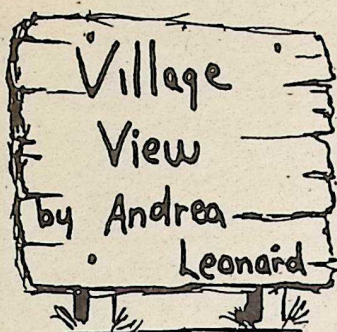




Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bates -- I want to hug you. Thank you; I share your feelings and, individually, I'm not directing my "acid-pen" at any single family who has come to share the Cape.

It's just that we often feel invaded as we watch what's happening around us.

Certainly the natives are glad of new neighbors -- interesting, concerned citizens who take up community tasks and share the burdens. No, there's nothing wrong with golf or bridge. The barbs struck home, though, didn't they?

Of course we welcome newcomers. We're not antagonistic to people who weren't born here. We're a friendly crew in our time we've even travelled some, and spent some years living off-Cape.

Long Island was my home for ten years. Maybe that's why resentment balloons when woodlands disappear, tall trees fall to axe and saw, and proud heads of pines, still green, are cast upon the earth.

I know the sea-of-roofs the eye beholds from Throg's Neck Bridge. I remember when small communities on Long Island were not unlike Cape villages; Lynbrook, before large homes were razed and six houses put where one stood before; Malverne, Rockville Centre, Baldwin. Oyster Bay, Smithtown and Huntington I knew as villages. Dozens more.

You'll remember Roosevelt Field before it was a Mall. You'll recall Old Country Road when it was an old country road leading through Westboro, east to farmlands.

What you watched happen to Long Island, I watched as well; and then I fled -- home. Now I see exactly the same thing happening to my refuge.

It hurt, didn't it, when the farms of Wantagh and Farmingdale became tracts of houses built by the Levitts and others?

It hurts me, it does, to see Pineridge Estates, where woodland stood undisturbed for centuries, spring up with its arrowstraight streets, its houses set precisely in rows, its floor plans and facades repeated in predictable sequence.

I don't blame you, individually, for coming to Pineridge. Nor the developer who bought and cleared the land and built houses. I don't blame the owners of woodlots who sold the acreage.

You fulfilled your dream. The developer made his honest dollar. Selling the woodland was forced by inflation so some native could meet living expenses, pay taxes on an older home, put meat and potatoes on the dinner plates. The land passes not without pain.

The Bateses are right; I'm guilty of generalization; yet a dozen people made it a point



to tell me, "Andy, you hit the nail on the head in that article."

One, a subscriber in North Carolina, called long distance to say it.

If I don't blame anyone involved, then who's at fault? The Chamber of Commerce for letting people know there's a haven here? From a strictly selfish view, maybe, but business is business.

Wishing won't make it so, but I do wish for curving development streets; houses with a wider variety of plans, houses sited at different distances and angles to give the neighborhood character.

It bugs me that developments tend to be faceless. It gives me the creepy feeling people living behind those curtained windows must be faceless too.

In time, I know, one house will grow a wing, another a larger garage; this one will acquire a bay window and a second story will be added to that. The samenesses will change.

Lady slippers can't live in full sunlight, however; trailing arbutus can find no footing in a lawn. Indian pipes will never again raise their ghostly stalks where they bunched for countless years. Pipsissewa, partridge berry and checkerberry will give way to myrtle, pachasandra and Boston ivy.

Once these wild plants were as common on Long Island as in the woodlands of Cape Cod. There, they're gone; here, you must search.

What's happening is precisely what Mr. and Mrs. Bates say they don't want; the Cape is becoming a miniature Long Island, a suburb.

I'm astonished they're unaware of this. They say they don't want it; I believe them. They feel defensive because their existence here contributes to it.

Right now the Cape has all the things they don't like about Long Island. Lack of planning and uncontrolled growth, overpopulated schools (Barnstable High was built for 1200 students and houses 1900), contaminated water (salt intrusion in Provincetown and other places close to shore, ponds closed to swimming when water tables drop, oil globs on our ocean beaches).

Our dump is becoming a mountain; solid waste disposal is a serious problem. The Traffic Commission (I'm a member) frantically seeks ways to solve traffic problems; Route 28 needs double-barreling, yet we hate the thought of a superhighway cutting along the south shore.

I see the broad traffic-choked lanes of Long Island Parkways.

Dear Bateses -- we're on the same side; we're saying the same thing: "For God's sake, don't let it happen here." But it is!

For six years I served as a Director of APCC when it was an infant organization; am still a member, still a supporter. It is a step in the right direction, but it's not stopping PROGRESS.

The Charter is dead. We'll live with what we've got and be grateful we've got it, though I'm saddened it didn't pass.

We desperately need organization in Barns-



you're through your next bridge game, your next round of golf, please take a peek at an organization chart of Barnstable's town government.

Now you're here, it's your town. You've other responsibilities than paying your taxes. Since you're retired, you've brought no youngsters to burden the school system, but many of your neighbors have.

Your taxes, plus theirs, plus mine, won't pay, at present rates, to educate those youngsters, or maintain new streets we drive on, or buy land (where?) for a dump and equipment for it, or the sewer system extensions and treatment plants we need.

I disagree there's room -- even now -- for everyone on Cape Cod.

Your proviso -- proper planning and control under a responsible government - would help. We won't have it. We were pleading for it.

People fight control as they must have, long ago, fought traffic lights, as they did, in my memory, zoning.

Time may bring the needed organization and controls; will it bring it in time?

Indeed, let's be better acquainted; people like you may be able to convince people who opposed the Charter.

It's not your fault, as individuals, the Charter failed. It is true, however, those people who cast the most confusion upon it weren't natives, but newcomers. They instilled doubt in natives and newcomers alike. I wish they would go back where they came from.

Because of them, the people decided the devil they know is better than the devil they don't know.

Your offer to contribute is accepted and welcome. If there are pitfalls I haven't seen and written about in this column over the last four years, I'm more than worried; I'm scared.

Yours was a good letter; warm, willing and constructive.

Thank you.

NOTE: This statement pertains to paragraphs on page 15, Village Advertiser, 28th February issue, in which this column referred to comments regarding the legality of the proposed Charter.

Several people are expressing concern, feeling aspersions have been cast upon their honesty by my stating, "it's hard to believe he would stoop to dishonesty ...", "but that appears to be the case."

During pre-election discussions many people made statements of their opinions on the legality of the Charter. Lots of people said lots of things, as always happens during political campaigns.

After the ballots are counted and the count is in -- in a democracy -- we accept the voters' verdict, pick up our marbles, gather up our tools and go back to work.

Last week's newspaper is good for only one thing: wrapping Friday's fish. Don't wear shoes that don't fit you. God bless ...