

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Questions on Civil Defense

It's time to raise some questions about the direction Birmingham is taking toward civil defense.

In recent weeks the city commission has: Approved a survival plan designed to cope with natural or man-made disaster. Authorized the city manager to devise preliminary plans for a fallout shelter in city hall.

Told the manager to secure a full-time civil defense director, either on a voluntary or paid basis.

Discussed but did not accept nor reject the manager's preliminary plans for a city shelter, at an estimated cost of \$50,000.

Gave the manager authority to investigate the availability of Federal funds. Authorized (last week) the manager to consult experts in regard to a plan for a combined shelter-operational center.

Reacted hesitantly (last week) to the manager's job description for the position of civil defense director.

ALTHOUGH SPECIFIC points might be questioned, basically the survival plan serves a useful purpose and is worthy of implementation. It provides for operation of the city whether an emergency arises from such tragedies as a severe wind storm or a nuclear attack.

Certainly, the prospects of tornadoic storms always exist, and the danger of nuclear attack will persist as long as the world situation remains as tense as it is today.

But does the City need a fallout shelter? There is no affirmative or negative answer to this question. No one can be sure whether such a facility is needed.

All the city fathers can do is weigh all the information they can gather, listen to the state and national governments for advice and act according to what they feel is best for the people of Birmingham.

IS A FULL-TIME civil defense director needed? Is the situation that serious, is there that much work to do to warrant the hiring of a full-time director? Is the scope of the program such that a full-time director is needed to carry it out?

Are city officials realistic, are they practical in their approach to the problem? Couldn't the absolute essentials of civil defense be met with a part-time director? Does the City have the funds with which to pay the salary of a director and to pay

for a shelter? Where would it obtain these funds?

SOME PEOPLE believe that because federal money is available city governments should take advantage of the opportunity and apply for it, regardless of the local situation.

Is this the picture in Birmingham? Are we considering asking for dollars from Uncle Sam just because he has it available? Or do we need to rely on him?

Preliminary estimates indicate that building a shelter on the basis suggested by the Federal Government—in order to qualify for federal funds—would cost tremendously more than the one proposed by the manager a few weeks ago.

Is the city capable of obtaining this kind of money at this time? If so, should it? Should it assume such an undertaking? Is the need that great?

ONE COMMISSIONER has contended that the civil defense director should have authority over all department heads, including the chiefs of fire and police. Should he?

These people now have two bosses—the city manager and assistant city manager—besides the city commission and the voters. Would adding a third person make for sound, efficient, effective administration?

Civil defense today hardly compares to what it was 10 and 20 years ago. Weapons are much more devastating, the world situation differs drastically, the people themselves are much more concerned with and aware of civil defense, the entire scope is much broader than it has been in the past.

So, shouldn't the question of hiring a civil defense director be decided first? Then a director be hired? And the commission act on his recommendations?

THE PRESENT city manager serves also as civil defense director. Should this dual-role be retained or should it be split into two distinct positions?

Again, shouldn't a decision on the position of director be reached before attempts are made to answer the other questions?

Interest in civil defense is mounting. The city manager has said it is fast becoming an integral part of government.

Should not the City and the people consider now the questions raised here? We offer them for that purpose.

'Rule 9' Deprives People of a Right

"Rule 9" is now almost a year and a half old, although its enforcement is still held up by a court injunction.

It was promulgated by the commissioner of the Michigan Corporation and Securities Commission in July of 1960 with the announced intention of eliminating segregated housing.

The "Rule" provides that no real estate broker or salesman shall allow his client to refuse to enter into any real estate or business transaction because of race, creed or color.

The penalty to the broker or salesman is loss of his license.

WHAT IT MEANS to Birminghamites is that if a property owner lists his home for sale with a broker, the broker cannot allow the property owner to refuse to sell the property to anyone because of race, creed or color.

Very few Birminghamites, or any other Americans for that matter, have criticized the intention of "Rule 9". Very few Birminghamites, however, should accept the effects of the rule lying down.

Under the guise of anti-discrimination, a bureaucrat has usurped the power of the legislature and taken away one of our hard-fought liberties, the right to sell or not to sell our property to whomever we please. The legislature in the last session tried to rectify the wrong but the proposed effort was vetoed by the governor along with 18 other bills.

