

IN THIS SECTION:  
Editorial  
School News  
Church  
General News

### Let's Act on County Road Plan

Much to their credit, Birmingham and Oakland County officials have effected a compromise plan for the widening of E. Maple Road.

This project is one of several included in an \$11 million road improvement program announced last September by the Oakland County Road Commission.

What the county plans to do is to modernize the major highways that will be affected by traffic from the freeways now under construction in the area.

The Maple project is one of three that road officials hoped to place under construction this year. But working out the differences between the county and the city prevented that.

**TO THE CREDIT** of Birmingham city commissioners, they gave an ear to the wishes — or more accurately, perhaps, the objections — of E. Maple residents.

They were concerned, quite naturally, about possible traffic hazards, the values of their homes and the removal of trees.

To make the project as palatable as possible for them, the commissioners insisted on a less extensive program than the county wanted. Thus, the compromise.

**THE IMPROVEMENT** is needed; there is no question of that. E. Maple is too narrow now for the peak loads of traffic it must carry. Certainly, future accomplishments in the area will bring even more traffic.

Whether residents wish to admit it or not, Maple is not a strictly residential street; it is a major arterial route. It carries east-west through traffic.

Widening the highway — with the resultant effect of easing the flow of traffic — will relieve traffic congestion in central Birmingham.

We are pleased to note, then, that this project has been approved.

**ON THE OTHER** hand, we are concerned that no more progress is being made on other phases of the county's development plan.

We are thinking primarily of 14 Mile Road.

The county desires to widen it to four lanes from Greenfield to Southfield and eventually to cut it on through to Lahser Road.

Birmingham has given its approval to this project, but Beverly Hills still has not acted on it.

It is our considered opinion that widening and extending 14 Mile Road is just as important to the overall development plan as is E. Maple.

We realize that Beverly Hills, like all communities, has its financial problems. We hope that they can see the need for the 14 Mile improvement as we see it and can fit it into their financial structure.

**THERE ARE** still other local proposals in the overall county plan — widening Southfield, with construction to start next spring; widening Greenfield; paving Cranbrook from 14 Mile to Lincoln; widening Big Beaver from M-150 to Adams, which is almost completed; and making Crooks four lanes from 14 Mile to Maple.

The time for action is growing short; parts of the road construction plan are already behind schedule; the freeways are nearing completion.

Let us hope that community and county officials will work together to solve their differences of opinion so that the rest of the projects may be undertaken with utmost speed and efficiency.



### Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



#### NEITHER SNOW, NOR RAIN . . .

A service most of us take for granted is the U. S. Post Office. Few of us know the name of our postman, yet we all know who delivers the milk and the dry cleaning.

About the only time we acknowledge his existence is when something has gone wrong.

The postman's life is a busy one. In Birmingham he starts work at 6 in the morning and has to sort our mail till around 9.

Then he either pulls on his boots or hops aboard his vehicle and starts delivering.

**THE ROUTES** in Birmingham vary from about 300 stops (places where mail is left off) to over 500. He should finish his route by 2:30 in the afternoon.

Post office employees are on civil service; including the postmaster, after he is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

While the old inscription on the main post office in New York says, "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds," locally the only thing that stops them is nighttime.

**THE POSTMAN** gets his route by seniority. If a postman retires or resigns, his route is open for bids. Some routes are considered better than others. Some postmen like business routes and others prefer residential.

Some routes are known as good routes because of the charity of the inhabitants at Christmas time. Others get the reputation of bad routes because of dogs, mud or complaining people.

**THE POSTMAN'S** life is not free from local color. One local postman who delivered a C.O.D. parcel, found that the resident was \$1.38 short with no other money in the house.

The resident disappeared and returned with 69 empty pop bottles and handed them to the postman saying that they were worth two cents apiece.

She apparently was quite annoyed when the postman declined to accept them.

As we enter into the season when postmen work day and night, we ought to take time out to let them know we appreciate their service.

### PEOPLE'S COLUMN

#### Thanks Garden Club For 'Beauty' Efforts

**To the Editor:** Noticing that the Birmingham Branch of the Woman's National Farm & Garden Association is staging its silver anniversary Christmas show Dec. 5 and 6, I should like to take this occasion to thank its members for their efforts to make and keep, during this last quarter of a century, a beautiful Birmingham.

