

Our Aim: Total Development

We normally encourage, but do not answer editorially, letters to the editor; however, last week we received and published one by a reader named John T. Rogers. In his letter, Mr. Rogers expresses the opinion that our editorials on the development of downtown Birmingham are motivated by the desire to have more stores in Birmingham because "The more merchants in Birmingham, the more income for The Eccentric."

The national reputation of our paper, as borne out by our numerous state and national awards, could not possibly have been achieved if we were to devote ourselves to material gain rather than community interest.

WE, AS every newspaper does which has achieved recognition, carefully divorce our editorial and news departments from any advertising influence. This can be verified by some of our advertisers who have on occasion wished to use our pages for non-newsworthy publicity.

Our editorial policy as to the development of our overall community has been the same throughout the years, and was clearly stated on this page as recently as January of this year:

"THE BIRMINGHAM area is a community of unique values.

"These values are reflected in the quality of our homes, our schools, our churches, our social and cultural organizations, our business establishments, our recreational facilities, our governmental services.

"Through the years, the citizens of this area have demonstrated a high degree of interest in standards that have made this a pleasant community in which to live, work and play . . .

"AS WE SEE IT, the effectiveness and character of any community is inevitably determined by the values that guide the lives of its people and become manifest, about them, in the pursuit of their daily existence.

"This is true for the Birmingham

area as it is for any other community. "These values determine the community environment in its many aspects. They embrace all community resources, both physical and intangible.

"THIS ENVIRONMENT reflects and constitutes at the same time both the vitality and the quality of citizenry values.

"To the extent that there is vitality and quality in these values, there is a direct relationship as to whether a community enjoys guided or accidental development.

"It follows, then, that the Birmingham area's community character is a result of its citizens' value standards. By and large, the residents of this area have a dedicated pride in maintaining a community character of the highest order."

WE HAVE advocated development of both residential and business interests only in keeping with the original zoning plan adopted by Birmingham back in 1934.

Nothing on our pages has encouraged development outside of this original zoning ordinance, because we, along with most of the residents of the area, we believe, are interested only in a planned and orderly development.

What may appear to be support on occasion of our local merchants is in reality our concern and desire to see that the development of our downtown area is consistent with the total character of the community.

IN REGARD to the recent parking lot controversy, emotions have been stirred to a high degree. We urge all parties concerned to accept the inevitability of the ultimate development of business within an area where it has been zoned for business.

We hope that the growth of our community can be directed by our strength of cooperation rather than have it dictated by the results of battle.

Let the Kids Decide

Parents and students of our area got together last week under the auspices of the Parenteen Committee of the PTA to discuss a center for teen-agers.

What transpired seemed to be a healthy discourse between the oldesters and the youngsters as to what the kids really wanted.

The thoughts put forward by the students were a credit to our community.

They felt that they didn't want a teenage night club and the pseudo-sophistication that goes with it. They wanted, pure and simply, a place to gather, have soft drinks and dance if the spirit moved them, without coats and ties and heavy expense.

THERE WILL be further meetings in the development of a teen center, some by the teen-agers and some by the parents supporting the project.

We think such a center is a great idea and hope it becomes a reality. We also hope that its development will remain in the hands of the teens, because we have seen too many parent-inspired projects fall by the wayside because they have been what the parents think the kids want rather than what the kids really want.

The use of leisure time is important in a community such as ours but it should

include the development of a sense of responsibility in our children in their use of it.

THEY CAN become rudderless on the sea of life if they don't develop a course now. Of course, no one expects a sailor to undertake a new voyage without advice and direction from the salts who have previously sailed the same seas. This is where the parents come in.

They should give them advice and direction, but not sail their boat for them.

Teen-agers want to be treated as grown up but don't want to do all the things their elders think is the thing to do. They are in the stage of development where they want to prove their independence. It's a process of weaning.

Let's give them all the help they need.

ONE WORD of caution to the kids, however: the success of the project includes leadership on the part of the students. If they fail to provide it, the adults will step in.

Accept the challenge for formulating a sound program and then implement it, thoughtfully, we would urge the youngsters.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

How good a secretary of state was John Foster Dulles? A discerning answer is found in "John Foster Dulles, a Reappraisal," by Richard Good-Adams. Good-Adams praises Dulles' great legal ability, his interest in foreign affairs and his unrelenting opposition to Communism. He had a special burden because President Eisenhower took little active part in developing foreign policy. Dulles' knowledge of other nations' policies, his forcefulness and his familiarity with details made him an advisor whom the President did not challenge. Dulles had two weaknesses, a tendency to lecture other countries and an undervaluation of other people's ideas. But he emerges as a rock-like man against whom storms beat in vain.

