

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Reminder to Supervisors

Here's a sample of how your taxes can be kept going up and up and up: simply because some public officials fail to research deeply enough the various elements that go to make up a proposed tax-supported project.

The Oakland County Board of Supervisors proposes to construct an airport that will contain runways and an area larger than the Wayne County airport. That, indeed, is an ambitious program . . . and its ultimate cost to the taxpayers can go sky-high!

At the Birmingham City Commission meeting Feb. 12 the Oakland County airport project was under discussion. Commissioner Carl F. Ingraham, who is one of our four local supervisors, said he favored the project.

When Mayor Florence H. Willett questioned him about costs, Ingraham admitted he had no knowledge of what it would run to. He did argue, though, that the project has his support insofar as starting it.

NOW, THIS editorial is not questioning the right or the wrong as to whether this airport is needed. That question is for the experts. But we do respond with, we hope, constructive criticism over the apparently casual concern Ingraham seemed to have over the possible money involved.

We also believe that the vital interests of the citizens and taxpayers of Birmingham would be served better if our city commission itself called its own appointed supervisors in to a meeting, and demanded from them more complete facts concerning this proposed airport—especially its potential costs.

TO ALLOW THESE supervisors (and the same situation relates to other Oakland County cities whose supervisors are appointed like Birmingham's) to commit their local communities to an unknown expenditure of tax money without even a few basic facts is certainly not good governmental practice.

Certainly, our city commission would not allow any of its appointed officials, from City Manager L. R. Gare on down, to involve Birmingham in an expenditure that ultimately might cost our people untold scores, even hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Over many years Birmingham's supervisors have been appointed in a sort of routine manner. Most of the time the in-

cumbents have been re-appointed annually.

WOULD IT NOT be wise and fitting, for example, for every city commission to express thoughts along this theme to each supervisor, when appointing them? We, elected by the citizens of Birmingham, are appointing you as supervisors to represent all of us on our Oakland County Board of Supervisors. You are to serve both your city and your county-at-large, of course. "But, we wish to remind you, your most important responsibility is to remember the interests of the city you are representing. This does not mean that you should not exercise your best judgment in serving on the county board. We, the commission, also allow, even encourage, other City employees in top positions to use their own judgment in many instances while performing their jobs.

"THIS SAME relationship exists among you as Birmingham's group of supervisors. You are very definitely responsible to the citizens of Birmingham through us, their elected city commission.

"We want you to report to us at regular intervals about your work as supervisors. We especially want to know what the board is doing that vitally affects Birmingham, in whatever item of interest to us. We don't want you to forget to whom you are responsible. We have confidence in your individual and collective abilities to measure up to your supervisor obligations.

"In an important way, you supervisors whom we appoint are part of the official 'team' that serves our people. It is their taxes that support whatever, in their name and for their benefit, we do—whether it be in the form of a personal service or in the construction and maintenance of some physical project.

WE HAVE PUT the words above in quotes, as a suggestion for a pattern, a policy we believe should be brought into living existence—for the present and the future.

We join Birmingham citizens and taxpayers in urging that stronger ties be created between our city commission and its appointed agency known as our supervisors.

Certainly this proposed Oakland County airport, with its ultimate tremendous financial impact upon every county taxpayer, is a strong argument for strengthening such a working alliance.

Suburbanite: Typical American

Consider the typical American: In 1910, he lived on a farm; in 1930, in a small town; today, he lives in a suburb—like Birmingham, Beverly Hills, Lathrup, Bloomfield Hills—of a metropolitan city.

Today's typical American—the suburbanite—wants to "put down roots" in more ways than one. He wants to know what is happening in his community and to have a voice in how his community develops.

Mr. Suburbanite wants to know his children's teachers as people, not as faceless bodies at Seaholm, Groves, Derby, Adams or Torry.

He wants to know how much the widening of E. Maple and Southfield roads will cost him and when he has to pay it, how much the Twelve Town Drain will cost and why these improvements are necessary.

