

Controversy Has Its Assets

Two controversial issues have prompted many people to attend the Birmingham City Commission meetings in recent weeks. Though we disagree with some of the arguments proffered, we are pleased to see such enthusiastic response from the residents. We recognize the stimulus these issues are giving to interest in local government.

For years, city officials have been urging citizens to attend governmental meetings, to find out for themselves what their elected and appointed officials are doing

and how they are spending the taxpayers' money.

This newspaper, too, has consistently tried to motivate citizen interest in civic and governmental affairs.

Consequently, we are pleased to note the attendance at recent meetings and hope that it will continue.

AS STATED here earlier, we endorse the city administration's plans for a municipal parking lot in the block south of Shain Park.

We can well understand the concern of residents in that area for the appearance of such a lot. But we also are fully cognizant of the efforts in Birmingham, by city officials and private citizens alike, to maintain high standards.

It is our contention that this lot can be built and be an asset, aesthetically and practically, to the adjacent area as well as to the rest of the city.

AS FOR the proposed sidewalks in the Pembroke-Deerby section of town, we know that the administration is correct and proper in planning a sidewalk program and presenting it to the commission.

We know that such programs are outlined only after studies are made. And we believe in the honesty, fairness and efficiency of the people who make these studies and subsequent recommendations.

IN MANY issues like this, the question is raised: "Why is this program being proposed at this time?"

It's a legitimate question when asked in search of information. It is entirely out of order when asked in a derogatory sense; with an implication that there must be something underhanded behind the whole affair.

The answer is, of course, that the program has come about in the normal course of events. Each year the administration studies such things as streets and sidewalks in various sections of the city and then makes recommendations based on the results.

That the private citizen does not understand these facts nor the technical knowledge involved goes without saying. He should ask questions.

But to assume that the City is trying to put something over on somebody is unwarranted, unfair, unwise and unreasonable.

MET, IT IS good to see the people turning out for the commission meetings. This is what we have been seeking all of these years.

The controversial issues have, then, served to create citizen interest in Birmingham's government. Let us hope that this interest has long life.

Honor the Dead; But Learn, Too

Tomorrow is Memorial Day. A day set aside to honor those who have gone before us.

It is important for us in honoring the dead, to remember not only those qualities of our predecessors which we would like to use as examples for our own lives, but also some of the mistakes of our predecessors so that we don't fall error to the same things.

We in a progressive society must profit by the mistakes of others. If we ignore them, we ourselves, will unnecessarily repeat them.

WE DON'T mean, of course, that we shouldn't practice the externals of honoring the dead by visiting places of their last repose or decorating graves with flowers tomorrow.

But more important, we should practice the internals of molding our lives after their better attributes and consciously avoiding their shortcomings.

By overtly mourning our dead, we can forget our own joy ahead. We are still responsible for the direction of our community, state and nation.

AS ABRAHAM Lincoln said at Gettysburg: "... It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here

to the unfinished work which they... have thus

Far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated

To the great task remaining before us... that we here

Highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain

That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of

Freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the

People, shall not perish from the earth."

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

Headline: Washington Calm Despite Rise Flights Over Alaska. Yeah, but let 'em fly over Washington and see what excitement they'd stir up.

The governor of Wisconsin lost his cook because he wanted meals served at odd hours now and then. His political cooking didn't jibe with the kitchen schedule.

Arab leaders talk about a unified front to engage in "positive neutrality." That is a fancy name for playing one side against the other.

De Gaulle had lunch at The Hilaria and spent only about three hours there. Doubtless anxious to get back to some good French cooking for dinner.

Yankee outdoorser Mickey Mantle is happy with his \$100,000 contract. Well, it's a living, anyway.

A strike against three big rubber firms is averted. Negotiators are trying to prove that rubber can be as flexible as steel.

Castro got a full-dress reception in Moscow, complete with appearance on Lenin's tomb. Well, we've thought for a long time that he was a Red square.

Princess Grace is so regal it gets to be a strain on the viewer. It was a positive relief to see a picture of her in a folksy sweater, doing her needlepoint.

Social security benefits are proposed for men at 60, women at 55. If this trend goes on, there won't be many working years left in which to earn benefits.

President Davaler of Haiti is said to have Red ties. He'll find, as Castro did, that this also entails wearing another man's collar.

A girl in our office says she approves of the push for more uniform time, since she's always enjoyed dates with fellas in the service.

In Poland they're trying to make it a criminal offense for a worker to spend any of his paycheck on the way home. Poland will be a housewives' paradise.

If trouble were in season only parts of the year, some people would be hunting for it out of season.

