

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Community Thinking Analyzed

Most residents (in our area) believe that providing necessary funds for educational needs is a local, not a state or a federal responsibility.

Community Research Associates made this statement last week in the second in a series of stories derived from the firm's recent survey of people living in the Birmingham School District.

The thinking of the community as reported in that article warrants special attention, we believe.

The question was asked: "If you were to choose between meeting increased educational costs through taxation at the federal, state, or local levels, which would you prefer?"

Of the people interviewed, 59 per cent favored local support, while 14 per cent endorsed federal financing and 16 per cent preferred state taxation.

IT IS INDEED interesting to note the attitude of local residents on this question of federal aid for schools, which has become one of the great controversial issues throughout the nation today.

In our opinion, this is an indication of highly objective thinking on the part of local residents. It demonstrates their belief that local problems are essentially local responsibilities which they are willing to shoulder as local taxpayers.

It is interesting to note, too, that this attitude prevails even though two-thirds of the people contacted felt that area property taxes were above average, whereas only two per cent rated them as below average.

THIS SURVEY showed further that

County Road Plan Evaluated

The primary road improvement program proposed by the Oakland County Road Commission merits serious consideration by the communities asked to participate in its cost.

Included in this project for improvements totaling \$11 million are several portions of main county roads running through communities in this area.

Some of them are:

Southfield Road from 9 1/2 Mile to 14 Mile, widen to five lanes.

Greenfield from 11 to 14 Mile, widen to four lanes.

Maple from Coolidge to Adams, widen to four lanes.

Fourteen Mile from Greenfield to Cranbrook, extend and widen to four lanes.

Cranbrook from 14 to Lincoln, pave two lanes.

UNDER THE ROAD commission's plan, each community would pay 25 per cent of the cost of the work within its boundaries and the county would pay 75 per cent.

This contrasts to the usual 50-50 cost participation ratio, and certainly affords an attractive financial arrangement for the individual communities.

Maintenance of county roads is a county responsibility; and inasmuch as these primary roads are used so much by residents of more communities that the actual ones in which they are located, it is proper and fitting for the county to bear the brunt of the cost. In short, county responsibility in this instance is greater than local responsibility.

MOST OF THE proposed improvements

Already signs of political partisan strife is evident as Con-Con delegates are beginning their program of fashioning a new Michigan Constitution. Too, there is controversy within each party as to what should be done. Well, that's o.k. Let 'em scrap a bit . . . out of competitive thinking and arguing and "dis-cussing" some good and acceptable ideas should emerge. So, boys and girls over in Lansing, let 'em emerge!

We know a young married woman who lives in Birmingham's eastside, who, though the mother of four children, believes enough in the American way of life to give some of her time to civic problems.

Whether it be a school, city, state or national

many local residents felt that costs of school buildings in the past have been too high. As the article stated:

It is clear that a tendency exists for people in this community to identify the "frills and fads of education" with the building program, rather than with school curricula or special services.

Let this be a caution to administrators in planning future school buildings. When citizens are willing to accept local responsibility for paying for needed facilities, they're less likely to want so-called frills!

ANOTHER POINT brought out in last week's article was that parents of school-age children oppose the 12-month plan of operating the schools whereas those without school-age youngsters favor it.

This pretty well answers the question of whether to extend the length of the school year.

Still another point demanding comment is that the local population exercises selectiveness insofar as educational programs are concerned. To wit:

People in the Birmingham area are capable of seeing beyond the physical plant to the educational program of their schools.

Whereas 6 out of 10 people across the nation give priority to school buildings over teaching, 6 out of 10 Birmingham area residents see the school program as most important.

Taking into consideration this insight into the community's thinking toward its schools—this survey was certainly profitable. The information it produced should prove exceedingly valuable to school administrators and, likewise, to the public.

have been needed for the past several years. Efforts have been made to achieve some of them, but the improvements have not materialized for one reason or another—usually from lack of money or of public support.

