

Why a Decision Was Postponed

"Without a program", it's difficult for a homeowner in Birmingham to tell what's going on at the county board of supervisors.

At the last meeting of the board there were three items on the agenda concerning the board of auditors, which is the three-man executive committee of the county.

The agenda said that the board of supervisors would consider selecting a new man to fill the term of Robert Moore which had just expired.

They also were going to discuss raising the salary of the chairman of the board of auditors and select a new chairman for the next year.

IT HAD BEEN rumored around the courthouse that Clerk-Register of Deeds Daniel T. Murphy would not only be appointed to the board but also would be made the chairman at a wage increase.

Mr. Murphy in his term as combined county clerk and register of deeds has stood out for his efficient operation of both departments, holding his staff down while at the same time initiating many dollar-saving programs. Microfilming of county records is an example. The amount of physical room this has saved when related to rental

costs shows an increase of thousands of dollars to the county's coffers.

WITH THIS BACKGROUND, why then didn't the board of supervisors go through with the appointment of a new auditor? All of the items concerning the board were briskly passed over to the next meeting.

The reason is quite simple. Mr. Murphy is a Republican. At the last minute a group of Democrats decided to nominate Robert Lilly, a present member of the board of auditors, as chairman.

Because the board of supervisors is not elected, no one knows how many Republicans and how many Democrats sit on the board. And rather than turn what might be a routine appointment into a partisan struggle, the matters were adjourned.

IT IS RUMORED that a supervisor from one of our strongest Republican communities was actually going to do the nominating of Lilly.

It is a disappointment to us that a non-partisan board gets itself into a potential partisan fight.

If county home rule comes to Oakland County, this problem can be solved by letting the people replace the board of auditors with a professional county manager and we feel that Mr. Murphy is well qualified for that position.

Halloween Program Pays Off

The merchants of Birmingham are often criticized but seldom praised for the work they have done in making Birmingham a better community in which to live.

Now that it's ghost and goblin time again, we wish to sing their praises and the Chamber of Commerce's for one particular program under their sponsorship.

For the past 26 years the merchants, first through the Rotary Club and now through the Chamber of Commerce, have sponsored a Halloween parade and related entertainment to take the children off the street Halloween Eve.

THE YEAR BEFORE this program was instituted, some 100 children spent part of

Halloween at the Birmingham Police Station.

Under the new program the damage to property on Halloween has been substantially minimized.

This type of program does not sell more products for our merchants but is another example of how they are working to build a better all-around community.

However, for the program to be effective, it is important that parents encourage their children to participate, instead of going from door to door begging.

THE MORE CHILDREN downtown under supervision means the fewer children running the streets with vision obscured by masks, inviting accidents, and, more seriously, the fewer children tempted to destroy the property of others under the guise of a prank.

And parents who allow their charges to "trick or treat" the night before Halloween are only transferring the hazards to the night before.

The Chamber of Commerce and the merchants are to be thanked for planning this program year after year to help keep the children out of trouble.

Parents are to be encouraged to have their children participate in these supervised Halloween activities.

The result will be a reasonable, safe and sane goblin night—without our awaking the next morning to find roof tops decorated with what earlier in the day had been part of a well-ordered front or back yard.

Will Canals Come Back?

The world's longest and possibly oldest canal is being modernized. This is China's Grand Canal, 1,000 miles long, which connects the country's two greatest rivers, the Yangtze and the Yellow.

Started in the seventh century, it was extended and completed in the 14th. In a country with bad roads and few railroads, water transportation is particularly important. The present improvement will, it is hoped, reduce the number of famines to which China has long been subject.

RUSSIA ALSO depends much on its canals which connect its chief rivers with one another. It is thus possible to go by boat from either the Baltic or the Black seas clear into the heart of Central Asia.

Even in ancient times the importance of canals was realized. The Egyptians contemplated, but did not finish, one joining the Nile to the Red Sea.

The ancient Babylonians had many canals by which the water of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was used to irrigate the country's rich soil.

That canal system was ruined by the invading Mongols in the 13th century, and ever since then the region has been barren and poverty-stricken.

IN OUR country, canals were invaluable until railroads sprang up to supersede them. The most famous is, of course, the Erie Canal, now incorporated into New York's state barge canal system.

If cars and trucks multiply in the future as in the past, business may find it helpful to send bulk and non-perishable goods by canal again.

Stranger things have happened.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace certainly doesn't love the authority of the Federal Government. He did his worst to keep Negroes out of schools and universities where white folks go. He tried to pit the irresistible force against an immovable body, and, of course, lost. The Kennedys beat him . . . which proves, thus far, that a chap like Jimmy Hoffa is more powerful than an Alabama governor.

