

## Where is the Citizen Interest?

Development of the downtown area and planning for civil defense are two important areas calling for decisions by Birmingham city commissioners in the near future.

A Central Business District Development Plan has been accepted "in concept" by the city commission. It was prepared and recommended by a merchants' committee and the city planning board.

As for civil defense, commissioners last week declined to authorize at this time plans for fallout shelters for the city's emergency forces.

**TO DATE**, we have evidenced no great interest at the citizen level in either of these projects. Generally, citizens have displayed no interest in modernizing the downtown business district or in constructing community shelters.

The CBDD would be a joint effort between the citizens and the business community. Some merchants have shown enthusiasm for the project, but there has been almost no expression from the citizens at large.

The commission has set up a meeting for Feb. 14 with board members from nine civic and governmental organizations to discuss the CBDD.

**HERE IS** a wonderful opportunity for

these groups to get in on the ground floor of a major undertaking; to make known their views, their needs, their wishes.

Here is a chance to bring their thinking out into the open, to offer ideas for solving the various problems. Here is the chance to express an interest or disinterest in the CBDD.

The city commissioners are responsible to the people; to legislate according to the wishes of the people, based on the needs and problems of the community.

**IT FOLLOWS**, then, that before they can act on matters of such great magnitude—involving costs of thousands, and even millions, or dollars—they must be conscious of what the community wants.

This is true whether it be the CBDD or fallout shelters. The commission must have a good idea of what the people want and of what they are willing to support with their tax dollars.

So, let the civic and governmental leaders voice their views on the CBDD at the Feb. 14 community meeting and let the citizens in general voice their views on both the CBDD and shelters through letters and telephone calls to the commissioners.

Then let us have action if it is so indicated.

## Choosing Qualified Candidates

Voters in some area communities will be going to the polls on Feb. 18 to choose nominees for the spring election.

In other communities, there will be no primary; but voters will still trek to the polls on April 1 for the spring election.

In the communities with a primary, the date for filing as a candidate is past. But where there is no primary, it is still possible for candidates to file for the spring election.

There are many problems in the various communities that call for solutions. Let us hope that this year there will be an ample supply of highly qualified candidates—candidates who will make a definite contribution toward solving these problems.

**WE ARE** experiencing tremendous growth throughout this area. With this increase in population, the people should recognize that the future of their newly selected homes is no better than their government.

And they should remember that their government is no better than their representation in it.

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

"Ye, grandson, there was a time back in 1962 when a bearded fellow named Fidel Castro was able to 'tell off' the great United States government," Grandpa will be telling another generation. "You see, Castro was little Cuba's dictator, and he managed to have Soviet Russia set up on Cuba some very terrible missile launching pads; and these missiles were pointed right at the heart of our country. But the American people rose up and let their Federal Government know that they'd had enough of Castro, and wanted every offensive military weapon on Cuba taken back to Russia." (This comment was written even before the staff was returned to Russia. . . it may yet be that Uncle Sam will have to go ashore in Cuba and actually look over the situation.)

Do you remember, in your childhood, reading about Robin Hood, who, with his band of Good Samaritans, stopped rich people who ventured into England's Sherwood Forest and took from them their money and jewels. . . and then saw that the stolen stuff was turned into cash and given to poor families? The only difference between Robin Hood and much of today's Congress and the days of Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck et al is the item of dates. . . also, plus the fact that Robin Hood, unlike the congressional pattern, didn't use the spoils to get into and remain in public office. Otherwise, both groups were in a manner of saying: "Philanthropists."

"No, little daughter, those great big glamorous gals of glamour who populate the entertainment world have no monopoly on happiness—they may acquire lots of moola, but such stuff too often mingles in their romantic hands. . . and for some of them it's a record of divorces and similar marital upsets," quoth the staid and dependable father to his feminine offspring. "So, honey, just you stick to the old-fashioned ideas and I'll wager

that your own family cottage will contain a fair quantity and quality of the real Sunshine of Happiness, with morning glories running up the side of the house and the pitter-patter of little feet running all over your happy home!"

It is reported that some U.N. diplomats give Atlas Stevenson a year longer as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Claim he has "lost face" with U.N. hierarchy because of his alleged "softness" concerning recent U.S.-Cuban situation. Thus, you can observe how "dog-eat-dog" attitude gets into such an alleged idealistic organization as the much-touted United Nations.

Leicester, in Merry Old England, sports a "planning officer" who believes that "a dash of vice" is "what brings any city to life." He argues that "an occasional scandal is what makes a city." 'Tis reported that Leicester's "good citizens" applauded "thunderously" as he spoke to them. As the Sage of Big Beaver once said: "There's no accountin' for tastes—a man brought up on vice will always hanker for it!"

It is very difficult for the average citizen to understand why the purity of Great Lakes water is threatened because of the ever-increasing development of industry, with its need for water, which it causes to become impure; plus the increasing use of the Great Lakes as dumping grounds for sewage wastes. Yet, the experts tell us that such danger exists, within the next score or so of years.

