

The Birmingham Eccentric

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We Like the Idea

When Birmingham built its municipal parking system, local merchants and store owners were assessed a share of the cost of the program depending on their benefit.

Payments for these assessments were extended over a three-year period, but could not be deducted as a business expense.

Oakland County's congressman, William S. Broomfield, has introduced legislation which would allow businessmen to deduct such special assessments as a cost of doing business.

This would be a great saving in the future to businessmen who could then deduct the tax payments.

THE JUSTIFICATION for the tax relief is that businesses will not have to expend working capital by an artificial rule and will be in a better position to expand their businesses.

Further, the improvements by a municipality under special assessment do not necessarily improve a man's business proportionately to the cost of the improvement. For example, a new sidewalk does not necessarily mean more business.

What The Eccentric really likes about the proposed legislation is that it permits

business to cooperate in public improvements. It also encourages merchants to want to take steps in bettering the shopping district as a whole.

As Birmingham becomes faced with improving its central business district, any help or encouragement will make for more enthusiastic participation.

The merchants, thus, stand to benefit from both the improvement and the tax relief—while shoppers gain a new convenience afforded by the improvement. This, then, becomes a mutual benefit.

CONG. BROOMFIELD'S proposed legislation does not affect special assessments against residences. The law remains that such payments are not deductible because they are improvements that increase the value of the property and are directly recoverable upon property sale. This supports the prevailing principle that personal expenses are never tax deductible.

The fact that such legislation is introduced does not mean that it will pass. However, the thinking behind this type of legislation illustrates that some people are still interested in improving our business climate.

Algeria Offers a Lesson

De Gaulle's France is confronted by an unenvying showdown. The crises, bred of the seven-year Algerian war, could spell crisis for the West as well. The Algerian war has degenerated into a terrorist nightmare. Yet, the prospect for a cease fire now has become more menacing, in some ways, than the war itself.

What has brought about such a paradox? An important, and perhaps the dominating, cause is the clash of two irreconcilable and frustrated military heroes of France, Charles de Gaulle and Raoul Salan. Of the two, only De Gaulle has evidenced any inclination to relent, to arbitrate. Yet De Gaulle's career, too, has often been marked by the same relentlessness he now has encountered in Salan.

Salan and his renegade followers, many of them officers under death sentence in their homeland, would tolerate no armistice. Their stand exemplifies the kind of military thinking against which govern-

ments long have had to insulate themselves.

Dreaming of old flags and lost causes, placing loyalty to their leader above loyalty to their country and its citizens, old soldiers often succumb to the delusion that they, not the people, are and deserve to be the masters.

Property rights and human rights subordinate themselves, in the muddled view of such men, to whatever reasonable cause their fanaticism has led them to espouse. Recurrence of this attitude down through history is one reason why trained statesmen distrust the military. France's debacle has its lesson for all the free world.

America, to be sure, never has been imperiled—at least not since Burr's time—by any military messiah. But that is no guarantee it never will be. The blood-stained sands of Algeria should be a warning to us never to relax our traditional stand against allowing generals to direct the ship of state.

Time to Meditate — on Spring, Summer

Deep winter is the time to meditate on spring and summer. Deep winter is what most of the nation is experiencing. Therefore, on to meditation!

Fishing, say. What better way to spend a winter evening, with the frigid wind howling around the eaves, than in putting tackle in order and pondering what the catalogues have to offer.

A dedicated fisherman can spend pleasant hours merely reading what is said about

this or that bait guaranteed to make the fish positively throw caution to the waves.

Winter is a time for armchair gardening, too. Forgetful of drudgery, the gardener can formulate plans to make his bit of earth a fruitful world. Vegetables, shrubs, flowers, ornamental trees—all these can be made to bloom in the heart, though the garden plot lie dead and white. Winter's the time for summer planning. Never mind whether the plans ever bear fruit.

When I first ran for the Board in the spring of 1953, a bond issue to build a high school had been defeated. The principal reason for running was to help develop a sound program that the voters would approve. At every neighborhood meeting during that campaign I told the audience we had entered our son at Cranbrook simply because we felt the public high school facilities were inadequate.

