

The Birmingham Eccentric

Published every Thursday at Birmingham, Mich., in The Eccentric Building, 1225 Bowers Street Telephone MDwest 4-1100

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Think Again, Mr. Romney

Perhaps, within the past decade, there has been no male citizen of Michigan who has identified himself more prominently with the cause of good, dynamic government than George Romney of Bloomfield Hills, president of American Motors Corp. He first gained prominence when he launched Citizens for Michigan, a state-wide non-partisan organization of men and women who are enlisted in improving government, especially on the state level. Romney, alert, aggressive, a salesman of top stature, is, at heart, a modern crusader for the good life. As the leader in the southeast Michigan stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon), Romney has accomplished much for his religious organization.

HE NEITHER SMOKES nor drinks. Yet he can rub shoulders with those who do, be it in industry or among politicians. Romney is not stuffy.

At present, he is active as a delegate from Oakland County to the Michigan Constitutional Convention. He is a vice president of that body, too.

At various times George Romney has been mentioned as a possible candidate for Governor of Michigan. Up to 10 days ago, he had not openly, officially, accepted such a label, preferring to remain "just a plain citizen of Michigan, who wants to do what he can to improve government."

In this non-partisan role (though he admits that he leans toward the Republican Party more than the Democratic) Romney has developed a considerable following. There is little doubt but what many scores of thousands of Michigan voters would like to see him enthroned in the governor's chair in our state capitol.

OF LATE, EVEN the office of President of the United States has been credited with his name by no less a person than one of the outstanding U.S. newspapermen, James Reston, head of The New York Times Washington, D. C., news staff. Well, all this sounds fine, and certainly is flattering.

But there are, at present, political pitfalls along the route being suggested for George Romney.

It must be remembered that the citizen following he has thus far developed is the result of his civic activities as a non-partisan, a man not seeking any elective office.

This status, if we may coin a fitting phrase, makes George Romney what we call a "political virgin." As such, he looms high against the usual roster of politicians, like a lighthouse in a heavy fog.

"ROMNEY ISN'T after a political job," say some voters. "He is not seeking our franchise. Like us, the average citizen and taxpayer, he wants efficient and economical government. In his civic activities he simply wants to lend his tremendous civic

interest and leadership for the cause of better government."

Well, that is the mental pattern in which countless thousands of Michigan citizens hold George Romney.

But all this may be changed. Last week he was reported to have made contact with Michigan Republican leaders, intimating that "he is considering becoming a Republican candidate for governor in 1962." If so, who will lead non-partisan Citizens for Michigan? I immediately he will probably lose much Democratic support, though it may be offset by greater Republican following.

Will organized labor oppose Romney? Probably, on the claim that he is not only a Republican but tremendously influential as an industrial leader.

IF WE WERE ASKED to give advice to 'George Romney' at this time we believe we would suggest: "That he reject the current lure and glamour accruing to the governorship until the new Michigan Constitution is completed and approved by the voters. "This new document no doubt will include a four-, instead of a two-year term for governor. It will require at least that much time for a man of Romney's abilities (or any other capable man) and ideas to get across certain improvements and reforms he would like to see in operation in state government.

"The present two-year term is not long enough to do such a job, because much of two years are consumed in 'getting acquainted with the job,' plus the need for a governor to continue efforts to maintain his party's organization."

BY REMAINING A private citizen, he would be in that political geographical area far removed from becoming a target of the opposition, and thus, we believe, better able to defend and help to win voter approval of the new Constitution. Romney is still a young man (54) and his political future will depend upon what he does prior to actual entrance into that unpredictable battleground of the democratic civic process.

George Romney's immediate personal problem is no small item confronting him, of course.

Actually, to date, he has made no formal statement that he is a 1962 gubernatorial candidate. We trust that he quietly and calmly and very objectively will re-examine his relationship to the question—not be rushed into a quick decision as the result of urging by others, or by potential competition from other possible candidates for the same office.

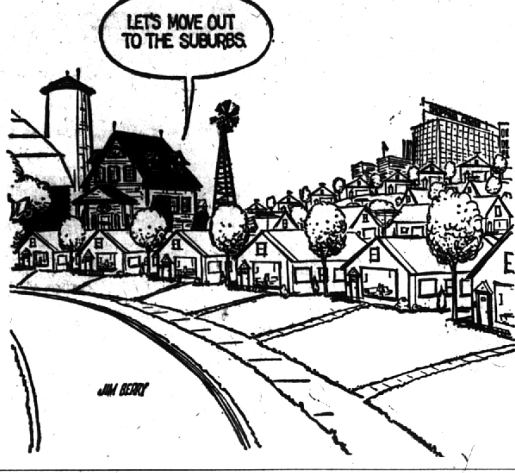
OUTSTANDING SUCCESS as a governor of a large state could prove one for presidential consideration, to be sure.

