

No Slums in Birmingham

It has been stated in a number of letters to the editor and at several Birmingham City Commission meetings that this newspaper has called certain areas in the city of Birmingham "slums".

As is customary, the position of this newspaper on any issue will appear as an editorial.

As a service to our readers, we also offer columns written by individuals reflecting their personal views. These columns appear throughout the paper with the author's name appearing at the top of the column.

homesteads than anywhere else in the community.

UNFORTUNATELY there are still a few homes left that mar the beauty of the neighborhood, but through the efforts of a neighborhood association even these homes could be brought up to comparable standards.

The other "plug" involves the present effort of the city commission to pave some of the streets in this neighborhood.

It is apparent from the commission meetings that a majority of homeowners in the area are not interested in having the roads improved.

Concrete curbs and gutters would materially improve the beauty of the streets, but the owners say no!

TWO COLUMNS WHICH cover a variety of news topics appear on our editorial page, those of Hank Hogan and Ken Weaver. These two columns are identified as the work of the individual writer.

What is expressed in these columns of personal comment should not be interpreted as the editorial policy of this paper.

It has never been the position of this paper that any part of the city of Birmingham could be considered slums under the dictionary definition. We admit there are areas where work could be done by some individual homeowners that would greatly improve their neighborhoods.

THE CITY does have the power to force paving on these residents even though a majority are against it, but we feel the City should take this step only when such an act would be in the best interests of the whole community.

Except where the streets were dug up for the installation of sewers, retiling would seem to bring the streets up to a level comparable with many other Birmingham streets.

It would seem, then, that paving the area would only indirectly improve the total city, but the degree of indirect benefit does not compare to the hardship that these homeowners would face in financing the project.

WE NORMALLY would not feel that such an explanation is necessary as to the difference between editorials and columns, but because of a widespread misunderstanding we wish to set the record straight.

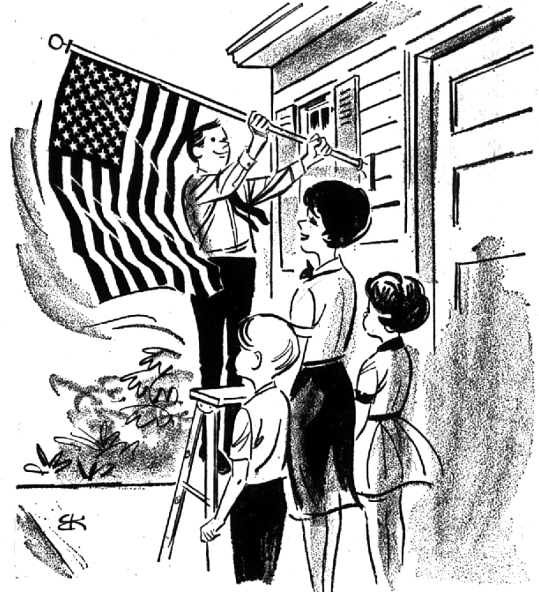
While we are on the subject of the area that has been suggested by Mr. Weaver as not entirely living up to the standards of our community, we editorially might throw in two "plugs" for the neighborhood.

Our editorial board has gone through the neighborhood and there seems to be more constructive activity in improving

Under these circumstances we feel the commission should go along with the residents.

We trust this editorial will clear up both this paper's position on a neighborhood situation and the difference between an editorial and a column.

Proudly Show Old Glory on Flag Day, June 14



YESTERYEAR HAPPENINGS

50 YEARS AGO
June 12, 1914

The efforts of the post office department to make the parcel post as useful as possible should receive support from both producers and consumers. It is now possible to send farm produce in convenient parcels at very low rates. The post office will not only transport the goods, but it will deliver them and collect the pay. Preparations have been made for an extremely useful service if only the public will avail themselves of it.

