

## Letters To The Editor

Enterprise - Sunday, March 12, 1950

On Monday night I attended the open meeting of the City Commissioners in which the controversy over the management of the City Library was given a somewhat one-sided airing. I think that the report of this meeting given in the Tuesday edition of your paper is a good one as far as the facts are concerned. I am baffled at some of the conclusions you have drawn. For example you say that the crowd sat in stunned silence, after Robert Manuel was ordered to sit down, to think that anyone could make the accusations that he did against the "Citizens' Committee." The stunned silence that I was sitting in, and which was shared by at least fifty other members of the crowd, was to think that any citizen attempting (if somewhat poorly) to express his point of view in an open meeting could receive the treatment that he received from a group of our "best" citizens and from the Mayor of our town. It is not the treatment he would have received in Soviet Russia, it is true. They would probably have him in Siberia by this time. But it was undeniably the treatment and the method used by Hitler's bully-boys to silence all democratic expression in the years prior to 1933 when they were trying to take control of Germany. I am not suggesting that our "best" citizens are Nazis. But as intelligent adults they should have better control over their reactions. It gives you cold chills to see that method in operation in this country.

Mr. Manuel's apparent crime was that he said he considered the "Citizens' Committee" unqualified to act as censor of the type of literature the rest of us may have access to, and that he also considered that they had been acting in an irresponsible manner. For this he was booed, shouted at, questioned as to whether he was a Communist, eventually ordered to sit down,

and repeatedly denied the floor thereafter. Two other citizens were denied answers to their questions and ruled out of order when they asked what the qualifications of this committee were. I would like to remind the Mayor and the committee that when any such group of citizens presumes to act for the public, then the public does have a right to inquire about their qualifications, and that they are open to criticism by that public. They are no more immune to criticism than the City Librarian and the Library Board, as public servants, are immune to criticism. Certainly the latter have received plenty in the last few weeks without resorting to undemocratic means of stopping it.

May I say in closing that I think the decision of the Mayor and the City Commissioners, to leave the investigation of subversive literature in our library up to the Library Board, a right and just decision. I am sure, from my knowledge of the members of this board, that the investigation will be fair and thorough, and that the conclusions they reach should be acceptable to everyone.

CHARLES W. VARVEL



# And By the Way

(John H. Purnell, editor of the Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise is on vacation. During his absence this column will be written by a group of guest writers, all Bartlesville citizens. A different one will appear each day starting Monday)

BY W. D. MCGINLEY

DEAR JOHN: Since You have been away from home a few days and probably thinking of nothing but whether tomorrow a brown fly or a small spinner will attract a fish, I thought you might be wondering what is going on here.

Looking back over the past few days, I can report to you the usual happenings found in each days news. But one thing stands out—what you might term the old American custom of griping about this and that—“Why don’t they — If I were commissioner I would — Looks like Bartlesville ought to have— Look at the dirt on the streets— There is no place here for—”. We will always hear this sort of thing and probably you and I will be helping to say some of it.

Yes, we should be making improvements in our city. There will always be improvements to be made. However, it is never amiss to sit back and review the fine things we have in Bartlesville. Many of these things you will find in cities of our size or larger, but you will not find all of them.

Our fine climate, despite contrary opinions, we share with all of Oklahoma. Our water supply, which until a few years ago was pretty well-known over the state for its poor quality, is now tops from the standpoint of taste, softness and adequacy. Our public school facilities are modern with new facilities being added to keep apace with our growing population. That goes too for parochial schools and this Fall our new college will open. New homes are being built, roads and streets, utility service to supply them, additional facilities, new churches, new business enterprises, new buildings to house offices of industry. All this is evidence of growth in the number of citizens employed and living in Bartlesville and vicinity.

Growth and progress in any community presents problems to be solved—problems which sometimes appear strangely difficult. And they are difficult when the general attitude is critical without being constructively critical and offering thoughtful suggestions — pulling apart instead of pulling together.

In any set of circumstances, where there is an obvious lack of harmony and unity between people, I always think of the people of Texas in all of whom there is a deeply ingrained pride in anything called Texas. Wherever there are two or more Texans, you can be sure that sooner or later they will rise and sing, “The eyes of Texas—”.

Isn’t this sort of pride in Bartlesville the thing that is needed to bring about harmony and unity—progress in all phases of our community life?

Incidentally, or rather as you would say, by the way, isn’t it past time that each of us substitute that gripe that comes to mind with a good word for our home town—for our neighbors?

# GIVE US MORE THINKING AMERICANS

Editor, The Tribune:

Several years ago I had the extremely unpleasant experience of facing from a platform a gang of Communist hecklers. It was an educational experience for an American. They could only shout and otherwise try to create confusion. It was useless to reason with them, because they would not even try to think.

Last night I had the terrible experience of facing a crowd who consider themselves good Americans, but who also would not try to think. They, too, shouted and were abusive. They even hurled the epithet of "Communist," which I bitterly resent. I was saying, among other things, that I hated the methods used by Communists, whether used by them or somebody else.

May God give us more thinking Americans! Only thinking Americans can in the long run save us from Communist or any other subversion of our Constitution and our ideals.

Bartlesville. *TRIBUNE* ROBERT MANUEL. *3-13-50*

HE HAS OVERPARKING PROBLEM