

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN

The other night a group of people were discussing vehicle safety around the bar at a local restaurant...

AT THIS point it was suggested that maybe we ought to have compulsory driver inspection. A suburbanite at this point said that's not too bad an idea...

THE OFFICER then said the gentleman would have to go downtown because he couldn't license him if he couldn't read.

OF COURSE, the story is an extreme and the secretary of state is doing a good job taking bad drivers off the road through the point system...

NOT TOO many years ago only certain police stations could issue licenses, now everyone can. Maybe we ought to make every driver take both a written and driving test each time he has to renew his license.



By KEN WEAVER City Beat

Exciting days lie ahead for people interested in progress in our community. We can expect developments along these lines in the near future.

Implementation of some kind of plan to modernize the downtown business district. The CBDD Plan has been talked about for a long time; looks now as if at least part of it will become reality before too long.

Expansion of the Community House. Plans are being formulated now, but nothing definite has been decided upon as yet. Look for an announcement soon.

THE MEETING scheduled for Feb. 14 between city commissioners and other civic-governmental officials is getting more and more attention. People are talking about it and about what may transpire.

AS ONE official said the other day, "Here's a chance for these people to have their say; anyone who's been invited and doesn't show up can just keep his mouth shut in the future."

So, after that community meeting more precise plans should be coming forth that call for action. The City's actual participation in any such plans will be determined in subsequent commission meetings.

BALDWIN PUBLIC Library officials are studying a report on a survey concerning the possibility of creating an area library system. They are trying to solve the problem of increasing use of library facilities by other than Birmingham residents.

Voters in the various communities may be asked to approve some kind of plan for an area system, or authority, and a millage proposal to support it. If I grog you at the black door wearing a very football helmet, don't laugh. It's really a very sensible precaution.

Ground Hog Day, 1963



PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Set Poor Example Before Teen-agers

To the Editor: We talk much about juvenile delinquency and rudeness of teenagers, but I believe we should concentrate more on adult manners and delinquency. For instance—on New Year's Eve my daughter and her three college roommates decided they would celebrate by sitting dinner out at a certain restaurant in Birmingham...

Yesteryear Happenings

50 YEARS AGO Jan. 31, 1913 Wednesday afternoon was a time for rejoicing at the home of Mrs. J. E. Stewart, 170 Maple avenue east, Birmingham, the occasion being the 75th birthday of her mother, Mrs. E. A. Fletcher, who is at the present time the winter with her Mrs. Fletcher's sister, Mrs. A. E. Welser, is also celebrating her 76th birthday at the home of her daughter in Livingston county.

Visit to City Becomes Rewarding Experience

To the Editor: May I, through your column, express my appreciation for a very rewarding experience in your community several weeks ago. I was privileged to attend an unusual Christmas party given by an organization in Birmingham—MOMS of a unit of MOMS of America (I believe) for a number of children from one of your state mental hospitals...

Once Over Lightly

30 YEARS AGO Feb. 2, 1933 Formation of a committee of 11 men to determine questions of policy in regard to the administration of welfare relief in Birmingham when the village takes over the poor burden from the townships (See HAPPENINGS, 3-B)

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Let's Review Social Security

With increases in the Social Security tax rate last year and this, the time has come to take another long look at the program.

What many people do not realize is that both the employee and his employer pay on the Social Security taxes. Many do not know that the rates have been increased for both employee and employer.

Last year, the rate for employees went up from 3 per cent of their paycheck to 3 and 1/4 per cent. This year, it has been increased another 1/4 per cent.

The employer is required to match his employee's taxes dollar for dollar. The result is that 7 and 1/4 per cent of the employer's total taxable payrolls are taken by the government to pay for the Social Security system.

TO TOP IT off, further increases are scheduled for 1966 and 1968 — without adding to the present benefits.

If other plans such as the proposed medical care program are approved, there will be even greater increases for both employee and employer.

In 1966, the combined employer-employee rate will be increased to 8 and 1/4 per cent; in 1968, it will be 9 and 1/4 per cent. These increases will not provide any increase in benefits to retired persons or survivors of deceased workers.

THE COST of the Social Security system has been rising consistently in the last 13 years. Started in 1937, the program saw no increase in its first 13 years; but nine increases have been crowded into the last 13.

Even more surprising is that Social Security taxes have now reached the point where many people actually are paying more for the Social Security tax than for their income tax.

Take, for instance, the case of Mr. Henelope. He has a wife and four children and makes \$4,800 per year. At the 1963 rate, his employer will withhold from his pay \$150.80 (for the year) in income taxes and \$174 in Social Security taxes.