There were a lot of mighty close election races—but this won't prevent the winners from acting as though they had a big popular mandate for their views.

## 'I See We're Having Difficulty Remembering to Type 1963!'



### PEOPLE'S COLUMN

## Westchester Students To Be Sent to Groves?

To the Editor:

Seaholm is across the street from Westchester. Groves High School Our children had to be bused to the Valley Woods Elementary School; and if they are expected to walk to the Valley Woods Junior High School, it is a long walk down a muddy, bumpy road.

The residents of Westchester bought homes in Westchester because they considered the proximity to the high school more important than large trees or rolling land, features available in outlying subdivisions.

Certainly, they never believed that within a few years their children might be denied the privilege of walking across the street to school! Even the value of Westchester property would then be lowered, because how could you tell a prospective buyer that his children are excluded from Seaholm "because we live on the wrong side of the street?"

**PARENTS WHOSE** children participate in school sports and activities know the importance of living within easy walking distance. No school bus is ever waiting at 5:30 when practice is over.

Even from a safety standpoint, why should our teen-agers be forced to drive or be driven to a school two miles away? Because the curriculum in the Birmingham junior high schools is uniform, there should be no problem regarding curriculum changes, and in transferring to Seaholm the students would be transferring with all their Westchester friends and would be rejoining their neighbors across the street.

**FINALLY**, Westchester is not across the street from the new Valley Woods Junior High School. Our children had to be bused to the Valley Woods Elementary School; and if they are expected to walk to the Valley Woods Junior High School, it is a long walk down a muddy, bumpy road.

Look at a map. One must conclude that when Seaholm was built the school board intended to include the children who lived across the street. The parking lot is not big enough now to handle all the cars of Seaholm students. Why would they want to exclude the walk-ins?

We certainly hope there is no truth to the rumors that have been circulating. The Greater Westchester Association is strongly against any change that would exclude their children from Seaholm.

The Greater Westchester Association

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**—The Birmingham Board of Education has not acted on this matter. The central office staff will submit its recommendations on restricting at a board meeting later this month. The board will then act on these recommendations in February. The Eccentric will, as it has in the past, report on the suggested changes.

**Letters from readers always are welcome. But they MUST be signed, although identities will not be divulged if the writer so requests.**

## Yesteryear Happenings

From the Files of The Eccentric

### 50 YEARS AGO

Jan. 24, 1913

The people of Birmingham will have an opportunity to hear Florence Gertrude Ruthven, New York's favorite society entertainer, on Friday evening Jan. 31, at the Johnston-Shaw hall. This talented artist comes here under the auspices of the entertainment committee of Birmingham Lodge No. 547, I. O. O. F., and the lodge is to be congratulated for securing such high class talent for its concert.

### Thursday, Jan. 16, Mr. E. W. Argus, contractor and builder, and Mr. Fenton J. Watkins were working on Mr. Argus' new house at the foot of Stanley avenue. About 2:30 p.m., the scaffold broke, both men falling a distance of about 20 feet. Mr. Argus sustained a broken ankle and a bad cut on the hip caused by an open knife in his pocket. Mr. Watkins had several bones broken, his right arm, the right thigh, the muscles on his right shoulder torn, face badly cut about chin, nose broken and other minor injuries.

Forty masked night riders visited the home of John Shannon, a prominent planter, dragged him from bed and lashed him until he was nearly dead. It is alleged the hand gave as the reasons for whipping Shannon that he had not properly conducted himself in his household. The incident happened near Dalton, Ga.

### 30 YEARS AGO

Jan. 26, 1933

Crime and violent death reached (See HAPPENINGS, 5-B)

## Once Over Lightly

by IRMA N. DAVIS

Soldiers get medals for bravery in action. Women get sales slips. Their battlefield is the bargain sale and let no man think the spoils of war go to the weak—or the meek.

I enlisted in the latest commercial combat about two weeks ago, a skirmish in which the prizes were skirts, sweaters and similar garments bearing a prized brand name.

**THIS SALE** is an annual one and the company general proclaim "D Day" far and wide. Evidently, a private army of women map their strategy out well ahead and a rookie doesn't have a chance.

At any rate, I reported for duty at an area department store about five minutes ahead of the battle call. As the opening bell rang, a gentleman from inside the store peered through the door, spotted the whites of our eyes and ran for his life. The details are hazy from there on in but I know that a division of us reached the target area.

**HEADQUARTERS** HAD planned well. Huge signs and arrows indicated sizes and types of garments. The only thing missing was a Red Cross station.

Swept on by a platoon of top sergeants, I discovered that the sergeants had a simple plan of attack—grab anything in sight.

The next stage was the dressing rooms where amateur quartermasters gathered garments as they were tossed aside by the victors.

**THE RED SKIRT** I had captured didn't fit but I did find a lovely green one for my older daughter.

I examined it for blood stains and headed for the cashier. En route, I spotted a four-foot high pile of skirts. As I reached for one, I was bulldozed out of the way by a burly woman who informed me in some salty barracks language that the loot was hers. There have been 50 skirts in the pile she had accumulated.