But such a goal is no less difficult to achieve than is industrial achievement in the manufacture and merchandising of, for example, automobiles. And neighbor Romney certainly knows much about this latter activity.

By PHA, but never did Cash show him any favors, also 'tis reported. So Cash gets no credit for his gambling, even though he will not have to hand over any cash to liquidate the L.O.U. Seems as though Mr. Cash should refrain from gambling.

Robert F. Wagner has been re-elected mayor of New York City. Leaders of his own Democratic Party, as well as Republicans, declare Wagner to be about the wisest, poorest mayor New York has had in a generation. Yet President Kennedy personally campaigned for Wagner, and so did Eleanor Roosevelt and former U.S. Senator Herbert Lehman. All of which merely reveals how and maybe why some politicians, in order to win for their party, will (with tongue in cheek) utter words that are far from the facts. For they all praised Wagner. (Note to Attorney-General Robert Kennedy, whose department is fighting for "truth in advertising": Has it ever occurred to you, Sir, that "truth in politics" would better serve the cause of self-government?)

Of course, every branch of the military service, along with most other human beings, makes mistakes... some of them big, some a little bit like. Like the case of a Virginia chap who got his orders to "join up" recently with the Army. Openly, courageously, this chap defied the Army's orders to "join up" with great confidence, too. For the chap is 80 years old!



PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Open Season Declared On the Super-Patriots?

To the Editor: This must be an open season on "Right Wing Extremists" and "Super-patriots" as concerted denunciations are coming up from our duly elected officials in a steady barrage. Why is this? Where, devotion and loyalty to America in a steady barrage. Why is this? Where, devotion and loyalty to America in a steady barrage. Why is this? Where, devotion and loyalty to America in a steady barrage.

persecution for spreading the gospel of truth, so do the grass-roots patriotic organizations grow, because only well informed citizenry can resist the dangers of demagoguery, apathy and a surrender of our freedom. God bless America and all American Patriots! S. OLSHANSKA 4800 Haddington Birmingham

Not Thankful?

To the Editor: It seems incongruous to me that in a community so abundantly endowed by God with all good things, only a handful of its people were sufficiently thankful to take time to attend the Birmingham Community Thanksgiving service last Thursday. M. S. P.

John F. Peters' barn, down on the old Wooster farm, caught fire last Monday and despite the fact that Mr. Peters' Smith, with his big 5-ton auto, took a load of eager fire fighters down to the scene, the barn was a total loss. Rihel Kennedy of our village is a very busy lady. Besides having duties to perform at the Royal Oak telephone office, she has 12 pupils, including the violin at the Detroit Conservatory of Music.

Local Teens Spend \$1,712,000 A Year

(Special to the Eccentric) NEW YORK—How big is the teen-age market in Birmingham? It is estimated to spend each year for food, clothes, beauty care, entertainment and the other needs and whims their particular costs are in this direction. They have never figured them out.

Both sides of Woodward Avenue and the boardwalk stretch between the two cement lanes, from 11 Mile Road to Birmingham, will be lined with trees 100 feet apart, 60 trees in all being used in the planting. The state highway department was made the announcement and is already engaged in organizing crews and securing equipment for the planting. The project is one of a series the department has planned in its winter program for the relief of unemployment. G. O'Neill, resident forester said.

Talk of the Towns

John Heywood, who lived from 1497 to 1580, compiled one of the earliest collections of English colloquial sayings. Here are some of them—with comments to update them a bit. "Haute maketh waste." Driving north on Woodward at 5:30 pm. "Look ere ye lape." Evans Ditch and other tributaries of the good old River Rouge. "The fat is in the fire." Public hearings. "When the sunne shineth, make hay." Dads of Little League.

"The moone is made of greene cheese." No spot for a subdivision. "Love me, love my dog." Recently defeated Bloomfield Township ordinance on the hed. "What Dad wants when hanging pictures. "Old their noses to the grindstone." Ouch. "Better to give than to take." Sewers. "Two heads are better than one." Even though shopping for shirts is a problem. "To tell tales out of school." PTA. "Better late than never." Eccentric deadlines. "The rolling stone never gathereth mosse." Just creates hole in road. "To robbe Peter to paye Paulie." Budgets. "Many small make a great." Arrival of quads. "A penny for your thought." Remembering overdue meter. "You stand in your own light." And the bill comes every two months.

