

Build, But Beautify, the Lot

The Birmingham Eccentric favors construction of the municipal parking lot proposed for the block bounded by Merrill, Bates, Townsend and Henrietta.

We do so for these reasons: The lot is needed. Studies by the City show a definite need for more off-street parking facilities in downtown Birmingham, particularly in this southwest quadrant of the business section.

This proposed lot has been part of the City's long-range plans for development of municipal parking facilities; it is no new proposal suddenly thrust upon the people. This newspaper has reported on plans for this lot on several occasions.

Salute to Bill

We have many opportunities to salute local residents for work they have done to better our state or our country, but too few opportunities to salute these same people for what they have done for their own community.

With all the tremendous talent residing in our area, how many of our citizens do nothing more than eat and sleep in their home community? The result is that a small hard-core group of individuals end up doing most of the work, and these individuals should get the credit for much of the growth and prosperity of the community.

ONE OF these "doers who have contributed time and time again to our community" has just been elected president of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, as you will note from our front page story.

This same gentleman appeared on our front page last week as the chairman of the local YMCA fund drive.

Several weeks ago, he appeared as a victorious candidate for re-election to the city commission.

HE IS A former mayor of Birmingham (and the youngest man to hold that post), a past supervisor of Oakland County as well as being a Lion, a director of the YMCA and active in many other local charities.

He was named Man of the Year by the Junior Chamber of Commerce back in 1952 because of his work for the United Foundation, the "Y" and the Little Leagues.

We heartily congratulate this gentleman for his most recent honor and offer him our earnest support in working for a better community.

Isn't it too bad that Birmingham doesn't have more Bill Roberts?

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

Experts on "how to raise children correctly" say that many of today's youngsters are resorting to stricter disciplines in raising their children. The use of "permissiveness" in molding youngsters, they assert, doesn't shape offspring to meet the responsibilities of maturity. Firm, yet fair, discipline is good for everyone—for children by parents, by adults for themselves.

Immoral, amoral emphasis on sex, whether it be in the entertainment world, or in the vulgar segments of the printed word, always has been a human social problem. It seems that there always are plenty of people who are willing to produce such stuff—and, alas! plenty of people who buy it.

So much of today's entertainment is far from being the stuff that can aid other media in the development of individual citizen character. Why expect today's youth, subjected to so much superficial entertainment, whether it be visual or auditory, to be an improvement over their elders?

In Haiti a revolt is threatened against President Duvalier, just when the government has declared a "month of national gratefulness to Duvalier." Gratitude, it would seem, is not universal.

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

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THERE ARE 12 parcels of property which the City must buy in that block for the new lot. Four are owned by three people and the other eight are owned by a syndicate of local businessmen. We understand the latter are ready to sell if they can agree with the City on price.

There are nine houses in the block. Only three of these (on Townsend) have been remodeled to the extent that they are in keeping with the high residential quality of Birmingham.

WE SYMPATHIZE with the owners of these properties. They should be respected and admired for their achievements in renovating their homes.

Yet, we believe these houses—all nine of them—should give way to progress. They should be removed to make room for the needed parking lot.

The area in which they are located is zoned for multiple family dwellings. There could be no change to commercial zoning without a change in thinking by future city planners and commissioners.

THERE IS concern—and rightly so—over the appearance of parking lots in general.

But let us remember that in Birmingham there has been a consistent, sincere emphasis on artistic values in the planning and development of municipal parking lots.

City officials had in mind the owners and occupants of property adjacent to municipal lots when they required expensive brick screening walls, decorative trees and certain kinds of shaded lighting in parking lots.

WHEN THE city commission adopted the new parking lot ordinance last year, there was some concern over the requirement of brick screening walls in privately owned lots.

The standards were too high and would prove too costly for property owners, was the argument. Yet, the overriding conviction was that if the city government could set such high standards, certainly it could expect the same from residents.

So, in Birmingham, at least, parking lots are not eyesores. They are assets and are geared to the community's sense of aesthetic values.

PERHAPS THIS is the time to give thought to creating some kind of civic art object such as the sculptured swan fountain proposed for Shain Park several years ago.

Inasmuch as the site of the proposed parking lot borders on the south side of Shain Park, an artistic feature of this kind could serve as a natural, attractive entranceway between the two.

This would give us the needed parking facility and still maintain the character of our community. The lot is needed, and should be built.

So, let's have it—and beautify it, too.

Women's spring clothing will have lots of pleats. And husbands will have lots of pleats in their brows when they get the bills.

