

### How the County Got a Building

In the middle of the Oakland County Service Center out on Telegraph Road, next to the new Court Tower, there are visible signs of new construction.

It looks very much like a daddy long-legs because it is round with orange steel beams jutting out and down from its center.

Everyone knows that this is the beginning of the over-half-million dollar county auditorium. Yet, if you were to check the county budget, you wouldn't find it mentioned.

IN ORDER to find any mention of it at all, you would have to look at the May 7, 1962, minutes of the County Board of Supervisors. A resolution was passed that day awarding \$540,920 worth of contracts for its construction and authority to transfer \$385,612 to the building fund from the miscellaneous nontax revenue fund. The Supervisors also resolved to take \$211,240 from the county's share of the property taxes we all pay and put it into the building fund for auditorium purposes.

The legality of these resolutions is not in question, nor is the right of the supervisors to put \$211,240 into a county building fund.

THE AREA that should be questioned by every taxpayer in the county is where the county got \$385,612 extra in its miscellaneous nontax revenue account, which supposedly is shown and entirely accounted for in the county budget, and which supposedly was empty after the supervisors purchased land for the new dead jet airport. There is no question in our minds where this money came from. Charles Sparks, our county treasurer, has been called a wizard for his ability to invest inactive county funds and bring interest into the county's coffers. Last year, he brought in over \$422,000. Yet, the budget shows only an anticipated \$220,000 this year.

THE OPERATION of the county clerk-registrar of deeds office and other county services has brought in additional revenue, and these are also underestimated in the

county's budget compared to actual receipts last year.

The money for the auditorium is only available because the County Board of Supervisors has continually and purposefully underestimated their nontax revenue each year giving them a surplus at the end. This has then allowed them to use this surplus for nonbudgeted items.

WE FEEL that nontax or tax revenues are still the people's money and should only be used as provided in the county's budget, so the people can look over the expenditures and voice their opinions. This is why we have raised the point about the construction of the auditorium.

It is an appropriation of gigantic proportions that was passed without any effort to find out the will of the people in the situation.

THE APPROPRIATION for its construction never appeared in a county budget, so the people never had a chance to point to it and say "no!"

It is an example of how a County Board of Supervisors can hold and use public funds by an accounting device which ends up making the taxpayer pay higher taxes. If all county money, properly estimated, were included in the budget, the county would get less of our property tax dollars leaving more for schools and lessening the need for continual increased school millage proposals.

WE FEEL that the money diverted for this project should have been turned into the general fund so the public could oversee its use.

We warned the public that this type of financing would happen in an editorial on this page last Spring. Nothing was done. Now our warning is a reality and if the public doesn't wake up and act now, it will happen again and again.

The public must force the County Board of Supervisors to honestly estimate nontax dollars in their budget and to use all county monies for the overall operation of the county (including capital outlay) and not some as a kitty for pet projects.

### We Review Our Roles

In reorganizing the contents of our newspaper last April, we moved our Editorial Page from the back to the front page of Section B. We felt that more importance should be given to the positioning of this page in the light of our plan to publish more editorials on local subjects.

This has been going consistently. Every week we have published one or more editorials commenting on some local development or controversy.

We do this because we believe parts of our role as a suburban community newspaper is to stimulate citizen interest and participation in local affairs; we feel that the Editorial Page can assist in doing this.

NOW, WITH National Newspaper Week coming up Oct. 14-20, we rededicate ourselves to this task. (See advertisement in Section CC.)

We renew our acceptance of the challenge and responsibility of keeping our readers well informed on what is happening in their community so that they may make wise decisions, derived through sound judgment.

Residents of suburbia look to their local newspaper as a main source of help. They know that their newspaper can be relied upon.

They know that their newspaper is more than an advertising medium, more than a gossip sheet, more than a bulletin board.

WE HOPE that our readers feel they can depend on their newspaper to speak out on certain issues, to report news even though it may offend some individuals or some segment of the community.

