

Time to Think of Freedom?

One hundred and eighty-seven years ago tomorrow, the Declaration of Independence was presented to the 13 colonies and proclaimed to the world.

Historians differ as to whether this document or our Constitution is the most important of our heritage. Yet, as we lead our everyday life, how many of us have actually paused to reflect upon it, or even reread it?

For many people, the Fourth of July is the sixth or seventh paid holiday of the year. Independence Day signifies, to them, an independence from working.

The last time many people read the immortal phrase "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary . . ." was in their senior year of high school.

HERE WE have a land that gives emphasis to the principles of freedom and democracy. We try to convince the world that there is no system of government, no way of life that is better than ours.

But, sadly, there is a disturbing apathy among many citizens toward our government, our heritage, our role in world affairs, our future.

There are those who will fight and die

for freedom when faced with its loss overtly, but who give little thought to it otherwise.

AND THERE need be great concern for our government today. If we wish to preserve our freedom, attention must be given to correcting some of the faults of an over-powering centralized government.

Are we too busy earning a living and too preoccupied by personal concerns to take a good look at our government? Are we too busy to vote? Are we too involved with our individual security to reflect upon such things as national security, independence, liberty and freedom?

Have we no time to review again these words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness . . ."

IT IS NOT enough to plant a seed to get a full-grown tree. Government, like a tree, must be nurtured, pruned and cared for.

And this is the citizens' responsibility.

Dr. Smith - a Wise Choice

From every indication to date, we would say that the Birmingham Board of Education has made a wise choice in its selection of a school superintendent.

Dr. John B. Smith's background qualifies him for the local position. He is an accomplished administrator, capable of originating programs to improve a system of recognized quality.

A CREATOR of ideas, he comes to Birmingham with an awareness of its reputation and with a promise to "make sure that reputation does not slip."

"If there are ways to improve the system they must be done," said Smith in an interview story in last week's Eccentric.

"A school system is just as good as the community wants it to be."

Obviously, then, he possesses one of the prime requisites for the job: A desire to give the children of the community the kind of education their parents wish them to have.

"The job of the schools," said the educator from Greenwich, Conn., "is to develop a youngster to the fullest ability. The graduate must be able to read critically, think analytically and communicate clearly."

DR. SMITH also is a strong advocate of effective communication between the school administrators and the public. He believes in the value of disseminating information to the residents of the district.

This is important to us, as public interest in the Birmingham schools has increased

A Good Idea!

An interesting step toward helping to make the most of returning Peace Corps personnel has been taken by the University of Minnesota. Ten tuition scholarships have been established for Peace Corps men and women who are graduates of the university or received their Peace Corps training there.

The scholarships will be supplemented by grants from private sources. The recipients will thus be enabled to complete their graduate studies, which in some cases will have been interrupted by Peace Corps service.

THE IDEA behind the establishment of these scholarships is an excellent one. It embodies the belief that those who have served abroad in the Peace Corps will have the potential to make a notable contribution to American society, and should be helped to the fullest possible realization of this potential.

Other universities and colleges would do well to consider establishment of a similar program. The more Peace Corps returnees can be attracted into graduate education, the better for the country.

considerably in recent years. For a continued successful operation of the schools, it is imperative that the administrators and the citizens understand each other.

WE ARE looking forward to Dr. Smith's arrival in Birmingham to assume the superintendency. We commend the board in its choice of administrator to fill this \$25,000-a-year post.

Stocks for Banks?

The public's interest in common stocks has seen the number of mutual funds mushroom within the last decade. And now, with a new development, the popularity of these funds may see an even sharper increase.

It may all stem from authority transferred by Congress to the comptroller of the currency. This official in turn has ruled that national banks may, in effect, establish investment funds if they so desire.

The privilege is limited to those banking institutions possessing trust powers; in other words, most of the larger commercial banks.

But even before the ruling takes effect, some have objected that stocks are one thing banks should steer clear of. These objections, though founded on a misapprehension, are nonetheless worthy of consideration.

To allay fears, it should be noted that no depositor's money will be remotely associated with an investment fund venture. Only those customers who specifically leave cash in an investment agency an participant. The liquidity of the bank will in no way be involved by the success or failure of any of its investment funds.

This feature should protect and secure the bank's financial integrity. Meanwhile, participants, it is hoped, will benefit from the heavy concentration of investment talent generally found around a bank's trust department.

This is not meant necessarily as an endorsement of the comptroller's action. But if people want to buy stock mutually it would seem that they could do a great deal worse than by dealing through their local bank's facilities.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization plans a show of force to scare the Communists. Let's hope the Communists don't get the same idea at the same time.

Dr. Jose Miro Cardona, the Cuban exile chief, resigns. He got tired of telling the United States government how it ought to run its affairs.

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

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PUBLISHED BY: PAUL N. AVERILL
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.
MANAGING EDITOR: KENNETH R. WEAVER
ADVERTISING MANAGER: ARTHUR SWANER
George R. Averill, Editor Emeritus

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Think Twice Before Starting Business in B'ham, He Says

To The Editor:

Are you a community-minded individual who wants to do all he can to add to the growth of the cultural and aesthetic promotion of your community?

