

The Birmingham Eccentric

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A Foundation Has Been Built

In the controversy over prayers in the classroom in the Bloomfield Hills School District, we are happy that the Board of Education formulated a new policy. To take the worship of God from the classroom is like building a tall skyscraper without a foundation. For a month the Bloomfield district had such a sky-scraper tottering in the wind. In the middle of December, because of complaints from some parents, the board established a policy to eliminate all but silent prayers in the classroom. Its purpose, of course, was not to impose on the majority the beliefs of the minority. Yet, the established policy had the effect of avoiding recognition of the existence of the Almighty.

WITH THAT result, how then could teachers explain such things as trees and birds and seasons, which science as yet has been unable to duplicate or reproduce or imitate. We feel that the school board was overly sensitive in its concern over separation of church and state. Other governmental groups have not felt it necessary to be that sensitive. The Congress of the United States begins each ses-

sion with a prayer, as does the State Legislature. Even our country has taken a prayer for a motto and imprinted it on the coin of the realm: "In God, we trust." Other boards of education in this area have not formally adopted a policy for or against prayers. They have solved each complaint as it arose.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that it took citizen pressure to prompt the board to formulate the new policy of allowing oral prayers and use of "music, decorations and symbols commonly associated with religious holidays."

However, this is a significant example of the fact that citizens can make government follow their dictates if they are willing to spend the time to let their desires be known. Now that the policy has been changed, the citizenry should forget the controversy and continue to cooperate with the board. They should not hold a grudge against members, who in good faith, did not share their views. We believe that board members' contributions, on the whole, reflect a fine record of outstanding service to this district's exceptional educational system.

Training Our Youth

One hundred and forty-three applicants for membership on the police force of a large city assembled recently to take the required physical tests. Thirty-seven of these young men, slightly more than a fourth of the total number, failed to make the grade and thus lost their chance at the job they wanted. Did the tests demand unusual athletic prowess? They did not. The youths who failed simply did not measure up to reasonable standards of fitness. Applicants were expected to climb 20 feet up a rope, do 16 pushups and 27 situps, jump 18 inches higher than the outstretched hand and run down three flights of stairs and back up in 29 seconds. These tests, though many a middle-aged policeman (or anyone else of that age)

might find them difficult, ought to have been duck soup for a youth in good condition. ONE SHOULD be wary of drawing general conclusions from an incident of this kind. Still, it does not seem out of line to suggest that when 25 per cent of the applicants for police work fail simple physical tests, something is wrong with our system of training. Men in their 20s should be physically fit as a matter of course, and they should also understand the importance of keeping themselves fit. Giving them such understanding is primarily the job of the schools. Government officials say that in many places, the job is not being done as well as it could be done.

1st Amendment Is Vital to Freedom

Let it be put as simply, and bluntly, as possible: Without freedom of expression, the United States would not exist. The land would be here; the people might be here. But the United States, which is not only land and people but a system of government based on a few momentous concepts, would simply not exist if freedom of expression had not been cherished since the founding of the republic. This is the essential, rock-bottom truth to hold in mind. This is the truth that a great many Americans, sometimes with the best of intentions, forget or ignore. That springs, in turn, from a lack of understanding.

THE BASIC GUARANTEE in the First Amendment to the Constitution is skeletally simple: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of

the press . . ." Everything rests on that. But that simple provision is bolstered up by a strong buttressing of tradition fashioned, often at bitter cost, over the course of many generations in the English-speaking world. The point can be underscored by noting that the great English poet, John Milton, was battling Parliament on the issue of free publication without prior restraint more than three centuries ago. We harp on this because it becomes increasingly evident that the recent Supreme Court ruling that allows licensing—that is, prior censorship—of movies has seriously undercut a fundamental liberty and may lead to a general attack on every man's right to express himself without first securing the authorities' approval. Americans should be conscious of the danger, and zealous to guard against it.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

"Divorce Anonymous" is a new Hollywood organization whose members are males who are ex-husbands. They get together to swap experiences and, in general, to bolster one another to the end that each may withstand further matrimonial involvement. If some member feels as though he is about "to pop" the question again, he may phone DA headquarters and a voice will read the transcript of his last divorce case, to cool his ardor. Added to the transcript are howling children, scolding mothers-in-law, nagging wives, etc. (Maybe soon a similar outfit will be created for the ex-wives, too.) Did you know that, since the end of World War II, many thousands of West Berlin girls were employed as spies for anti-Communist groups? Now that the wall has been installed, the girls can't commute between East and West Berlin, so they are unemployed. In this case, in 4 way . . . stone walls may a jobless state make . . .

