

## Newcomers and School Affairs

"The ongoing relationship which exists between a community and its public school system is a matter of considerable importance. When this relationship is one of understanding and mutual trust, a sound and efficient operation of the schools is apt to ensue. However, when this relationship is one of misunderstanding and mistrust, gross inefficiency of school operation is more than likely to occur."

With the above preface a report was made to the citizens of the Birmingham School District this year on the reactions of our citizens to our public schools by a professional statistical group.

**THIS REPORT** included several areas of research, but the one that attracted our attention particularly was the voting behavior of our residents in relation to the length of time they have lived here.

The statistics show that only 13 per cent of the residents of our community living here less than a year vote in school elections, while 59 per cent of this SAME group ignore school votes but do vote in national and state elections.

Of the residents living in the community between one and two years, 26 per cent vote in school elections.

**IN THE** two-to-five-year residence category 56 per cent get to the polls for school elections.

The pattern is more interesting in another part of the survey that shows that one-third of our residents have lived here less than five years.

Apparently, then, a vast segment of our community never get to the polls to vote for school officials or millage proposals.

Yet, the report showed that this new group who didn't get to the polls were younger and had a higher percentage of children.

**IF THE** surveyors' original statement that efficiency of school operation has a relationship to the public's understanding of school problems is valid, then Birmingham is just plain lucky that it has an efficient operation.

Add to this the fact that our community is actually losing two years of citizen contribution to the betterment of schools by this lag in interest.

**THE REPORT** can only lead us to conclude that, as a community, we have an obligation to an early orientation of new residents to our schools and their problems.

This responsibility includes us as a newspaper to communicate with the residents so that they are able to keep informed of the activities of the school system.

**THE SAME RESPONSIBILITY** also falls on the administration of the school system. We might add that the school administration is presently doing an exceptional job with its periodic talking to the residents and with such efforts as its special tabloid section appearing in *The Eccentric* last fall.

The responsibility also falls on parent-teacher and citizens' committees to foster more interest among newcomers.

But the main responsibility falls on the shoulders of the new residents themselves, to take an early interest in their community and its schools so that both the residents and the school district gets the maximum profit from their contribution.

## Vigilance vs. Apathy

Sheffield Estates Civic Association and Pembroke Manor Association serve as excellent examples of how homeowner groups can best meet civic responsibility.

We point especially to the efforts of these two groups to have Birmingham's parks dedicated to that use in perpetuity.

We disagreed with them that the parks should be dedicated; but we certainly admire them for their civic interest and initiative.

**THEIR MOTIVATION** is commendable; They sought to protect the interests of the public; to assure that the people of Birmingham would forever have the use of certain properties for parks.

The two groups presented their case in an orderly manner to city officials. They presented signed petitions and requested an audience. They argued their case determinedly but inoffensively.

There were no accusations, no dramatic scenes.

**AND, IN THE** end, they achieved at least partial success. The city fathers decided to give the public a greater measure of assurance by designating the properties as parks, thus limiting the possibility of changing their use or selling them without the public's awareness.

Accepting this partial success graciously, they then called for a clarification of the section on parks in the Birmingham city charter.

What is lacking is a definition of parks. Defining them would give stronger meaning, and apparently legality, to their use as such.

**THE EFFORTS** of these two organizations illustrate vividly the value of citizen vigilance as opposed to citizen apathy.

May they continue their good efforts, and may others follow their magnificent example.

## When the President Speaks . . .

In a speech at Yale University President Kennedy endeavored to outlaw traditional ideas relative to governmental surpluses and deficits. He asserted that not always are surpluses good for the economy, and that not always are deficits harmful to the same economy.

His belief is based upon the assumption that an "all-wise" federal government, staffed by economic theorists, can manipulate a "free competitive economy" in a nation of 180 million people so that a planned deficit can stimulate business; also, that a planned prevention of a surplus also can be healthy.

**ADMITTED THAT** in rare cases such beliefs may be fruitful, yet to defend them without admitting the danger attending them is, we think, playing a hazardous game with a free competitive economy.

This is because a dominantly economically illiterate citizenry may foolishly accept such presidential utterances as "gospel truth", eventually resulting in national fiscal suicide, insolvency, bankruptcy — and then inevitably, inexorably will follow loss of democratic liberty and freedom.

Certainly, economic laws are not based on "myths," though many a political utterance is!

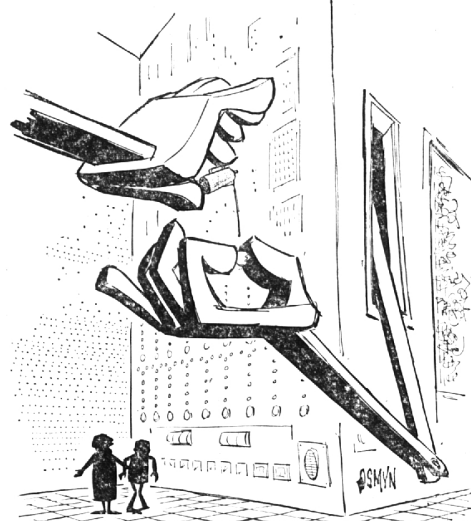
## From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Suburbanites with city jobs see taxes sprouting all around them. Assessments, especially for school, are high in communities with little business property to tax. Newly settled areas frequently have extra costs for development of public services. Meanwhile, the vogue for the city income tax is spreading. City governments maintain that people who earn their living in the city, use city streets and other expensive services but pay property taxes somewhere else should contribute to the costs of running the city. Detroit now has

joined the group collecting wage taxes and expects to add about 35 million dollars to its annual income this way. The financial pressures which make this technique seem necessary strengthen the case for closer cooperation among communities within the same metropolitan area—if not "metro" government, at least more merging of basic services needed by all the residents.

