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The Birmingham Eccentric

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

Thursday, December 31, 1964

EDITORIAL SECTION B

1964—A Good Year for B'ham

It's customary on the last day of the year to make resolutions to improve oneself in the coming year.

This is the close of Birmingham's Centennial Year and instead of great resolves for 1965, we feel that if our community can accomplish as much in the new year as it did in 1964, the Birmingham-Bloomfield area will be a still better place in which to live and raise a family.

In 1964 we saw some real progress made in solving our downtown problems. Whatever plan is finally implemented, it was heartening to see some of the critics of the original development plan roll up their sleeves and make constructive suggestions.

DURING THE centennial celebration we saw a real effort on the part of the merchants to clean up their alleys, which we hope will continue in the years to come.

A community is only as strong as its weakest link and if our downtown area is not properly maintained the community's overall welfare will be greatly threatened.

We have seen a historical society created to assemble, for our citizenry, artifacts attesting to our rich community heritage.

This is an important step because strong trees have strong and deep roots. Without

sturdy roots trees may topple. So in building our community we must first build our heritage and then take care at all times to cherish it.

During our centennial celebration we observed Michigan Week as did no other community. The quality of the program, including the biggest parade Birmingham has ever seen, will be a hard goal to exceed in the coming years.

THE CHAMBER of commerce has been reorganized so that it recognizes all segments of the community, not just the downtown shopping center. This is a great improvement in vision and purpose.

We might add in all modesty that during this year your community newspaper was also selected by the National Editorial Association as the top suburban weekly in the nation.

The many things that have happened this year stand out because each and every one of them strengthened us as a community. After a couple of years of infighting among segments of the community we have come out of it stronger.

If we can do this again in 1965, there is nothing Birmingham can't do as a community.

Singing the State's Praises

With Governor Romney's second inaugural tomorrow, we feel that the state's motto perhaps should be changed from "Water Wonderland" to "It's great to live in Michigan!"

Just two short years ago the state was the subject of national jokes because of its financial position, its unemployment and its general anti-business, pro-union attitude.

Now on the last day of 1964 the state stands with a substantial surplus of over \$50 million, which is still growing daily; with more people employed than ever before in its history; and new imaginative programs in education, mental health and reorganization of the operating departments and commissions of the state.

BUT THESE THINGS are just the governmental and political side of Michigan's health. Tomorrow, the Wolverines from Ann Arbor will take the field against Oregon in the Rose Bowl.

It's been a long time since the fortunes of the University of Michigan have come up smelling like roses.

To complete the feeling, the U of M has also hung on to its number one rating as the top collegiate basketball team in the nation.

This is quite a feat for the state that has never been considered a basketball area.

WHILE THESE latter two honors may not impress the boys from East Lansing, it is all part of the changing image of our state nationally.

We have over 100,000 new jobs in the state. Instead of us growing because the nation is growing, it's the other way around. It's the auto business that is holding up the Gross National Product.

As we look out the window, maybe "Water Wonderland" is appropriate, but it sure is great to live in Michigan.

Government Pay Gap

The wide discrepancy between the pay of high government officials and that of executives doing comparable administrative work in business has often been noted. Even when allowance is made for the particular satisfactions of government work — the power and prestige attaching to high office, the excitement of being involved in great affairs, the sense of usefulness to society—the gap between government salaries and the rewards in private industry is enormous.

A sense of duty or the special values cited above, or a combination of the two, keeps many high level men at their Washington jobs in spite of this gap. Defense Secretary McNamara, for example, will soon have spent four full years in Washington though his salary of \$35,000 is less than a 15th of what he would receive were he back at the Ford Motor Company.

MENAMARA'S CASE is exceptional. But in plenty of other cases men in high executive posts could be making several times as much money in private enterprise. Some of those that have been leaving government service, or are about to, are doing so because the economic rewards elsewhere are simply too tempting to pass up.

Much has been done in recent years to keep millions of federal employees at pay scales comparable with those in industry. At the upper levels, however, the pay gap is still very large despite current increases.

Government service should not, clearly, be a money-making proposition. No one proposes that any upper-echelon executive, however able, be paid anything like the amount he could make in industry. But unless the present gap is narrowed further, the government will find it hard to attract and hold the top-notch men that are needed.

From The Eccentric's Point of View ...

Mr. Johnson will see the inaugural parade from a heated, carpeted pavilion. These politicians will make any sacrifice to appear among the people.

Winston Churchill celebrates his 90th birthday which is the best ad for brandy and cigars we've ever heard about.

