

### Raising Their Pay Would Help

The Eccentric has long stood for economy in government, but this philosophy does not mean that the smallest appropriations to a governmental agency are always the best appropriations.

For example, we have many elected municipal boards and commissions in our area composed of public spirited individuals. These part-time managers are compensated for their time according to statute or by charter provision.

The amount of compensation is ridiculous compared to the work expected of them.

**BIRMINGHAM AND** Bloomfield Hills pay their commissioners the gigantic sum of \$5 per meeting. Beverly Hills, Southfield Township and West Bloomfield Township compensate their board members at the rate of \$10 per meeting.

Bloomfield Township is the high in the area, paying \$15 per meeting to its trustees.

Franklin has the distinction of being low, by paying its councilmen \$1 per meeting.

Under the Constitution you cannot change an elected official's compensation during his term of office, so we bring this matter to the public's attention, before a new crop of officials are elected in the April election.

**WE ARE** not suggesting that these officials get a raise to make serving on a governmental board a profitable thing. We feel that raises are in order merely to try to compensate these people for the time they lose from their other earning pursuits.

We are not suggesting that the spirit of public contribution should be replaced by purely pecuniary rewards, but with sub par fees we are penalizing those people who work for us day in and day out.

**FOR EXAMPLE,** a trustee of a township like Bloomfield attends two public meetings a month and two executive sessions. The public meetings last in the neighborhood of three hours each and take place in the evening.

The executive sessions are held on Thursday mornings. They start at 8:30 and last past 10, which just about eliminates Thursday morning as a working day.

Add to these regular meetings the number of special assessment hearings for roads and sewers and you have used up a good part of the month.

But to be an effective trustee you must know what is going on. Attending meetings alone is the minimal protection needed to be a good public servant.

One must spend some time with the police, fire, water, sewer and building departments for background in making decisions.

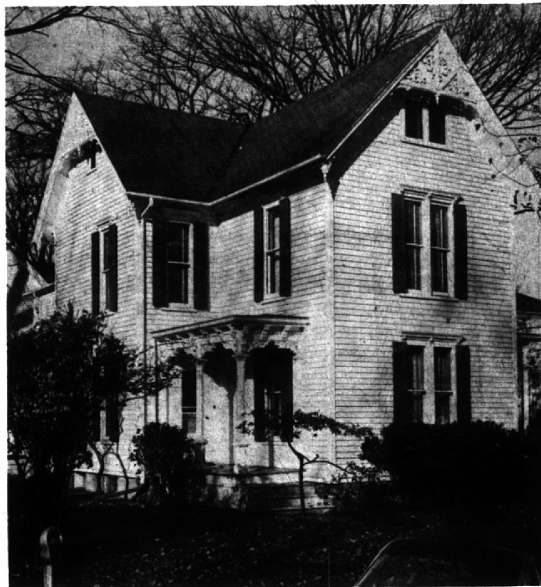
For all this a trustee is compensated \$15 per meeting.

**ALL OF** the local elected officials we are including are part-time. They earn their living in some other manner. Therefore, at the rate of compensation they receive they can only devote so much time to public life. Yet, the public would profit if they could spend the extra time that is needed.

So before the per diems are set for the newly elected officials we consider, because we believe in the old axiom, "you get what you pay for."

We also recognize that raising one's own pay is not exactly a popular thing to do, but statutes and charters put this responsibility in the individual board's hands and no one else can do anything about it.

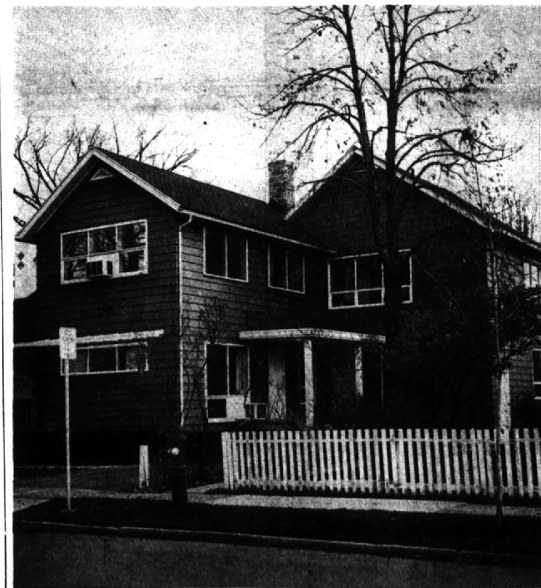
So while the onerous task is on the boards, they are also the ones to determine their own worth.