The stock market hit a new low. So did optimism about the economy.

## "It Always Forgets the Sugar!"



### PEOPLE'S COLUMN

## Objects to Headline On Graft Case Story

To the Editor:

I should like to register my objection to the headline in the July 12, 1962 issue of *The Birmingham Eccentric*—"Pham Man Named in Detroit Graft Case." It seems to me that this is the type of journalism we could get along very well without in Birmingham. As I understand it, the crime man has not been convicted or even had an opportunity to state his case.

**IT SEEMS** entirely unnecessary to make this a matter of headline news, particularly in view of the possible adverse effects on him, his wife and children, if any. I have heretofore thought that *The Eccentric* did not need sensational headlines to sell papers. Consequently, I fail to see that any purpose is served by this type of headline.

**JUST TO KEEP** the record straight, I am not a personal friend of the man in question; nor is it my purpose to defend him. I have met him, but I doubt that I would recognize him if I were to see him again. I should simply like to live in a town where the legal paper has a sense of fairness. I am not, by the way, objecting

to reporting the fact that the man was arrested, which is a matter of public record and certainly of news value. I am objecting to the headline publicity prior to the time he is found guilty.

W. B. WESTON  
944 Kennewick  
Birmingham

## Yesteryear Happenings

From the Files of *The Eccentric*

50 YEARS AGO  
July 26, 1912

William Lorimer, who was recently elected from the United States Senate, was slightly injured in an automobile accident near Pittsburgh when the automobile in which he was traveling from Washington to Chicago, in trying to avoid a collision with a buggy, ran into a telephone pole.

Plans are being considered by the German government at Berlin for Crown Prince Frederick William to visit the German African colonies in 1914. If the trip is decided upon, the prince will represent Emperor William at the opening of the German railway to Lake Tanganyika. The German battleship *Hessen* rammed a torpedo boat when the smaller craft was crossing the bow of the big warship in an attack on Kiel, Germany. Three members of the torpedo boat's crew were killed.

The statement that Capt. E. J. Smith, commander of the ill-fated *Titanic*, was not drowned, but was recently seen in Baltimore, was made by Peter Fryal of that city, who was quartermaster of the steamship *Majestic* of the White Star Line.

(See VALUES, 8-B)  
(See HAPPENINGS, 8-B)

## Can Teach Moral Values In the Schools

To the Editor:

This is a reply to S. Olschanska who apparently is disturbed over the recent Supreme Court decision banning group prayer in the public schools.

If Birmingham were a more pluralistic community, the wisdom and logic of the decision would be more apparent. In support of his opinion Justice Black commented: "When the power, prestige and financial support of government is placed behind a particular religious belief, the indirect, coercive pressure upon religious minorities to conform to the prevailing majority opinion is unmistakable." (See VALUES, 8-B)

## Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



312-644-1100 is not a social security number, nor the measurements of a shapely hippopotamus; it is the telephone number of *The Birmingham Eccentric* under the new area code seven-digit number system.

The telephone people tell us that we'll get used to the new system in time, but they have forgotten to tell us what to do until that time arrives.

**IT IS EASY** for us, intellectuals, to understand why the new system must be. If we are going to be able to dial all over the world, then the telephone company is going to have to make available many new telephone numbers, and of course, telephone numbers.

If the company stuck to the old system of using lettered prefixes like Midwest or MAYfair, it would cut down the number of possible telephone numbers because there are, together, 126 letters that can't be used together. I'd cite a couple of examples but next week some reader would come up with one and I'd get a nasty letter.

**NEVERTHELESS**, knowing that it has to be done to aid progress, I still don't believe this corner will ever become accustomed to it. The problem is, of course, that I can't take my business elsewhere.

Last year I was asked to make the first Direct Dialing call from the old MAYfair exchange (now 513-62). The telephone company prepared a special phone with an approved plate signifying the event.

All of the local potentates of the company along with the more impressive governmental officials gathered round and I started dialing.

I CALLED the West Coast, and with every turn of the dial the faces of the telephone people beamed. With the dialing completed, everyone waited with hushed respect for the occasion.

Finally, a voice on the other end said, "Northern Insurance Company." This was not the party that I had intended to reach, but I made history by dialing the first wrong number coast to coast from that exchange. And that was when you only had to remember two letters and five numbers.

**MAYBE EXPERIENCE** will force the telephone people back to the old system, but I doubt it. If they keep this up, however, they will have to discontinue those little prefix phone books because there won't be enough room to affix the numbers.