In Boston's the governor's wife was tagged for illegal parking. They don't know whether to commend the cop for bravery or fire him for stupidity.

The Senate Rules Committee decides to skip charges of promiscuous hanky-panky in the Hoffman case. Spoilsport!

Cairo scorns us and accepts aid from Red China. The best Egyptian dancing of the season will be seen when Nasser tries to untangle the strings attached.

Ringo Starr, one of the Beatles, has his tonsils removed. Unfortunately, he can still sing.

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Stay Alive in '65



PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Horse and Buggy Caused Accidents Too

To the Editor:
A few months ago a gentleman, whose name I do not remember, wrote a letter to you and you published it in *The Eccentric* with a prominent border all around it.

If I recall correctly it was on the front page sort of indicating that perhaps you agreed with him. In this letter the gentleman advocated cutting the speed limits on Michigan highways starting with the 70 mph speed on the freeways and then going all the way down to the line.

RECENTLY I watched on TV the testing of an automobile which was rigged to hit an immovable object at 17 1/2 mph.

In this case were some dummies in front and rear seats. These dummies were seated in the same manner that a human being has his weight apportioned from top to toe. At 17 1/2 mph the rear dummies went over the front seat into the dash and/or windshield when the car hit the immovable object.

Presumably the gentleman who wrote the letter would want everyone to drive at speeds less than 17 1/2 mph if they were to be reduced down to do much good.

The writer came up through the horse and buggy stage and then into automobiles. He distinctly remembers all the bad accidents caused by runaway horses or teams and people being killed or maimed by kicking horses.

If the facts could be gathered there isn't any doubt in the writer's mind that as a percentage of miles driven with horses versus cars, or perhaps on a population basis or some other logical basis, we would find that the old days had more accidents.

To illustrate the point the writer quotes from an epitaph on a gravestone in Oxford, New Hampshire:

"To all my friends I bid adieu, A more sudden death you never knew. As I was leading the old mare to drink She kicked and killed me Quicker'n a wink."

RUSSELL P. EDWARDS, 4815 N. Adams Road.

Winter injury and drying of young trees can be prevented by wrapping their trunks to a height of three or four feet above the ground. Michigan State University extension horticulturists recommend using a commercial tree wrap, starting at the tree's base and working up.

The world's longest and fastest man-made toboggan run is located at Grayling, Michigan. Speeds up to 100 miles an hour are possible on the 3,000-foot slide.

Yesteryear Happenings

50 YEARS AGO
January 1, 1915
Our merchants one and all say that they have had a good trade in holiday trade as ever. Every store had a decoration in their windows that would have graced Woodward avenue in the big city. Birmingham does not have to take a back seat when it comes to wide-awake businessmen. Our stores are the wonder and surprise of city people whenever they come out to investigate our offers of a home for them. One and all express pleasure at the stores and markets.

We are in the midst of a diphtheria scare, but at this writing no one afflicted is very ill. Mr. Harry Gibson has had it very lightly, hardly sick at all. Mrs. Ed Holloway is a victim, but is not dangerously ill. The Gibson family is afflicted. A 12-year-old son, being the sufferer, and Mrs. Clarence Heath is suffering from the disease. All families are quarantined, and cases are handled by competent physicians and no spread of this dreadful scourge is feared.

Last Saturday night Dr. N. T. Shaw dressed the wounds of conductor C. E. McKellar of the D.U.R., who was attacked by a woman with two men who boarded the car at the Six Mile road. She used a knife and grabbed the conductor about the throat and head, nearly severing an ear. One of the men rang the bell and when the car stopped, all three left in a hurry.

30 YEARS AGO
January 4, 1935
The Board of Education's campaign to stimulate school tax payments was launched in earnest last night at a meeting in the Community House, at which the laxity of city officials for not taking the initiative in the drive was roundly criticized. The meeting was attended by about 40 men and women, representatives of clubs, leagues and service organizations, each of whom was asked by Ray A. Palmer, president of the Board of Education, to spread the word of the school district's financial plight.

City Manager James W. Parry is preparing an estimate as to the cost of installing a municipal power plant sufficient to generate electricity to operate the city's pumping stations. A 10-10 power plant building, Municipal Library and public school buildings. The estimate is being prepared in accordance with instructions contained in a resolution adopted by the City Commission Wednesday night.

Six and one-half pound Delores Dawn Spath, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wellington Spath, of 337 East Maple avenue, is to be showered with gifts today, because she is the first baby born in the year 1955 to parents in Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills or Bloomfield Township. Delores arrived at 10:10 p.m. while the New Year was less than 48 hours old.