To create and maintain those characteristics that have made this a "quality" town has taken awareness and dedication. There have been repeated attempts to take our park away from us for commercial purposes, but the Garden Club members and other foresighted citizens have thus far defeated these efforts.

**THE TRUTH** is that esthetic values are tremendous assets to our small city and nothing can recommend itself to the new home-buyer like trees, parks and beautiful public places.

I do hope that we can further distinguish our park by the addition of Marshall

Frederick's imaginatively-designed fountain. I find in my travels that Mr. Frederick is considered the peer of American sculptors.

More than 6,000 flowering crab trees have been planted by the club in this area. In addition, you will notice how carefully maintained and well landscaped are the Community House and library grounds.

**I BELIEVE** there are very few residents who do not appreciate our park's well-kept grassy expanses, its trees that give such grateful shade to the bench-sitters on a hot summer's day, its gay tulips and bright geraniums which the Garden Club members plant yearly.

So I congratulate the Garden Club for its thoughtful members who are willing and eager to go on beautifying Birmingham. Very few places have woodlands and a River Rouge ravine comparable to ours. Let us not lose these Heaven-bestowed advantages.

RUTH SHAIN  
(See PEOPLE'S COL., 2-B)

### Yesteryear Happenings

From the Files of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO  
Nov. 29, 1912

Fire reduced almost an entire block of Royal Oak property on Sunday evening. Flames were noticed coming up from the back hallway of the telephone office, immediately in back of Goodfellow's bakery about 8:30 o'clock in the evening by Miss Harriet White, who immediately notified Miss Ethel Kennedy, the operator on duty at that time, who immediately phoned to Pontiac, Highland Park and Detroit, notifying them of the danger the town was in.

Interest in the eastern war situation shifted from the belligerents, whose delegates are preparing to meet with an apparent sincere desire to work over the terms for a truce, to the great neighboring powers, Austria and Russia. These titanic rivals are strengthening their border forces at an hour when the statesmen of all the powers are spreading broadcast assurances that their only policy is to subordinate rivalries and interests to the common welfare of Europe in the cause of peace.

Only a few weeks ago our people (See HAPPENINGS, 7-B)



### Once Over Lightly

by IRMA N. DAVIS

Practice may make perfect but at our house it has, so far, only led to some perfectly weird sounds.

It all began with an innocent little summons to a meeting at school at which "instrumental music" would be discussed.

The notice might more accurately have read "and students will make their choice of weapons." Miss Nine had already announced that she wanted to play the "apart" drum. However, the school's music instructor recommended a wind instrument and Miss Nine promptly elected the "tombone."

**CERTAIN DRAWBACKS** to this choice were pointed out to her, mainly her lack of reach. The tuba was adjudged too large for one so small and all parties concerned finally settled on the flute.

One of its advantages, I quickly found out, was its silence, although the quiet was intermittently shattered with Miss Nine's moans that she couldn't "make the sound come out."

What did come out was a drafty "whoosh," but her teacher reassured her that all flute players suffer the same initial difficulty.

**A FEW WEEKS LATER**, she triumphantly produced her first (sour) note. It had all the earmarks of an air-rail alert.

We sounded out the scale on our piano and Miss Nine marched her fingers into position hopefully. The music came out all right but the notes didn't match.

agreed instead to consult her teacher for the correct fingering.

Meanwhile, her practice slip — on which was noted the time spent daily with the flute — showed a record of diminishing returns.

**WHAT WAS NEEDED**, I decided, was a little on. I enlisted the unwitting assistance of the Detroit Symphony. Off we went on a Saturday morning to the season's first Children's Concert.

Miss Nine ecstatically discovered the flutists as they walked on stage and expressed disillusionment with the orchestra's seating arrangement which somewhat hid him from view. She listened intently to Beethoven, who had had the good sense to include "her" instrument in his composition, "Overture to Prometheus."

The program also included a gay, brash performer who did a juggling act to the strains of Johann Strauss's "Perpetual Motion." Don Gillis's "Alice in Orchestra" was narrated pleasantly and each instrument took a brief bow as an imaginary little girl wandered through a fictional city of music.

**AFTER THE CONCERT**, we battled our way up front because Miss Nine had seen one of the flutists. He agreed with her that the "flute music was neat" and, in turn, advised her to "practice every single day."