Oh, for the good old days when *The Birmingham Eccentric's* number was merely 11.

By KEN WEAVER

## City Beat



There will be a one-world government some day. That it will not be a man-made government, it will not be a United Nations type of government. In fact, it will not be government as we think of it today.

It will be a spiritual government, with God the ruler.

Of this I am convinced. This spiritual rule will not come through any formal church organization, group or denomination. It will not come through the actions of any religious body that exists today.

It will come when God alone decides to bring it to us. And it will come with and through His presence, when He decides to descend among us.

It will be a government of, by and for the Deity. All wrongs will be righted, and there will be no possibility of disobedience because no one will have the desire or temptation to disobey.

**OBVIOUSLY**, I have arrived at these conclusions through no formal study of the great religious doctrines, beliefs or writings of the past or of today.

I have, I believe, arrived at them through simple reason.

Only a Supreme Being could be responsible for the origin of the Universe and of Man. Therefore, the day will come when that Supreme Being will appear among us and assume absolute rule throughout the world.

With His coming, all ambition by man to rule will disappear.

I picture Him appearing in the heavens, visible at once to all peoples everywhere. His presence felt and known by all peoples in all lands.

It stands to reason that if there is a Supreme Being, He possesses all knowledge and is capable of all things.

Therefore, He will know simultaneously what is happening in Birmingham, Mich., and in Moscow, Russia, and in Little Armenia, Armenia.

**FOR ONLY** a Supreme Being can know what's taking place all over the world at one time and thus rule the whole world.

Only a Supreme Being can command, and win, the obedience of all people. He can do this because He brings with Him the power to abolish all desire to disobey.

Human nature will prevent man from ever uniting under one rule through his own efforts, although man may fully realize that his only salvation is to have one united government that is civil or spiritual.

This is why the United Nations, or any other kind of world government by man, can never succeed.

It cannot achieve everlasting peace. Only a spiritual government can do that.

**THE FACT** that man has so many different religious beliefs, the fact that he cannot accept the beliefs of any one denomination, the fact that he cannot unite under one religion precludes any kind of one-world government by any present-day church structure.

These are my simple beliefs. I hope they offend no one. I present them here in the hope that they at least will stimulate thought in this direction of eventual spiritual rule.

## Once Over Lightly

by IRMA N. DAVIS



Lollipop do cost money. Ever since Miss Eight first faced this grim fact, she has been hard put to it to raise the necessary wherewithal, once her allowance has gone the way of all good things.

Her sweet tooth showed an early tendency to grow much faster than the rest of her and, as a result, she is constantly on the lookout for a good money-making venture.

Early in the game, she tried a few "get-rich-quick" schemes.

The magic vistas of borrowing seemed an easy out until she made the rude discovery that loans are rapidly followed by a day of reckoning.

**REALIZING QUICKLY** from this shock, Miss Eight explored the avenues of "credit buying."

To the best of our knowledge, she is the only small financier who has successfully established a "coupon charge account" at the corner grocery.

A kitchen seminar on the monetary facts of life convinced her that "buying on the cuff" also has a hidden hooker. She visited the grocer and regretfully closed out her account.

After that, Miss Eight went into business.

**HER FIRST VENTURE** was a backyard circus, complete with posters and a ticket booth at the gate. By some shabby alchemy, she talked the family cat, Mrs. Tang, into doubling as a tiger and that was the beginning and end of the animal act.

The star of the tentless big top was also its sole owner, naturally, and the audience was promised a succession of daring stunts—from somersaults to balancing on the gym set. The sugar-camouflaged in the kitchen underwent a mysterious depletion as large and murky amounts of fruit-flavored drinks were prepared for the guests—for a small fee.

**THE TOPPER** was the "test your strength" punching bag which hung from a low branch of a tree. It bore a definite resemblance to our missing hot water bag and fitted the bill admirably, once it was filled with water.

Miss Eight was busy for days beforehand, making out tickets on four-by-five filing cards. They sold well at three cents each and the customers apparently were satisfied, with one exception.

That one demanded his money back. The punching bag was rigged, he claimed. Miss Eight said she'd lend him a towel but refunds were "out."

**OF COURSE**, it wasn't long before the diminutive business woman was faced with another defect in the lollipop fund and so went back to printing tickets again. This time, she graciously prepared to sell admissions to a fashion show seminar—a subject: boring in an already-stilled ground.

That's when the short-lived neighborhood newspaper was born. Printed entirely by hand and painfully duplicated by the same method, it underwent lightning price changes, ranging downward from 10 cents to a penny. Miss Eight's only customers—also—were found at her home address.

**RETIRING** as a publisher, her youngest then conceived a more fertile field—a "private" club. For 10 cents, her friends were promised several privileges: "Gooches, drinks and rules."

The organization's founder conducted her own campaign for the club presidency, and her own ballot, and, of course, counted the one and only vote.

The only other club office, that of treasurer, was filled by presidential appointment. Inasmuch as the two posts were held by the same little girl, the club was forever assured of a quorum.

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