Once the freeways now being built in the county are completed—in about three years—traffic will jam up more than ever on the present roads; and the need for improvement will become even more critical.

SOME OF THE proposed improvements are acceptable to the governing bodies and the people in the local communities, and some are not.

For example, Beverly Hills councilmen oppose the suggested extension of 14 Mile Road from Southfield Road to Cranbrook; while Birmingham city commissioners would like to see it extended as far as Telegraph.

Many residents in the 14 Mile-Southfield area object to this part of the plan. In Birmingham, many residents oppose widening of E. Maple.

THE MUNICIPAL governments and the road commission must take these facts into consideration.

They, and the residents, must be ready to compromise, to work out acceptable solutions.

To reject these improvements would be to impede progress and to invite costlier programs in the future.

From the county, area and local standpoints, the project assuredly is worthwhile. As stated at the outset, it merits serious consideration—by all concerned.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

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Whether it be a school, city, state or national

election, she willingly does her various chores to acquaint other voters with issues, get them to register, then to vote.

Indeed, her example over a half dozen years has encouraged a few others in her neighborhood to do likewise.

"I'm an American and I believe in the need for free citizens to work in defense of freedom," she seriously states.

The time I give to work at election times, to be aware of issues and personalities running for public office, takes up but a small part of my life. After all, doesn't citizenship demand that we live up to our duties and responsibilities of free and self-governing men and women?"



"I think that I shall never see . . ."

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

'Sunday Drive' Reveals Evans Ditch Pestilence

To the Editor:

You may think it a far cry from politics to Holy Writ. But an offering of politics—a legacy from the Dark Ages—here on the outskirts of health-conscious Birmingham recently helped to clear up the meaning of a well-known passage of Scripture.

It came about when we happened to be driving around the environs of the city one balmy evening. I bent on nothing more important than a little relaxation and becoming acquainted with some of the mushrooming new housing developments hereabouts.

The rapidly and extent of new growth is simply amazing. It is evident that one scarcely dares to turn his back when up springs a thriving new community.

Within the span of weeks a farm will have become a settlement. Mere months and a wood has turned into a whole new subdivision; lake property into fourishing year-round resort, complete with paved roads, shopping centers, schools, churches, banks—all the accommodations necessary for fully-equipped suburban living.

AS WE PROCEEDED in and out of these fledgling developments, we could scarcely believe our eyes, so thorough had been the transformation. Tract after tract of abandoned farmland had become sparkling, saint-fresh, beautifully landscaped homesites.

There were several traditional developments, with modified versions of the old-fashioned colonial house. Some specialized in up-to-the-minute multi-levels with all the innovations that accompany them.

Others, however, offered more commonplace dwellings, hastily thrown together, with little thought of beauty or durability. Nothing had been considered, apparently, beyond immediate occupancy by couples determined to rear their children in healthful country atmosphere, far from the hazards of city streets and overcrowded—high priced or no high prices.

DRIVING ON, we observed that all too many subdivisions, spanking new a half dozen years ago, already had assumed a down-at-the-heels appearance. Peeling paint, buckling shingles, loose siding.

Now it's my turn to discuss fall-out shelters. Let's try it from a different point of view—sort of like Tom Lehrer's "Survival Hymn"—the first line of which is "Oh, will we all go together when we go, all suffused with an incandescent glow . . ."

This is a serious topic this bit about fall-out shelters. As one friend aptly put it: "Fall-out shelters are getting to be as controversial as politics and religion."

But to get all heated up about the topic is really a waste of time.

If you're a fall-out shelter person, then build it. If you're not, then don't. But don't start a guerrilla war just because somebody doesn't agree agree with your point of view.

And, just because most everybody reacts strongly, this reporter enjoys the humorous extremes of both points of view.

Let's take a look at a day in the life of the shelter enthusiast.