Every time the Communists in Laos promise a cease-fire, they gain more territory. They may adopt as a slogan that old saying, "Peace, it's wonderful."

King Hussein of Jordan says he won't give up his throne to let the country join the UAR. It sounds like an ultimatum—one the people may take him up on.

Ambassador Kennan will quit to go Harvard. Having lost so many men to Washington, Harvard figures it's about time to get some back.

Now there is a common language for electronic computers. We'd better keep a few human beings around to keep an ear on what they're saying.

Elizabeth Taylor says some people may figure she's a secret woman. After all the publicity she may be a bit red-faced, at least.

The New York Mets have enjoyed a winning streak. This is quite different from last year, when they were streaking toward the league cellar.



This is the type of sculptured swan fountain perhaps some work of art like this could be proposed by Birmingham sculptor Marshall included in development of the new parking Fredericks for Shain Park several years ago. lot.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Preserve the Charm Of Townsend Homes

To the Editor:

I have often admired The Eccentric and feel that you have done a fine job of reporting for our area.

Occasionally there comes a time when a newspaper must take a "stand" on an issue and I feel that time has come in Birmingham.

THE PROPOSAL by the city commission to tear down the houses on Townsend St. to make a parking lot strikes me as being as unwise a move as building factories on Bates.

Every progressive town and city in our country that is alert is wise to the fact that they must preserve these charming bits from the past or very soon they will be just another mass of neon lights, modern front shops that look like any other cheap town.

BIRMINGHAM so far has some charm left—it should be preserved. So, Eccentric, please take a stand on this issue and every issue in the future that may destroy what was already here.

MRS. R. D. BRODERICK
3576 Darcy Road

Yesteryear Happenings

From the Files of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO

May 9, 1913
The Silver Medal Contest which was held in the M. E. Church Tuesday evening May 6, was a decided success in every way. Each contestant did remarkably well, and although each deserved a medal, but in a contest only one can be the winner, and the one who was awarded the silver medal was Miss Esther Wakefield, daughter of the M. E. Pastor, Mr. C. E. Wakefield.

The meanest man has been found in Birmingham. Mr. Price of the Walker-Gordon farm took a plank to the Barnum School so that his little girl could have a "feeder" and help other little girls to have a good time. Mr. Black, the janitor, was to make it the next day. Hanged if some unregistered Son of Belial didn't go and steal it during the night. Shame on you! You are known. Bring it back at once.

We always have said that the best people of Detroit, when looking for a home, come straight to Birmingham, the Pride of Old Oakland, and it proves true every day. Mr. A. D. B. Van Zandt and family are with us, and are comfortably settled in the pretty little home of J. C. Buckner on Woodward Ave.

30 YEARS AGO

A public hearing will be held at the Bloomfield Hills Country Club next Wednesday night on a proposed 1933 budget of \$37,000 for the City of Bloomfield Hills. The budget, calling for a tax levy of about \$29,500, or about \$8,100 less than that of last year, was approved by the City Commission Tuesday night, but cannot be adopted until after possible objections have been heard from the public.

The new 3.2 beer will go on sale in Birmingham at 6 p.m. today as in other cities of Michigan, but the sources of supply will be narrowly limited and all drinking will be done at home. Only four places (See HAPPENINGS, 7-B)

CBD Plan Formulated During Critical Time

To the Editor:

In recent weeks, there have been many comments on the original Birmingham CBD plan as it was presented to the planning commission and, in turn, the city commission, ranging all the way from good to bad.

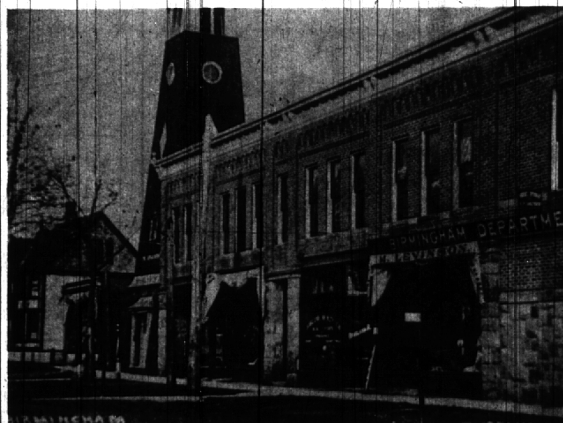
As one of the original members of the committee, I would like to offer my impressions. We came together at a critical time for our downtown area. We were at a standstill in our downtown area.