### Our Community Values

There is a constant effort to "preserve the residential character of Birmingham." Our city has a reputation for attractive homes, for attractive neighborhoods. In the older section of town there are homes which have been carefully maintained over the years and others that have been remodeled in keeping with neighborhood characteristics. Two ex-

amples are the home above on Bates St., which has been well maintained and the home below on Daines St., which has been tastefully remodeled. (This is the second in The Eccentric's series of pictorial editorials on community values. Readers' suggestions for this series are encouraged.)



### Why We Will Not Suppress News

We are sometimes asked why we publish certain kinds of news, especially that concerning juveniles involved with the law.

The Eccentric's general news policy is "to collect and present all the local news of general interest in as much detail as is warranted."

This means that we publish ALL news of general interest that is in good taste. We are obligated to do so as accurately and fairly as it is humanly possible.

**OBVIOUSLY,** we would not be much of a newspaper if we said, "We are going to publish some of the news but not all of it."

We wish that all of our residents—adults and juveniles—could live above the law. Realistically, and sadly, we know that a few do not.

Those that do not are news. It is hoped, of course, that the publishing of this news serves as a deterrent to others. There is evidence over the years to support this contention.

**IT ALSO** is our policy "to resist emphatically the pressure of groups or individuals who for personal reasons seek to utilize the columns of The Eccentric to further their own interests."

This works both ways—for those seeking publicity solely for the sake of personal or group ambitions and those seeking to

suppress news simply because it is unfavorable to them.

**AS FOR** law enforcement stories, the names of juveniles (children 17 years of age and under) are not used unless they are held on a serious crime charge, such as murder, robbery, rape or assault with a weapon, or unless jurisdiction is waived by the juvenile court.

To make sure that this policy is adhered to consistently, our reporters are instructed to check with the publisher or managing editor before writing about any legal situation that involves a juvenile.

**OUR PURPOSE** in withholding the names of juveniles is to afford early offenders a chance to mend their ways free of the stigma of adverse publicity.

Like it or not, law violations—whether by juveniles or older persons—make news. It is our job, our responsibility to publish news.

Naturally, it is only fair to print news about all persons so involved. We dare not, and we will not, show favoritism to any individual, family or group.

We do not, and we will not, suppress any news—including that concerning juvenile delinquents or any other lawbreakers.

This is our responsibility; we intend to live up to it anyway.

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

We do not deny the need for more accuracy in the packaging and labelling of certain U.S. commodities. Improvement in this direction certainly would help the consumer in his purchases. He better could judge the relative values of many foods, for example, if more uniform marking were used. Say, speaking of more accuracy in labelling and packaging, can you mention any "package" more phony, more inaccurate, than the statements and promises made by so many of our politicians, during election campaigns? But to expect these altogether too numerous demagogues and quacks to confine their utterances to honest "labelling and packaging" may be asking too much. Really,

the best and only way to handle such political hypocrisy is to **cease** voting for them when they are up for re-election. Doing this is comparable to discontinuing the purchase of some commodity you have found to be labelled and packaged dishonestly. It's that simple!

"The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine" is an old and true axiom. Finding of numerous little and big "sides" of the late and unlamented Adolph Hitler is going on in Western Germany. Some of them have been occupying public offices, others have prospered in business.

### Once Over Lightly

by IRMA N. DAVIS



Let's go the experts one better. The bookshelves are full of advice on "how to raise children" in 10 easy lessons. Not one contains a check list against which parents can measure their progress.

There is a tried and true method, however, and it's a mighty simple one.

The ingredients are merely the stock phrases uttered by various members of the family group as junior progresses from crib to college by not-so-easy stages (comfortably labeled "phases" by hopeful mothers and dads).