In reality, their newspaper is a living textbook and potentially one of the greatest teaching tools available today.

We hope readers of our newspaper know they can offer their own opinions, on local

problems or any other subject, through the "People's Column" letters on our Editorial Page.

WHEN THEY want to purchase something in our community, they can search for the best values as advertised in their local suburban community newspaper.

When they want to see what is happening in their community, they can turn to our news columns and find the latest information on government, business, sports, weddings, social events, anniversaries and celebrations, traffic, nature, births and deaths.

These, then, are the roles of our newspaper:

- To inform.
- To interpret.
- To lead.

WITH THESE factors in mind, we rededicate ourselves on the occasion of National Newspaper Week to these roles and—

To the principles of freedom of the press, unbiased and complete news coverage, truth, accuracy and all other principles involved in the ethics of journalism.

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

A congressman thinks the Navy should ban the atomic merchant ship designed to be a showcase of peaceful U.S. technology. Maybe so—but the message may be a bit hard to get across with the messengers in battle dress.

President Kennedy says so quick tax cut is needed. A lot of taxpayers were cut to the quick when they heard it.

Exercise and a strict diet are what keep a man fit—as many an overweight citizen notes while lounging around taking on a big load of calories.



### Yesteryear Happenings

From the Files of The Eccentric

50 Years Ago  
Oct. 4, 1912  
Miss Violet Paxton, instructor of dancing from the Strasburg school of Detroit, will start a dancing class here Thursday, Oct. 17. All those wishing to join the class may call at the Johnson & Shaw Hall Monday, Oct. 14, between the hours of 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 7 to 8:30 p.m.

J. L. Levanseler, proprietor of the new Moving Picture show building now being erected on the Poppleton property makes the following offer. To the person suggesting a name for his new theater now being built that is chosen by the judges, he will give \$15 worth of admission tickets good for anybody.

Mr. John H. Bortle, a Birmingham citizen, who spends his winters in the Sunny South, mostly in Florida, has a mammoth mounted alligator on exhibition in Hoge's hardware store window. This "gator" is a monster, is fully twelve feet long, and aside from killing the saurian, Mr. Bortle shows great skill as a taxidermist for it is very life-like.

30 Years Ago  
Oct. 4, 1932  
The body of Chester W. Haskins, 31 years old, of 380 Aspen Road, was found in his automobile on Glangary road, about 3 1/2 miles northwest of Walled Lake, Wednesday morning, asphyxiated by fumes leading into the car through a rubber tube attached to the exhaust pipe. Coroner J. Lee Voorhees of Pontiac pronounced death due to suicide, and said no inquest would be necessary.

Justice of the Peace, David Levison was forced to dust off some more law books in his office several nights ago. The occasion was the first marriage ceremony he has performed since taking office. The bridegroom gave the justice \$5 for the service—\$3 more than the fee required by law. "Nevertheless, although I wouldn't want my wife to know it," Dave commented, "I'm still \$5 out on this marriage business."

The Cranbrook School football varsity lost to the freshman team of Detroit City College in the season's opener at Cranbrook Friday by a score of 14 to 0. Cranbrook had a slight edge on the play at the line, but the visitors won the game on punts and intercepted passes.

15 Years Ago  
Oct. 9, 1917  
"A fool just repeats his mistakes, while a wise man learns from them — are we Americans (See HAPPENINGS, 3-B)

### PEOPLE'S COLUMN

### What! Do You Dare Speak to Someone?

To the Editor:  
Would it be possible for you to exercise more caution in the things you print? Maybe I was in error when, in reading recently on one of your pages about the "idea of defrosting our big churches" by merely throwing in ground smiles or nods or even the spoken words, I jumped on this suggestion and decided to make it mine. (But if you hadn't printed it, I never would have run into the difficulty I encountered just this morning in my church.)