Are you one to invest or to gain your family's life savings to add another cultural attraction to a supposedly cultural and artistically-minded Birmingham? I would advise anyone to think twice and then don't do it.

AFTER YOU have ventured into a business of this kind and your money is completely gone from lack of local patronage, the logical thing to do is, of course, to close the doors and go out of business.

But it is not as simple as all that.

By now you will have lost six to seven thousand dollars, and you call The Eccentric to run a "going out of business" ad. They in turn call the city treasurer to see if you have paid your \$100 to go out of business; a license, you know, a penalty or failure.

OF COURSE, you had to pay the city in the form of a merchant's license to begin the business, so why complain.

And furthermore retorts the city treasurer you owe \$700 personal property tax for having opened the doors of your place of business in the last few days of December, 1962, rather than when your lease officially began on Jan. 2, 1963.

You can't believe that this can be true and you tell the treasurer that he must be joking or out of his mind. He in turn assures you that he is not joking and that he will be right there in a few minutes to collect his jeopardy tax as he called it.

NOW BESIDES being dazed and flabbergasted, I could not believe my own ears and told myself that I was in America and that human and civil rights are assured here.

However, my surmises were proved wrong because within 10 minutes the Balogh Gallery was invaded by "storm troopers" of the gallant Birmingham police force, directed by one Mr. Berger, treasurer, waving his walking stick and bellowing at two women artists who were taking their paintings back as per contract. (We had everything on consignment; therefore, the artists had every right to take back their works of art whenever they chose to do so.)

If we were to sell anything a 30 per cent commission was to be charged for our services.)

BERGER ordered these women to take their things back into the building even though they had most of them in their cars or on the sidewalk.

Berger then proceeded to seize all property in my gallery and taped a letter which he had quickly concocted on the door.

In effect, it said that everything in the gallery is seized and will be auctioned off at whatever price can be obtained for them from dollar up, and if there should be something left over after the \$700 figure is reached then the people can have their belongings back.

THE ARTISTS present just

couldn't believe their ears that something like this could conceivably take place in a supposedly free America, and that a city could give someone authority who is so lacking of aesthetic and cultural background to even speak in these terms and to place such insignificant value on artistic objects to just auction things off for whatever they would bring.

Naturally this news was quickly spread to all participating artists and within the same evening of May 7 every piece of art work was claimed by the participating artists, one threateningly stating that they would have liked to see anyone try to stop them from claiming and taking their personal property, I, of course, agreed with them wholeheartedly.

THE NEXT morning, however, brought repercussions from the treasurer. Threats from jailing me to throwing the keys away and all that nonsense for having permitted those objects to be removed.

By this time I was getting pretty well upset about the manner in which he had allowed this police state to deprive the individual of every human right.

I just could not understand how such tactics could be legally imposed on the citizenry, especially against a business that never really got started and one that completely went bankrupt.

And above all whoever condones

a law whereby a small business can be so heavily taxed on consigned property they don't own, in my estimation, should not be in public office but should head up the Mafia because of the tactics they employ in imposing and collecting their taxes.

My personal visit and appeal to Mayor Burgum resulted in another sorry note.

THE MAYOR said that since he is only a figurehead there wasn't much he could do. It is deplorable that we the citizens support these figureheads who do not care to cure the practices of their administrative offices.

Then I wrote to Governor Romney, who is much too busy promoting his own destiny to be bothered with trivia of local city government. His secretary did extend the courtesy of replying and suggesting that perhaps these participating artists who exhibited in my gallery might like to share this tax burden even though it does not seem right that I was so heavily taxed for merchandise I did not own.

TO MAKE a longer story a little shorter, the treasurer did auction or give away most of my consignment on May 29, in this free country. This may sound like a sob story to some but to someone who is close to this unfair

(See BUSINESS, 3-B)

Happenings of Long Ago

From the Files of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO

July 4, 1913

Last week Friday evening, just one of the very hottest nights of the season Master Roy Harold Tuxworth at the Baptist church gave a graduating recital, and it was a most interesting affair, too. Notwithstanding the extreme heat the church was filled full by a fine lot of people, our very best, to do honor to the young musician, and he did not disappoint a single person.

The last of last week, Mr. Theodore Blumberg working at Wm. Hagerman's near Circle, was badly injured by a heavy bent of an old barn that he with others were tearing down. This barn had three beams and in taking one of them down it fell across our old friend Theo. Dr. Campbell attended him and found two ribs broken, and other injuries of minor importance.

Several young kids came down from Pontiac last Sunday night to show B'ham folks the real Simon Pure sport. They succeeded. Shot off a sky rocket that hit Mr. Elmer Huston, who narrowly escaped serious injury. One in village took all night and two for two hours each, and all dismissed with a poppy.

30 YEARS AGO

July 6, 1933

A comparatively light vote is expected in the annual Birmingham school district election Monday when one member is to be chosen to the Board of Education, to succeed Dr. W. G. Hutchinson, whose term is expiring and who will not

be a candidate for re-election. The candidates are John S. Black and E. S. Clark, two men who have been close friends since 1919, when each came to Birmingham and whose houses face one another.