We had problems which were coming up which had to be handled or grass could very easily be growing in a few years in our downtown area. If this happened, the tax rate would have fallen completely on the residents of Birmingham.

Our plan was submitted to me many long hours of work and at all times I know we were working on a plan for the benefit of all our residents. A good, healthy downtown section is the best insurance for a healthy town.

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



Here is an early view of Maple looking ground is the old Bikeslee home. The Morris west from the corner of Woodward. The Levinson store in the foreground was the high structure in the picture is the Birmingham Fire Dept. tower. In the back-

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN

Bits and Pieces

The other night we were discussing new homes and I happened to ask a local couple how they liked their new abode. The husband said he was having the same trouble with his new home as with his former smaller one. Apparently in their old home they had one bathroom, and every morning there was a race for its use. He would be getting ready for work at about the same time his kids would be getting ready for school.

He thought he had solved the problem by purchasing a three-bathroom home. In the meantime he purchased one of those electric toothbrushes for the family. It has one mechanical unit and several fit-in brush units for each member of the family.

The problem arose, then, where the electrical unit should be kept. Each member of the family wanted it in his or her bathroom. The father won out, but now he can't get into his own bathroom in the morning because everyone is using the toothbrush there.

THE FOLLOWING is a letter which Senator Beall of Maryland received from a constituent, which was recently printed in the Detroit Board of Commerce magazine:

"Dear Senator: I have a very dependent relative who has little financial responsibility. He means well, but he keeps buying presents for my wife and me, charging them to my account. When he sees something that he thinks we might need, he buys it, and I have to pay. These things are rarely what we would have bought ourselves. Because he doesn't work for a living, money doesn't mean much to him.

"He is generous to the poor and needy, with my money—and gives to the unworthy, too. I just received a bill for his latest spending spree, and it gives me a sick, hopeless feeling. How much better things would be if I could spend my own money for the things I want.

"He won't listen to me, but he will listen to you. Please, please use your influence to cut the spending habits of my Uncle Sam.

Sincerely..."

By KEN WEAVER City Beat

No, I have not seen the movie "Days of Wine and Roses."

A few people suggested that I had seen this movie before writing last week's column about the troubles of Fay and Ralph.

The show, I understand, concerns a young couple plagued with a drinking problem.

Fay and Ralph has this trouble, too; but they are embroiled in a social enigma much more complex than that. They have experienced an almost complete deterioration of human motivations and sense of values.

A COUPLE of readers said they didn't get the point of last week's column. Actually, it was just an attempt to describe a social problem. It offered no solution because there is none.

Fay and Ralph, and others like them, cannot be helped until they want help.

There are various social agencies, such as Family Service in this area, to help people work their way out of these dilemmas.

But Fay and Ralph did not avail themselves of any such service. There was a time when Fay, in all probability could have been rehabilitated as a volunteer mental health program. But she chose not to accept the opportunity.

Today, it may be too late.

RALPH IS an alcoholic. He has been informed of the services of Alcoholics Anonymous but to date has not sought help.

He works only enough to buy more booze, not to provide for his family. He has lost consciousness of any responsibility in this sense.

Relatives have tried to help Fay and Ralph. But their efforts have failed. The couple accept handouts but shun any responsibility for improving their situation.

The relatives have been discouraged to the point that they seldom offer to do anything more, unless it's to provide food.

YES, THE plight of Fay and Ralph is a sad one. There appears to be no hope for the future for them. They cannot be helped until they are ready to accept help.

They will not improve their lot until they are prepared to meet and accept all responsibility it involves. Such is the story of Fay and Ralph.

Guess I'd better go see that movie about the "Days of Wine and Roses" now.

One hundred and 44 delegates, representing Michigan's 34 state senatorial districts and 110 state representative seats, wrote the new constitution in 136 days.

In the state's new constitution, civil rights are strengthened. The new document has created the first and only state constitutional civil rights commission in the United States with broad powers.

Michigan's 1850 constitution was a good one as it applied to agriculture which was the basic industry at the time. But since then manufacturing and tourist industries have come to the state. The new constitution is fashioned for all three industries.

The new constitution has more than 8,000 fewer words than the often-amended 1908 version, making for greater clarity and understanding.

Do You Remember?

Here is an early view of Maple looking ground is the old Bikeslee home. The Morris west from the corner of Woodward. The Levinson store in the foreground was the high structure in the picture is the Birmingham Fire Dept. tower. In the back-