**AFTER I HAD WAITED** in line for 15 minutes to pay for my trophy, a floorwalker marched up and promoted those of us at the end of the line to a deserted cashier's station around the corner. "Ah," I thought, "even a rookie gets a break now and then."

Unfortunately, the cash register had been knocked out of commission. Eventually, the siege was over and I left the field, past a company of battered clerks and a few husbands who had been drafted. Most of them had long since retreated to positions behind the lines and were patiently sitting out their tours of duty.

I had learned one thing, however. Next year, I'm going AWOL.

## Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN

### Lenore

During the past year Michigan has been exposed to probably the most dynamic campaigning it has ever seen in its history. Even the days of colorful "Soapy" Williams have now been overshadowed by a whirlwind team.

I'm referring, of course, to the new governor and his wing of the spotted bow tie at square dances was replaced by a man in shirt sleeves shaking hands at factory gates in the wee hours of the morning and a gal who had the courage and determination to climb up on a platform and speak for her man.

I HAD the opportunity recently to attend a luncheon shortly after the governor was inaugurated. He hosted this affair and at the end he stood up and thanked everyone for coming.

The audience yelled "Speech, Speech" and he answered that if they wanted a speech they would have to get the female side of the family to deliver it.

After encouragement, Mrs. Romney stood up and made some remarks starting off with the Bible's description of the creation of woman. She said that God realized that man was lonely and He created Eve to be his helpmate. Then she related that she felt that this was her role in life—to be the helpmate of her man.

IN A QUIVERING voice she then thanked everyone for coming to the luncheon and hoped she could get to know the Lansing people better. She said their door would always be open to all parties for help and assistance.

Her speaking voice has an excitement to it that holds the audience sort of spellbound. It is the delivery of a comely, not a professional speaker.

She was child-like when she spoke of her awe for the size of the Michigan government her husband had just inherited.

She was like the girl next door in her sincerity in asking both Democrats and Republicans to join with them in a drive for a better state.

**MANY PROFESSIONAL** politicians claim that Romney's victory was tipped by Mrs. Romney. His opponent's wife had never actively involved herself with campaigning or politics, which is probably the rule rather than the exception among public office holders' wives.

Up to now politics was considered a pretty "lone" sport. At the conclusion of her speech there was tremendous applause and a Democrat legislator sitting next to me commented, "You know, I think we elected the wrong Romney!"

## By Ken Weaver City Beat

In an editorial concerning municipal officials' salaries a couple of weeks back, we said Franklin conciliar were the lowest paid in the area, at \$1 per meeting.

We erred, say the boys in Lathrup. Councilmen there draw no pay.

If it isn't money, then what is it that attracts people to public office?

A sense of civic responsibility, dedication to the community, desire to help solve problems and a wish for personal recognition must rate among the top reasons.

**THERE MUST** be some personal satisfaction for each individual so serving. But this is a difficult thing to explain. It differs from one individual to another.

Three Birmingham people figured prominently in the news last week. We asked them what personal satisfaction they derived from serving in government.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to learn," said Mayor Florence H. Willett, who has served as a city commissioner for eight years. She announced that she would not be a candidate for re-election in April.

Helping to guide divergent personal opinions into some agreement to solve community problems offers satisfaction for her.

**HER SERVING** in office "has given me so many new horizons that I never would have had in any other field of interest."

She has found "opportunities to meet people that I never would have had otherwise." One example of this was a visit to a Negro congregation in Pontiac.

Citizen reaction is another source of satisfaction. "It's so much better to hear people say 'that's our mayor' than to hear them say 'that's the mayor,'" relates Mrs. Willett.

The "the" usually denotes criticism, coming from some disgruntled citizen.

The "our" usually reveals a sense of possession and pride in the community "it's something that belongs to us," Mrs. Willett explains.

**COMMISSIONER** William H. Burgum, candidate for re-election, enjoys the opportunity "of working on and helping to solve problems for your neighbors in the community in which you live."

He appreciates the association with fellow commissioners, who he regards very highly. He speaks of them as being "extremely capable" in their vocations as well as in their roles as city officials.

**FOR COMMISSIONER** William E. Roberts, who also seeks re-election, "the accomplishments we have had" offer personal satisfaction.

Birmingham, he says, can look with pride on its developments in municipal parking facilities, as compared to other communities.

"It has been a real pleasure to serve with the people we've had on the commission," Roberts declares. "I've always enjoyed it."

**PERSONAL** satisfaction, then, must be one of the chief reasons why people serve their government with little or no pay.

And pride in the community is one of the traits of this entire Birmingham community that we prize so highly. May we never lose it.

ESTABLISHED IN 1878

A Free, Responsible and Aggressive Press Is Democracy's First Line of Defense

Published every Thursday at Birmingham, Mich., in The Eccentric Building, 1225 Bowers Street Telephone Midwest 4-1100



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