearance of health and vigor will be felled. If you see a tree with clusters of clinging seeds which seem to grow out of the cement about a tenement house or in a crowd of alleys, it is almost certain to be the "Tree of Heaven" which came to us from faraway China.

Happenings of Long Ago
Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

59 YEARS AGO
January 21, 1910
Articles of association have been filed with the county clerk at Pontiac, organizing the Oriental Detroit Motor Car Co., to be located in this village. This is purely a home company. All those interested are people dwelling in our village or vicinity. Land has been secured from T. B. Smith, and it is said the company will coin money, make a good machine and soon have a factory second to none in the state.

"A very small fire at Green's laundry, Sunday evening last, called out the fire department, and our entire population. The cause of the fire is unknown. Loss, \$50."

"Allen A. Castle will leave the old farm in the spring, and take up new life in the little city of Birmingham."

38 YEARS AGO
January 23, 1910
Hearing on a proposed ordinance to authorize the construction of an elevated highway between Detroit and Pontiac along the right-of-way of the Grand Trunk railroad will be held at 11 o'clock Friday morning before the Detroit common council.

15 YEARS AGO
January 18, 1945
Birmingham's city board has suggested to the plan commission that a service drive be constructed along the east side of Hunter Blvd. from London to Madison. It would eliminate many traffic hazards, planners said.

A "splendid record" for salvage collection was compiled in Birmingham during 1944, it was disclosed this week. Residents donated 1,762,899 pounds of paper, metal, tin, fats, rags and old clothing.

Shares Wealth

JIG RAPIDS, Mich.—Walter R. Braund of 1440 W Long Lake road, Bloomfield Hills, has presented Ferris Institute a gift of \$400 for the underwriting of two scholarships at the college. He has given prior gifts to the college for scholarship purposes. Braund is an alumnus of Ferris Institute. He was a commerce graduate of that school in 1931.

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