30 YEARS AGO
June 14, 1934

The police department's campaign against overtime parking which followed the City Commission's decision to retain angle parking on Woodward avenue between Brown street and Oakland avenue, resulted in tickets being given to 105 motorists for illegal parking during May. It is revealed in the monthly report of Company Stoddard, police clerk. Only 18 tickets were issued for the same offense in April.

15 YEARS AGO
June 9, 1949

Approval of the construction of an access drive in front of the Colonial Court terrace development on N. Woodward was voted Monday night by the city commission. To cost an estimated \$5,200, the property owner will pay 50 percent, while the city and state will each pay 25 percent. City Manager Donald C. Egbert expects the drive, which will consist of an 8-foot parkway and 21-foot service drive, to be built this season.

Walnut Lake. With power transmitted direct to all four wheels it can go where other trucks wouldn't dare try. We predict a great future for this machine.

The police department's campaign against overtime parking which followed the City Commission's decision to retain angle parking on Woodward avenue between Brown street and Oakland avenue, resulted in tickets being given to 105 motorists for illegal parking during May. It is revealed in the monthly report of Company Stoddard, police clerk. Only 18 tickets were issued for the same offense in April.

Bottled liquor is expected to be available without prescriptions within a few days at six Birmingham stores, the proprietors of which were appointed last Friday by the State Liquor Commission as "specially designated merchants." The stores approved are Van's Pharmacy, Bergstrom Drug Company, Wilson Drug Company, Schettler Drug Company, Cunningham-Economy Drug Store and the Birmingham Fruit Company.

An adjustment in the salary schedule for Birmingham public school teachers, designed to more

nearly equalize the present salaries on the basis of preparation, ability and length of service, was adopted last night by the Board of Education. The adjustment entails an increase in the salary appropriation for 1954-55 of \$4,682 over the 1953-54 appropriation, and will result in larger pay advances next year for 57 of the 80 teachers.

Commencement activities for Baldwin High School will open with the Baccalaureate service in the school auditorium this Sunday evening at 7:30. The Rev. Harold Towne, pastor of St. James Church, will give the invocation. The address of the evening, "To Keep Your Feet True," will be given by the Rev. Emil Kost, pastor of the First Baptist church.

The Birmingham Eccentric won second place among the nation's weekly newspapers for its community service last year. The National Editorial Association announced Saturday evening at its annual convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Eccentric also received honorable mention for its general excellence.

Viewing Both Sides of an Issue

The Birmingham City Commission is faced with a perplexing situation in the request to rezone property along W. Maple near Larchlea.

property for such a period of time does so at a certain risk. We believe that no one has an indefinite vested right to the use of a certain type of zoning.

The property, consisting of five lots owned since the early '40's by Manley Bailey, is zoned for business and thus has carried a higher assessed valuation. Co-owners with Mr. Bailey are his wife and sister-in-law, Mrs. Eleanor Haack.

In our opinion, rezoning this property to residential would be in the public interest.

City commissioners have received a recommendation from the plan board to rezone the land to residential, believing this would be more compatible to the surrounding property.

Though we realize that the sum pledged to date is small, we view with pride and much respect the gesture of the residents. It serves as a splendid example of what can be done in situations like this.

MR. BAILEY, however, objects to rezoning. After paying the higher tax rate for so long, he objects to a lower classification that would, in effect, decrease the value of his land.

All too often, there is a lack of understanding of and compassion for the other person's problem. Too often, emotion predominates in the dealing with such situations.

Representing residents of the area, the Taliaferro Estates Association favors the proposed rezoning. It does not want a business development in that location.

Arguing solely from narrow, self-interest can only prolong and complicate any dispute. We are heartened by the fact that in this particular incident the residents recognize that Mr. Bailey has a side, too.

In recognition of Mr. Bailey's rights, the association has worked out a program in which the residents are pledging a certain amount of money to help offset any financial loss he might suffer through rezoning.

WE HOPE that Mr. Bailey and the residents will be able to resolve this problem in a spirit of cooperation and thus ease the task of the city commissioners.