15 YEARS AGO
December 29, 1949
Replacement of the old cast iron gas distribution mains on Woodward avenue, between Oakland and Oak streets, was begun Tuesday. (See HAPPENINGS, 6-B)

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN



THAT THEY SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN

On the morning of December 7 of this year, I boarded a navy vessel in Pearl Harbor and traveled out to the Arizona Memorial in the middle of the harbor.

This structure of steel and marble was constructed over the hull of the sunken battleship in memory of the over 1,100 seamen who are still entombed in its remains. The navy still considers the Arizona as a fully commissioned battleship, and an honor guard raises and lowers the colors each sunup and sundown on a mast that rises from the depth of the murky grave.

THE TRAGIC event that happened just a short 23 years ago has become a slogan, "Remember Pearl Harbor."

It will probably go into the history books alongside such immortals as "Remember the Maine," and "Damn those torpedoes . . ."

But other than in history books we tend to forget Pearl Harbor. We forget the message of Pearl Harbor and what can happen in a surprise attack.

We forget about unpreparedness.

The attack involved 33 Japanese warships and 353 airplanes. They were able to get within 20 miles of Hawaii without anyone apparently being concerned about them.

THE 2,117 MEN killed in the attack gave their lives so that we might enjoy freedom and democracy. But even this we accept with indifference.

In a year of unparalleled prosperity we have a tendency to forget the past and expect life as it is in the future. And yet if we do there will be more Pearl Harbors. The American people can not continue to be apathetic about democracy. We seem only to get excited when we are at war.

If only we could inscribe on everyone's heart the words of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg.

IF ONLY we could remember that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

No one would forget Pearl Harbor.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

The Kennedy-Groves Memorial Fund has its first contribution.

It came from Cleo Wendorph of 27610 California Drive S. W., Lathrup.

"Let me be among the first to commend you to your column (Dec. 10 issue) proposing a Kennedy-Groves memorial in Birmingham," said Mrs. Wendorph in a letter accompanying her check.

"It takes real patriotism to rise above partisan politics and view the matter objectively, as an American citizen. You have restored my tormented faith in mankind. As a lifelong Protestant, I among many others, was deeply disturbed when my party proposed a Catholic for our Chief Executive. But I came to regard John Kennedy as a man of integrity, who put his obligations to his country above those to his church.

"THAT HE was a highly intellectual and cultured individual, loved and respected by millions throughout the world, has been attested to by the many memorials in his honor. So, indeed, why not in Birmingham?"

"Since a part of the Kennedy dream was the furthering of education, why not an addition to the Baldwin Library—a Kennedy wing with a plaque honoring Capt. Groves, or some such tribute?"

"Although I am not a resident of Birmingham, nor a taxpayer, your suggestion seems a logical one. And because I have a warm spot in my heart for my 'home town,' I am herewith enclosing a small contribution toward a suitable memorial for our martyred President and a local hero."

NEEDLESS TO say, the contribution is gratefully accepted. I hope that others will see a real purpose and value in such a memorial and will help to make it possible.

Mrs. Wendorph's check will be held over a period of time to see whether other donations will be forthcoming. If so, the necessary legal steps will be taken to set up a formal Kennedy-Groves Memorial Fund. If not, her money will be returned.

CITY BEAT proposed on Dec. 10 that a memorial be established to honor both the late President John F. Kennedy and Capt. Michael Groves, former Birmingham resident who died of a heart attack after directing the activities of the Presidential Honor Guard during the Kennedy funeral services.

That column provoked considerable comment. Most people agreed that a Kennedy memorial would be appropriate but that Capt. Groves were to be honored it should be done as a separate act.

After all, they said, Kennedy was the President and even though Capt. Groves distinguished himself in the service of his country and his commander, nothing should be done to dilute any honor intended for the President.

SOME PEOPLE suggested naming a school after Mr. Kennedy; others proposed that his name be given to a street or a park or a new building; many thought any gesture to be made should give recognition to his intellectual and literary attributes.

This writer firmly believes that Birmingham should have some kind of memorial—large or small, something of solid material or something of a spiritual nature, but certainly a sincere gesture of some kind that would honor either or both of these men.

Are there other citizens like Mrs. Wendorph who believe likewise?

Early Deadlines Next Issue

Offices of The Birmingham Eccentric will be closed on New Year's Day, Jan. 1. They will be open, however, on Saturday, Jan. 2.

Because of the holiday, early deadlines will be observed.

Therefore, all advertisers and news contributors are asked to submit their copy as early as possible for the Jan. 7 issue.

The Birmingham Eccentric extends the greetings of the season to everyone.

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