

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Be Gone, '61—Come In, '62!

Annually, as the Old Year comes to a close, editorial writers nearly everywhere try to arrange the letters of the alphabet into words that fit this occasion. That's what we now start to do. Should we say something like this: "1961 is about finished... how did it treat you?" Or: "Now that 1961 is about completed, what did you achieve, endure, enjoy, accomplish during this epochal year?"

OUR NATION, MORE and more, is depended upon to engage itself in trying to solve so many of this earth's widespread problems. More, no doubt, than we can even should attempt to do. It's fine to have idealistic dreams, to be sure... but even our Founding Fathers believed that a sound economy, a minimum of centralized government, was the best foundation upon which to erect a democracy, a republic.

LOOKING OVER the physical environment of this Birmingham-Bloomfield-etc. area, we must admit that it continues to become the home of more and more human beings. This is one of the nation's most delightful suburban areas... so why should it not attract people!

SOME OF us have had trials and tribulations, with perhaps the loss of loved ones... and the birth of new ones... and this, too, is the living life. Some of us have married, with high spirits soaring on the sustaining currents of romance. (May they always soar!)

Our area has not been menaced with physical violence, of course. The seasons treat us all very acceptably. Our beloved State of Michigan is on the way to getting a new—and better, we all hope—Constitution. Civic and economic problems still beset every American...

Time goeth its way... and we do ours. Sure, discard the 1961 calendar and in its place hang the new one, labeled 1962. It only contains days, weeks and a whole year. It won't do a thing for you except give you time to do your own doing.

When Your Offspring Hits Right Notes

There comes a moment, a golden moment with bells, when the child strikes a note that sounds like music. The child, boy or girl, has been emitting horrible sounds—wails, grunts, squeals, tuneless thumps, depending on the sort of instrument involved—

ing parents. Their offspring may now go on to become musicians of quality; the boy or girl may come to play like an angel, and win prizes, and be the hit of the senior musical show. But few thrills in later years will compare with this moment when what has been raucous and ugly is suddenly transformed, and there is music in the air.

Flower Names To Outlaw Profanity

A noble campaign for uplift and purity of speech has been launched among coal miners in Poland. Its ultimate aim is to eliminate cuss words from the miners' vocabulary. "Diminute" is not quite the proper verb. Substitution is the idea.

accustomed to uttering a lurid oath—feeling irked is expected to come out—feeling, one imagines—with the name of his favorite blossom. The concept is, as was noted above, a noble one. But somehow we can't imagine a tough coal miner banging his head on a timber and yelling "Petunia" or "Rhododendron" or even "Gladious!"

Identify Authors Via Electronics

Something new in literary criticism, if that is the phrase, is being tried by a Columbia University graduate student. He is putting Homer's two great epics, the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," through an electronic computer to find out whether the blind poet wrote them both or had the help of talented imitators.

On the face of it, this sounds fine. Zip Homer through the electronic brain, and out comes the answer. Then tackle the question whether Shakespeare wrote the plays of Shakespeare, or whether they were done by Bacon or someone else. The method could doubtless be applied to a lot of literary questions. But somehow this approach on literature. We'd rather just read Homer seems to have a kind of dehydrating effect and Shakespeare and all the rest of them, and not worry much about exactly who wrote what.

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

An Atlanta, Georgia, woman willed \$300,000 to be used to care for three dogs owned by her late son. Is that what is called "putting on the dog"?

in ancient Rome, the traditional wedding cake was broken over the bride's head—as a symbol of plenty.

Never quarrel with a man whose prices are lower than some others. After all, he knows better than anyone else what his services are worth.

Twelve men and one woman have crossed the Niagara Falls gorge on a tightrope. That makes 13 people.

We agree with the chap who declared that the best way to stop on a dime is when playing a slot machine.

The pronghorn antelope can outrun a man when only four days old... but that's no real record. How about Ole Man Tax Collector who can outrun an Olympic track champion?

An Iowa newspaper recently carried a laundry ad that read: "Towels for the whole damp family."

The University of California expects an enrollment of 119,000 by 1975. That should almost qualify it for statehood.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Answers Questions On Civil Defense

To the Editor: The editorial "Questions on Civil Defense" (Dec. 14, 1961) offers several points which should be considered thoroughly by the citizens of Birmingham. I would like to offer my comments on the questions raised in your editorial.

