

Recognizing Responsibility

A major decision facing the Birmingham Board of Education is the selection of a location for its new administration building. The board has set a March 1 deadline to reach that decision.

In making its selection, such factors as cost of land, cost of construction, parking facilities and amount of space needed for the various offices must be carefully weighed.

In addition, an important factor that must be given thoughtful consideration is the Birmingham School District's responsibility to help keep Birmingham a healthy community.

WITH THIS in mind, we encourage the school officials to give favorable consideration to the proposal of the Cooperative Study Committee to locate the new structure on Merrill Street in downtown Birmingham. This also calls for acceptance by the Birmingham City Commission.

The CSC proposal asks:

● The City of Birmingham to vacate Merrill Street between Bates and Henrietta.

● The City to exchange this piece of vacated thoroughfare for school-owned property on Pierce Street adjacent to Pierce School.

● The school board then to erect its administration building on the Merrill site.

Acceptance of this plan by the school board and the city commission, both of which have expressed an interest in it, would assure the continuance of the school administrative offices in downtown Birmingham.

It would mean, then, implementation of one step of the plan to modernize the central business district-civic center area of Birmingham.

THAT PLAN, proposed by the Civic Design Committee—which like the CSC is a subcommittee of the Citizens Action Com-

mittee—offers concepts for the future development of Birmingham. These concepts are designed to maintain and enhance the high aesthetic goals and standards that now characterize this community.

Readers will recall that one of the proposals of the CDC is to locate a type of structure such as the school administration building on a site fronting Municipal Parking Lot No. 7—The Merrill Street location.

The Eccentric has advocated acceptance and implementation of the CDC plan in the belief that it would give impetus to the objectives of a healthy, vibrant, prosperous and pleasant community.

IT IS OUR understanding that the schools could function just as efficiently and effectively at the Pierce location as they could at the Merrill site.

We believe the schools should—in the interests of over-all community welfare—accept the Merrill choice unless the costs in time and money prove prohibitive. In such a case, certainly, the downtown site should not be selected if it were to be at the expense of education for our children.

Likewise, we believe the City of Birmingham should think well of the CSC proposal unless its surveys indicate that this step would be an obstruction to the movement of traffic or cause a bigger problem than the one it would solve.

ANOTHER FACTOR for the City to weigh is what it could do with the Pierce property in event the exchange materialized. One benefit we can visualize is sale of the property, thus adding to the City coffers.

At this point, however, with all things considered, it seems to appear that the Merrill site would not only be advantageous to both the school district and the City but also would give support to a highly-favorable plan for the future development of the downtown area.

'Be Wisely Generous'

"The needs of these kids aren't just at Christmas. I think we ought to be wisely generous 365 days of the year."

This statement was made by industrialist Charles B. DeVlieg of Bloomfield Hills in reference to his gifts of \$90,000 in personal assets to Camp Oakland and \$25,000 to the South Oakland Boys Club.

"I'm sure that as more citizens in our community learn what these two fine organizations are accomplishing for youth my gift will be but a modest start," said Mr. DeVlieg.

Though his beneficence is appropriate to the season, it comes not so much as a Christmas gift as an example of the broader religious precept of giving.

IN THIS light, Mr. DeVlieg's benevolent citizenship should serve as an inspiration to others in the community. It evidences a willingness to share in prosperity, a dedication and devotion to the local community,

an interest in the welfare of its young people and a sense of individual responsibility and obligation.

Mr. DeVlieg deserves public commendation for his generous gifts to the camp and the club. But he deserves even greater praise for the example he has set as a private citizen interested in the development and welfare of the young people in this community.

LET US hope that his beneficent act will inspire others now and later to recognize some of these needs and to "be wisely generous 365 days of the year."

We believe charity should begin at home. It is tempting, we know, to give to some well known state or national project; to give support to or initiate a home-town, grass-roots cause, is, however, the real test of local community dedication and citizenship.

From The Eccentric's Point of View ...

Senator Williams walks out of the Baker probe. Since he's not a committee member anyway, the committee may be able to struggle along without him.

Seat belts for children riding in the back seat cost much less than plaster casts, new glasses, hospitalization and X-rays.

The State Department says Castro has at least partial control over Soviet anti-aircraft in Cuba. That's more than a partially disturbing report.

There is a certain sameness in the flood of letters to editors all over the land. Never, it appears, has so little been said in so many words.

Johnny Keane's baseball rise has been meteoric. First he won the pennant, then he won the World Series—and now he's won the Yankees.

Europe is said to be 35 years behind us in use of prepared baby food. It's just a marvel how the kids over there manage to survive.

Tahombe tries to crash a conference of non-aligned nations and is held under house arrest. He not only makes trouble, he attracts it.

Shirts will be shorter by spring—two or three inches above the knee, says a designer. The prospect makes winter longer.

The Rolling Stones, hairier than the Beatles, now outrank them in Britain. Oh, well, maybe all that hair will keep them from seeing their way across the ocean.

Britain's foreign secretary says Russia's new leaders won't last long. Considering his party's four-vote majority in Commons, he should talk.

Some politicians make a big show of getting out of vote. Others focus on getting in the vote.—in the right column on the ballot.

According to consumer experts, debt-ridden couples are more impulsive than others. They also have less cents.