"Well, I guess you liked the concert," I observed later. "Now, how about a little time with your flute?"

"Oh, do I have to?" wailed Miss Nine. "I wanted to practice my juggling."

### City Beat

By KEN WEAVER



Now that Thanksgiving is past, we can start thinking seriously about Christmas.

It's regretful that more people — including some merchants — can't let us observe Thanksgiving before they begin pressuring us to prepare for Christmas.

This occasion of being grateful for our blessings is such an unusual (compared with holidays of other nations) and traditional one that you dislike seeing it overshadowed by another major observance still some weeks off.

Each holiday should be celebrated in its own right and not lose anything to the other.

**ONE OF** the gayer aspects of the Christmas season is the practice of decorating — Christmas trees, colored lights, displays and the like.

Each year, various groups conduct Christmas decoration contests.

This is good in itself.

But how about someone undertaking sponsorship of a community-wide contest?

Would this not foster greater community spirit? Would it not, if kept in the proper perspective, add to the spiritual meaning of the holiday?

**BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC** librarian Elizabeth Turcott came across an old Detroit Journal clipping among some family papers at her home the other day.

It gives you an idea of moral, social and economic values in years gone by:

"Highland Park at last has been blighted by the presence of the woman of the streets.

"The driving out of the woman of the underworld from the city of Detroit, the large foreign element that has crept in, and the Ford \$5-a-day wages are the principal reasons for the invasion.

"Girls barely out of their teens with their hair hanging in braids, women who try to appear young by means of paint and powder, are nightly parading the streets of the village accosting boys and men.

"Some of the women have rooms in the village, while the greater number do their entertaining downtown.

"It's easier to get away with it in Detroit," according to one of the girls.

"The influence of these older women who have invaded Highland Park is being felt among the younger girls of the village, many of whom are given too great freedom by their parents. Two of these littlefortunates, still in their teens, were watched by a Highland Park detective and a Journal reporter, Friday night.

"They left their home, which is a most respectable one, and by conspicuous actions and suggestive remarks succeeded within half-an-hour in being accosted by no less than 18 men, many old enough to be their fathers. Finally, two men joined them and they took a car for the city . . .

**A CERTAIN YOUNG** man quit his job and told his friends he was going into business for himself.

"I'm tired of working for the other guy," he complained.

A few months later a former acquaintance met him and asked how he liked being on his own.

His reply:

"Oh, I don't know. The police won't let me park in front of my office; tax collectors tell me how to keep my books; my banker tells me how much balance I must maintain; freight agents tell me how my goods must be made; state and local officials tell me how my buildings should be changed; the union tells me whom I should employ, for how much and for how long.

"And on top of that I just got married."

### Speed Law Changes Needed

Two things have crossed our desk in the last couple of weeks that seem to have conflicting philosophies.

The first is the request by a local resident for legislation which would allow municipalities under certain conditions to vary the state imposed speed limit on residential streets.

The resident feels that 25 miles per hour is too fast on certain streets, particularly dead-end streets.

The second item to come to our attention is the prospect of uniform speed laws among all the states.

**THIS IS ENCOURAGED** by groups who feel it is confusing with our interstate highway system to have different speed laws in each state.

With more people travelling interstate the number of incidents where citizens are being arrested for actions that aren't crimes in their home state is increasing.

This has been the political philosophy of this paper that government should only involve itself in those matters where men

can't solve a problem individually, and that the involvement of government should be on the level closest to the citizenry.

We believe the voice of the electorate diminishes in direct proportion to the physical distance of the government to the people. A citizen's voice is louder and clearer in the city hall in Birmingham than it is either in the legislative halls in Lansing or in the congressional halls in Washington.

**LOOKING AT** our two problems and applying our philosophy, we feel the municipalities should have the power to regulate down the state speed laws when matters of health, safety and welfare are involved, and we will fight for this legislation.

On the other hand, we would favor a uniform speed limit on federal highways, throughout the United States because this is an area wherein the individual or the state cannot really solve the problem.

If everyone is presumed to know the law, as the old legal maxim states, we must give the people the opportunity to know it.

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EDITOR: PAUL N. AVERILL  
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.  
MANAGING EDITOR: KENNETH R. WEAVER  
ADVERTISING MANAGER: ARTHUR SHAFER  
George R. Averill, Editor Emeritus