1. "BUT DOES the city need a fallout shelter?" If the question is, does the city need a fallout shelter for emergency use only, then I would say no. But if the shelter could be utilized as a supplement to provide working facilities for normal city operations then I would say, certainly.

2. "IS A full-time civil defense director needed?" etc. At the present time it would seem that the answer could not be other than yes. Ask your neighbor if he would have any idea of what to do in case of community disaster. Be it nuclear or mature.

3. "DO WE need to rely on Uncle Sam for dollars..." This is not the exact translation of your statement. In public health, transportation (air and land), postal services, police, etc., we rely on our U. S. Government for assistance, both educational and monetary. The program to be considered under civil defense should not be undertaken without the most careful study of available help by federal, state and local government funds.

4. "IS THE city capable of obtaining this kind of money at this time..." The City should investigate all possibilities—local, state and federal for available assistance. This is another point in favor of a full-time civil defense director for the City of Birmingham.

5. "NEED FOR immediate shelter?"... summary of your comment. If a nuclear attack happened (See DEFENSE, 5-B)

6. "ARE CITY officials realistic..." I feel you have answered your question in the first part of the editorial. The answer is too complex to be settled during two or three-hour meetings once a week. No decision should be reached until as much information as possible is thoroughly understood.

7. "DOES THE city have the funds to pay for a director and shelter, etc?" This program should be carried out the same as any other expansion program the City would undertake. If the Federal government pays part of the cost, as in highways, etc., then the City should be guided by this.

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Talk of the Towns

The United States Patent Office in Washington, D. C. is about to issue a busy, busy year.

The inventive Americans have kept the office active. If this year is like 1960, the variety will number in the thousands.

A few of last year's included: A missile launcher that fires missiles or rockets rearward from a moving plane.

A fishhook attachment that prevents single or multiple hooks from fouling.

An infant pacifier that produces a mild vibration and buzzing sound.

New devices to improve motoring included a burglar alarm set so that it sounds the horn continuously if any unauthorized person enters the car; a method for removing dents from the outside; a do-it-yourself muffler repair kit.

Then there were: A new type toothbrush that has a sterile, disposable bristle-head and material for massaging gums, adaptable to handle.

A reflecting telescope with interchangeable optical systems. It was patented by Robert E. Fischer, then 16 years old. The Forest Hills, N. Y., youth has won honorable citations for his work in astrophotography.

An automatic umpire, a device for photographing batting action by three cameras to register exact passage of baseball, thus settling disputes.

A small adhesive pad that fits into the lower part of the ear so that earrings may be attached to it.

Also registered in the patent office are: A waffle iron that opens automatically by means of a thermostat that releases a catch holding down the lid.

A compact radio transmitter that fits into a metal housing, which becomes the antenna, suitable for a parking meter. Transmits a signal when the coin box is forced open.

An ashtray and cigarette snuffer that clips on the back of a book of matches.

A carving knife oscillated electromagnetically.

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO Dec. 29, 1911

A series of special meetings will be held at the Birmingham Baptist church, beginning Jan. 2 at 7:30 p.m. Evangelist E. Bond Griffith of Detroit will assist the pastor.

John Grubb, who lives on Oakland Avenue two miles east of Woodward Avenue, will have an auction sale Jan. 8 at 1 p.m. He will sell two horses, two cows, lumber wagons, farming tools and cornstalks. M. H. Blunt will be the auctioneer, William Wheeler, clerk.

The prettiest dancing party of the season was given Christmas night at the Johnston-Shaw Hall under the direction of Frank Passage. For this occasion, the hall was made attractive with decorations symbolical of the Yuletide. Red and green crepe paper were used with the color scheme being carried out in electrical lights, also Jack-o-lanterns. Ninety-two couples were present and punch and cake were served.

30 YEARS OLD Dec. 31, 1931

Drastic economies in Bloomfield Township government, including salary reductions and savings in general operating expenses, are recommended in a critical report on township affairs issued Wednesday by a committee from the Property Owners Division of the Birmingham Real Estate Board, the committee is composed of Eugene Walton, chairman, and Luther Heacock and R. K. McClellan. The report was the outcome of the division investigation of the past several weeks, following the passage of the township's new budget.

The Feast of the Candles, an adaptation of an old Moravian custom, will be observed at the First Presbyterian Church Sunday evening. More than 150 candles have been prepared for the unique services by the members of the Baldwin, Barnum and Adams Christian Endeavor groups. A program of appropriate selections will be sung by Rev. W. Clarence Wright, pastor, will preach a brief sermon.