Despite U.S. requests that ocean ships owned by our Western Allies refuse to transport cargoes to Cuba, most of them do it. Among them are Great Britain, Greece, Lebanon, Morocco, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Norway and Finland. So, you see, where "the love of money" is concerned, the bonds of ethical friendships are mighty fragile.

The big week end killed hundreds of Americans, but the office cynic says it wasn't really so bad—if you compare it with the Black Death of medieval times.

The gorilla and chimpanzee have man as their closest relative, says Dr. Morris Goodman of Detroit. And they might be preferable to some close relatives.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Insists Designers Ignore Safety in Making Autos

To the Editor:

The editorial writer in your Sept. 12 issue is quite correct. "At present, auto design ignores much of what has been learned about safety," except that I would say "most" instead of "much."

It has taken 10 years and laws in 33 states to force the car makers to give us two belts in the 1964 cars, and two front seat belts are but the tiniest fraction of what might be done to prevent deaths and injuries, even if we cannot prevent the "accident."

One car, an American-made rear-engine design, has the steering shaft starting from a point two inches in front of the leading surface of the front tire, so that it is sure to be driven backwards in any crash that deforms the left front corner.

A promising engineer here, with two children, was killed; his only important injury was a broken neck, when this solid steel shaft was driven backwards a measured two feet.

ONE PARTICULAR firm in the cars now with no frame side rails, to save a few cents cost per car; this has led on numerous recorded occasions to increased probability of this car in side impacts, with significant increase in deaths and serious injuries to passengers in these cars. A former automobile engineer has stated that current

bumpers are designed to override! What can knowledgeable engineers expect of two opposing narrow convex bumpers but that they shall over-ride and inflict the maximum damage to two contacting cars? When impacting the side of another car, this can only mean increased death and injury to the passengers in the impacted car.

MR. WILLIAM B. HANKLA in his reply (Oct. 3) to the Sept. 12 editorial writes, "The automobile manufacturers of this country have energetically exhibited all aspects of automotive safety for several decades."

Exploration is what we need. These explorers knew very accurately that crash padding over many of the interior surfaces of the car would prevent many deaths and injuries.

Ten years ago one of the better cars had padding widely distributed over the interior surfaces. It was not mentioned in the advertising, and people did not have to be taught to use it, as they must be taught to use seat belts. It was simply built-in protection.

A RESPONSIBLE industry would have seen to it that this padding was widely used in all cars, particularly those of lowest cost and widest distribution. This has distinctly not been the case. Mr. Hankla likes the sound of

"crumpling sheet metal, bumpers, and other structures," e.g., fenders, lights, grilles, radiators, and wrecked engines. These provide surely not more than 10 or 11 inches of deceleration distance at a cost of \$400 to \$800.

The hydraulic bumper, as proven in actual crashes by Prof. James J. Ryan at the Engineering School at the University of Minnesota, will provide 17 inches of uniform deceleration at a cost of about \$35, and this bumper can be used over and over again.

THE CHINESE are alleged to have burned down the barn whenever the yearning for roost pig became imperative. The carmakers may be said to have reached the cultural level of the Chinese of 3000 years ago, when they demand that we smash up a car to the tune of several hundreds of dollars to get \$15 dollars worth of deceleration.

And one thing more. Do not expect to get a realistic picture of industry performance or motivation from an employee of the Automobile Manufacturers Association, Inc.

HORACE E. CAMPBELL, M.D., Chairman, Automotive Safety Committee, Colorado Medical Society, Formerly Vice-Chairman, Committee on Automobile Deaths and Injuries, American Medical Association.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Says Negro Problem Should Concern All

To the Editor:

I was indeed heartened by your lead letters appearing in the People's Column of the Oct. 10 issue of the Birmingham Eccentric. They were both letters of vital import to our community.

It is high time someone spoke out for the long, sometimes painful way of earning the respect of our children through the way we live our lives.

Morals are the result of what we believe in and how deeply we believe it. The cartoon showing lines of paid-shirted Dads in shiny automobiles depositing their children at the church door sticks in my mind.

NO MATTER how much we hope the church will make our children "good," we are only wasting gasoline if Dad returns home to cut the grass instead of taking seriously the act of worship himself.

An hour of church once a week can never undo the week long acts of selfishness and moral laxity the child has thoroughly digested at home.

Mrs. Greeson has certainly expressed my deepest concern when she states, "I can't keep out of my head the thought of what it would

be like if I were a Negro, raising my children in this world, and trying to explain away and answer their questions."

"HOW CAN any white human being think seriously about this and give a guiltless answer?"

