

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Citizen Level Leadership

George Romney is a citizens' man. He comes to the political forefront as a citizen interested in government, concerned with the problems of Michigan from the citizens' point of view.

He recognizes that honest, progressive, efficient and effective government stems from a citizenry with a sense of civic responsibility.

He recognizes within himself this same sense of responsibility. So he is responsive to it in his fellow citizens.

He realizes that it takes leadership of exceptional quality to instill in the people a desire for that type of government and to guide them on the thorn-strewn path to it.

He believes he has that quality of leadership.

ROMNEY CERTAINLY is not a politically indoctrinated or politically trained candidate. He has made no career of politics.

He epitomizes the private citizen who enters into the field of public service because he feels he has something to offer and wants an opportunity to do so.

Romney is a successful business executive, having risen to the top positions of his auto manufacturing company. He is a leader in his church. He is a family man.

He is a man with a magnetic personality and the intelligence to accompany it.

WHEN ROMNEY became acutely aware of Michigan's financial difficulties, he sought to do something about them. He believed he could offer some constructive assistance.

Realizing that if long-lasting solutions were to be reached, Romney decided that any action to be taken would have to come from the citizen level.

So, he organized a citizens' group, now widely known as Citizens for Michigan. Through his work with this organization, Romney has gained an intensive knowledge of the state's governmental make-up, its characteristics and its problems.

The key point is that he acquired this knowledge as a private citizen interested in and desiring to do something to better his state government—not as a politician seeking to further his career.

THROUGH THE citizens' group, Romney worked vigorously for establishment of a constitutional convention. Now that convention is in session, engaged in the important job of rewriting Michigan's aged constitution.

Romney serves as a delegate and one of three vice presidents. Again, the citizen interested in the present and future welfare of his fellow citizens has exerted his leadership.

He is attempting to apply the citizen approach in revising that document, to modernize it according to the thinking of today's citizenry.

AT A CRUCIAL point in their history, the people of Michigan are fortunate to have a citizen-oriented man assuming this role of leadership.

They can accept that leadership, because George Romney is first and foremost a citizens' man.

Let's Improve Our Jury System

The Oakland County Bar Association has voiced criticism of the present method of selection of jurors for our circuit courts. Under the existing law the clerks of the cities and townships of the county must once a year prepare a list of jurors from the assessment rolls in the number of one for each 400 inhabitants.

The jurors must be of good character, of approved integrity, of sound judgment, and well informed and conversant with the English language, and free from all legal exceptions, and who have not made, and in whose behalf there has not been made any application to be selected . . . as jurors."

The law further states that the clerks shall avoid selecting people who had served as jurors the previous year.

The jurors selected are paid \$8 a day while serving.

BASICALLY, THE law leaves the selection entirely in the hands of the clerks. The Bar Association feels that the same people are being selected each year. It is easier for the clerk to select someone he knows would like to serve, than to alienate someone who might feel he hasn't the time to serve the community.

This practice, attorneys allege, leads to having juries comprised mostly of elderly people, mostly women, who are retired and

come from rural communities. This would have the effect of keeping the dollar amount of judgment awards at a minimum.

TO BRING WHAT they feel is justice back into the courts, a committee of the Bar Association has prepared legislation to have jurors selected by an independent jury commission, similar to Wayne County.

The commissioners would be selected by the five circuit judges and would select and interview all prospective jurors, taken by the commission from voter registration lists.

There are two hurdles to cross before this commission could become a reality. First, the Bar will seek the support of the county supervisors who would have to appropriate funds for the project.

The second would be passage of enabling legislation by the state legislature. With the backing of the county board of supervisors this would be no problem.

THE ECCENTRIC has observed the tendency of lawyers to avoid trying cases in our county because of the fear of our present jury-selecting system. This in no way promotes the spirit of justice.

Therefore, we wish to go on record approving a jury commission, and to encourage our supervisors to do what is necessary to secure this end.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Proposed Golf Course Site Good for Nature

To the Editor:

In response to your editorial in The Birmingham Eccentric of Feb. 11, concerning possible conversion of the 60 acres of land (with the exception of that leased by the Birmingham Art Association) on 14 Mile west, into a golf course, I wish to explore briefly another idea you expressed in the said editorial: That of an improved natural site.

On Saturday after tossing about a few hundred words on the subject with a couple of friends we drove over to the aforementioned site (former sewage treatment plant property). We went first into the rather unexciting building which is now the home of the B.A.A.

I REMEMBERED parks in great cities and areas in neighborhoods where I had gone to watch the birds, or feed ducks, or search for rare wild things.

Placed tended and protected and enhanced by the support of thoughtful citizens—and I remembered, too, that these places had been for everyone.

Would you ask the citizens of this area if they think they need a natural site of this sort?

MILLIE MITCHELL

Aid to Sectarian Schools Harmful To Public System

To the Editor:

I wish to reply to the letter "Aid to Education Should Be For All"

LET NO ONE be misled into believing that the use of public funds in any form to support sectarian schools would not weaken America's public education system.

WILLIAM LYMAN 8205 Hickory Bend Birmingham

(More PEOPLE'S COLUMN LETTERS ON 5-B)

Happenings of Long Ago

Hits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

30 YEARS AGO Feb. 16, 1912

The village of Birmingham has given notice of a sanitary sewer bond sale for which sealed proposals will be received at the village office until 7:30 p.m. Feb. 26

30 YEARS AGO Feb. 15, 1912

Racing on ice took place last week on Southfield Avenue and were largely attended. First prize of \$5 was a free-for-all; there was also a 2-4-8 trot or race with a \$5 first prize and a pony race with a \$2 award.