Because he wants to be "closer to life" than is usually possible in the impersonal atmosphere of a metropolitan city, he is willing to accept the responsibilities as well as the privileges of that way of life.

NOW, CONSIDER the suburban community newspaper.

In his new book, "Community Journalism," Professor Kenneth Byerly of the University of North Carolina Journalism School says these goals of getting closer to life are difficult to obtain without a strong local newspaper—such as The Birmingham Eccentric.

Byerly tells of the reactions of residents in a New York city when its newspaper ceased publication.

He quoted a minister: "It's like half-living to be without your own community's news. How do you get people interested in community projects?" "How do you know who stands for what, and why?"

He quoted a civic leader: "If our paper had still been publishing, that plant

wouldn't have closed. Our town has no public voice now. Our vital spark is gone." A candidate for local office said: "The past election was the deadliest ever. How do you reach the people? How can they know the issues? You can't talk to them all in person."

IT'S THE OLD story of not missing the water till the well ran dry: These feelings were expressed AFTER the paper had ceased publication for lack of public support.

Obviously, a community voice requires two basic things—something to say, and someone to listen and respond to it.

It is the responsibility of The Birmingham Eccentric to be more than a gossip sheet; more than a reporter of local meetings, weddings and basketball scores.

To have "something to say" on issues vital to the community's growth, development and welfare—and to say it clearly and completely—is the major function of this, the local suburban newspaper.

THE SUBURBAN community is still evolving. It is the responsibility of the suburban newspaper (in our case, The Eccentric) to report and interpret the various problems and accomplishments of that evolution—and to offer its readers direction and leadership by stating opinions on them in its editorial columns.

From time to time The Eccentric will bring to the attention of our readers, in editorials such as this, the various kinds of responsibility which we believe the suburban newspaper has.

As in all forms of communication, there must be a "sender," this newspaper; but there also must be a "receiver," you the reader, who will read, discuss, agree or disagree with our tenets.

Only through active TWO-WAY communication can this newspaper be a true Birmingham-Bloomfield community voice, and Birmingham-Bloomfield the kind of community we want it to be.



Are We Going Downhill?

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Support the President On Tariff, Advocated

To the Editor: A tariff confers a privilege which makes it economically possible for domestic producers to manufacture an item which will sell for more than the current world market price. There is no room for special privilege in an economic system supposedly founded upon concept of free enterprise. Why should we pay a premium price for domestic products if foreign workers can make them cheaper? Why concern ourselves with the plight of manufacturers whose

privilege is about to end? CERTAINLY THE richly endowed USA can produce some items easier than can anyone else on earth. Those hand labor is a match for our automated machinery. Furthermore, cargo ships don't unload goods here only to return home empty. They take our products with them! The price issue should be obvious to all—when goods don't cross borders, soldiers will. Let's support our President. CARL F. SHAW Drayton Plains

Maple Widening: Cars Here to Stay

To the Editor: Compromise Sought on Maple Widening (Eccentric, Feb. 11)—It appears that we have several city commissioners who are of the opinion that the "auto" is not here to stay. 1. Let's try half a loaf. 2. More cars will enter the city. 3. I would like something less than proposed. Some progress has been made

since 1920 in the quantity of automobiles produced, and in the same tone from what I can determine from the fact we have less horses traveling our streets than we previously had. I would hope that some thought for the next 10-20-or-30 years is considered when this subject is next on our city agenda. A. ROBERT BLIVEN 1284 Ruffner Birmingham

Shopping Around By Rolfe



"Here's the color—and I need just enough to re-do the seat of the chair I'm painting!"

Talk of the Towns

A Beverly Hills tot was walking with her father a day last week and discovered a dollar on the sidewalk. Curious dad asked her what she planned to do with it, suggesting that she put it in the bank. The youngster agreed. That was what she should do. Later that evening she cozied up to him. "Dad," she started. I think I'll put that dollar in the bank. I think I'll put it in my purse 'cause a girl never knows when she'll need a dollar these days."