In accordance with the new state (See HAPPENINGS, 7-B)

By DENI SCANLON

A device that registers radioactivity while being flown over ground; may locate minerals from the air.

A high heel that can be telescoped and adjusted to height desired.

And: A motion picture method that produces a panoramic picture around a circular room.

An infant's feeding spoon with the handle at a right angle to permit the infant to grasp the handle with his fist and feed himself.

A bowler's stance indicator that tells the bowler where to stand to strike specific pins.

Suburban Sidelights

By HANK HOGAN

During the past several months a group of Republican state senators, including our own senator, Farrell E. Roberts, have been touring our state to excite their party into taking affirmative steps to formulate a legislative program.

The press has labeled them "Moderates" because they represent a middle of the road philosophy. They themselves feel that they are rather "progressives" as opposed to "negatives".

The senators publicly state that in the past the Republican legislators have been against anything the governor is for, and for anything the governor is against.

The result is that progressive legislation is either killed by veto or by legislative committee. This past year has disrupted the procedure, however, because no one was sure what the governor was for or against. The legislators then legislated from panic.

EXAMPLES OF the governor's programs are his announcement to the press of his desire for more money for mental health and higher education, and then his single-handed killing of the extension of nuisance taxes for these purposes; his announced program to end price-cutting on milk and his veto of the bill that ended price-cutting; and his veto of a bill which increased benefits to unemployed workers, because the union did not want other provisions of the same bill.

The Moderates' program includes 13 areas of needed legislation. Their thought is, let the Republicans pass the bills and if the governor vetoes them, he must explain his veto to the people of the state.

Under their program the senators ask for greater support for intensive psychiatric treatment centers on the local scene for therapeutic treatment instead of custodial care.

On higher education they state that while a good education is expensive, a poor education is more expensive. Our schools need more money, but they also need an unsparring, continuous re-examination of current practices, systems, long and short range goals and particular emphasis on expanded use of physical plant facilities.

Their program also touches on other areas of legislation such as taxation, labor, economic growth, civil rights and tourism.

AS A RESULT of the efforts of these senators their goal seems to be in sight. For the first time in modern memory the Republican senators and representatives held a joint pre-session caucus in Lansing recently to discuss a legislative program.

If the amount of work that these senators have done to bring about these discussions is duplicated in the actual passage of such a program, we, in Michigan, have at last a bright future.

By KEN WEAVER City Beat

Politics needs a George Romney. This is true both on the state and national levels.

However, appreciation is a man who holds his convictions and principles above personal ambition. George Romney is that type of man.

He speaks out on his convictions even though he is aware of possible consequences that would be adverse to him personally.

AS STATE chairman of Citizens for Michigan, Romney freely spoke his thoughts of what he considered the ills of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Then came the election of delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Romney was an Oakland County candidate on the Republican ticket, and won going away.

However, appreciation was lacking in his own party on the state level. Too many Republicans remembered his criticisms of his party and would not accept him as Con-Con president.

So, he became a vice president. Now, Romney is considering running for governor. If he decides he wants the job, will these same Republicans nominate him?

Romney's handling of the Gen. Eisenhower appearance before Con-Con, his plan for reappointment, his leadership in the convention to date appear to have improved his image and enhanced his opportunities within the party.

AND IT FIGURES that the more often his name is mentioned at home the greater his popularity becomes on the national scene.

It has reached the point where talk is just now beginning of the prospects for "George Romney for President" in 1964.

Daily newspaper columnist David Lawrence wrote the other day that although Romney is being mentioned in this respect, he does not seem to care what impact his words may have from a political viewpoint.

Speaking of "a forthrightness that is characteristic of" Romney's entire career, Lawrence called him the type of man "who would rather adhere to his convictions than compromise to win political office."

He cited, as an example of Romney's speaking out on his convictions regardless of possible consequences, his recent address in Chicago before the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Lawrence wrote that "no other prominent personality in the political or economic world has made so sweeping a denunciation of industry-wide bargaining" as Romney did in blasting both labor and industry.

He also criticized in that speech government intervention in industry-labor disputes.

FOR MANY years the American public has accepted as "that's politics" the practice of compromising principles and convictions for expediency.

And some politicians have found it an excuse for furthering their desires for personal power, gain and glory.

The practice, and the demand for it, have become so widespread that some men of strong principles and convictions have refused to enter politics, to seek public office.