

Reorganize Road Commission

When the new Constitution becomes effective and counties can adopt "home rule," it would be well if Oakland County reorganized its road commission.

The road commission as now set up is an autonomous body controlled by three commissioners. These commissioners are appointed by the county board of supervisors.

That board is comprised of 85 men, only a third of whom are elected by the people—the remainder being appointees of various city commissions.

The upshot of it all is that the commission answers to nobody, particularly not to the voters.

In too many instances the commission is not interested in nor motivated by the wishes of the people. It acts according to the way the members feel, knowing that they don't have to answer to anyone.

ADD ANOTHER ingredient to this dismal picture. For many years, it has been the habit of the county board of supervisors to appoint retiring members of the board to the road commission.

This was not true of the most recent appointment; but, unfortunately, it has happened so often that the real power now has passed from the commission to the chief engineer.

The county is fortunate that this chief engineer is qualified to handle this responsibility; however, one-man rule too often is "a poor way to run a railroad."

DURING WINTER months our office is plagued with complaints from residents who feel that the road commissioners are not doing their job well and that they can't even reach them by telephone.

Home-owner associations are continually complaining to their municipal boards in areas that the commission operates and even the local governments on occasion are brushed off by the road commission.

The road commission receives funds from gas tax and other state taxes based on the area they are to serve; yet the municipalities served get no accounting as to how the money is spent in their area.

In most cases to get road work done the municipality has to dip into its own general fund to finance projects that are the responsibility of the road commission.

ADDING UP all of these things we feel that the time has come to make the road commission accountable to someone. Should that someone be the voters of the county?

It is our sincere hope that when the county adopts some sort of home-rule that this be included in its plans.

It's Not Money Alone

There is more to the picture than the mere statistics reported in a news story last week concerning incomes and business in Birmingham.

We refer to the article on Page 3-A relating figures from the copyrighted annual sales management publication entitled "Survey of Buying Power."

This report showed that in 1962 Birmingham residents had a total net income, after payment of personal taxes, of \$121,689,000 and that the local retailers had a sales volume of \$81,938,000.

THE OBVIOUS conclusion is that with more money available, the people spent more and, thus, business was good.

The statistics indicate the high degree of support rendered local merchants. But we have no survey to show the extent of support given to local charitable causes.

However, we do know of this area's generous response each year to The Community House fund drive and, currently, to the Birmingham YMCA Capital Fund Campaign.

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

The Russians have race problems too, as their fellow Communists, the Chinese, have made plain. Over the years Russia conquered most of Northern Asia, inhabited by Turks, Mongols and other tribes. Travelers today are struck by the separation between the Asiatic masses and their Slavic rulers, recalling the social line once drawn between the Hindus and the British in India. Chinese propaganda, directed toward the new Asian and African states, makes full use of the inferior condition of Russia's Asiatic subjects, saying that this is inevitable in a white man's country. If the rift between Russia and China became too serious, it might be patched over by a compromise, dividing the world into Russian and Chinese spheres of influence. But if the Russians once admitted to a belief that race was as important as economic status, their attempts to influence nonwhite peoples would be entirely futile.

One of the quaintest of recent business statistics concerns the use of gas for illumination purposes. This use, it seems, is booming. Most of us who are in middle age or better know what illuminating gas is, and remember the boulevard lamps that rather dimly lighted streets. In their heyday they did the job all alone. A half century ago, some 300,000 gas lanterns twinkled on American avenues. But shortly before World War I electric lighting began to take over, and the picturesque gas fixtures came down rapidly. Now illuminating gas is making a striking comeback, mostly as a pleasant amenity. Even a short ride through urban and suburban residential districts can be convincing. Gas lanterns dot lawns in remarkable profusion. More are in service now than at any time in history.

You sometimes can make a teen-ager turn over a new leaf, but getting him to turn off a light is something else again.

Congress created the Department of Agriculture.

We know, too, how well area residents support the annual Torch Drive.

ANOTHER SIDE of the picture is that people with higher incomes are usually educated. They are people with either natural or cultivated tastes for the better values in living.

That this is true locally is attested to by our outstanding cultural accomplishments—the arts festival, the dramatic productions, the musical events, the high quality of our local schools and public library, to name but a few.

THIS, THEN, is a more complete picture:

We have the resources to acquire education, to purchase the necessities and some luxuries of life, to generously support worthy causes and to attain high cultural goals.

Our real pride, then, is not that we rate high nationwide in income but rather that our community reflects high standards and values in its way of life.

Just 101 years ago. It was included in the Department of the Interior. Now it's in the Department of Confusion.

Latest reports indicate that the federal deficit is shrinking. Many a taxpayer will wish he could say the same about his personal deficit.

Russian ships are making subsalses of themselves in the area where Trieste is seeking Trieste, but so far they've shown only a surface interest.