PLEASE TELL the people who have questioned our dedication that Board members have a reason for serving that goes beyond their interests in their own children. This is the real answer to the question of why we run. Like most citizens, we feel an obligation to contribute something to the community, and giving time and energy to improving the school

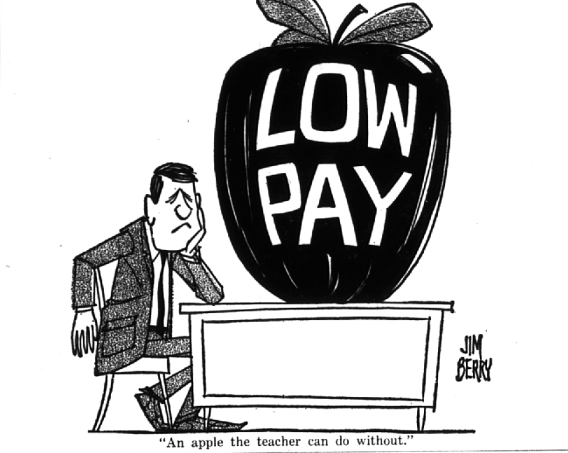
is a bit deeper into their wages to keep up with this New Frontier.

The American Indians first introduced the white man to the idea of working out peaceful relations. . . done, symbolically, by smoking the pipe together. But what followed also, it seems, went up in smoke, too. Takes more than a pipe to bring about peace—which the pipe and other kinds of smokers in the United Nations have found out.

Gov. Swainson has appointed a 27-member committee to wage war against persons who scatter litter over the Michigan landscape. That's well and good . . . and should include bottles and cans, as well as paper.

The recent visit of Jack Frost to Florida and Texas ruined much of the citrus crop . . . and word now comes that the cost of oranges and grapefruit will be higher . . . putting the squeeze on something besides the citrus.

Plastic surgery will never accomplish its ultimate good until it can arrange to keep people's noses out of other people's business.



PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Board Chief Explains Vote on Prayer Policy

To the Editor: The following is my reply to a letter I received from a local resident concerning my vote on the prayer policy for the Bloomfield Hills School District.

Thank you for your letter congratulating me on having the courage to reverse my earlier decision concerning prayers in our schools. I have thought carefully about what I should say in reply.

Frankly, I feel that my switch to the "pro-prayer" point of view required no courage. The really courageous members of the Board were Max Miller and Earl Given, who adhered to their carefully reasoned and sincere convictions in the face of strong pressure and considerable antagonism. I am sure that Merrill Bates would have been equally steadfast if a critical illness in his family had not prevented his attending the Jan. 16 meeting.

YOU WROTE that some people have questioned the fitness of some of us to serve on the Board because we no longer have any or all of our children in the public schools of the District. Further, you asked for an answer to their question, "Their children aren't involved—why should they (the Board) care?"

The facts are that every Board member except Mr. Martz and I now has at least one child enrolled in the Bloomfield Hills Public Schools. The Martz children and ours are now beyond high school age. I admit that parents of enrolled children might give more time and energy to improving the schools than I am now able to do. However, the experience that some of us older members have gained from our years of mistakes and successes on the Board is, I think, valuable to the community.

TO COMMENT further on my own case, in late 1952 we asked Cranbrook to admit our older son in September of 1953. Our high school was then in excellent condition in Vaughan School. The community was embroiled in a bitter controversy over whether we needed a new, separate high school building.

While some might call it "a Temple in Teapot," to others it looked like another attempt to crucify Christ as it was done on the mount of Golgotha some 2,000 years ago.

Only the resolute action of the parents and other God-fearing citizens prevented a certain Newcomer from imposing her will upon Bloomfield Hills School System.

In New Jersey, the State commission of education outlawed the observance of the Ten Commandments in the schools. Is there any wonder that children of today, devoid of moral and ethical standards, will become tomorrow's delinquents, murderers and out-laws, an easy prey for the conquest by the anti-social forces? Only vigorous patriotic defense of our Christian heritage and Constitutional rights will save our Land from slavery and oblivion.