'Do You Take Trading Stamps?'



PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Yule Stamp Designed For Many Religions

To the Editor:

In regards to a letter published from a citizen calling down the post office department for issuing four holiday stamps without mentioning the birth of Christ. I believe the stamps were designed to favor equally all of the religious groups that celebrate a religious holiday during December. This country is not composed of Christians and atheists but also includes, among others, the Jews who celebrate Hanukkah during December. Although Dec. 25 is highly de-

Opposes Federal Funds for B'ham

To the Editor:

I am in emphatic agreement with The Eccentric and Mayor Charles Renfrew that Birmingham should not apply for assistance under the Urban Renewal Act. I am in favor of the urban renewal program but believe its application should be limited to

(MORE PEOPLE'S COLUMN LETTERS ON 6-B)

cities where the magnitude of problems has passed the point of local solution.

Certainly Birmingham is not such a city nor will it ever be. I suggest the city commissioners and planners who appear to favor participation in the federal program reconsider their position which clearly is not in the national interest.

WILLIAM LYMAN,
5295 Hickory Bend,
Bloomfield Hills

Yesteryear Happenings

50 YEARS AGO
December 25, 1914

Some complaint has come regarding the giving of half the road in case of an automobile coming up behind a team. The parties claim that when they come up behind a fellow with a team, he stubbornly refuses to give any of the road, no matter if there is room to turn out. Although there are plenty of men who are running autos who should be driving ox teams and vice versa, rights should be respected. The law says that when a man is overtaken by a faster vehicle, the man driving the slower vehicle shall turn out and give half of the beaten path.

Much interest has been manifested as to the probable outcome of the local option battle which is apparently imminent in Oakland for the fourth time. Records show that in 1908, when the "dry" measure was first voted on, the county went "dry" by 79 in a total vote of 10,777. Two years later, the victory swung to "wet" by 1,102 in a vote of 12,848. The last time, in 1912, the count again went "wet," but the margin of victory slumped to 648 out of 10,565 votes.

Nearly all the watch signs have hands set at 8:18 but comparatively few people know why. It is no accident. W. K. Washburn, of New York, was painting a sign for a jeweler when the news of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, April 14, 1865, was received, and the latter ordered the painter to put upon the dial the hands at the exact time the fatal shot was fired—8:18.

(See HAPPENINGS, 6-B)

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Run Goldwater Again? 'This Is Too Much!'

To the Editor:

Some of your recent contributors seem to disapprove of the national will as expressed on Nov. 3; and this certainly is their precious right as citizens of a democracy.

However, the idea of running Mr. Goldwater again—this is too much! A strong two-party system is essential to our strength and our freedom. The Republican Party could not survive making this mistake twice.

In carrying the five states of the South, Mr. Goldwater carried 100 counties with substantial Negro population. By 1968 we can expect many of the presently disfranchised Negroes in these counties to be voting and this would reduce Mr. Goldwater's South to one or two states.

Surely, the party of Lincoln deserves something better than this, and so does the nation.

AND THE poppycock about clearing out the Communists at the top of the State Department! Who, Dean Rusk? George Ball? Maxwell Taylor (who spent the Christmas holidays of 1944 holding Bastogne against Nazi hordes)? Shades of McCarthy! Loose accusations against men who are carrying heavy burdens for our country serve no useful purpose.

We need and will recreate a strong Republican Party; and this party will, like the Democratic party, address itself to the compelling issues of this century—the enfranchisement of our minorities and the securing of their civil rights, world peace (surely it is not our destiny to turn earth into a radioactive cinder), better economic and educational opportunities for all.

THERE CAN be little doubt

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



MELE KALIKIMAKA is the Hawaiian way of saying Merry Christmas. And as I write this on the sunny beaches of the island of Maui, with Christmas carols being piped over the public address system, it is hard for me to get into the mood.

Christmastime to me is a long drive over snow-covered roads to Grandmother's house. It's a green spruce tree with green, red, blue and yellow lights. It is a roaring fireplace.

Christmastime is when the family is together, and while the kids look forward to running down the stairs to see what Santa left under the tree, I remember it best not for the gifts, but for the feeling of security coming from a family together.

CHRISTMASTIME is a big turkey dinner, with mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, if you like it, and fruit cake that has been well saturated with brandy for months.

With Christmastime being all these things, it is hard in this tropical paradise to even think about it.

With all of the lush vegetation, Hawaiians still have to import their Christmas trees because they need a colder climate in which to grow.

Most Christmas decorations are artificial and to top the day off Santa is supposed to arrive in an outrigger canoe instead of a sleigh and eight reindeer.

With all of this un-Christmas spirit, they still expect over 25,000 assorted-sized mainlanders to take over the islands for the holidays.

MAYBE I'M MAKING too much of the fact that this wonderful area lacks some of the things we normally associate with Christmas.

To celebrate Christmas properly you don't really need a tree or lights or ornaments. You don't need snow or turkey.

Christmas is our Lord's birthday. We overlook it on occasion.

All you really need for Christmas is love. We forget that the first Christmas had neither decorated trees or even Santa Claus.

It was a day of joy and a day of hope. And the angels sang, "Peace on earth, good will to men." These things don't need decoration.

Christmas is in your heart wherever you are; MELE KALIKIMAKA to you all.



City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