Suburban Sidelights

By HANK HOGAN

Some local Suburbanites spent the weekend in New York recently and were overwhelmed by the unfriendly attitude of the "Big-City" dwellers.

A cabbie at the airport tried to convince them that he should take them downtown without the benefit of the meter ticking. He set a price. The party refused and he did not take another cab. They did and the metered fare was less than his quoted price.

They stayed at one of the new hotels in the city where the employes apparently are not permitted to smile.

The first night they went to the theater they had trouble getting a cab. After they had waited quite a long time, a big black limousine pulled up and the driver said he would take them. After they all climbed in, the driver said the eight-block trip would cost \$10. The party climbed out again.

WHEN THEY finally reached the theater they were met by a large woman with a still larger voice, who was a combination of head usher, program salesman and hat check girl. They were not accustomed to paying over \$10 a seat and were treated as unwelcomed interlopers.

Breakfast the next morning was unbelievable. The service and attitude of the waitress were both, to say the least, poor. They then went to Rockefeller Center to see the skaters. The first man to tell them that he was not permitted to skate was a young man who was not permitted to skate.

That evening after dinner they again headed for the theater. They had half an hour to go some 10 blocks. They waited for a cab. Many came and many went. People fought for them. The half-hour was gone, and still no cab.

All of a sudden a big Cadillac drove up and the driver asked where they were headed. When they told him, he said, "Hop in. I've got nothing to do until 11." And they whisked in to the theater.

This small effort by a city resident far overshadowed the previous actions of the inhabitants of the largest metropolis in the world. The suburbanites had the opportunity to see the city underneath, not just the coarse surface exterior.

WE MIGHT in our own city remember that a man in a big Cadillac may not come along to change outsiders' impressions of us. We might reflect that indifferent service does not bring back customers.

The moral to the story then is that the heart of a city is shown about when it is covered by a rough exterior, and that the only way a stranger knows we appreciate his patronage is by a smile and a friendly attitude.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

Business was slow in the gas station that Sunday afternoon 20 years ago.

The attendant and his 15-year-old assistant went about their usual Saturday afternoon cleaning chores.

The boy day-dreamed as he swept and washed down the floor of the lubrication room.

He paid little attention to music coming from a radio on the tool bench.

A car pulled up in the drive, and the attendant hurried out to wait on it.

THE BOY went on with his work. There was an interruption in the radio program, but he did not notice.

A little later, another interruption. Again, no reaction. The attendant returned from serving the customer at the gas pumps, he heard the radio announcer breaking into the program once again.

"What was that?" asked the attendant. "Something about bombs?"

Immediately, the boy snapped to attention. "We repeat. The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor. In a sneak attack early this morning..."

"This means war," said the attendant. And the boy solemnly nodded his head.

He listened attentively to the radio the rest of the day—and for many days thereafter.

THAT WAS Pearl Harbor Day. The day that changed the lives of millions of people.

For the boy, it meant accelerating his high school program so he could graduate before the draft reached him.

Then, in January, 1945, came that letter from President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"Greetings," it started. "Your friends and neighbors have selected you to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor."

It meant serving 22 months in the Army of the United States, including 14 months on Leyte and Guam. Which made possible a four-year college education on Uncle Sam.

Which resulted in his landing a newspaper job.

AND HERE I am 20 years after Pearl Harbor Day, a man with a family, a good job, with memories of the past, with concern—and hope—for the future.

Asking the question, "Will my children face war, too?"

'Big Fires' Costly in U.S.

In the United States recurring "big fires" account for about a fourth of the nation's total \$1.5 billion in losses.

Fire chiefs define the "big fire" as one resulting in damage of \$250,000 or more. Last year, 1960, there were 342. Total damage amounted to \$285,000,000.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs reports that the nine most often burned occupancies among areas were, in decreasing proportion, public schools, steel fabricating plants, hotels, supermarkets, chain stores, and dining centers, restaurants, shopping centers, and department stores.

As for the human loss that results from an average of 11,300 yearly deaths over the last 10 years, no estimate can possibly be made. "Who can calculate the earning potential of 11,300 persons killed by fire in youth or maturity, or their possible contribution to art, science, literature?" he asks.

For every well-publicized "big fire" and its grievous loss, there are hundreds of thousands of small casualties by defective or overheated heating equipment. Other causes were flammable liquids, cutting and welding operations, and lightning.