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# The Birmingham Eccentric

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

Thursday, May 10, 1962

# EDITORIAL

SECTION B

## Congratulations to the BAA

With the announcement that the organization that converted a sewage disposal plant into an arts center had been selected as the tri-county regional winner in the Michigan Week Achievement of the Year competition, The Eccentric wishes to congratulate two separate groups of people.

The first group, naturally, is the members and officers of The Bloomfield Arts Association, who combined a dream and tremendous hard work, to create a cultural center for our area.

BAA IS only five years old, but has done more to awaken the pursuit of art locally than any other single group.

It has been the backbone in the creation and continuation of the Birmingham Arts Festival, which has brought our community national recognition. It has brought commercial as well as artistic benefits to the community.

THE SECOND GROUP that deserves commendation is the Birmingham City Commission. It had the foresight and in-

genuity, when the sewage disposal plant was no longer needed, to lease it to the Art Association at a nominal rent.

Instead of stepping aside and letting the abandoned plant deteriorate by non-use, the commission allowed BAA to remodel the interior as an arts center, converting it into something the whole community can use and take pride in.

At the same time the commission invested money in structurally improving the plant, thus assuring its continued use for city, or any other use, such as BAA.

BOTH OF THESE groups displayed confidence in the people of the community in their desire for and willingness to support such an organization.

As a result, the center is now open and will be used as the site for the Arts Festival this June.

Considering that this project was competing against all the community projects in the counties of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb, we have reason to be proud that we were the area that showed the best community spirit.

## It's the Quality That Counts

In the April 19 issue, a most unusual ad appeared in The Eccentric, Bob Gwynn, one of our local talents, paused in his campaign to sell more clothes to tell the people of this community that there is no such thing as a free lunch. His full-page advertisement dealt with the "Value of Integrity."

The point is well taken. When identical products are sold for different prices, the difference is usually visible in the quality or the servicing that goes with the product.

When the products are not exactly identical, the price differential is usually connected with the quality of the product.

WE HAVE a considerable element of pride in the appearance of our "hometown." To operate a store in this area costs more than to operate one in a low-rent district in Detroit. This must be reflected in price.

If you want Birmingham to stay as it is, or improve, you can't leave town to shop and expect the town to exist without you. Further, the price shopper very often forgets to include in the price of products purchased at a discount the cost of the shopper to get to the discount house, includ-

ing the time which might be put to some other more productive work. After all, time is money.

TO MR. GWYNN'S ad we might add another factor that should encourage Birminghamites to shop locally. When shopping in Birmingham you are generally dealing with the type of merchant that wants you both as a customer and a neighbor. There is a personal relationship that can only exist in a small town.

In a shopping area of this kind you are not a statistic. The merchant knows that there are only so many shoppers and he must keep all of them if he is to be successful. He cannot afford to say, "If I lose this one, so what, there are more where she came from."

WE ARE PROUD of the Birmingham-Bloomfield shopping area, and are happy that Mr. Gwynn was moved to publish his ad. We subscribe to the old axiom that when a man charges a lower price, he knows that the value of the product and service he is selling is likely to be lower.

## And It Doesn't Talk Back!

The car has been a conversation piece for more than 60 years. In its pioneer phase, when scoffers were certain it would never replace the horse, much of this conversation was derogatory.

But though belittlers were many, manufacturers and owners were not the only supporters of the horseless carriage. In January, 1899, the editor of Scientific American expressed regard for it.

"It looks like a hackney-coach with delirium tremens," he wrote, "but it is a sober-minded, straightforward vehicle. We not only give it our respect but our admiration, for with its big rubber tires it gets

over the ground in a velvety sort of way and reaches its destination without becoming tired."

BY TODAY'S standards these lines were not entirely accurate. Some owners, unable to start their cars these cold mornings, echo the early-day skeptics.

Yet the quoted lines were prophetic. We do give the automobile our respect and admiration, even when threatening to "get a horse." The car is essential to our way of life. And one of the great things about it is that it takes insults without talking back, or even kicking.

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

There is a considerable push under way for legislation that would extend the permissible use of wiretapping by law enforcement authorities. Although there are good arguments for this, from the police point of view, the possible dangers springing from this invasion of privacy cannot be ignored. Those who prosecute law violators quite understandably want the best tools they can get. Evidence gathered by tapping the telephone lines of suspected persons could be an excellent tool in many cases. Abuses are possible, however, even though some partial safeguards can be written into the laws. One must also consider the danger that, as the barriers against wiretapping are broken down, various electronic means of invading privacy may soon be sanctioned also. Congress should bear in mind that the whole business is a Pandora's Box. Opening it to take out a useful tool may let great evils loose in our society.