On Wednesday evening of last week a surprise was given in honor of David Amerson and visiting friend Raymond Goheen of Lincoln at the Chestnut farm by Bernice Messel and Viola Lamb. Two well-placed loads of young people from Big Beaver arrived yesterday morning. Music and games and a late lunch were enjoyed.

Speculation in both public and private circles ran high today as to what effect, if any, the proposed incorporation of Bloomfield Hills

30 YEARS AGO Feb. 18, 1932

Although a petition nominating him for village president in the March 14 election was filed with the clerk Tuesday, Harold J. Miller, former holder of the office, declined to accept the nomination

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Talk of the Towns

If people get confused about names and facts at Birmingham's St. James Episcopal Church, it's no wonder.

Dr. Kenneth H. Gass is rector of the church. Charles Kass has been the senior warden of the vestry. Since January, however, Kass has retired from the position and turned it over to another gentleman—Siffrin Vass.

Another item along religious lines came last week from a Bloomfield Township mother who overheard Daughter No. 2 (age five) asking Daughter No. 1 (age seven) a rather baffling question.

"If God is God, then who is Jesus?" the little one asked.

Listening intently for the answer to this question, the mother was surprised to hear: "Well, Jesus is God's maiden name."

There are negotiations afoot these days that women in these parts might well be interested in. Continuing the female's age-old campaign for equality, some 300 women went to Lansing last

week in a soft approach plan to back a bill that would make it a misdemeanor for an employer to pay a woman less than a man receives for the same job.

Members of the Michigan Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs—including some from this area—met with legislators to remind them that the fight for women's rights is not a dead issue.

The bills, sponsored by Sen. Philip Rabeil (D-Iron Mountain) and Rep. Marie L. Hager (R-Lansing), would reinforce prohibition of discrimination in salaries because of the sex of the employee.

A public hearing was scheduled Wednesday before the House judiciary committee. If you call for this, talk or write to your representatives.

Remember Hank, you'll be sharing this office with us for a long time.

Suburban Sidelights

By HANK HOGAN

An open letter to John B. Swainson, Governor of the State of Michigan:

I have read with interest your proposed tax package to cure the ills of our great state. After taking out my pencil and adding up your program, I find that not only will it cost me, as a citizen, more money to live in Michigan, but also when I'm through paying, the state will be in more of a financial crisis.

Your proposed three per cent corporate and personal income tax, plus a five per cent tax on financial institutions will raise, according to your figures, \$306 million. Your extra one-half per cent corporate and personal income tax for municipalities would raise an extra \$51 million but wouldn't help the state's financial picture.

To balance the new taxes, you proposed to repeal the Business Activities Tax (\$72 million), exempt manufacturing machinery and equipment from personal property tax (\$65 million) and exempt food and drugs from sales and use taxes (\$36 million).

THIS WOULD leave the state with 71 million new dollars after subtracting the discarded taxes and cost of administration from the new tax.

HOWEVER, GOVERNOR, you have proposed a budget for 1962-63 for the state of \$528 million. Your commissioner of revenue has estimated revenue without additional taxes will be \$462.4 million. This would mean that your proposed program would be \$5 million out of balance.

Your program would go into effect the state would be about \$96 million in debt.

MANY OF US were romanced by the thought that an income tax would solve all our ills; but, Governor, you have shown that it won't. It will only open the door to more spending.

"Fiscal reform is not creating new taxes to spend more money. Fiscal reform is trying to restore an unfair apportionment of taxes, and most important, living within our means with a little left over to pay off our deficit.

Isn't it about time you used your potential leadership to show the way to restoring financial responsibility by having your administrative staff cut expenses?

Isn't it time to admit that our revenues are not what you would like them to be, and to prepare a budget that is honestly balanced as required by the law of our state? Don't we, as your constituents, deserve a better program than you have presented?

Sincerely yours, A. Suburbanite

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

An English teacher once said, "Avoid beginning sentences with the word 'the'."

That a newspaper copy editor said, "Don't start paragraphs with 'the'."

So, a reporter began leaving "the" out of his stories almost entirely. Other writers followed suit.

Today, the war against that little three-letter word rages full blast.

The poor thing is all but obliterated. You see sentences like this, for example: "Council last night amended the zoning ordinance." "The council last night . . . ?"

"THE" IS A useful word. It has a very definite purpose—English teachers call it an "article"; it is used to introduce a noun.

Used properly, it is just as good a word as any other. Used too often, it becomes just as meaningless as any other word that is used too often.

And that is where the trouble lies. We writers have become so fearful of over-using the word that we under-use it! We leave it out when it should be used.

Someone got the crazy idea that our style becomes more professional when we start a sentence or paragraph omitting "the."

Which factor, I believe, serves to illustrate the major fault of newspaper writing today: We are more concerned with HOW we are writing than in WHAT we are writing.

Becoming overly involved in our construction of a story, we forget that the reader seeks information rather than a masterful piece of writing.

If a reporter is capable of getting his facts (all of them) stated clearly and accurately—and at the same time manages to write them in a clever, appealing style—he finds his stories are well read.

But if he manages only a clever style, he lacks readers.

PUNCTUATION SERVES as another example of our subordination of contents to method of writing. Someone complained that we used too much punctuation.

So now, we under-punctuate. We force the reader to wade through a sentence without the aid of punctuation marks to help make our meaning clear.

This is good. But unfortunately, every news story does not lend itself to this type of writing.

So what do we do? Sometimes, we contrive what we think is an eye-catching lead.

THIS ONLY defeats our purpose, because the reader is quick to see that he has been duped—that that was written so outstandingly in the "lead" has nothing to do with the rest of the story. He resents the contrivance.

Whenever the reader's attention is called to the method, or style, of writing rather than to the contents, the writer has failed in his job of communicating.

PART OF THE trouble, too, I think, is that our world (See CITY BEAT, 4-B)