

To the People of B'ham

This letter is headed not to "Dear Editor" but to the people of the City of Birmingham. I am a ninth-grade student at Barnum Junior High School. At the time this was written, I knew little detail of the incident of which I am writing about. (It was written Friday afternoon.) I want to express my opinions before I know the details.

Last Friday, Nancy Jones, a 14-year-old seventh grader was brutally beaten and stabbed to death. I do not know why or by whom.

THE RUMORS that flew around school Friday were terrible. I walked into my first hour class to be greeted with the news that, not 45 minutes before, not 40 yards away, a schoolmate of mine had been beaten up. It was not until 12 that I knew she had died of knife wounds.

At 3:17, Mr. R. Vanette, principal of Barnum, called for a minute of silent prayer for Nancy. It was not until then that the tragic shock hit me fully.

I now ask you, WHY MUST THESE THINGS HAPPEN? HOW CAN THEY HAPPEN? WHO IS AT FAULT? I can't say why they must happen. But I surely can tell you how they happen and who is at fault.

THE BIRMINGHAM City Commission, the city police, the clergy, the teachers, the news services and, most of all, the parents are at fault. They are all too lax, too willing to give in, to let things go,

so that things get out of hand and eventually lead to tragedy. I am thoroughly disgusted with this newspaper's handling of news items, especially things concerning teen-agers. I am sickened by this newspaper's theory that as soon as you're 13, you smoke, drink, drag race (when you're 16), etc.

I am sickened by the editorials and articles concerning the stories of the year, Woodward, etc.

YES, EVEN as I sit here writing this article, which I sincerely hope the citizens of Birmingham will read, I am ashamed at the thought of what I'm doing in this very moment. But something HAS to be done. I think the Detroit stabbing of Nancy is an act of violence (in Detroit papers) and front page space and top television priority had a lot to do with the stabbing of Nancy. I am fed up with seeing nothing but violence in the newspapers.

The "terrible immorality" of our generation is a favorite subject, and yet the same people who criticize the teen-agers turn around and flock to the theaters to see such people as Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

THEY COMPLAIN of drag racing in city streets. A man offers his airstrip to be used as a drag strip. But Ken Weaver, writer of the City Beat column, quotes the owners of the Detroit Dragway as saying such a thing wouldn't work here. Well, what do you expect them to say when a new one would cut their profits?

What of the good teen-agers who would welcome a place to go on Friday and Saturday nights, or a place to go buy a Coke without being treated as shoplifters and troublemakers? Why don't you start taking the optimistic point of view, rather than be unhappy pessimists all your life?

I'M NOT trying to say I think everyone just complains but does nothing. Much has been done in the line of trying to get a teen center by the Parenteen Committee, for instance, but few people know it. Neither am I trying to say all of today's parents are failures. But a good 20 per cent of them are. And a good 20 per cent of the teen-agers are bad, and not always because of their own choice.

But any person might think that 50 per cent was more like 90 per cent, from all the newspaper articles. What about the other 80 per cent. The good clean 80 per cent? The future leaders of America? Let this be the beginning of the light. Let the people of Birmingham start to think for themselves. Let Birmingham set a nationwide standard.

A CONCERNED TEENAGER

EDITOR'S NOTE: The facts in our possession at this time do not seem to indicate that the unfortunate death of Nancy Jones was an act that can be attributed directly to a common problem of juvenile delinquency.



ANDERSON WERNER TRUXELL

Name GM City Relations Leaders

Three General Motors Corp. executives who live in the Birmingham area have been named chairmen of their division's City Committee for 1964 by GM President John F. Gordon.

Calvin J. Werner, vice president of GM and general manager of GMC Truck & Coach Division, will lead the Pontiac plant committee that endorses community relations in the Pontiac area.

Werner, of 2633 Endaleigh Drive, Birmingham, succeeds E. M. Estes.

Bertil J. Anderson, manager of GM's Chevrolet plant at Livonia, will lead that city's committee to insure good community relations. He resides at 2913 S. Cobbleside Court, Birmingham.