The American Medical Association is urged to take a stand against smoking. Cigarette makers may take offense but they haven't shown a strong defense.

Chairman Miller of the GOP national committee says more than a third of eligible Americans failed to register and vote in 1960. He wants them to do better, especially for Republican candidates, in 1964.

A headline reports "friction inside U.A.R." What else can be expected, with leaders of Egypt, Iraq and Syria all rubbing each other the wrong way?

De Gaulle thinks France can get along without NATO. The only thing France can't get along without, in his view, is De Gaulle.

Goldwater, professing disinterest, has come to be the favorite among GOP state chairmen. Another year of indifference, and he'll be a shoo-in for nomination.

A columnist refuses to disclose news sources to Congress. At least he does have sources, which is more than some of the columnist pundits seem to have.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Raven a Beatnik House? Writer Says: Nevermore!

To the Editor:

With the state of affairs that our world is in today, I am often surprised at the number of people who take the time to express their feelings and beliefs publicly by writing to the editor of The Birmingham Eccentric.

But at the same time, I am also very disheartened at the nature of many of these letters, since many of them unfairly ridicule the young people of this generation and their choices of entertainment.

MR. JAMES A. MOYNE'S letter to the editor of The Birmingham Eccentric on the 25th of July about the opening of The Raven Gallery, which he chooses to refer to as a beatnik coffee house, was unreasonable, untruthful, uncalled for, disrespectful, rash, and which I most undoubtedly suspect was written with little or no investigation of The Raven Gallery. The nightly entertainment

which takes place at The Raven is clean, wholesome and direct authentic folk music from our past and present generations and is about the history of the world of today and yesterday.

SO IF MR. MOYNE'S was a disheartened of The Raven's opening in Birmingham, then I suggest that he write another letter to the editor disowning his friends, relatives and his generation.

On the other hand, if he is concerned about the quality of the performers which are to appear at the gallery, I think he will be greatly abashed to find his claims of "bearded guitar players," "way-out poetry orations and below-average jazz bands few and far between, if at all.

This type of patron will not be there because people like my friends and myself will be present, and we are not and do not like to be accused of being labeled in this manner as Mr. Moynes has done.

There will also be a large number of adults in the audience, and many times I have observed them as being more rude during a performance than the young people who have also been present.

I would recommend that all the critics of The Raven Gallery and of the business establishments of this nature "look before they leap," and I think it is in order for Mr. Moynes to attend a performance at the gallery and then write a formal apology to Mr. Cohen, the professional entertainer, the young people who have been so bitterly offended, and then turn his civic-mindedness to our current world problems.

CHARLES L. SHEPHERD
1415 Riverside
Birmingham

Swimming Pool Request Gets Woman's Support

To the Editor:

Mrs. Shirley Fitzgerald's letter to The Eccentric on July 25, 1963, regarding a municipal swimming pool certainly has my vote. How does one go about obtaining a community pool?

We moved here from California last August. When the first hot days came along, I called the recreation department to inquire about local pools and was told that the high school pools were closed for the remainder of the summer.

WE WERE told that we would have to belong to a private club or join one of the public lakes, which aren't as close as a map might indicate.

The recreation department has wonderful programs for swimming instruction and two of our children have benefited from this.

Open swimming is also available for a short time each day, but if the time is not right, we must enjoy the heat or travel a distance.

ALSO, THE minimum depth of the high school pools is not designed for family swimming when there is an under-five or six-year-old nonswimmer who might also enjoy the water.

Let's do something about it! ANNE HOOTMAN
890 W. Southlawn
Birmingham

Mother Takes Issue With Raven Letter

To the Editor:

I wish to take exception to the letter in the July 25 Eccentric about The Raven Art Gallery.

I am not a member of the "hot rod set" nor the "way-out youths." I am not even a youth, but a mother of four children with fairly conservative tastes.

I visited The Raven Gallery in Detroit not long ago and found it cool (I refer here to the air-conditioning), clean, the employees courteous, and the food good.

No, I didn't hear any jazz concerts or poetry orations, but the art wasn't as "far out" as that which I see at Cranbrook Institute.

In any event there are so many people who will undoubtedly visit the gallery now, as a result of Mr. Moynes' letter, who need not have bothered to otherwise!

EDITH T. BOYER
851 Fox Run
Birmingham

Yesteryear Happenings

50 YEARS AGO
Aug. 8, 1913

Some time ago it was known that the Hughes pumps installed in 1890, some 23 years ago, were not adequate to pump the water that the growth of the village demands, and it was no disgrace to the pumps either. They were doing duty as good as ever. However a contract was made with the Canton-Hughes Pump Co., of Wooster, Ohio, for a pump that could fill the needs now and for years to come.