Brazilian people are advised by Castro to profit from Cuba's revolutionary experience. Lesson One: Pick your leader more carefully.

The answer to those who wonder "what on earth there is to negotiate about" could be, "Things we might be fighting about."

Paterson is said to be disappointed because his return match with Linton is indefinitely postponed. Some fellows are gluttons for punishment.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

What Makes Community Attractive to So Many?

To the Editor:
This is an open letter to Mayor William H. Burgum, members of the Birmingham City Commission and The Birmingham Eccentric.
I would like to share with you, regarding the matter of acquiring one of our residential blocks for the purpose of making it into a parking lot.

First, let me say, I have no reason to question your integrity. I am assuming that you are all honorable men, imbued with the spirit and desire to do nothing but what is in the best interests of the community as a whole. Also, I am sure that you, yourselves, feel that you are practical people, taking a practical approach to this question.

At a previous meeting, the impression I got was that you felt that we, who are putting up this protest, are just being a bit emotional about this matter and are primarily motivated by our own selfish interests, and that in the long run, after this thing is accomplished, we will all be the better for it, and that, painful as it may seem now, we would

later on even be grateful to you for your courageous and practical action.
Gentlemen, I ask you to examine your position with me more closely. You say "that after a series of surveys, you have been led to conclude that there is a present and future increasing need for parking space due to the growth of the Birmingham business district."

YOU ALSO imply that even though it would be feasible to deck parking lot No. 1 and other suggested lots that are already in existence, it would be more practical to acquire this block now before the value increases, and later on, as the need arises, you can deck the other areas. You speak of future costs to the community as being the reason for taking this action now.

All right, let's talk about cost. I take it that by costs you mean how many dollars it would take out of the city treasury to purchase this block of ground now as opposed to what it would cost later on to buy this same piece of ground.

HAVEN'T YOU overlooked another aspect of

cost: What about the cost to the community? What about cost in terms of pride of the property owner who has the initiative and good taste to take these other homes and remodel them and redecorate them?

What do you think it is that makes this community so outstanding? Not only to Michiganders, but known throughout the nation?

What do you think it is that makes this community so attractive to such a high caliber of people who constantly move into this area?

WHAT DO you think it is that prompts so many large corporations, when transferring operations to the Detroit area from other parts of the country to recommend that they find a place for their family to live in the Birmingham area?

Do you think it is because we have the slickest and the largest parking lots? Is that what you think?

OH IS IT because this is a (See COMMUNITY, 1-B)

Urges Vote On Community College Issue

In a recent speech Eugene Power, member of the board of regents for the University of Michigan, stated that due to the lack of adequate finances that institution must limit its enrollment to the highest 10 per cent of the graduates class from out-of-state and the top 25 per cent in the State of Michigan.

If this represents a trend for our state institutions of higher learning in selecting students, what is going to happen to the marginal student with good intelligence desiring a college education?

THE CITIZENS of Oakland County are now in a fortunate position to help their high school graduates secure a higher education by casting their vote in favor of the Oakland County Community College proposal.

The proposal is aimed at establishing a junior college system for all citizens. In this manner we can make sure that college space will be available for all our graduates without a quota system.
Let's strike a positive blow for education by voting June 10 for the Community College proposal and electing a six-member board of trustees.

HAROLD J. ABRAMS
100 Elm
Pontiac

Happenings of Long Ago

From the Files of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO
May 30, 1913
George Johnson has bought out the McBride restaurant on E. Michigan Avenue and without doubt will make good. Every Sunday, he gives a special dinner for half a dollar. Next Sunday, you can call and eat your fill of chicken and strawberry shortcake. Try the Johnson restaurant and George will give you the glad hand.

30 YEARS AGO
June 1, 1933
Far the first time in history, a state track and field championship is in the possession of a Baldwin High School team. Seven Baldwin athletes, who qualified to enter the state meet by placing in the regional 600 weeks ago at Ypsilanti, won the Michigan Class B championship at Birmingham Saturday in the 27th annual state high school track and field meet held in the Michigan State College Stadium at East Lansing.

A public hearing will be held in the Commission room of the Municipal Building Monday night on a proposed 18-month budget which provides expenditures of \$245,300.09 and calls for a tax levy of \$222-010.09. The budget was introduced by the Commission last Monday, but must be submitted at a public hearing before it can be formally adopted.

Petition asking for a writ of mandamus to compel the Birmingham City Commission to approve a (See HAPPENINGS, 7-B)

Eccentricities



By HANK HOGAN

I don't think I have ever used this corner before to plug a candidate for political office, but the school district election will be upon us shortly and I want to make a couple of remarks about a school trustee far enough in advance so that it doesn't look like a paid announcement. For the last four years the Birmingham School District has been very ably served by a young man named George William Coombe, Jr.

