



Of the many different things I've worked at, I can think of nothing that's been more stimulating than writing this column each week for the readers of the Village Advertiser.

Regular readers often tell me they wonder how I think of something different each week to talk about. Some weeks, of course, I do feel "dry".

Other times the biggest problem is finding time to write everything I want to talk about and to decide which subject is most timely and will be most interesting to read.

Not everyone is concerned with the same things, of course; some people like to read about the villages in days gone by. There are two kinds of people who enjoy those columns: those who remember and for whom nostalgia is a kind of happiness; and those who didn't know the Cape then, but have enough imagination to see, in the printed word, things as they must have been.

To some, history is as dead as last Friday's fish catch; to others, it's like meeting new people, seeing new places, almost a form of travel — travel through time to another era.

Stories about the past almost always pose problems because everyone has different memories. Mine aren't identical to those of my brothers' or of someone else who grew up with us. Each viewed things going on around us through different eyes.

Memories are fallible, too; mine plays me false at times. You may remember someone as having had brown hair and blue eyes while my mind registered his hair as black and his eyes as hazel.

You may recall a certain house having yellow clapboards and green blinds; I might remember it as white with blue shutters. In this instance, we might both be right since paint on a building, unlike eye color, can be changed.

Perhaps I've sometimes taken liberties with truth when writing of the village I grew up in. It wasn't to deceive, but rather because my own memory failed. Sometimes, too, I've gotten my decades confused.

If you try to remember exactly how some place you knew looked, forty or fifty years ago, you may find it hard to recall how and when the changes came. It happens to me, too.

Often when I've written a column about something controversial, a critic will send a Letter to the Editor to refute my view or correct an inaccuracy.

When readers agree with me, they're more apt to write a note directly to me. Recently I received a postcard from a lady who indicated she'd vote for me "for President of the U.S.A.!" She's not likely to get the opportunity, for there's no job I feel less qualified to assume, but it's nice to know not everyone thinks I've a warped mind or am 100% wrong.

Encouraging people to respond, whether publicly through Letters to the Editor or privately through notes to P.O. 353, is part of my fun in writing these articles.

Some people who apparently read them fairly regularly occasionally apologize; "I don't always agree with you," they say, "but I enjoy knowing what you think."

Goodness gracious! I don't expect there's a single solitary soul who's going to agree with me all the time. I doubt my own mother thinks I'm right more than half the time. In fact, she may be my severest critic; if she's not, my brothers or dearest friends certainly are.

Of all things this column is NOT, the biggest thing it isn't is a pattern for other people's thinking. All it is, is a view of what one individual thinks, and an attempt to show why.

In fact, if what I say doesn't conjure up some pretty good arguments for the opposite side, then I'm failing miserably to accomplish what I've set out to do.

The whole purpose of Village View is to rattle enough bones to get people thinking.

I'm not a reactionary and I'm not a liberal. I'm not a radical and I'm not a red-neck. I'm not a women's libber and I'm not a devotee of male supremacy. I'm not a fanatic about anything.

Neither am I a mug-wump.

You could say, without being sued for slander, I'm opinionated. I believe as I do because of the life-experiences I've been fortunate enough to have.

Growing up in a family of four children, all of whom were tolerably intelligent and reasonably articulate, our suppertable was the forum for expressing opinions. Our parents permitted, even encouraged us to say what we thought.

As long as we kept ourselves enough under control to avoid physical battle or personal insult (most of the time), we could speak our minds about any subject that might come up.

That's what goes on here in Village View. I tell it the way I think it is. The facts may turn out to be different. This is the way it seems to me; that's all.

That's why I don't come apart at the seams if it appears different to you, or if someone says, "No, you're wrong. All wrong."

Fine! Tell us about it. Set the record straight. It's a matter of education, and I'm still learning. I've got an open mind; I'm not setting myself up as an expert or oracle or "last word".

It's one of life's unfortunate truisms that the printed word seems to convey greater plausibility than the spoken one. I regret this, for it distorts my purpose. I write because it's easier to express my thoughts on paper than in casual conversation.

That's no gift, believe me. It limits me. The only time I feel comfortable about making public my viewpoints is when I have a typewriter handy.

That means I'm reluctant to speak in public, hesitant to stand up and expand on a subject extemporaneously. I can write what I want to communicate, but it's almost impossible for me to say it.

What's printed in the paper is what I'd say if I had the knack of standing up on my feet and talking. Some of us are gifted with the ability to express themselves verbally; I envy those people and wish I shared that faculty.

Writing of my concerns — whether on ecology, social problems, politics, nature, or the historical past — is my avenue of communication.

One thing I've always believed — and always will believe, I guess — is that when I'm rattling the keys of my typewriter — even when I'm wrong, wrong, all wrong — I'm expressing for some other people, who can neither talk nor write easily, things running through their minds.

I truly believe if I've reached a certain conclusion about something, someone else probably has, too, but they don't know quite how to put it into words (or maybe they are afraid of reprisal if they express their ideas) — spoken words or written words — and while I find it hard to SAY, I do seem able to write it down.

So I do.