A man with a wife and three kids, this fellow has spent five months and \$369.95 trying to figure out the do-it-yourself kit. He has buried his wife with the carry-out-the-dirt-from-the-bomb excavation bit, but the children are nuts about this gloriously grubby game.

The freeman's version of a padded cell is well stocked with health foods (nutritional and space

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But, out of sheer desperation, the hopeful newcomer obviously had closed his eyes as well as his mind to the shortcomings these slaps-dash, mortgage-ridden monstrosities in his desire for a place to call his own.

Eventually, we crossed the Evans Drain, which meanders through parts of Southfield Township. At first glance it appears to be a harmless ditch, carrying off surface rainwater; one of the many mushrooming new housing developments hereabouts.

The old stunt of destroying property at Halloween was still in evidence this year. A crowd of young men threw portions of the pumpkin family in the direction of Mrs. Nellie Camp's front door. The pumpkin took with it a portion of an old-fashioned stained-glass window which cannot be replaced without much trouble.

Dr. Earl L. G. Ward, who has resigned his position as deputy secretary of the state board of health, arrived at his home Thursday. He will visit his parents for two weeks after which he will leave for the West, where he intends to begin the practice of medicine.

I had the very great pleasure of attending the annual Field Day at Seaholm High School for the very first time. I was amazed at the amount of work and time which must have been put into it by the boys, girls and teachers.

It was so colorful and the enthusiasm, teamwork and sportsmanship was wonderful.

ON THE OTHER HAND, I believe that I have never witnessed such rudeness anywhere as that of one teacher. This teacher, at the beginning of the Field Day events, threatened to tear their children from those parents at the end of the gym to go somewhere. I don't care where, but just get out!

This was most unnecessary and I believe that teacher should realize that if he were to do that, his nation she would have no one to teach; but for the taxes we pay, her job would be nonexistent.

THEY MEANT NO offense, only wanting to see their children compete in a wonderful event.

I believe I speak for many parents who were already there at the gym when this outburst took place. And I truly believe that the sign should not be allowed to happen again.

J. W. Birmingham

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

80 YEARS AGO Nov. 3, 1911

John H. Wendell of Larkspur fame can proudly exhibit two manure potatoes very nearly the same in size and weight. The larger one weighed three pounds and three ounces, the other was two ounces lighter.

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30 YEARS AGO Oct. 29, 1931

Faced with the necessity of raising approximately \$30,000 in cash between now and Dec. 10, when winter taxes are expected to be coming in, the Birmingham Board of Education, at a special meeting Tuesday night, voted to issue script money, comparable to the closing day's program of the Michigan Baptist Convention which ended its four-day session here Thursday night.

The 18th amendment cannot be modified in a referendum. It is agitation for the return of a 3-per cent beer is only an attempt to get President Roosevelt and Congress into a conspiracy," was the claim made by Grant M. Hudson, former Michigan congressman in an address heard last Thursday. Hudson was one of the speakers on the closing day's program of the Michigan Baptist Convention which ended its four-day session here Thursday night.

Elimination of the possibility of (See HAPPENINGS, 4-B)

Talk of the Towns

By DENI SCANLON

Hank did it. Ken too. Now it's my turn to discuss fall-out shelters. Let's try it from a different point of view—sort of like Tom Lehrer's "Survival Hymn"—the first line of which is "Oh, will we all go together when we go, all suffused with an incandescent glow . . ."

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Suburban Sidelights

By HANK HOGAN

The attitude of the University of Michigan Regents in announcing that there would not be an increase in student tuition, I'm afraid, is very detrimental to the growth of higher education in our state.

At the present time appropriations to higher education amount to one-quarter of the state's general fund. In the next five to ten years the number of students eligible for college will double or triple because our war babies are now getting ready for college.

Since 1950, our population in Michigan has increased 22 per cent while the appropriations to higher education have increased 313 per cent.