You may have noted that the Kennedy Brothers, John and Robert, criticize the steel companies for increasing prices. This duct of private wealth

certainly sets a darn poor example of frugality in their operation of the federal government. Every day their socialistic program adds more and more tax burden to the already over-taxed wages of the American public. Isn't that boosting prices?

A British scientist sees our universe as an electron in a super-universe. Maybe—but that sounds a little like going from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Russia and the U.S. are perfecting nerve gas that makes the victims unsure of what they are doing. Some diplomats seem to have been trying it already.

Russia will help create a world communications system using satellites. Well, the Kremlin's had a lot of experience ordering satellites around.

The fellow who said *hope springs eternal* in the human breast must have been thinking of a fisherman at the start of the new fishing season.

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Weed 'Em and Weep

## PEOPLE'S COLUMN

### Hey Kids, Residential Streets Are for Cars!

To the Editor:  
At about 6:15 on the Monday evening following Easter Sunday, a young boy's life came abruptly to a close.

With meditations of the previous day fresh in his mind, we are reassured by our faith that this child is now safely in His care. Our thoughts must indeed turn to the needs of those remaining among us—to that individual whose misfortune it was to be driving his car past the infamous five-spoked wheel where Beverly Road, Riverside Drive and Southfield intersect.

OUR SYMPATHY may be expressed to the bereaved family, whose hopes for a young boy's future were literally dashed to the pavement in a crumpled, helpless heap.

"Why," we ask ourselves, "must these tragedies occur?" Instead of just uttering the question, let's answer our query.

In a community which is proud of its intellectual development and opportunities, of its attractive and spacious homes and churches, of its beautiful landscapes, is not this intersection which has been permitted to remain in its present form a shadowy blot on our whole image?

THAT IS is extremely hazardous for adults goes without question and we, "the enlightened," will this summer, as things stand now, expect children to negotiate it safely with only an amber light to assist them.

We are told that traffic counts, which are far from recent, show too few cars on Beverly Road to merit, by law, a continuously operating green, amber, and red signal lights.

Where are the pertinent statistics, the up-to-date traffic counts? Before we point fingers at county and village officials, however, let's ask ourselves when did we last explain to our young children that residential streets as well as highways are designed primarily for automobile traffic?

WHEN DID we last check our young sons' or daughters' bicycle riding habits? Are we too occupied with our own private concerns

of the moment to spend the time it takes to repeat the rules over and over again, and to stay home to enforce them?

Have you driven behind a wobbly young beginning bike rider on the street, and wondered where in the world his or her parents were? I have!

Have you had a defiant young boy turn his bicycle directly into your car and then watched him laugh when you did all in your power to avoid him? I have!

WERE THESE your children, or might they sometime be mine? We don't know unless we're on the job as parents.

Why are our children permitted to play in the middle of the road to a school bus stop, when sidewalks are available?

Why are little children permitted to play in ditches within a step of a freshly oiled, slippery street, where both adults and teenagers are violating the speed limit and would be at a total loss to prevent skidding into them should some emergency occur?

WE CANNOT plead ignorance, all we can say is, "I just didn't stop to think about it."

Let's all of us together stop and think and do something about it. To those elected, appointed, and hired officials of our community, let's say thank you for what you have done—the light and the crossing guard at school times, but you must do more about the dreadful hazard at Beverly, Southfield and Riverside, and do it now!

To our PTA we must say thank you for what you have done—the painting of pedestrian crosswalks and agitation for a guard—but you, too, must do more to be true to two of your stated objectives:

1. "To promote the welfare of children—in the community." 2. "To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth."

TO OURSELVES we must say, "Traffic safety education is my responsibility and I myself must abide by the laws and rules as well as teach them in my home".

May God grant us the knowledge and strength to make our community as safe as it is beautiful!

A PENSIVE MOTHER.

## Yesteryear Happenings

From the Files of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO

May 10, 1912

Higher paid and more thoroughly equipped teachers are urged for the public schools of the county by Dr. P. P. Claxton, United States commissioner of education, in his annual review of educational conditions.

The report, which deals with the first decade of the present century, shows that, though the average monthly salary of male teachers increased 38 per cent, and the salary of female teachers 27 per cent, the average annual pay of teachers, including those in the big cities and high schools is less than \$500.

Plans are being organized for the second annual Tax Day in Birmingham and Royal Oak for the benefit of the crippled and blind children who are in the care of the Michigan Children's Home Society. The state institutions are not open to the crippled children, and the only place for them is the county poor house.