THIS NEWSPAPER is sympathetic to Mr. Bailey's point of view; yet we submit that any businessman holding a piece of

We also urge other groups to keep this example in mind for working out future problems of this sort. As has often been said:

"Where there is a will there is a way."

From The Eccentric's Point of View ...

Isn't it time for some of the candidates for the new 19th Congressional District to move into that district? While the law says you don't have to reside in the district, isn't it an insult to the voters to say, "I want to represent you but I don't want to live among you?"

tried such a pattern, he'd go broke ... but the Federal government merely issues more I-O-U's. (Yet it will get votes—that is, until the nation's finances "go for broke".)

A plastic surgeon claims he can make a woman look 15 years younger. An aging Hollywood starlet thus has a chance to be a juvenile delinquent all over again.

much talk—for & agin—the practice of simple devotions in public schools has been popular since the U.S. Supreme Court held that no public school system can prepare and require prayers to be spoken in them. (Not even to save the nation from the Socialistic-Welfare philosophy that seems to emanate, from time to time, from that same sacred Washington, D. C., edifice!)

Further Johnson says that he will go for further federal tax cuts in 1966 and 1967. Possible, you may ask. Of course, with the use of red ink to record federal deficits. If an individual

The United States and France will join in commemorating D-Day. It's nice to know that's still at least one thing we can get together on.

THE GOLDEN YEARS

A retired man known in the neighborhood as Mr. Wilkins has obtained a job as a buyer and supervisor in a small suburban drug store at a salary of \$40 a week. He believes he is on his way to the Golden Years.

Mr. Wilkins is rich. He has \$107,000 in investments and a retirement income of \$640 a month (including about \$300 a month in dividends from his investments, and excluding Social Security).

He was retired from an executive job with a large drug and chemical manufacturing firm on December 31, 1961. And from that date until he got his drug store job three months ago he had a rugged time of it.

"I MADE three errors in judgment before I got out of the door with my engraved watch," he says. "First, I thought that a man with \$107,000 would be somewhat important and someone what catered to, and found that's not nearly enough money for that ... not in a city.

Second, I thought I could sell my executive experience for at least a desk and telephone, and some worthwhile work to do, and found after 14 humiliating pitches for a job that I couldn't. And third, I thought my wife and children were conditioned for my retirement ...

"One who loves his wife in such a situation must finally tell her candidly that an attractive woman of 40, with a new mink, whose husband is on the way, is not the same as a 62-year-old woman, with an

old mink, whose husband has already been ...

"AND HE must frankly tell his children, especially his married and ambitious daughters, that the fine family home (with maid) that they like to point out to their friends with pride, and to visit, is no longer really theirs for a retiree. Daddy ...

SO MR. WILKINS and his tearful struggling wife sold out and headed West, bankrupt in this place and at this time in vital areas of their lives, but still rich in money.

He headed down the church-charity-civic road, joining this and that and other things the community offered. And the wife, skilled over the years in such affairs, prospered. She slowly forgot her mink and the beauty parlor, remembered she was sixty-six, and adjusted.

Wilkins got down to cases. He put up \$40,000 of his \$107,000 for a third interest in the suburban drug store (which was paying about 5 per cent return) with a contract that gave him 40 a week to work from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every day, handling all purchasing which his experience equipped him for—and supervising the pharmacist and the soda clerk while the other owners were out.

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN

The recent Indianapolis 500 brought to mind a book that was published last year about the advertising industry entitled "Fireball."

The book details how a young hot-shot in the ad game built up a promotion for an auto company based on the number of wins its cars got at race tracks around the nation.

The climax of the book came when the big race arrived and all the brass of the car company came out to watch. Unfortunately, the ad campaign came to a sudden stop when the company car crashed, killing its driver.

IN THE BIG ONE at Indianapolis last week, certainly sponsors of cars aren't to be blamed for a tragedy that resulted from human error.