YOU SEE, even though we have been attending and supporting this particular church for nigh on 10 years each Sunday of our lives, any genuine "warmth" generated in those 600 hours of service wouldn't be quite enough to keep one's hands cool if the hands be cold. So, I said to my husband, after reading in your paper about this edit to who declared our churches must become "icebergs."—I said to him:

"JOSEPH, FOR almost a decade I have seen the same identical people in those iden-

tical pews each Sunday. None of them (because they seem so intent on honoring God up there) have ever nodded, smiled, or whispered a word to me."

I told Joe that the very next Sunday I would insist that this pattern be broken. Joe said to me: "Good luck to you, gal!" But the way he said it made me wonder if he held much hope in my experiment.

WELL, I followed through this morning. I wish I hadn't. It was quite awful. And it took such courage to do it. We entered, my little girl and myself, by the same front door as usual. We had to look squarely at people full of the same people seen for so long; instead of keeping my eyes lifted to the altar, I looked right at the front pew, smiled, nodded and whispered a very tiny "good-morning" to this one lovely looking lady.

MAYBE I CHOSE the wrong lady for my experiment? Her expression didn't unfreeze one bit. In fact, a look of "what's she grinning at" spread over her. She (See CHURCH, 7-B)

### Once Over Lightly

by IRMA N. DAVIS

It is a well-known fact, among women at least, that a man will drive to Florida via the Alaskan highway rather than stop and ask for directions should he lose his way.

Not my father, before he set out on any trip, he always asked the best route. Then he took another one. His driving exploits were famous and were matched only by his absent-mindedness. It was for this reason that he had buzzers installed in each car he owned—to remind him the emergency brakes were engaged.

The warning system made an unholy racket when the ignition was switched on and must have scared many a garage attendant out of his mechanical wits.

AS A TEENAGER, I made many trips with my father during summer vacations. His job took him all over the country—by way of the worst back roads—and he firmly believed in mixing business with pleasure so that I could one day say I had been in every state.

On one such occasion, after harrowing hours in the car, he insisted at twilight on driving "just a little bit further." At midnight, he pulled to the side of a country road. "Now, get out of the car," he said; and I did. "That's 31 states," he crowed, "you're in Maine. No, you aren't—move over a couple of feet."

AS FOR THE other end of the country I will always remember the Grand Canyon—although with a lingering sense of anxiety.

Leaving the canyon, we had a choice of two routes west. Naturally, we took the one that was under repair. Soon I heard my father mumbling to himself:

"Let's see—19,345 miles m-m-m. About 21 miles per gallon, m-m. Yup, we'll make it." When I looked at him, no doubt apprehensively, he explained that he figured he had a half-cup of gas. The next trading post was about, well, he wasn't sure, maybe 20 miles—

WE MADE IT. We coasted down hills with the ignition off, up hills with it on. Luckily we were driving toward sea-level.

"Knew we'd make it," Dad said gleefully as the motor died—in front of the gas pump. When he had finished explaining his system to the Indians, we took off again on the desert route.

Sand drifted across the road and before too long we couldn't even find the asphalt. For hours we inched along hunting patches of sage brush which were packed firmly enough so that we didn't sink. At dusk, we finally spotted a bulldozer. The driver "built" a road for us back to the highway.

DAD WAS A chemist but, in an amateur sort of way, he was also a "road construction superintendent." His passengers were the superintended.

The wrong choice of roads, if they lacked foresight enough to travel by train rather than with my father, often led to deadends, miles from nowhere. The solution was simple: Dad drove—his "victims" walked in front of the headlights and pieced highways together out of sticks, stones and stray bricks.

Some of them swore the government owed them WPA checks.

KNOWN AS THE "only man who ever argued with a streeter," my father had a one-track mind when it came to automotive mixups. It was invariably the other driver's fault; therefore, such individuals were "dirty sods." He didn't believe in causing.

### Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



I was lying in bed with my knees propped up, reading another James Bond thriller, when the silence was interrupted by the buzzing of a fly. Very shortly thereafter he was joined by another fly.

There were lamps on either side of the bed and the two flies started using them as pylons and began to race around them. Unfortunately, both James Bond and myself were in the middle of the race course.

Under normal circumstances I would have jumped out of bed, grabbed a fly-swatter and smashed the intruders against the wall, lamp or table, wherever they chose to light.

THIS RASH type of action only leads to more trouble because then you have to climb up the wall and wash the remains away.

So instead of chasing them around, I climbed back into bed with the fly-swatter and waited until they flew by again. After a couple of test swings I figured out their speed and altitude and then waited.

As they headed into the straightaway I swatted them in mid-air, with a very fine forehead swing and the other with a stiff backhand. It doesn't take a full swing if you use the proper amount of wrist action.

THE ADVANTAGE of swatting them in the air is that there is nothing to clean up afterwards except taking a dustpan and sweeping the bodies off the rug.

This method saves untold cleaning hours as well as the need to redecorate your house every two years.

This same method may be used on mosquitoes if you increase the amount of wrist action.

Another advantage of this system is that it keeps your eyes and wrists in shape between golf, tennis or squash matches.

WHILE I'M ON the subject of swinging at uninvited guests, Robin Bahr, the gal who formerly cooked "Pot-pourri" over on the Arts page, had a bad problem this summer in her cottage.

The experts explained to her that the way to get rid of the pests was with a tennis racket.

It seems that if you chase a bat with something solid, their natural radar will keep them from being hit. However, because of all the holes in the tennis racket, their radar doesn't work.

THE EXACT procedure is to wait till they're flying and then hit them as if you were returning a serve in tennis. It doesn't matter if you hit them forehead or backhand, or try a lob or drop shot. As long as it is a decent return, the impact will kill the bat.

One problem is that you have to restring your racket more often than usual.

Well, so much for world problems. If you are bothered by flying invaders, why don't you try out your eye and arm?

### By KEN WEAVER City Beat

On several occasions, this column has extolled the virtues of Birmingham's municipal government—and the people who serve it.

Now comes a letter from W.A.P. John telling of a personal experience which reassured him of the caliber of our city employees.

"I'm long an active influential member of the community," writes:

"A recent experience has convinced me that the citizens of Birmingham are woefully ignorant of the devotion of its employed public servants and the quality of the zeal they devote to their jobs."

"ON BEHALF of my fellow residents on Tooting Lane, I recently inquired about the proposed use of chipped elm trees as a mulch in the adjoining Baldwin Park. We were fearful of a possible breeding ground for elm bark beetles.

"Forty-eight hours after my inquiry was posted, I had a personal call from Mayor Florence Willett (my older children call her the 'poor man's Claire Booth Luce')."

"She said: "1. That no parts of diseased elm trees were used in the mulch; "2. That the Chief of the Parks Department had packed the base of healthy elms with infested tree chips for three years and had not been able to infest healthy trees; "3. That despite his experiments, he had ordered all diseased elm tree chips burned.

"THIS, TO ME, is clear evidence of the high caliber of our municipal staff, for which our taxpayers should be grateful."

And John goes on to suggest that the city employees might be the source for a series of articles by The Eccentric.

We trust that John read in last week's Eccentric the first in a series of articles by City Editor Larry Evee on the Department of Public Works. Other features will follow on other departments.

Thanks for the suggestion, Mr. John; it's a good one!

IN A COLUMN a few weeks ago I discussed what I considered payola in the newspaper profession, in connection with news conferences.

I cited such practices as dinners, cocktail receptions, musical shows, breakfasts and others.

Since then, some public relations people have defended their profession.

"We try to be good hosts, to do what we think would be the proper thing for a host to do."

"We're actually trying to help you do your job."

Which goes to show that, after all, there really are two sides to every argument.

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