

Walk Down the Main Street . . .

A letter in our People's Column last week raised the point of what is happening to downtown Birmingham with a rash of cheap and ugly signs in store windows.

It's an interesting point because Birmingham has been known as an above average specialty shopping center. In past editorials we have defended our merchants for quality and service rather than price selling. One local merchant purchased a full-page ad to explain to the public that there is no such thing as a "free lunch."

NOW OUR FAIR community, having established a reputation for offering the best merchandise, is taking on some of the trappings of a circus, with banners and colored signs.

Some new businesses have come into our community not with the long-range goal of strengthening its marketing image but with the short range goal of capitalizing on and diluting that which has been built over the years.

These businesses have a nominal quality of coming in and getting out after they have exploited the image of an area.

NEIGHBORING CITIES tell the story of what happens after the image is gone. Drive down the main street of Pontiac or Royal Oak. Where are the once mighty and substantial businesses?

Birmingham has established a reputation above and beyond its shopping reputation.

It is known as a cultural community. The cultural events are, in part, promoted by local merchants. If we lose these merchants and the nomads have packed their tents, what do we have left?

WE AT THE Eccentric are proud of our contribution to the character of our business district. We have refused to accept ads which have a tendency to downgrade other stores.

We have tried to encourage merchants to upgrade the community in their ads. We have tried to edit out of ads false claims or misrepresentations.

We can not, however, do the shopping for our readers to completely protect them.

Birmingham long has been faced with strong competition from outlying shopping centers. Birmingham is now faced with deterioration from within.

THE PEOPLE OF this community will decide on what course Birmingham will follow.

If they patronize those stores which have no long-range interest in our community, they will eventually destroy the shopping character of the community, they will encourage more stores of this type to come into the area.

Walk down the main street of our town and decide how you want it. Where you shop will mean what will stay.

Birmingham's future literally rests in your hands.

Skirt Lengths -- Their Ups and Downs



1900s 1910- 1920s 1930s 1940s 1950s 1960s

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Next Step: Eliminate Christmas from School

To the Editor:

The Supreme Court prayer decision goes a long way towards the removal of God from our lives.

The U.S. now has the singular distinction of being the only nation outside the Soviet Bloc which forbids prayer in public schools. There is a nasty, petty, nagging quality about the decision. It's explaining it to a group of children affected by it.

The next step is to eliminate Christmas. Mr. William Lyman, in a letter to The Eccentric, makes this very plain.

Apparently in the future our children will be punished for humming "Silent Night" in the classroom! And if prayer in public schools is forbidden, can a father direct his children to pray in a home with an ERA mortgage? Can religious programs be shown over government subsidized Teletext?

ONE STEP at a time, the atheists and their friends are whittling away our religious liberty. Christianity is to be returned to the category of social problems.

And it follows that destruction of religion in the public sector of our life will result in destruction of religion in the private sector of our life.

Mr. Lyman observes (through a quote from McGillis) that Christmas observance in the schools are "not American." How absurd! In the 173 years of our existence, Christmas has been a part of our public and private lives. In fact, by reason of our tradition, history and experience, it would be "not American" not to hold such observance in the schools.

THE COMMUNIST Daily Worker, or had the court's decision as a great victory in its issue of July 7.

And on the same day as the prayer decision, the court declared that obscene literature could be sent through the mails. Mr. Lyman did not comment on that decision.

Birmingham residents can now

start looking over the eye on the mailbox as the merchants of this material step up their activity with the court's blessing.

Surely, a Constitutional Amendment to restore our religious liberty is a modest enough request to be made of our legislators.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Supreme Court decision bans official, or government-directed prayers, from the schools.

Offers Plan To 'Solve' Social Ills

To the Editor:

Speaking of economic illiteracy, Bertie A. Holden of Wisconsin, Michigan announced his candidacy for the State Senate from this district. He certainly is qualified for this important office, and is a prominent, educated, and well-known farmer, and on his own personal requirements ought to win out. Be sure to read his prominent announcement.

How to Wreck Our Society

1. Give the land and natural resources to 10 per cent of the population, tax low as 2 per cent in Asia.

2. Elect the above people to public office.

3. Confiscate up to 1/2 of all farm production to give to the land owners as rent, (more than 1/2 of city production goes to rent).

4. CONFISCATE 22 per cent of the remainder for the Federal Government as income taxes (maximum is 92 per cent).

5. Confiscate 2 per cent of the value of our houses annually for state and local government as property taxes (also paid by the owners).