Vermont's Gov. Philip A. Hoff complains that he's the only Democrat in his administration. The Republicans figure to reduce the number by one, next election.

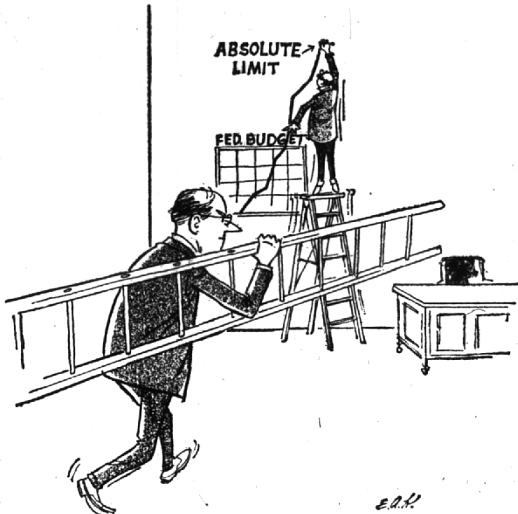
Top scientists issue a statement approving the idea of landing men on the moon. The astronauts aimed in that direction will approve of that idea, too.

In 1947 only three per cent of all families and single individuals in the country had incomes up to \$15,000 a year. Twelve per cent are in that group now and have half as much spending power.

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

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Don't Look Now



PEOPLE'S COLUMN LETTERS

Bank Editorial Draws Praise From Officer

To the Editor:

I should like to congratulate you on your excellent editorial entitled "Stocks for Banks" in the July 3 issue of The Birmingham Eccentric.

It is certainly highly appropriate to point out and emphasize the fact that no depositor's money will be invested in stocks.

The comptroller of the currency has announced that he intends to issue regulations permitting banks to create a common trust fund in which agency accounts may participate. Such funds will typically hold common stocks.

However, there is fundamentally nothing new in this approach and it is largely a change in the mechanism

of investing funds for trust department customers.

BANKS HAVE for many years operated agency accounts and purchased common stocks for these accounts. In addition, banks have had common trust funds, which are similar in many respects to the well-known mutual investment trusts. These common trust funds have substantial investments in stocks.

Presently, however, only accounts in which banks act in a fiduciary capacity, such as testamentary trusts, living trusts, guardianship accounts, may be invested in these trust funds.

Thus, the proposed change merely increases the flexibility of which banks may operate and will permit funds held in agency accounts to be invested in a common trust.

NORMAN B. WESTON
Vice President
National Bank of Detroit

Why Denied Recourse to Review Board?

To the Editor:

It was very kind and thoughtful of the editor to make research on points of law governing business in Birmingham and having them printed as a reply to my letter (July 3 issue) of complaint.

However, I would appreciate him calling the city treasurer to see if he might consider telling the truth this time in regards to your fifth paragraph that "People who object to their taxes have a recourse to the board of review," and if so why I denied this review?

FROM THE time of my telephone conversation with the treasurer on May 7, 1963, at which time I was first informed of this exorbitant personal property tax, or jeopardy tax, no more than 10 minutes lapsed before we were invaded by the Birmingham police led by the treasurer with a seizure notice and demanding payment of such tax.

Perhaps my attempted appeal in my letter to local and state officials slipped the editor's attention since he states that "people who object to their specific taxes have recourse to the board of review."

PERHAPS THIS board of review then is granted to the privileged because I certainly have not been granted a recourse, not even a hearing.

I strongly urge an investigation into these practices before the officials cause the death of many small businesses in Birmingham and force them into communities where they may be fairly treated.

CHARLES E. BALOGH

STRICTLY FRESH

It's said about the average taxpayer: He's alive and kicking!

When you feel like criticizing the younger generation



tion, just remember who raised them.

There's a big difference between learning to drive and learning to play golf. When learning to play golf, one doesn't hit anything.

One family reports television shows are getting so bad that their children have gone back to doing homework.

Some say every family should have three children if one turns out to be a genius, the other two can support him.

Plant no bigger a garden than your wife can take care of.