The effect of the Rule is to discriminate against property owners who want to sell to whomever they please but who engage a broker to help them.

THE "RULE" was promulgated because some real estate brokers in another Detroit suburb devised a point system as a method to exclude what they felt were undesirable from their community.

These brokers clumsily tried to enforce their own beliefs and prejudices on home owners.

The cure, however, is worse than the disease. The action of the commissioner can be further criticized since he waited to put the Rule into effect until a few weeks before the primary election last August when there was a fear of losing a minority vote.

Because of his "keen insight," he has been promoted from his state office to one of the highest federal positions in our state.

THE ECCENTRIC is not advocating segregation in our community. It is not endorsing or condoning the brokers' conspiracy in the other Detroit suburb to exclude what they felt were undesirable.

It is merely questioning the method of a non-elected official to deny (because of his own prejudices), the people of the State of Michigan their Constitutional right to hold property or dispose of it anyway they wish.



It's the Day After That's Happenings Really Christmas for Mom of Long Ago

By CLEO SYMONS Special Writer

All children and most grown-ups would unhesitatingly say that Christmas is their favorite day. But your vote goes to the day after Christmas. It is like no other time. Filled with peace and plenty, gratitude and memories, it has no pressures or frizzled nerves; no anxieties. And while it saddens you to know there are some who have less than all the joys inherent in the season, you can only sigh and resolve to share more another year. The feeling of expectancy and excitement are gone. All hopes and desires have been reasonably fulfilled. From those kindled by the voices of the robed choir singing in your church to the dreams of eager-eyed children who awoke to morning surprises.

YOU WANDER around in your new housecoat, admiring the linoleum tree, by the tree a Dresden-bare angel that has gained a score of predecessors.

You smell the fragrant greens on mantle and stairs and drink in the aromatic spice of bayberries, recalling other times, other customs. You lift your eyes to a varnished swag of evergreens festooned from every archway, and think fondly of each friend who sent them. You catch the glint of crystal and brass, the whiff of leather, from gift sets and accessories. You revel in thoughts of lovely lingerie, sweaters and your husband's dress-hats there in boxes on the window-sill. Even if it is only the frivolous pair of slippers you wanted so desperately, you are happy.

DO NOT Y see just the mess, the dead ashes and charred chunks there in the fireplace? someone may. Of course not. You see yesterday's bright blaze mirrored in dear faces and refuse to be intimidated by the tangle of ribbon, crumpled paper and boxes left behind by a hasty scavenger. Kicked-up rugs and trampled crumbs do not distress you in the least today. You sink down in an easy chair with a cooling cup of coffee, blind and deaf to the duties that cry out to you. "I'll relax just a minute before I put my hand to the plow," you tell yourself.

The family has scattered to the four winds to try out new sleds and skates, to show off wrist watches, fur mittens—even a new pair of slippers. Like a shipwrecked sailor, the old black checker flops down at your feet, companionably the most of this island of quiet.

WITH THOUGHTS of the aim shaft in your bedroom closet in mind, resolutely you turn away from the dish of yuletide sweets at

your elbow. With equal fortitude, you pick up your new best-seller, determined to take only a hasty peek.

Seconds later you have forgotten the spectre of unmade beds, breakfast dishes, houses to set, to rights and the load of table linen you meant to toss into the automatic washer. Your faithful subconscious—smugly aware of a freezer and refrigerator bulging with the makings of snaks, meals and midnight raids—slyly whispers: "Make it easy, girl, you've earned it."

Two hours, several chapters and an empty dish later, you are getting your way to Miami with the runaway heroine, who is properly chastising a cheating spouse fortified by their joint bank account.

YOU HEAR footsteps bounding onto the porch and the door bursts open. Without raising your head, you acknowledge cries of "Mom! Mom! Mom!" with an absent wave of the hand toward the kitchen.