THE "NO, NO" stage is indulged in by the clan, including the little one who has it down to a science, especially at mealtimes.

The "Johnny hit me" and "Sister started it" period means no explaining to the veterans and the same applies to the "for heavens sake, can't you kids get along" plea. The latter plea has infinite variations that would wring the heart of anyone but the participants.

Such a check list will get parents past the dotting and up to the doddering stage in their own personal development and that's the verbiage really gets going.

Who hasn't heard the "Susie's mother lets her wear lipstick and nylon" bit or its masculine equivalent? Of course, minor matters of grooming such as "don't you know enough yet to wash your hands before dinner" haven't made a dent on this set yet.

**EVEN THE BEST** housekeeper discovers at this stage of the game that her prodigiousness (See ONCE OVER LIGHTLY, 2-B)

### Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN

#### "MOTOR MANNERS"

Now that Birmingham's driving and parking situation is getting back to normal after the invasion by Christmas shoppers, I would like to make a strong plea to our fellow residents to add some courtesy to their driving habits.

Driving through our fair community even in non-holiday times can be an unforgettable experience.

Trying to turn at Woodward and Maple with the motorists trying to outmaneuver the pedestrians and the pedestrians trying to sneak across the street after the "wait" light has started flashing can only lead in the long run to some pedestrian being mounted prominently on some motorist's hood.

**YEARS AGO** Emily Post published a book called "Motor Manners" in which she felt that the basic rule of driving was "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

With this in mind, people wouldn't fight over parking spaces or "tail-gate" you when driving on crowded streets.

On the other hand, a courteous driver does not double park on Maple Avenue to await a parking space.

It's kind of funny that some kindly old people become monsters when they slip behind the wheel of a car, and a few teenagers take out their frustrations in heavy traffic by ignoring the other driver.

**WHEN YOU** stop to think about it, every time you slip behind the wheel, you are steering over a fraction of a second.

By waiting that extra second or so that it takes to do a courteous act, you may save a life; and the inner-satisfaction you get from helping others will more than offset the fact that you are a few seconds late to get to that appointment.

By KEN WEAVER

### City Beat

On several occasions, this corner has called attention to the high caliber of government, of the various organizations and of the citizenry in Birmingham.

Now comes another example: the joint meeting set up for Feb. 14 at the Community House between the city commission and nine other organizations (see story, 1-A).

They will discuss the proposed Central Business District Development Plan and the respective needs of these groups.

**HERE IS** a unique situation: a city government calling a brainstorming session with responsible groups—all interested in and concerned with the development of their community—to explore a community problem.

What's going to happen to Birmingham? Will it keep the status quo or will it plan for the future? What kind of a future can it plan for? What do the organizations in this city think about its future?

Are the organizations willing to give of their time and talent to thinking and planning for the future?

How important is the downtown area? How can its development be planned? What factors are to be considered? Where will the money come from to finance any projects?

The brainstorming session between the city commission and the nine groups on Feb. 14 should provide answers to at least a few of these questions.

**A WISE MAN** once said to me: Big business accuses the government of pinching pennies on expense accounts. The fellow on an expense account is never guilty of this.

Compulsory retirement adversely affects the health of aged persons. There's no doubt about it—especially if there's no money to retire on.

Aviation experts don't expect any breakthrough soon in quieting airplane engines. This may mean a general breakdown in ear drums.

Japan has become the biggest fishing nation in the world. Perhaps this is because the Japanese have learned to fish in less troubled waters.

They say that in case of nuclear war the city dweller might be safer than the fellow in a small town. But the small townier is better off in peace time; he has a place to park. (This is true in Birmingham, at least until the Christmas season arrives.)

**THE FOLLOWING** story, I am told, is true.

A Birmingham mother saw her teen-age son slumped dejectedly in a chair in their living room, the picture of anguish and depression.

"What's happened to him?" she asked her husband, sitting nearby.

"He wants to go to the corner drug store," the father said. "but the car won't start."

This, they say, is a characteristic of suburbia. But suburbanites think it's more of a nation-wide phenomenon of our youth.

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