6. Confiscate 4 per cent of our expenditures for state sales taxes.

(See PLAN, 8-B)

Yesteryear Happenings

From the Files of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO

Aug. 9, 1912

Plans are going ahead for the Masonic picnic. This promises to be the biggest and best of all the good times the "44" has held. Supt. Minton of the D.U.R. has consented to give us an exhibition of fancy pitching. Dr. Jamieson and Wiley Bell will execute a high dive for a stated prize and other stunts will be pulled off by our acrobatic members.

Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Conway are comfortably settled in their new cozy little home on Pierce Street. It is a modern home in every respect; furnace, bath, electric lights and telephone. Mr. Conway is now building a bungalow for C. Newman on Greenwood Ave. He is also building a two-story house for Fred Mullender, corner Woodward Ave. and George Street. Watch their progress.

Berto A. Holden of Wisconsin, Michigan announced his candidacy for the State Senate from this district. He certainly is qualified for this important office, and is a prominent, educated, and well-known farmer, and on his own personal requirements ought to win out. Be sure to read his prominent announcement.

30 YEARS AGO

Aug. 11, 1932

Four more men for whom petitions have been filed for election to the city charter commission at the special election Sept. 6 qualified during the past week, in addition to the six who had previously qualified. They are Ralph Corryell, Edward Bryant, James Taylor, and Lee White. The six who had qualified previously are Clarence Viet, Charles Shain, George Averill, Harold Ellerby, E. Osborne and Frank Beardsley.

(See HAPPENINGS, 8-B)

By IRMA N. DAVIS

RIGHT NOW we're braced to haul out our fall wardrobe which underwent the shortening process some months ago. We know—we just KNOW—that our face is going to fall and meet those hemlines at our knees.

Of course, this could take the price to a new outfit or so, except for the diabolical fact that no self-respecting store will be showing fall fashions in the fall.

You see, there's some sort of unwritten rule that bans the sale of bathing suits, for instance, in summers or galoshes after Christmas. It simply isn't done.

THAT'S WHEN we sell for coats and snow suits, my dear, the sales clerk informs you in an August manner.

There is one out, however. We mature women can head for the "back to school" department and the plaids which are high-style for the younger set.

They're dandy for that middle-aged spread, as are horizontal stripes. They way, the attention of the fashion gossips will be diverted from our open-face knees and no one will ever know that our skirts are one inch too short.

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



Before Governor Williams left office he appointed a Citizens' Mental Health Inquiry Board to inquire into charges of abuse of patients at our state institutions and to look over the entire administration of the state's mental health program.

The board made a report on abuses in late 1959 and one on the overall administration in December of 1960.

The board was made up of non-political people interested in mental health in the state, and included both professional and lay persons. It was chaired by Dr. Robert Mowitz of Wayne State University.

THE INTERESTING thing about the report on administration was that it was filed and buried until this Spring, and the only thing that unburied it was the clamor caused by the board members because it had not been published.

When the present governor was sworn into office this report was available for his use in reorganizing or improving the mental health department. It is still available for the governor to use, but nothing has been done with it.

WITH THAT INTRODUCTION, what did the report specifically say?

The board felt as a basic premise that the department could be only as strong as the leadership offered, and that major problems existed in lack of adequate integration, communication and coordination among the various facilities and the central office.

The board found that each mental facility works relatively independently of the other facilities and the central office. This results in considerable overlapping and little awareness of what others are doing.

THE RESULT, of course, is that the caliber of each institution rests on its individual superintendent, and that some of our mental facilities are the finest in the nation and others among the poorest. It is still available for the central office offered leadership, the poorer institutions could be brought up at least to an acceptable level.

If the central office offered leadership, statewide programs such as community mental health centers could be promoted which would eventually cut down the need for beds in our institutions.

INSTEAD, YOU have many separate empires each working to improve themselves with the end result that Michigan each year gets more bed space, but falls behind other states in curing and returning citizens to useful lives in society.

The responsibility falls on Charles Warg, the director of the department. He is not a doctor and apparently not a leader.

Isn't it time for the governor and the Mental Health Commission to say to him, "Shape up or ship out!"



By KEN WEAVER

City Beat

"Just what church do you go to?" asked one telephone caller.

"Do you have a Latter Day Saints background?" asked another.

"You sound something like a Jehovah's Witness," commented a woman reader.

These were some of the reactions to the opinions expressed in this column in the last two issues relative to an eventual one-world government under a Divine Ruler.

"THE NEWSPAPER crowd isn't like it used to be," quipped a former journalist. "They aren't like the reporters in 'The Front Page Story.' Reporters weren't religious in the old days. Reporters of today don't drink like the old crowd did."