"You sick!" they chorin, in tones that plainly mean: "Are you crazy or something?" "While your eyes continue to whip back and forth across the pages, you mumble something that should be: "Help yourselves," and they reluctantly troop out of sight. Presently you are reassured by loud clanking, opening and shutting of the refrigerator door, and finally a prolonged silence. They have found something to keep body and soul together until you come to life again.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN then and dusk, you manage to lay the wind of a telephone conversation with someone whom you haven't talked to since day before yesterday. When dinner time arrives, you renege on the date; you eat a savory dressing and all the trimmings you were too keyed-up to enjoy during the stress of yesterday.

Finally, you gather around the fire with the family. While each one is engrossed by his new space toy, chess game, baby doll, novel or whatever, you have time to think long thoughts about the coming of Jesus and all the events it set in motion.

UNEASILY AWARE of threats of war, you are sobriety grateful for all those unwrapped gifts under your tree: The necktie of DEW-Line listening posts that guard the nation; the slender chain of sub- from (SEE CHRISTMAS, 6-B)

Bits of News Cleared From Old Files of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO

Dec. 15, 1911 Elijah Adley, after the absence of 30 years, is around on his old stamping ground. His wife, who accompanied him from his Idaho home, is visiting her relatives in Gratiot county while "Lije" is enjoying himself in this vicinity. Adley has a big grocery at Pollock, Idaho.

The Oakland Realty Co. together with Ernest Petry, Jr. and James F. Shore of Detroit, have bought the Harrison Hamlin farm and are cutting it into 5-acre farms, three of which are already sold. This is only one of several tracts bought and sold out in small farms and the demand is just starting. The Hamlin farm on Maple Avenue, a state macadamized road, within easy walking distance of the car line, makes an ideal home location.

Our birdman, Eugene Heth, is known in the aviation world as "Wild Bill, the Cloud Buster." His highest flight was 4,000 feet and he was in the air 32 minutes. He is making exhibition flights at Tupelo, Miss., for the Wright Brothers.

30 YEARS AGO

Dec. 17, 1931 An important financial change was announced today by the officers and directors of the First National Bank when they made known the purchase of the Birmingham Savings Bank by the First National Bank of Birmingham. The transaction was completed Wednesday night when the records and assets of the Birmingham Savings Bank were moved to the offices of First National. On and after Dec. 17, customers of the Birmingham Savings will be served at the offices of First National.

A. C. Uter, 872 Southfield, was appointed Wednesday as chairman of a committee from the Property Owners Division of the Birmingham Real Estate Board to investigate the relative advantages and disadvantages which would result if Birmingham should incorporate as a city. The Property Owners Division has asked a report be submitted within 90 days.

The Village Unemployment Relief Committee and its correlated agencies are preparing to provide Christmas food and clothing for about 1,000 Birmingham families, according to Lloyd B. Reid, welfare director.

15 YEARS AGO

Dec. 12, 1946 Plans for the children home decoration program, recently set up by (SEE HAPPENINGS, 6-B)

Suburban Sidelights

By HANK HOGAN

'Twas the nights before Christmas and all through the houses, the TV sets were exploiting our young with last-minute visions of what every child needs under the Christmas tree.

Have you noticed that the answer to "What would you like Santa to bring you for Christmas?" changes every half-hour, unless your child is watching a 15-minute TV program, then the answer changes every 15 minutes.

Not being a confirmed TV viewer, I had the opportunity to sit before that almighty electronic gadget (or is it an institution now) for a couple of hours before dinner last night.

If the American people are concerned about the infiltration of Communism or the potential devastating effects of a nuclear bomb, these are nothing compared to the subversion of our children's minds by continuous and misleading advertising.

My daughter's favorite half-hour program started off with 15 minutes of continuous ads the other night.

GAMES THAT are played on boards with miniature pieces are depicted in these ads by real live pirates or actual size tanks. When a child receives these gifts he probably he was disappointed because he can pick up the miniature tank, not drive it. Talking dolls are depicted walking around like real live human beings.

These things are pounded into their little minds and they are not prepared to sort the real from the make believe.

Can you imagine that a five-year-old girl wants a Robot Commando (a battery-operated plastic robot about a foot and a half tall that acts on voice commands) and Garloo, the remote controlled monster (an ugly 22-inch plastic monster that picks up objects), as a result of watching TV?