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



I noticed that the governor has been holding conferences around the state to give the citizenry an opportunity to air their thoughts on "fiscal reform."

Any kind of change is tough because no one in his right mind wants more taxes, yet the state is in need of more revenue.

Most citizens when talking about "fiscal reform" start off by saying that service should be reduced and the need for more revenue will disappear.

This is, of course, the best answer, but where do you start reducing services? Schools? Higher education? Mental Health? State Police?

IT'S OBVIOUS by going through the state budget that reductions to any large extent are not possible unless the people want poorer schools, bigger waiting lists for mental hospitals or poorer roads.

Even small reductions are difficult to effect. Take pensions for example. In the old days pensions were given to governmental employees who worked for low wages, so that in their old age their upkeep wouldn't be a charge on the state.

Then industry used them as a fringe benefit to keep employees, and government got into the business wholesale. Today practically all full-time governmental officials are under some sort of pension program.

EVEN MEN earning in excess of \$20,000 a year, after a certain period of service, can retire or get a non-governmental job and receive a substantial check from the state. There are many school superintendents who can retire on a pension in excess of \$12,000.

Where does the money come from? From our state taxes, of course.

Take the state legislature. If a man is elected four times, he is entitled to an annual pension equal to one-quarter of his highest salary after his sixtieth birthday.

FOR THIS PRIVILEGE he must contribute five per cent of his salary into the fund. Quick math will show you that if he serves four terms, he will contribute \$2,800 and be entitled to \$1,750 per year for the rest of his life after age 60.

And he has a part-time job. Since it is the public's money, it is too bad the public doesn't demand some limitation on pensions so that no one would get in excess of, say \$6,000, so it is a real pension and not a windfall, and that only full-time long term career people are entitled to come under a plan.

Of course, this would affect some people adversely, so it won't be done, and the people will have to pay more and more taxes to keep this system in existence.

All other possible reductions seem to run aground on the same obstacle.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER



To each his own. Last week, the other columnist on this page, Hank Hogan, described his vacation in the north woods of Michigan, recommending it as a wonderful place for a vacation.

Hank Hogan's secretary, Mrs. Gwen Kittle, has other thoughts on the subject.

His comments reminded her "of the last (and I do mean LAST) vacation in the north woods of Michigan which I took—accompanied by my husband, five kids, mother-in-law and two dogs on a rug which sported 24 hours a day and the other a beagle with a kidney infection that required drastic doses of imperative medicines, the lack of which would have even more disastrous results than the application of same.

"THE FIRST week we spent in our "luxurious" cottage, hemmed in on each side with about five feet to spare on each side, it rained for six days.

"That ended my husband's 'vacation' and as the sun came out on Sunday he departed—leaving me with the happy mob who had by now divided into enemy camps.

"The children seemed to be always in their bathing suits but the pile of laundry was mountainous each day and I seemed to spend most of the day either dropping off or picking up dirty or clean, depending on my direction, laundry at fantastic prices.

"The 'complete conveniences' offered were, let's face it, not as convenient as my own little kitchen, and having so many feet I couldn't laugh off the sea of sand which spread throughout the cottage.

"THE VIEW out of the cottage window wasn't bad, I'll admit, if I could keep everyone behind me and out of mind but I don't seem to recall this happening often.

"I tried to be a good sport since I was stuck, and even got roped into a game of MONOPOLY—I'm not a bad loser but any amusement I might have got out of this game, which would have been minute, was edged off by the fact that the worst punishment I can endure is having to sit at a table and play a game—ANY GAME.

"By Happy Saturday, time-to-go-home day, I awoke, as usual, to the snoring of Mother's pug who adored me and would sleep near no one else, and gleefully packed, but with a strange out-of-focus feeling.

"BY THE TIME I reached Bay City I had such a violent migraine I was in and out of every gas station for 50 miles and the only good thing going was that my 15-year-old just got his driver's license. Without a thought, I turned the wheel over to him and died in an alive sort of way until we hit Royal Oak where I crawled in on my hands and knees to my bed.

"That's my last vacation in the 'beautiful north woods of Michigan'—I have gone on for hours with the various hilarious ramifications of this particular vacation for the delight and ticklement of my friends at parties—but . . . I must tell you about the last vacation I had.

"I FLEW TO N.Y. (sans family), stayed in a luxurious (See CITY BEAT, 4-B)

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