To answer the many, many queries—Detroit's chapter of Theta Sigma Phi, the national journalism group for women, will hold its annual book fair on Tuesday, March 27 beginning at 10 a.m. at the Detroit Press Club facilities at the Detroit Leland Hotel. Two weeks ago a plea went out, via this column, for books to be donated. Call it a "teaser technique" to draw inquiries (or what it means—oversight) but the message still is: donate books and come to the fair.

A closing-Ed Eccentric reporter this week was working on a column sent in by a student correspondent. One of the items stated: "Florida students are being applied to the last of the eighth grade students."

Paper place mats at Devon Gables drew an interesting comment from a young diner last week. Studying the printed material about Mexico that appears on the table savers, the would-be tourist told her adult companion, "Mexico must be a swell place to live. There's a lot of dessert and you can learn to dance the siesta."

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO

Feb. 23, 1912 Because so many of his friends have expressed a desire to be with him on an occasion and patented article, Morgan W. Rindel has offered shares at \$10 each to those who wish to invest in his "Out-Of-Site" bed. Details will be arranged at a meeting to be called soon, providing enough interest is manifested. Up for discussion will be organization of a stock company with enough capital to manufacture beds and capital to carry book accounts for about 90 days.

A speaker very aptly stated, "at the recent Farmer's Institute in Birmingham, that the Bloomfield fruit grower and farmer is the most independent man on earth. This is true because a ready market is within reach of his hand.

Frank Passage, general manager of the Thursday Night Dancing Club and his fellow laborers are busy proof of the success of their Valentine party. One hundred and twenty-five couples were present. The club colors, pink and white, were carried out clear to the banquet hall.

30 YEARS AGO

Feb. 25, 1912 Within \$100 of their goal of \$700, members of the Birmingham Rotary Club plan this week to continue their house-to-house canvass for dollar memberships in the Oakland County Society for Crippled Children, according to Walter Connelly, who is assisting in the campaign. The Birmingham campaign is part of a county-wide drive to raise \$2,000 which will provide medical care and treatment for approximately 175 crippled children in the county.

Taxicab companies operating in Birmingham won a distinct victory Monday night when the Village Commission voted to instruct the attorney to draft an ordinance to the present taxicab ordinance which will materially reduce the amount of liability insurance they are required to carry.

Music and literature have occupied places on the program of Birmingham Business Women's Club for the past two weeks. Joseph Parvis gave two tenor solos at Wednesday's meeting. Mrs. C. Kenneth Bell of Greenwood Ave. told the life story of a book from the time it is submitted to the publisher until it is placed on the library shelf. Mrs. Bell spoke at yesterday's meeting.

15 YEARS AGO

Feb. 20, 1917 Motorists who presently park their automobiles on any one of Birmingham's 14 through streets had better make arrangements to park them elsewhere or find themselves with a parking violations ticket. Within a short time, they (See HAPPENINGS, 4-B)

By DENI SCANLON

But if he's going to treat us well And give us milk and honey Please tell me, father, where the hell He's going to get the money?

Don't worry, child, there is no hitch About this glorious plan, He'll get the money from the rich To help the common man.

But, father, won't there come a time, If we take all their cash And they are left without a dime, When things will go to smash? You need a lot of seasoning, You nosey little brat, You do too damn much reasoning To be a Democrat!!

Suburban Sidelights

By HANK HOGAN

Touring various city, village and township meetings in the last few weeks, I was impressed by the "extremely large" number of the electorate attending to see how their municipality was run. I came to the bitter conclusion that these meetings, perhaps, should be reported as society news because of the apparent lack of interest in the governmental whirl. Therefore . . .