The City Commission is prepared to pass next Monday night a resolution authorizing the acceptance of city bonds in payment of delinquent city taxes for all years prior to 1933. The procedure was made possible in a law adopted in the recent session of the State Legislature, and members of the Commission agreed informally last Monday they would act favorably on a resolution as soon as it could be offered.

A decision to be handed down by the Michigan Supreme Court will determine whether beer is to be sold for consumption in Birmingham restaurants. Judge Glenn G. Gilchrist of Oakland County Circuit Court announced yesterday that attorneys for both sides in the Birmingham beer suit had agreed to a halt in the action pending the Supreme Court's decision in a similar case brought before it on an appeal from another circuit.

15 YEARS AGO

July 1, 1948

Birmingham's 25-year-old village plan commission ordinance should be completely revised and brought up to date to incorporate recent Michigan legislative action regarding municipal planning commissions. Mayor Milton F. Mallery recommended at Monday night's term is expiring and who will not

(See HAPPENINGS, 3-B)

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN

Should the governor of the great state of Michigan have marched in the freedom parade in Detroit a week and a half ago? The parade is long gone and so is Dr. Martin Luther King, but the controversy still continues.

What was the purpose of the parade? I'm told it was twofold: To raise money and to protest; not necessarily to protest Michigan's laws or attitudes, because Michigan's pretty progressive state, but to protest the attitude of the South.

Michigan's social consciousness, both by statute and action, is second to none. The extremes, of course, would like more quicker or less slower, but the extremes are never satisfied.

THE PURPOSE of the parade, then, was to protest a situation not in Michigan and to raise money to fight it.

Under this situation should a chief executive officer of a state participate? He indicated his sympathy to the cause by sending a representative.

If a parade were held in Washington, D.C., would you expect to see the President of the United States leading the parade? I doubt it, but he'll get his chance.

Since basically speaking this is a protest of a minority, it is not in keeping with his high office to get out and join a group which is protesting against actions of a body of which he is head.

I AM NOT implying that the President is in agreement with the congressmen of the South, because he has shown on many occasions (to his credit) that he disagrees with members of his own party. But there is not a heck of a lot more he can do about it.

Now back to Michigan. If Romney had marched, it probably would have been one of the best "political" moves of his career.

Statisticians tell me that 88 per cent of the colored vote, voted against Romney in the last election, so that he surely could have picked up a vote or two in this instance.

BUT TO GIVE credit where credit is due, Romney's not that kind of man.

If he had marched in the parade, he would have lent his mantle of office to a cause of which he is sympathetic but is not necessarily a concern of his state or constituency.

He would have lowered the dignity of his office by protesting against organized government, when he, himself, is the leader of organized government in this area.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

The thing that bothered me most about "Cleopatra" was that I could not remember my history.

As the story unfolded, I found myself trying to remember more details about Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, Cleopatra and the Triumvirate.

Facts concerning such things as Caesar's son, whether Caesar actually was an emperor during his rule, Cleopatra's visit to Rome, the rulers that came after Caesar escaped me.

At any rate, the decision to see the movie was an easy one. When the offer of free tickets for a private showing to newspaper, radio and television people came, I didn't stop to moralize on the subject—just said yes.

"CLEOPATRA" IS a magnificent spectacle. Some of the scenes, especially the one of Cleopatra arriving in Rome on a monumental sphinx, are simply gorgeous to view.

Those who wish to see the movie for the love scenes between Antony and Cleopatra (Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor) will probably be disappointed. There are no great, passionate scenes that stir the emotions.

Actually, the love affair between the queen and Caesar emerges as the stronger.

As for nudity, the movie leaves more to the imagination than it exposes to the naked eye.

THE SCENE in which Cleopatra tells Caesar how strongly she feels that she will bear him a son will probably be the best remembered. For once, a movie handles such a scene much as it would be described in a book—with the actual words and accompanying gestures.

I agree with the critics that Rex Harrison as Caesar is the outstanding actor in the movie. Yet, because I had hero concepts of them, I found both Caesar and Mark Antony weaker than I had pictured them.

Antony, especially, I had envisioned as a much stronger man than he was characterized. I had not realized he was an Eccentric society editor Mary Ellen Mead described him, "a Roman lush."

Caesar I had thought of as a tough, but just ruler. I had not thought of him as a tyrannical dictator.

MY IMAGE of Cleopatra was of a beautiful, clever, scheming woman. On screen, she appears more as a plump, sweet, conscientious, people-loving queen.

Yet there are moments when she appears more like a shrew or a witch (with a better spelling than I can use here) than as a stately queen.

The dialogue is not in keeping with the authentic stage settings and the costumes. It's too modern, too English. A dialogue sounding more like a translation of Latin, though less easily understood, would have been more appropriate.

IF YOU want to see a splendid spectacle, with some high points of superb acting, see "Cleopatra." But if you want to brush up on your Roman history, read an encyclopedia.

Old Glory Flies Even Higher