Clyde W. Truxell, general manager of GM's Detroit Diesel Engine Division, was named chairman of the Detroit committee, succeeding S. E. Knudsen. Truxell, of 31750 Brandingham, Franklin, will guide and direct Detroit's relationship with General Motors.

Bond Sales Rise in '63

Oakland County purchases of series E and H savings bonds totaled \$11,749,481 in 1963, according to Alfred C. Girard, chairman of the county's Savings Bonds Committee.

The 1963 figure represented 109.5 per cent of the county's Treasury assigned goal for the year and compared with \$10,041,855 in 1962.

IN ANNOUNCING the 1963 figures, the county bond chairman said he looked for an even better showing in the current year.

He reported that again in 1964 the Treasury plans an intensive nationwide promotion aimed at increasing participation in the payroll savings plan in both large and small employing establishments. Firms which are not now making the thrift plan available to employees will be urged to adopt it, and those which already have it in operation will be encouraged to conduct a personal solicitation of all wage and salary earners with a view to adding enrollees.

Lt. Nechman In On Korean Maneuver

Army 1st Lt. William A. Nechman, 26, son of Mrs. Marion I. Nechman, 16011 Buckingham Road, Birmingham, and other members of the 75th Infantry Division took part in Exercise SNOW STORM in Korea.

The week-long field training maneuver was designed to test the division's ability to operate under Korean winter conditions and to measure the effect of extreme cold on men and equipment.

Lt. Nechman, a medical administrative assistant in 1st battalion of the division's 17th Infantry, entered the Army in July, 1960 and arrived overseas last July.

A member of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, he is a 1956 graduate of Birmingham High School and a 1959 graduate of Mexico City (Mex.) College.

City Arranges For Greener Grass

Birmingham city commissioners Monday night awarded a \$14,141 contract to the McClellan Ball Co. for the purchase of 520 bags of fertilizer.

The fertilizer will be used in the city's park areas, Springdale Golf Course and Greenwood Cemetery, according to Darrel C. Middlewood, superintendent of the Forestry and Parks Dept.

Although the bid submitted was not the lowest, it was the only one that met the proper specifications, Middlewood said.

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I & R Report In the Making By LWV Group

A report on initiative and referendum in the charters of Michigan local governmental units is being prepared by a committee of the League of Women Voters of Birmingham.

The fact that the charter of the city of Birmingham does not contain an initiative and referendum clause was brought to the attention of the League during the past year and led to the adoption of the study in November.

"THE POWER of the people to initiate and amend legislation has always been a stand of the League of Women Voters," said League president Mrs. Garvin Bowden Jr.

"Both the old and new constitutions provided for initiative and referendum applying to state legislation and the statutes for municipal home rule provide cities with the option to include it in their charters. Birmingham is one of the relatively few cities without statutory I and R," Mrs. Bowden said.

THE STUDY COMMITTEE is under the chairmanship of Mrs. William E. Eassey of West Maple. Committee members are Mrs. W. A. F. John, Mrs. Wilber U. Johnson, Mrs. J. S. Kemp, Mrs. Donald E. Kohle, Mrs. Angus McLeay, Mrs. William Reddig, Mrs. Dorothy K. Roosevelt, Mrs. Charles Shain, Mrs. Lian Smith and Mrs. Charles F. Tanner.

Series to Prepare Pre-School Parents

A series of four meetings for preschool parents will begin on Feb. 12 at 8 p.m. at Westchester elementary school.

The discussion meetings, planned to assist parents whose children will be entering kindergarten in the fall is sponsored by the principals and the visiting teacher of Pierce and Westchester schools, in cooperation with the Parent Education Associates. The meetings will alternate between Westchester and Pierce elementary schools.

Ether Middlewood, chief of mental health education, Michigan Department of Mental Health, will discuss "What is My Job as a Parent in Suburbia?" Although the series is designed primarily for preschool parents, this first meeting will be open to any interested parents in the community.

THE PURPOSE of the program is to develop a better understanding of the child's growth and development, and authorities well known in the field will discuss child development from their points of view. Following the presentations, small discussion groups will be formed. A question period will conclude the program.

On Feb. 19, the 8 p.m. meeting will be held at Pierce school. Daniel Welch, principal, will moderate a panel discussion on the physical and emotional development of children.

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