Grateful Mother

system seems a good way of discharging that obligation. Once in a while, when we see that our schools have achieved a new distinction, the satisfaction is reward enough for the effort we have expended.

I WELCOME and thank you for your prayers. Let us also pray that each of us will find in his heart more tolerance for the sincere convictions of minorities and less concern for his "rights" as a member of the majority. A self-righteous majority once crucified the greatest of all minority leaders. The tendency is still with us.

Incidentally, I did not change my opinion about permitting prayers in the schools because it appeared to be the popular thing to do. I reversed my initial position because I concluded that to permit reference to God and recognition of major religious anniversaries was the better thing to do.

DAVID W. LEE, President of the Board of Education, Bloomfield Hills

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO Feb. 9, 1912

The object of greatest interest in school circles at present is the beautiful silver cup won at the interscholastic indoor track meet at Detroit Central High School last Saturday evening. The men responsible for the trophy are the members of the relay team: Lester Purdy, Charles Martin, Ernest Burtraw and Hamilton Parr. Birmingham had a walk-away in this event. One second and two thirds were also won. Result: one silver cup, two bronze medals and second place for Birmingham.

We are informed that a committee of arrangements will call a public mass meeting to which all village residents will be invited to discuss village affairs. Sewers, and subdivisions and additions will be talked over.

William A. Bristol of Southfield is the proud and happy owner of a well just put down by Ed Daniels. It is a success. It is 115 feet deep and has 80 feet of the best water ever for household use.

30 YEARS AGO Feb. 11, 1932

The first serious fire in the village in two years broke out Tuesday morning in the furnace room of the Village Players Theater on Chester Street and caused damage estimated at \$1,000. Volunteers were called to aid regular firemen and for nearly an hour battled flames which ate stubbornly through the floor at the south end of the building.

A resolution on petitioning the auditor-general to convey to the village all lands on which taxes have been delinquent for five years was adopted unanimously by the Board of Education Monday night. If the auditor-general agrees to the request and the village does not own the property, it would be offered for sale by the village within 60 days from the date of deed transfers.

Had weather been good, at least for business on the Grand Trunk commuter line, according to J. R. Minton, local agent, who reports that an extra car has had to be added to the trains leaving Birmingham at 8:09 a.m. and Detroit at 5:20 p.m.

15 YEARS AGO Feb. 19, 1947

Commissioners Colt Allee and John W. Martz this week announced that they will not be candidates for reelection to the City Commission at the April 7 election at which time their present terms expire. Both indicated they will "resist any attempt to be 'drafted' for subsequent terms."

When Aler D. Parnie 987 Madison avenue, called up the telephone company and the Birmingham water department to request the halting of service for three months, while he and his family vacation in San Antonio Tex., he had no trouble with the girls who took his res.

(See HAPPENINGS, 5-B)

By DENI SCANLON

Talk of the Towns

It isn't very often that reporters get the opportunity to talk up their profession in print as more goes with a pitch that might give readers a chance to contribute to writers.

Theta Sigma Phi, a national journalism group for women, is in dire need of books—everything from best sellers to classics, paperbacks, children's literature, cook books, comics, educational volumes, scientific journals or jigsaw puzzles.

The reason for the need is simple—to make money enough to provide a scholarship for a young girl interested in studying journalism.

Once a year, the Detroit chapter of this organization puts on a book fair where paperbacks are sold for a nickel and a dime and hardbacks for 35 cents.

The '62 fair will be in the Colonial Ballroom and

Detroit Press Club facilities at the Detroit Leland Hotel. Books will be open at 10 a.m. and the sale will continue into the evening hours.

The point of the pitch is this. If anyone around the towns has books to contribute to the cause, please do. They can be brought to me in The Eccentric news department or they can be picked up at your home by just calling here to give me the address.

Another point—everyone is invited to attend the sale.

So, should spring cleaning begin early in homes hereabouts, how about finding it in your heart—and closets and bookshelves—to donate to the cause.

Can you help the society for the preservation for women in journalism?

Suburban Sidelights

By HANK HOGAN

Merriman Smith, senior White House correspondent for UPI, entertained us the other evening with his comments on the new administration.