Liquor License Gala

At a recent meeting in the Township of Bloomfield, which has approximately 23,000 residents, nine interested citizens were present, six of whom centered their interest on approval of a liquor license problem. The Byron Gersons of Royal Oak and the Bloomfield Shopping Plaza brought to the meeting their out-of-town guests Samuel Rubiner, Paul Saracino, Gerald Emmer and, of course, their attorney, Oscar Feldman.

The striking Virginia Bearden, in a smart gray dress also was present. Could she be interested in a sewer in her area?

Among the other guests in the newly decorated auditorium were Robert Green (will he be a candidate?) and James Hannan of Bloomfield Village.

The remaining agenda could be summed up as six parts sewer to one part water, with just a twist of rods.

Amid Fire Hall Decor

With a smorgasbord agenda, the Beverly Hills council entertained five guests. The Bernard Ricks were there—Mrs. Ricks was wearing an attractive three-quarter length Persian lamb coat.

On the esquire side Messrs. Lindensmith and Mann were attired casually, while William Bay was quite debonair.

The novel ash trays around the hall attracted quite a bit of attention. They are used as water drains when the council is not in session.

Festivities at the Former Kelly Mansion

Nine enlightened Lathrupites joined the council in the stately building, known locally as the House-in-the-Woods.

Perennial attendees Louise Lathrup Kelley and her husband were joined by Thomas Manton, Doc Holland, Guy Antonelli, Joseph Finnell, M. W. Huber, Earl W. Foust and latecomer Mrs. John Campbell.

A buffet of topics was served.

Stunning Mayor Hostess

The Lady Mayor and her commission recently entertained 28 guests (out of more than 27,000 invited) in the commission room of the Birmingham City Hall.

Mesdames Paul Hillman, Richard Morley, Beatrice Kaiser, Allen McCrea and Mr. Joseph Madaras of Davis St. joined Mr. and Mrs. L. O. Phillips and Mrs. Lala Kent of Bonnaville St. to consider zoning problems.

Among the others interested in the tete-a-tete were Mrs. H. R. Griffiths, Mr. Louis Rabout, Mrs. Michael Bosak and Mrs. Clayton Wigle of Ruffner St.

The "young set" was represented by Don Kent, Steve Beare, Paul Harlan and Paul Wells.

Highlighting the entertainment for the guests were the burning of trash and the licensing of dancing schools.

A good time was had by all!

By KEN WEAVER City Beat

Looking over past issues of The Eccentric the other day, I came across a Page One item on Feb. 16, 1912, that said John McCarroll had requested a reprint of the following by a Walter Mason: "Our home is rather humble, Maud; the roof is on the burn; the kitchen table's wapper-jawed—the chairs are out of plumb.

"The stairway railing is badly cracked, the screen door has no catch. Our crockery is mostly cracked, the glassware doesn't match. "I do not blame you that you sigh and shed a tear that smarts when you see rich dames go by in joyous chug-chug carts. We have this comfort though, my pet, a joy that never ours; we're absolutely out of debt and what we have is ours.

"I'd rather use a sway-back chair, attired in garments frayed, than loll on divans rich and rare for which I hadn't paid. Some day I hope to take you, dear, a trip around the globe; and then you'll make the queens look queer when in your jeweled robe; but till I can raise the price to give you gems, my pet; this cheap John lay-out must suffice, I will not go in debt."

AT A RECENT Birmingham City Commission meeting there was this hand-out, called "Sains Statistics": Father, must I go out to work? No! No! My darling son.

We're living now on Easy Street With Funds from Washington. We're cared for now by Uncle Sam, So don't get excited; We do not need to care a damn Because we're subsidized.

But if he's going to treat us well And give us milk and honey Please tell me, father, where the hell He's going to get the money?

Don't worry, child, there is no hitch About this glorious plan, He'll get the money from the rich To help the common man.

But, father, won't there come a time, If we take all their cash And they are left without a dime, When things will go to smash? You need a lot of seasoning, You nosey little brat, You do too damn much reasoning To be a Democrat!!