BECAUSE THE ADS have such a tremendous influence on our youngsters, the manufacturers are in a position to charge astronomical prices, although most of the stores are discounting the toys now.

The ads make no effort to reach certain ages. They are scatter-shot to appeal to all ages although the toys were designed for certain intelligence levels.

We all get disturbed about the commercializing of Christmas. But this is a step beyond. Not only are they turning the Lord's birthday into an outlet for their products, but they are instilling in our unprotected young a greed and an unnatural desire for materialistic goods.

There are laws protecting children from some influences that are deemed by society to be unhealthy, such as sex and drink.

Should not the television industry take upon itself the responsibility of protecting its little listeners from this influence before parents start a forced black-out or governmental authorities step in and make rules?

After all, with power comes responsibility. As long as the industry's leaders know they have this power, they should use it prudently.

By KEN WEAVER City Beat

A parent complained about prayers in the classroom. So Bloomfield School District officials ordered the practice stopped.

This appears to be ridiculous. Why shouldn't children say prayers in school? Is not a wholesome habit for them to develop—in school and other activities as well as in the home and church?

Should they not be aware of God's existence outside of the home and church?

What about the pledge of allegiance to the flag? Should it be discontinued because of the phrase "one nation under God"? Is that not also a fostering of religion in the schools?

What about non-sectarian prayers? Wouldn't it be all right to say them? Who would be offended? Why should a complaint from one parent bring about an end to prayers?

So what if some children say "amen" and others make the sign of the cross? Don't they thus learn at an early age that people are different; that to get along in this world they must accept this and other differences?

Besides, how many children would notice or pay much attention to the difference in how prayers are ended? Is it not through parents that children learn prejudices?

THAT'S ONE side of the ledger.

Now for the other. Has it not been determined that there is no legal basis for prayers in the school? Separation of church and state, you know.

Would not the saying of prayers open a wedge for those who would introduce religion in the schools? What about John and Jane Doe? They come from a family that believes that neither the existence nor the nature of God is known or knowable.

And what about those who just don't believe in God at all?

Oh, sure, they can be excused from participation in prayers, religious programs, etc. But is it fair to isolate them, to so distinguish them from the other children?

Is not the main purpose of schools to educate the children? Wouldn't all the commotion, the emotion, the controversy that might arise with the issue be harmful to this purpose?

And, finally, if there is no legal basis for offering prayers in school, would not the complaint from one person be sufficient to justify an end to the practice?

SO, THAT'S both sides of the ledger.

So, where do I stand?

I believe in God. It is a simple belief. I believe saying non-sectarian prayers in school is a good, sound practice and can do no harm as long as it is not made an issue.

Talk of the Towns

By DENI SCANLON

All it took was a few flakes of snow last week to get people in a holiday mood.

A Beverly Hills man inadvertently discovered her son's Christmas gift for his father while helping the boy tidy up his room. "What's this?" she asked holding up a small cellophane tape bound package.

"Oh, that's Daddy's present. He really needs it," the little fellow said. "Can you tell me what it is?" she asked. "A fuse," he answered.

Another gal in the area was convinced last week that she was getting a badger fur from her husband.

Mink or Persian lamb or fox or sable seemed to her the most popular of the fuzzy stuff so she set out to see just what badger fur was like and why her spouse would consider an "off brand."

By the end of the day, she was more confused than ever. She wished she'd never heard him hurriedly say, "Badger" to some unknown person on the other end of a mysterious phone conversation.

Finally, unable to tolerate the curious question any longer, she decided to come right out and ask. "What's that night, what's that night, what's the best use you know of for badger fur?"

"Well, it makes a great shaving brush," he answered. "At least that's what the fellow told me yesterday when I called to find out about a new one."

Then he added, "Don't tell me you got me one for Christmas?"

Kids have a way of being so succinct about a situation. A little girl in a North Adams family pleaded to early this year so I don't have to wait so long to open my stuff."

"Please ask Daddy to get the camera set up early this year so I don't have to wait so long to open my stuff."

Snow meant something special to the tot who moved here recently from the southwest.

Somehow it was so tempting, she asked for a bowl of it for lunch.