George is a part-time attorney on the legal staff of General Motors; part-time because he arrived on the Birmingham school scene just about the time when being a board member became a full-time job.

FOUR YEARS ago, the school board was in the throes of a revolution. Dr. Dwight Ireland was superintendent and ran the school system with an iron hand.

The school board's reputation was that it passively put in operation that which the superintendent wanted. The school system was not exactly falling apart because Dr. Ireland was an able administrator. The problem was that policy was not necessarily being made where it should have been made—by the school board.

THE REVOLUTION started when a group of "young turks" tried to bring the power back to the school board. Unfortunately, they were still a minority on the school board.

With the election four years ago, George replaced a member who retired and this gave this group the votes they needed to forge ahead.

Because of various disagreements, Dr. Ireland resigned and the school board hired Dr. Otis Dickey to replace him.

During Dr. Dickey's tenure, the Birmingham School District flexed its muscles, shed its shackles and grew to new heights as a school district. And the good doctor was the first to say he was able to do it because he had an enlightened and interested board.

We had a couple of changes of faces on the board during the period, but one man rose to the top. The man who had great energy, great drive and tremendous ability.

TO ACKNOWLEDGE his work, the school board made him vice-president last year, second only to retiring school board head, Kathryn Loomis.

I have worked with George on many projects and have never found him wanting.

I hope the citizenry return him to office in June and give him the honor which he deserves.

I sincerely believe that making George W. Coombe, Jr., the new president of the school board could be the best thing that ever happened to the Birmingham school system.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER



There has been a lot of talk lately about standards in this city of ours.
People opposed to the proposed new parking lot have been clamoring for preservation of the high residential standards of this community.

I witnessed no one getting on the bandwagon at last week's public hearings on street improvements and sidewalk construction when city commissioners emphasized that they were trying to maintain standards.

Such comments evoked no response from the people objecting to these particular projects.

THE PROTESTERS were being hit where it hurts most—in the pocketbook—and were opposed no stouter what.

This became apparent, I thought, in the remark of a woman who was informed that her sidewalk assessment would be only slightly more than \$8:
"If I had my way, we wouldn't pay for it even if it were \$5."

OH, THEY had all kinds of reasons. Like:
The street is in excellent condition if used only by the people who lived on it.
Trees would have to be removed. (The city engineer explained that for the most part walks would be curved around trees.)

This one was a crusher—"It would just be another place for kids to dart across the street."

Who would shovel the snow at the corner house if the renters there neglected to do so?

WHEN IT came right down to it, these people were concerned with their own welfare—not with any community standards.

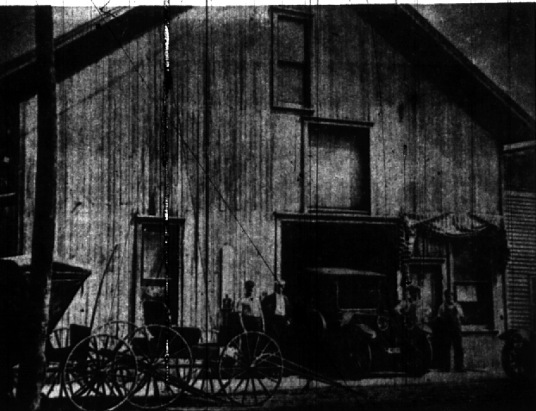
BUT, SUCH is human nature; so, on to lighter things—
Weather was the main topic of conversation at the joint service cook luncheon on The Community House last week.

Every weather joke ever created must have been told and retold. And some new ones created.
There were 175 men in attendance. Some wore top coats, some did not. Throughout the meal they joked that ice cream would be the dessert.

The sky was cloudy and a chilly wind blew across the place. Hot coffee was the hottest item on the barbecue menu.
THE MEN stamped their feet under the table and pulled their coat collars about their necks. When the sun broke through the clouds, they cheered.
While members of the Continental Air Command Band were warming up (I say that with a question mark), the ladies from The Community House served dessert.

It was cake—and you guessed it—ice cream.

Michigan's new constitution gives the legislature power to establish metropolitan districts with such powers as the legislature wishes to give. It also grants to townships, cities and counties powers to transfer services, share costs, jointly control and cooperate.



Yes, They Remember

Two weeks ago, this picture appeared in this spot with our readers being asked: (Robert Popritz, far left; Glen Schlauch; that the building on Maple in the block east from Woodward, was remodeled into two stories and now houses the Koecher popcorn shop and an architectural firm; that a plumbing shop is immediately to the east of this building.)

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 Bowen Street. Telephone Midway 4-1100



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