One woman agreed with my version of how God will appear to all people in all lands at the exact same moment. "He comes to the world."

"The Bible tells us," wrote Phyllis Nelson, "that when Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, after his Crucifixion and Resurrection, God sent two men from Heaven who said to the eyewitnesses:

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

THEN SHE offered these Bible passages as corroboration of my statements:

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." Rev. 1:7.

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." Zechariah 14:9.

AFTER READING the first column, Charles E. Holmes stepped in to tell of a weekly piece of religious sayings that he distributes to many of his business associates.

He left a copy here. I quote from a statement that, although taken out of context, supports my belief in the importance of personal contact with God.

Go now into your closet alone with your Maker, confess your wrong and seek His pardon. Ask and ye shall receive. Your honest confession will bring you untold happiness. Then tell your joy to the man next door."

NOW, BEFORE leaving this subject, I must pose some questions which are raised by man's accomplishments in space:

Will man find human life on other planets?

If so, what will happen to man's religious concepts?

Will the belief in one God as the creator of man and the earth (and the universe) be strengthened or weakened?

If there is positive proof that there is no God, then what?

Help Keep Our City Clean

Birmingham merchants have long had a reputation for keeping the front areas of their stores clean.

But what about the rear areas?

Litter in downtown Birmingham, especially in the alleys, has become quite a problem.

The City's DPW workers are meeting their responsibility head-on; but, unfortunately, some merchants and many citizens neglect their responsibility.

SOME MERCHANTS permit refuse to pile up at the rear of their establishments. And many shoppers thoughtlessly and carelessly toss scraps of paper, cigaret butts and the like on the sidewalks and in the streets.

The DPW has placed 25 refuse containers in the downtown area, but people just aren't using them. Citizens apparently aren't aware of the availability of these containers—or else, they are just too darn lazy to walk over and use them.

IN RECENT WEEKS there has been much pilfering and scavenging by adults as well as children, in the downtown alleys.

Is McNamara Too Good?

Informed persons, regardless of political party, have said that U.S. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara is the ablest American ever to occupy that most important federal office.

He is reputed to have streamlined it, both personnel-wise and in its technical physical operation.

It's even been reported that he has been able to improve some phases of its military pattern.

BECAUSE OF the competence of this

youthful former president of the Ford Motor Co., it now is being asked: Can anybody "ever fill his shoes"?

In other words, will he "regenerate" the Defense Dept. to such high efficiency that his eventual departure will leave such a void that our U.S. defense establishment will be de-vitalized, and our national security endangered?

Can you recall any other Twentieth Century appointed public official whose lustrous flashes with the brilliance of Robert S. McNamara?

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

What wonders occur in the scientific segments of the news today. Mankind now can use orbiting man-made, microwave-in-sky satellites, from which to bounce back to earth radio and television sound and pictures. . . . thus adding a marvelous, additional means of communication. If only mankind's head and heart could keep up with scientific progress, what a more powerful and secure society Mother Earth could clutch to her bosom!

Maybe we should begin to face the fact that the rise of juvenile gangs is not some unaccountable abnormality, but a normal outgrowth of raising children in the crowded and often depressing areas of our cities. Having recognized that, we

might find out whether there is not some merit worth salvaging in the makeup of these lads. Maybe what they need is not repression but guidance—not any nanny-pammy guidance, but rugged leadership intended to divert their aggressive spirit into worthwhile channels.

President Kennedy has asked Japanese industry to build and operate various business enterprises in the United States. Holy Smokes! Isn't he satisfied that there are enough American businesses that he can get mad at?

Sun tan is aging, doctors say—which may be why tanning is so popular with teen-agers who would like to be taken for adults.

Once Over Lightly

The headline is an occupational hazard—if one is a woman.

The vagaries of fashion have dipped to a new low and as far as we're concerned it's a low blow.

Our fingers are still throbbing from all the stitching involved in raising hemlines to this summer's length. Now they tell us—one inch below the knee for autumn, please.

Around Memorial Day we yanked our wardrobe out from the cedar chest, ganked sure that all was well. Then we tried on a dress and two and discovered that last year's hot weather gear hung a horrifying inch BELOW THE KNEE. We looked positively drowsy.

IN SUNDRY spare moments, we pined our neckline and hitched them all up. Dame fashion was very pleased and so were we—until we first sat down and our skirts inched up. But after some weeks of basic training and judo, we managed to keep our knees up from view whenever we were at desk or table.

The latest fashion decree has done more than put us to a lot of needless wear. We were indignant enough to use the scissors on some of our garb and, unless the fringed look comes into style, we've had it.

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