Naturally, the state cannot continue this percentage growth or else it would be spending one-half to three-quarters of its general fund in this area to the detriment of things like mental health or welfare. At this rate the state would have to increase taxes every year.

MICHIGAN IS in a unique situation. Over 80 per cent of our students who go to college go to one of our state-supported institutions.

We are the only state in the nation that supports nine state colleges, and we have one more on the way in Grand Rapids.

It costs the state of Michigan approximately \$1,300 a year to educate one undergraduate at an institution like Michigan or Michigan State. A resident of this state pays a tuition of approximately \$280 per year.

This means, of course, that the people of the state subsidizes each resident student approximately \$1,000.

A non-resident student pays approximately \$700 in tuition and is, of course, subsidized by you and me approximately \$600.

I personally believe we should subsidize our students to some degree, but if our student population keeps increasing without tuitions increasing, we will just run out of money. Which, I might add, our fair state is being doing of late.

THIS IS WHY I am critical of the stand Michigan is taking. University officials feel they do not want to charge more than 23 per cent of cost. But why have they selected that arbitrary figure?

It can only lead to a holy war between the legislature and educators which will lead to the deterioration of our first-rate educational system.

They could have very easily selected the figure of 34 1/2 per cent or some such increased figure, which would have opened the door for the legislature to work with them to solve a difficult problem.

I might add, however, that merely raising tuition will not solve all of the problems. But it is a starting point.

We are going to have to run our state institutions more efficiently. Can you imagine using a building in your business for only six or seven hours a day for nine or ten months?

Some colleges do better than that, but I'm afraid we will eventually have to use the physical facilities 16 hours a day, 12 months a year.

We will also have to develop more community colleges, because we can educate a student in one of these institutions at approximately one-half the cost. But how they are built and by whom still remains a question.

MICHIGAN TODAY has one of the top, if not the top, higher education systems in the nation. We want to keep it that way.

The growth of the system, however, must be a joint effort of the educators, the legislators and the people.

If one of these groups becomes narrow-minded and takes an inflexible position, growth can become stunted.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

Last week we quoted some thoughts on today's world problems as expressed by Mrs. Theresa D. Kreuz' seventh graders at Holy Name School.

Here are some more of them: Denise King—" . . . The greatest problem the United States faces today is Communism. The way the Communists people are take the place over the world litter, by little, striking only the weak points and starting trouble."

"Getting ignorant people to fight and riot. Finding faults in a country and showing them to people who are . . . finished so they can start trouble."

"Mending small countries who need their help think that they are wonderful people who will give them everything they want; and then, once they've got them under their control, they take over the whole country."

GREGORY GROMEK suggested creating an "international relations bureau" to help nations learn to get along with each other. Other countries should follow President Kennedy's Peace Corps idea, he thought.

Dag Hammarskjold's death stood out in the mind of Aimee Hess.

"Bodies bringing sorrow to half the world," she stated, "this great man's death presented a new problem to the United Nations."

"In other words, the choice of a new secretary. "The man that will be chosen will have many great responsibilities, so he should be very dependable. "Since he will take the place of Dag Hammarskjold, he must be a respectable person and a hard worker. He should be honest and he should be willing to spend most of his time with his duties. "He must be friendly and cordial and, above all, patient. "He must have a firm, unshakable belief in his faith and conviction."

PATRICK BRENNAN listed the qualifications he thought the UN secretary-general should have: A sense of responsibility, a good speaker, ability to make a fair and honest decision, knowledge of world problems, awareness of the dangers of the position and neutralist attitude.

The communistic form of government was cited by Brian Murphy as the world's greatest problem.

"It is slowly taking over more countries. Communism doesn't put a person down, things which you can do in the United States and in other democratic lands."

"For example, it completely ignores Freedom of Speech, of Religion, of Assembly, and of the Press. "No one can possess something of their own if they are under communistic rule."

MICHAEL SALTSMAN was concerned about the hypothesis (See CITY BEAT, 4-B)