The Senior Class of Birmingham High School will have Dean P. S. Shaw of the Michigan Agricultural College to deliver the commencement address. Dean Shaw has the reputation of being one of the most popular men in the educational circles of the state and is a speaker of unusual ability.

30 YEARS AGO

May 12, 1932

Mayor Roland Marvin of Syracuse, N. Y., is living on a diet which costs nine cents a day. After he gives it a fair trial, if satisfactory, it will be prescribed for the unfortunate who are helped by the city welfare department. Mayor Marvin was one of the first city executives to eliminate married women from municipal jobs and started the idea of 10 per cent salary cuts for all employees.

Nearly 600 acres of land in various parts of Bloomfield Township will be ploughed and turned into gardens to be grown by men on the

(See HAPPENINGS, 4-B)

by IRMA N. DAVIS

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## Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



'Tis only a little pension, but some of us love it

May is not only the month of flowers and Mother's Day, it is also the month of conclusion for both Con-Con and the legislature. (If the tax problems are solved.)

This has been an interesting year in Lansing with Con-Con and the legislature sharing the spotlight. Most interesting were the personalities involved in both bodies. As most of you realize, Con-Con came into existence because the four biggest counties in the state voted for it. The remaining 79 smaller counties all voted against it.

The majority of legislators of the state come from these 79 smaller counties, and these legislators were not overly enthusiastic about the Convention.

Add to this that a Detroit newspaper polled the Con-Con delegates and two-thirds of them said that they were interested in running for another office. Many legislators were sure the Con-Con delegates had their eye on their seat.

THIS SOMEWHAT strained the relationship between, the two bodies and each went their own way.

The unfortunate part was that Con-Con had to modernize the legislature, and the legislature had to provide the funds to do it and this somewhat cold attitude helped neither.

When the question of what to do with the desks and chairs of the Convention after Con-Con was over came up on the floor of the House of Representatives, one of the members remarked, "Let's sell the desks to the Con-Con delegates, and maybe they will leave ours alone."

Across the street when Con-Con was discussing the legislature you would think all legislators were over 70 years old and living off the gratuities of lobbyists.

THE HIGH POINT of this interplay occurred last week when Con-Con voted to increase the salary of the legislature, but to cut off their pensions.

The legislative pension for those legislators who have served over eight years amounts to \$1,250 per year after they reach 60. The vast majority of legislators never qualify because they don't last eight years or they die in office.

But to listen to the few legislators it affected, you would think that the state had been turned over to the Indians. This handful of legislators after ignoring or abusing Con-Con for seven months, now wanted to lead the troops against the passage of the final document.

One legislator tied up his party caucus for over an hour on what would happen to the state if legislative pensions were cut off.

He was finally laughed to his seat when someone in the back of the room sang out:

"'Tis only a little pension, but some of us love it."

## By KEN WEAVER City Beat

Comes this true story landing a Birmingham store. Mrs. Housewife bought a new, "lovely and expensive" hat for a special occasion. Because she had other shopping to do, she asked the store to send the hat out to her home.

A week later, no hat. So, the store manager put a tracer on it. The driver for the delivery company insisted he had put the hat box between two doors.

"You just watch on Easter morning and you'll see who's wearing my hat," said the lady, sure that it had been sent to the wrong address.

CAME GOOD Friday. Mrs. Housewife returned to her home from another shopping trip. In the garage sat a hat box. She opened it. Her hat, all right.

On the Saturday before Easter, she called the store manager again. "Here's what happened," said he. "The box was delivered along with some other parcels to another store in Birmingham."

"They finally discovered it, sent it back to us and we asked our parcel delivery concern to take it to you."

AFTER ALL THIS trouble, the hat must be a jinx, thought the lady. "I'm going to send it back."

"Mam, we want you to have the hat as a gift from the store," said the manager. "Wear it proudly."

Impressed by this goodwill gesture, Mrs. Housewife said: "I did wear it proudly."

"The store is one of the nicest I've ever done business with. I will shop there again."

"And I'll always cherish the hat."

Baseball's chiefs have voted against return of the spit ball. So the rabbit hat and home run partnership continues.

George S. McGovern will continue as head of the Food for Peace program. Now what we'd like to see is a Peace for Food program.

A person too outspoken is seldom invited out.

Most Russians go through life without getting a hairbrush haircut, it's reported. And we thought haircuts were high in this country!

In the first American auto race 60 years ago, the winning car averaged seven miles per hour. The big risk then was starvation before destination.

Marriages may be made in heaven, but some don't pan out so well after the contracting parties come down to earth.

Stan Musial thinks this will be his last year as a ballplayer but says he still loves baseball. At \$70,000 a year, we can see why.