The Negro problem should be the concern of each and every one of us, particularly in a suburb such as this where we have so little chance to get to know Negroes as fellow human beings. The only constructive project I know of to ameliorate in our deplorable lack of knowledge in our community is the five-evening workshop on Human Relations now in progress which is being sponsored by nine churches in the Birmingham, Southfield and Pontiac area.

ST. PAUL has already given us the answer to both these letters when he wrote: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

M. M. T. Barrie, (MORE PEOPLE'S COLUMN LETTERS ON 5-B)

Yesteryear Happenings

50 YEARS AGO

Oct. 24, 1913

One of the events of the coming winter which will make "Life" worth living in Birmingham, the "Fride of Old Oakland" will be the dancing classes, conducted by Miss Merab Standart, at the Johnston-Shaw hall. Miss Standart has studied Folk-Gymnastic-Classical-Aesthetic and Interpretive dancing under the best teachers of Chicago and Detroit, and hopes with the cooperation of the people of Birmingham to make it popular and enjoyable to all here. A class is now being formed for the married set, commencing early in November.

Birmingham Lodge Number 547, I. O. O. F., is to be congratulated on the splendid exercises carried out last Saturday afternoon in connection with the unveiling of their monument at Roseland Park Cemetery. The lodge has secured a plot of ground here large enough to accommodate 18 adult graves in one of the finest and best located sections in the cemetery. The monument which is of the best Vermont granite is a

(See HAPPENINGS, 5-B)

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



When I was a youngster I used to roam the streets of Greenwich Village in New York City.

The area was filled with women dressed as men and vice versa and represented the sordid side of life from which we protect our children in a community like Birmingham.

For the most part, the streets were dirty, the homes were dirty and even the people were dirty.

But the tourists came in droves to drink watered whiskey and experience the same thrills one would get by reading a book from the realism school.

IN THE BACK of my mind I always thought "Wouldn't this be a good life—no responsibility—no need to dress for work or social engagements." I felt that these were real people who didn't need to impress other people with their accomplishments or importance.

I suppose everyone has some sort of ideal escape from the cares of reality, like being a beachcomber or a hunter in a lonely woods.

The other night I had occasion to return to my old haunts. Things have changed.

Gone were the strippers and the transvestites. Bars were now out of style.

THE COFFEE house, the black tights, a beard, a guitar and off-beat poetry have replaced them.

The tourist is still there paying \$2 a head to see and hear entertainment while sipping a 75-cent cup of coffee you'd throw away if your spouse served it to you at breakfast.

The streets, the homes and the people are still dirty, maybe even dirtier.

But it brought home to me something I overlooked as a youngster. These were the same people who were there many years ago, but they had changed their costumes.

LISTENING TO their conversations, they had the same problems every businessman has—how to dress up their establishment to lure the tourists away from the "joint" down the street.

How to cut overhead and increase profits. How to look "beater" than the next person to attract attention.

They had not escaped. Really, they just had poor working conditions.

It is true that the grass always seems greener on the other side of the fence, but fortunately I had looked before I leapt.

I showered to erase the last traces of the village and wondered to myself, "Is even the beachcomber smitten with the problems of the world?"

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER



Open letter to John Millhone, editorial writer for The Detroit Free Press:

"Who speaks for the suburbs?" you ask in your column in the Sunday Free Press of Sept. 29.

You say there is not a single significant leader representing the suburban communities of the Detroit metropolitan area.

You are right, John, in that there is no one single person or authority representing us.

But there is a voice—or rather a collection of voices that I believe you have overlooked:

For years, papers like The Birmingham Eccentric and South Macomb News—to name but two—have been reporting, interpreting and guiding suburban developments.

OVER AND over again they have called attention to the similar and dissimilar problems of area communities. They have reported on solutions and have offered their own suggestions.

Time and again, these local newspapers have advocated cooperation between the various municipal governments to cope with mutual or related problems.

Time and again, they have pointed out that these units of authority should be working with Detroit to accomplish results on the metropolitan level.

They have criticized consistently the attitude that Detroit, the central city, should serve as the mother—the master problem solver—for everyone.

Your own newspaper, John, and The Detroit News both can help this situation by taking an area-wide view rather than continuing an attitude of Detroit first and the suburbs second.

The quicker the Detroit dailies recognize and accept this responsibility and opportunity the sooner and the better the results throughout the metropolitan area.

There are also groups like the Southeastern Oakland County Mayors' Association which have made contributions in this respect and which hold promise of even greater accomplishments in the future.

SO YOU SEE, John, even though there may be no one single authority to represent the suburbs there is a collection of voices that seek to accomplish the very thing you suggest.

The readers of the suburban community newspapers pay heed to what they say. Perhaps you, your newspaper and the 50 significant leaders you say exist in Detroit should also pay more attention to them.

You might learn something.



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