In the event a housewife's union is organized it seems husbands who do the dishes should at least have associate membership. Human beings in every age and from every land reveal a strong inner urge "to worship something—something visible or something of the spirit." Even in an aggressive democracy, or republic, such as the United States, the citizens "want to believe in something, even as it relates to government." So they demand that public officials, "Like Caesar's wife, be above suspicion." Which no doubt is why scandal of any sort that attaches to public officials de-values them. Thus, the recent revelation that New York's Governor Nelson Rockefeller and his wife are to separate already has discredited his status as a potential GOP presidential candidate in 1964. Yes, citizens want to believe that candidates for high public office, . . . are above suspicion." People want presidents to possess feet of alabaster . . . not of ordinary clay. These Russian trawlers in the Cape Cod area were, too, fishing—though maybe not for fish. 'Tis said that horse sense is that faculty which keeps horses from betting on people.



"You see, I am a corner lifesaver."

Birmingham Doctor Heads New Committee

A Birmingham pediatrician is head of a new committee of Oakland County doctors who have grouped together to fight medical care for the aged, financed by Social Security. Dr. Robert J. Mason, M.D., a former president of the Oakland County Medical Society, heads the new Oakland County Political Awareness Committee. The group will seek the support of other professionals, such as dentists, as well as the support of pharmacists, other businessmen and patients. The Michigan Minute Men, a statewide political action group composed of doctors which was reactivated this week, has already backed the new committee. DR. JAMES A. READ, M.D., a resident of Bloomfield Hills with offices in Birmingham, said the committee is not directly a part of the county medical society, but that doctors in the society are acting independently. Dr. Read is president of the county medical society. Dr. Mason said petitions, to be forwarded to Cong. William S. Bloomfield (Rep.-Royal Oak), are available in many doctors' offices in the county. The petitions support the 1960 Kerr-Mills law and are in opposition to the King-Anderson bill aimed at providing medical care for the aged on Social Security. Dr. Mason said implementation of the latter bill "provides a service rather than the promised dollar," and does not include everybody. He said the bill is a tax and not an insurance program.

South Oakland Drain Surplus To Extend Line

Area towns who contributed to the finances for the Southeastern Oakland County Sewage Interceptor fund—now paid up—have a return coming from the surplus. The return will not be immediate, however, for the reserves will be used to finance an addition to the fund in its opening 18 months to two years from now. Birmingham has a 4.3882 per cent share in the fund. Beverly Hills, 4.217 per cent and Southfield, 1.3801. Reason for holding the surplus, according to drain officials, is to have available immediate operating and bond redemption reserves for the fund. Birmingham has a 4.3882 per cent share in the fund. Beverly Hills, 4.217 per cent and Southfield, 1.3801. Reason for holding the surplus, according to drain officials, is to have available immediate operating and bond redemption reserves for the fund. Birmingham has a 4.3882 per cent share in the fund. Beverly Hills, 4.217 per cent and Southfield, 1.3801. Reason for holding the surplus, according to drain officials, is to have available immediate operating and bond redemption reserves for the fund. Birmingham has a 4.3882 per cent share in the fund. Beverly Hills, 4.217 per cent and Southfield, 1.3801.