C. P. S. Price says advertising does pay and pay big. He advertised in this paper and the Royal Oak Tribune last week cows for sale, and By Heck! before either periodical was born blessed if he didn't sell 15 cows. You can't tell him it didn't pay to advertise in the home paper.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union will have a great treat for the people of Birmingham, next Wednesday afternoon August 13, at 2:30 in the Methodist church parlors where E. N. Law, the great Author, Singer and Orator, will have an interesting part in the program. There will also be singing and special music, refreshments will be served, no admission, just be present and bring another.

30 YEARS AGO
Aug. 19, 1933
Formal organization of a Birmingham Retail Merchants Association (See HAPPENINGS, 5-D)

Our Growing Transportation Problem



Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN

Pet Peeves

Two things that happen continually around town bring out the worst in me.

The first isn't just a local problem, but it happens every time I drive out Maple Ave. The road is four lanes wide. Traffic in each direction has full use of two lanes. But practically every time you drive down the street two people are driving side-by-side at the same speed. The good Lord and the various highway departments designed the roads so that the slower traffic can travel in the right-hand lane and the left-hand lane is left for passing.

If cars are going the same speed they should be in the same lane.

THE ONLY THING worse than two cars side-by-side is one car in the left lane with no cars in the right lane. I suppose it is more pleasant and airy in the left lane but Michigan laws says KEEP RIGHT EXCEPT TO PASS on four-lane roads.

When you blow your horn at these road-hogs they glare at you. If you try to pass them on the right you are violating the law, but more important you are taking your life in your hands because usually they pull into the right lane just about the time you are half-way by them.

Signs on the highway do not beautify the landscape but a couple on Maple saying KEEP RIGHT EXCEPT TO PASS might add years to my life.

THE SECOND PROBLEM that disturbs me is not too frequent. After a good automobile accident there always seems to be some glass on the highway.

The state law says that tow trucks removing disabled cars from a highway have the responsibility of cleaning this up. In some cases they do a good job. In others they apparently forget.

Sometimes the accident is minor in nature and a tow truck never gets to the scene. In that case who picks up the glass? Answer—innocent tires.

EVEN THOUGH the state law puts the burden on tow trucks, it doesn't relieve the responsibility on the motorists involved. If someone were to get a flat tire from broken glass and could prove that the glass that caused it was on the highway as a result of an accident, he could hold the person who caused the accident liable.

This is a hard thing to do but if it happened once or twice maybe offenders would get the message. I hesitate to expand the responsibility to all local police departments, but it would be a step in the right direction if they carried brooms in their cars and made the motorists sweep up after an accident. This would be about the most effective way of keeping the roads clear.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

Letting the thoughts wander here and there: Language, they say, is anything the people make it. This notion appears to have a certain logic; but that logic collapses under the impact of what actually happens to language when rules and precedents are shrugged off and ignorance substitutes for knowledge.

(Yet, I always contend that rules and regulations should serve as guides and never as absolute authority.) It is sometimes said that when people come up with new ways of saying things, they are unconsciously enriching the language and that this is unreservedly good.

I submit, however, that it is not good if the change reflects mere lack of understanding rather than originality.

It isn't difficult to find examples: When a man says "I convinced him to do it" instead of "I convinced him that he should do it" or simply "I persuaded him to do it," he is not displaying originality; he is showing ignorance.

When people say "softenize" for "soften," they show that they don't know their language.

When a physician says, as one is reported to have done on the occasion of the Cooper orbiting, that the astronaut "egresses" from the capsule—thus making a verb of a noun instead of using one of the verbs meaning to come out—that contributes nothing to the language.

The English language is a remarkably strong, supple instrument for conveying thought. Usage born of carelessness and ignorance weakens and cheapens it.

Though our language need not, and should not, remain stagnant, changes should be accepted only as they improve on tested methods of expression.

"Difference" is not a synonym for "better."

TEN YEARS ago, records show, some 34,000 students from abroad came to this country to study. That seemed like a lot.

But that total has doubled. During the 1962-63 school year some 64,000 students from 152 countries have been studying here.

They are studying at institutions all over the country. Of the 2,000 colleges and universities in the U.S., more than 1,800 have foreign students on campus.

In addition, more than 7,000 residents and interns from abroad were stationed at hospitals in the U.S.; and there were about 6,000 foreign teachers and others engaged in scholarly work of one sort or another.

It takes little imagination to see how much the world's picture of us depends on how we treat these visitors. While here they not only read and attend lectures but also study us and carry back with them impressions of our society.

Does this mean, then, that we should always be on our best behavior? WHO SAYS our era doesn't have that old zest for life? That our time is pale and flavorless compared with those days a few decades back when the folks were treated to (See CITY BEAT, 5-D)

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 Bowers Street Telephone Midwest 4-1100



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