Consider, too, the case of Mr. Cooplan. He supports his wife and three children on \$4,000 a year. His employer must withhold \$145 in Social Security taxes but only \$119.60 in income taxes.

Increases in the rate for 1966 and 1968 will place many more people in this situation.

NOW, CONSIDER these two points: 1. The income tax is the main source of money required to run the entire business of the Federal Government. For example, it provides huge outlays for defense and space exploration. 2. Social security taxes are used solely to finance one single program. It is no wonder, then, that we ask if things have not grown a little lopsided.

YET, WE must examine the reasons for the increases in the Social Security tax rate.

Each year more and more people become eligible to receive old age, disability and survivor's benefits. This group actually is growing faster than the country's payrolls.

Thus, the rate must be increased from time to time to make up the difference. We can expect this condition to prevail for at least five more years—that's why the rate is scheduled to climb to 9 1/4 per cent.

IN THE PAST 26 years, Congress has added to the cost of the system, by increasing benefits and by adding new ones.

If the Administration's medical care program for the aged is adopted, it will mean that both the employee and the employer will each pay another 1/4 per cent.

Furthermore, the taxable wage base for employees—now \$4,800—would be boosted to \$5,200. Thus, the maximum amount to be paid by the employee would be increased, both by the increase in the rate and the increase in the wage base.

PROVIDING FOR our senior citizens with as high an assured income as possible during their later years certainly is good and proper.

But what we must remember is that increases in benefits cost money, which must be raised by increasing the Social Security rate.

We must guard against overloading the system, to prevent it from breaking down. We must keep it from getting so costly that workers of the future will revolt at carrying the load. Then no one would benefit.

Employers and employees alike should examine the entire Social Security program to determine whether it is really being handled in the long-range interests of the taxpayers.

completely wise and virtuous has no need at all of glory, except so far as it disposes and cases his way of action by the greater trust that it procures him." Plutarch lived more than 1,800 years ago.

Sweden's popular King Gustaf probably is the most down-to-earth sovereign alive today. He enjoys stepping into small stores and shops and saying: "Hello!" He speaks to just about everybody, any time, anywhere. He quit drinking and smoking in 1912 as an example for all Swedes... yet he smokes down great quantities of sweet pastries—the pants-waist!

"Will it ever be necessary to ask Ann Landers and her sister, Abigail Van Buren, to answer this question: How can the United States recover some of its former world-stature?"

Congressmen charge each other with obstructionism, but they like to take credit for government projects in their districts. That's constructionism.

Adenauer says his phone sounds like it's being tapped. Some think he is hearing things—but what worries him is that others may be hearing them.

The Budget Bureau reports a deficit of \$7,800,000,000. It's money we owe ourselves, though—so nobody will suffer but the taxpayers.

Several farm experts have been named to the state planning commission in Red China. We didn't know Red China had any farm experts.

War is the last thing we have to worry about, says Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society. And possibly also the first thing.

Steel executives fined for price-fixing said they had only made errors in judgment. Such as judging that they would not be caught!

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

The vital importance of the part the U.S. Congress ought to play in the preservation of liberty and freedom may be attributed to two basic situations: first, the almost strangle-hold that the Federal Government has on the nation's purse strings through the income tax. Second, the use of this taxing power to centralize more and more power in the Executive Office in the White House, resulting in a decrease of the applied philosophy of states' rights—and also making much of the actions of Congress, itself, dependent upon getting tax money diverted to their own states and districts. All this, of course, because of the growth of the vast majority of U.S. citizens into the attitude of "gimme," of dependency upon government for what really is fictitious security. With a power-hungry executive branch, together with a suppliant citizenry and a socialistic-supporting Congress, do you think that if we lived in colonial days we would have the courage to fight for freedom from a despotic British rule?

Broadly speaking, "economics" is the science of the most efficient production and distribution of wealth. Its best application, of course, can exist only in a free society. When it gets into the hands of political state welfareism, it ceases to be efficient, even honest. Only a free enterprise system in a competitive society can bring the maximum of security to people. It is emphasis upon this type of economics' needs teaching in this and every other nation that wants to be free and prosperous. No less a person than Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges recently stated that "if ignorance paid dividends, most Americans could make a fortune out of what they don't know about economics."

Insofar as moral and philosophic guidance for the conduct of human affairs is concerned, it certainly is true that "there is nothing new under the sun." For example, consider this statement, written by that famous Greek moralist Plutarch: "Men steered by popular applause, though they bear the name of governors, are in reality the mere underlings of the multitude. The man who is

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