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files of The Eccentric 50 YEARS AGO Jan. 26, 1912 Last week the editor of the Birmingham Eccentric was in Detroit for two days along with other Michigan editors as guests of the Detroit Board of Commerce. Guests invited included members of all press clubs. Over 800 men, editors and Detroit business men attended a luncheon with Gov. Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey, Michigan's Gov. Chase N. Osborn, Michigan Press Association president James Schermerhorn and others. The Bridgport, Conn Saturday Post reported on the musical talent of 14-year-old Hazel Bodine, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Bodine, former Birmingham residents, now living in the east. Mrs. Bodine was the former Emily J. Adams and her husband is a native of Birmingham. Their daughter appeared in a number of Bridgport musical events, playing the cello. George N. Brady, of Bloomfield Hills first, Detroit next, has left with the Birmingham Eccentric office a fine lot of printed matter, blue prints, photos and a pamphlet explaining the right way of handling sewers for Birmingham. It may be seen in this office. 30 YEARS AGO Jan. 28, 1932 The first answer to demands of the Birmingham Real Estate Board, that Bloomfield Township cut its operating expenses, was made at a meeting of the Township Board Monday afternoon when it approved agreement with the Detroit-Edison Co. for a \$447 monthly saving on highway lighting. A meeting of all the members of the Birmingham Unemployment Relief Committee, and any others interested in welfare work will be held in the Municipal Building today. It was announced yesterday by Lloyd H. Reid, welfare director. The purpose of the meeting is to determine as far as possible what the welfare needs of Birmingham and vicinity will be for the remainder of the winter. No objections were offered to the 1932 Bloomfield Hills Village budget of \$68,400 when it was presented for public hearing Saturday. The new budget calls for an increase of \$2,600 over last year's tax levy. The latest report on the Quonset huts from August Carrier, housing manager, indicates that the 12 huts at Cranbrook now have all the water connections. (SEE HAPPENINGS, 5-B)

People's Column UNICEF Official Says PJM Misled About Fund Use

The Editor: Last Jan 4 you published a letter from a reader, PJM, who had been misled into believing that UNICEF funds had been misused to finance the UN's Congo operation. Please allow us to set the record straight. Not one penny contributed to UNICEF through the Trick or Treat program, UNICEF Green Cards or donations has ever been misused. The money was used for purposes that those specifically represented by us, namely to aid UNICEF in the Congo and elsewhere in over 100 countries. As far as the U.S. contribution to UNICEF is concerned, its payment did not become due until last Dec. 27—and on that very same day UNICEF received its check for \$10 million. C. LLOYD BAILEY Executive Director U.S. Committee for UNICEF United Nations, New York

By DENI SCANLON

Went to check the map last week to locate a street. It didn't sound familiar and it wasn't on the map. The road turned out to be one of many, many new avenues being built in the numerous subdivisions mushrooming around the Birmingham area. It was only four years ago that this reporter drove around to find out what Bloomfield Township, Beverly Hills, Wood Creek Farms, West Bloomfield Township, Bloomfield Hills, Birmingham Farms and Lathrup looked like. Thinking back over that short period—plus the realization that street building is going on faster than map making—brought to mind just how fast this vicinity is changing. The most emphatic change personally, of course, was the demolishing of the old Birmingham Eccentric building at 220 N. Woodward, the construction of our new facilities on Bowers and the substitution of Demery's in our old headquarters site. The Sportsman Shop on the corner of Martin and Pierce has made that area take on a new look and the new front on Himelbock's and new back on B. Siegel-Kay Cooley is keeping up with the times, too. Beverly Hills with its increase in subdivisions is fast reaching a stage when sites for homes will be few. Groves High gave the village a facial change and the proposed Beverly Hills Methodist Church and the Medical Village Inc. will soon alter it again. The Maple-Telegraph corner of Bloomfield Township "just ain't the same" either. The township is experiencing a change along many of its major arteries including the addition to the Township Hall on the southwest side of Long Lake and Telegraph. Even Franklin, known as the town that time forgot, is remembering that change, however minor, is inevitable. George Wellington Smith has moved into a spanking new office and the village and library have moved into Smith's former and remodeled spot. Even the honeymoon cottage near Guldfield is being revamped. Wonder what four more years will do.