But I wonder if the car companies will be as enthusiastic about pushing car performance in terms of race results now that the public also knows that the more power you throw into a car, the more you flirt with the grim reaper.

Car company officials will tell you that the more horsepower the car, the more able it is to pull you through emergency situations, but state troopers and county sheriffs will tell you that a large percentage of fatal accidents happen, just like on the speedway, because the average driver can't control this power and ends up contacting trees and fences along county roads.

SAFE DRIVING IS old hat until someone you know takes a chance that ends up in the obit column the following week. Then you start thinking about your own driving habits.

Hopefully, this isn't too late.

Well, the big race is now over, but there will be another next year and probably the year after, and as long as the prize remains over \$150,000 for the winner, there will be more husbands and fathers willing to risk their lives.

In the meantime more drivers around the country will be taking the same risks without the benefit of a financial reward if victorious.

ONE WONDER what has to be done to impress drivers that every time they get behind the wheel, they are not only taking their own lives in their hands but also the lives of many others, if they don't devote their full time and energies to what they're doing.

Let's hope that the tragedy of the 500 will leave a lasting impression on car makers who are trying to build sales with horsepower, and on some of those speedway drivers you meet daily on city streets.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER

"... What does the presence of the university mean to Birmingham, this generally enlightened, sophisticated, leader-loaded, affluent community?"

Now, isn't that a thoughtful question?

The question was asked last week by Dr. Lowell Eklund, Oakland University's director of continuing education. He was one of four panelists speaking to the point of "Whither Birmingham 10 Years Hence" at The Community House's annual meeting.

To show what people outside of this city think of us, he quotes a letter of criticism and expression that the "mark of the poor in Birmingham is that they wash their own Cadillacs."

EKLUND'S COMMENTS are worth passing on here from the standpoint of diction, if nothing else; though his ideas are also worthy of meditation.

"A university, first and foremost, is an institution seeking for truth in whatever form—even though its dimensions and impact may be unpleasant and irritating," the educator declared.

"It provokes, it catalyzes, it ferments, it chaffs the established status quo—the present order of things. It means new knowledge out of research that challenges, upsets, even destroys old ..."

YET, OUT OF these changes can come fresh winds—and rattle routers and iconoclasm—who turn out 25 years later to have been prophets like Jeremiah or poets like Whitman or Thomas.

"A university can and should be a great boon to the community of which it is a part. It can help a community relate to the greater society, it can help the community meet its challenge for survival and progress, it can help the community not to fade away gracefully of its own smugness as the latter strives to maintain the old comfortable order of things.

"The university provides the seedbed for renewal of culture; it excites, it provokes, it challenges, it offers hypotheses and thereby possibly new truths."

LOOKING AHEAD to 1974, "Oakland University and Birmingham can and should see close and internal association for their mutual benefit and progress," Eklund said.

The university can—and does—help in the advancement of education and professionalism, he explained, through courses on campus, like the summer program offered off campus, "like our pioneering effort this last semester with The Community House"; conferences; cultural activities, such as the Meadowbrook Festival, events to be held in the Baldwin Shell which will be completed this summer; the Community Arts Council, a lecture series and the Meadowbrook Hall Museum.

PLANS FOR the future, Eklund said, include an auditorium for community-wide use. "All we need is three million dollars."

He went on to say:

"Together we can generate a better community for ourselves; it is our duty."

"A challenge to the community, yes; but communities are individuals living together.

"So we can remember these words of Albert Schweitzer: "One man committed to the highest and best he knows (See CITY BEAT, 8-B)

The Birmingham Eccentric
Published Every Thursday
Established 1878

PUBLISHER: PAUL K. AYERS
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.
MANAGING EDITOR: KENNETH R. WEAVER
ADVERTISING MANAGER: ARTHUR BRADSHAW
George R. Smith, Editor Emeritus