Mr. Smith was very non-partisan, and cut up the Eisenhower era as freely as the new Frontier. He started his speech by apologizing for his suit but he said reporters down in Palm Beach wear summer clothes and all his winter apparel was out of date.

He then discussed the two biggest news items of the year: John Glenn's flight and Caroline's kindergarten marks.

HE FELT A White House reporter's biggest job was to get the proper adjectives in a story. For example, during the Eisenhower administration, Ike golfed in "nearby" Augusta, Ga. However, opposition to the administration may be on a junket to "far off" Maryland.

Words change with administrations. During the Eisenhower administration the President cruised off Newport, R. I., in a navy ship called the "Barbara Ann." Republicans called this ship a "boat" and Democrats called it a "yacht." The new President renamed the ship the "Honey Fitz," and Republicans now call it a "yacht" and the Democrats call it a "boat."

WHILE MOST people are entitled to take a weekend off, a President must justify any relaxation. If he goes to Florida for the weekend, his press secretary always announces that he is fatigued from a heavy schedule. He must be very careful, however, not to imply that the President is ill, or else the stock market might crash.

The President must be very careful not to get a sun-tan, or he will look too healthy to take off the next weekend.

ON A SERIOUS note, Smith said that the new Constitutional Amendment limiting Presidents to two terms will in his opinion have the effect of changing the political power every eight years.

He feels a Republican will follow Kennedy, and a Democrat will then come back in. He felt people voted for a type of President, not the man. He felt that Truman was re-elected in 1948 because the people wanted a rough and tumble President after Roosevelt.

After Truman they wanted a fatherly President, and will look for this type of man again in 1968.

MR. SMITH ended his talk with anecdotes about golf. He said the people just don't realize how much golf has been played by Presidents. For example one President got up on Christmas morning at 4:30 a.m. and instructed his secret service aid to get his clubs ready to play at sun up. The aid told him it was snowing out but the President still insisted he wanted to play.

At 6:30 they left for "nearby" Maryland in three White House limousines. An inch and a half of snow had fallen and the secret service agents were afraid of losing the balls.

The President told them to take out a first aid kit and dye the balls red with iodine. He then played a fast nine holes because he wanted to get back and have breakfast with Mrs. Woodrow Wilson.

By KEN WEAVER City Beat

Many times Bob Page has asked if any thought or planning had been given to civil defense when various recommendations have come up for consideration before the Birmingham City Commission.

Bob believes that when new projects are proposed, they should include provisions for civil defense as might be appropriate.

New water connections, for example, should be designed to assure immediate cut-off from outside sources in event of nuclear attack.

Bob sometimes becomes concerned when his colleagues seem to lack the conviction that he has for the urgent need of this type of planning.

Birmingham, he says, should assume leadership in the field.

But, we need some direction first from the state and national level, his colleagues caution.

WELL, BOB, don't be too disturbed by this lack of inclusion of civil defense in community projects.

Birmingham stands not alone. At a recent conference in Chicago, four members of the Northwestern Illinois Planning Commission were asked whether any thought was given to civil defense in their community proposals.

Well, Bob, their chairman went into a lengthy history of civil defense, how it has lagged during the years because of patriotic apathy and lack of dynamic leadership.

All of which amounted to—no, they were not including civil defense measures in their planning proposals.

YET, THIS group has the responsibility of planning long-range improvements of a regional nature—improvements calling for inter-community cooperation.

That planning unit serves a metropolitan-suburban area similar to our own in growth complexities. It must offer solutions to such problems as water, sewers and roads.

As it happens in this area, many streams and sewer systems and highways pass through more than one city and county.

Therefore, the need for regional planning. There, as here, the planning is proceeding without provision for civil defense.

ONE OF THE points the planners stressed at that Chicago meeting, Bob, was that the need for cooperative action of various units of government continues to grow at a rapid pace.

The practice of inter-government cooperation, primarily through contractual arrangements, is becoming increasingly more acceptable by both the public officials and the public, they said.

The cooperation exists in planning and effecting many improvements designed to serve the people for 50 to 100 years—yet, no one offers any cooperative venture for civil defense.

And, as you know, Bob: Time is marching on.