Suburban Sidelights

By HANK HOGAN

After reading the headlines for the past week about everyone being in favor of an income tax, I started to wonder how Michigan got into a position of needing more taxes. Michigan, at the end of its last fiscal year, was still 71 million dollars in debt. This, of course, is impossible because the Constitution limits the state to a debt of \$250,000. In eight of the last ten years Michigan has not had a balanced budget. How has this happened? Let's look at how a budget comes into being. FIRST, ALL state agencies estimate what their needs will be for the coming year and submit their requests to the state budget director. The budget director then asks the commissioner of revenue how much money he anticipates will be paid into the state coffers, from various taxes. The budget director then turns these figures over to the governor who must balance them and submit them to the legislature. The governor, of course, gets plenty of help from the budget director and interested parties. It then becomes the legislature's job to review the governor's recommendations and pass a budget. In the past years we have gotten into debt because the estimate of incoming funds has been overly optimistic, and the money simply didn't come in. The responsibility rests on the governor's shoulders because under the Constitution he is not submitting a balanced budget, yet after it happened five or six years in a row you would think the legislature would catch on. IF YOU CAN remember back to last year, the governor submitted a budget of \$477 million. The legislature asked the revenue commission what he thought the income would be and he said \$462 million. Clearly then, the governor did not try to submit a budget he couldn't live with. By adding the income he could promise, various organizations more money, which he knew would not be there. The legislature, then, tried to balance the budget at \$462 million and every state agency yelled they were getting a "cut." What they meant was not that they were being cut from the year before, but cut from the governor's recommendations. The sad part about all this is that apparently Michigan's revenue won't even be \$462 million unless we all go out and buy a new car and pay more sales tax. SO WE HAVE spent ourselves into more of a deficit, and the state needs more revenue. The answer? If we keep spending at the current rate the legislature could pass nuisance taxes this year but we would still be in trouble next year. The only way out of the mess would be to hold the line on all spending. But what about the needs of mental health, higher education, welfare and general education? We have found that once you give an agency a sum of money you can't give it less the next year. Each agency has an inherent right to a budget increase. Therefore, with every letter you write to your legislator asking for more help for a state agency, you are pushing the state that much closer to an income tax.

By KEN WEAVER

City Beat

Madame Housewife, living in the southeast corner of Birmingham, called the other day. "Say, it must really be cold out today," she declared. "I tried three times this morning to mail a card, and all three mail boxes were frozen shut. "I tried the one at the railroad station, the one at Torry and Webster and at Ruffner and Adams. The temperature was above. MAYOR JEROME Cavanaugh of Detroit has accused the press and other news media of plotting to "thrust" George Romney on the public as a man of politics. I don't know whether to feel hurt or proud that no one contacted us to assist in this "plot." Were we slighted or did the "plotters" believe us above this sort of thing? Either the Hon. Mr. Cavanaugh lacks knowledge of how the press works or else he ignores what he knows and craftily seeks to tarnish the image of Romney that is now developing. George Romney is news because he figures in events that are newsworthy. He is news because of the things he says and does. And he most certainly is political news because he takes part—and quite actively so—in politics and government. If for no other reason, he became news because of his announcement that he may seek the Republican gubernatorial nomination. That alone makes his every move, his every word of some interest and concern to the public. His enthusiasm for and actions in state politics and government are big news to us because he resides in our community. If the image the public is now getting of Romney is one of favorable political personality, it comes as a result of the news he creates and is involved in—not because of any plot by the news media. The public could not be so duped. Newspaper ethics prevent such plotting. Newspapers are responsible for reporting the news, not for the results of it. And besides, we are competing against one another. ANYBODY WANT to sponsor a debate? Dr. John R. Caldwell, whose letters to the editor about fallout shelters have been published in this paper, has suggested a debate on the subject. It could be something like this: Resolved that the U.S. should give financial and moral support to the 'UN' and that fallout shelters are not in the national interest. This is a business of fallout shelters is one of the hottest topics of discussion these days. People are either vehemently for or vehemently against shelters. How about it? Any takers for the bid to sponsor a public debate on this controversial matter? THE JAN. 13, 1962, issue of New Yorker magazine carried a reprint (and comment) of the following legal notice from the Nov. 16, 22 and 30, 1961, issues of The Eccentric: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN Please to Take Notice that on Tuesday the 12th day of December . . . at nine o'clock in the forenoon, at the office of (See CITY BEAT, Page 7-B)