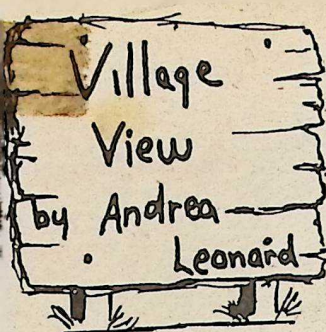




How human it is to resist change!

Not only do most people feel acute discomfort when faced with unexpected changes, but animals share this common reaction.

If you've ever had a pet, you know the anxiety they show when the family routine is interrupted or when they see signs of coming changes.

Your cat doesn't like it when you move the furniture, is upset when the household routine is interrupted, seems to have a built-in time clock and knows when it's time to get up or family members are due home from school and work.

Your dog shows signs of distress when a suitcase comes out of the back of a closet, or one of you is late arriving home.

People are the same way, even though they have a better understanding of the reasons for change in routines.

Husbands find it hard to adjust to furniture arrangements different from the one they're used to.

Children customarily sit in the same place at the table for each meal. If company comes, and the seating arrangement is changed, their discomfort is often manifested in unruly behavior.

Is anything more unsettling to a homemaker than finding her favorite grocery has re-arranged its displays?

Many of us, in fact, shop almost entirely at one market because we know where every item is to be found; it's too frustrating to explore a large new store unless we have plenty of time. That means learning an entirely new pattern.

If you drive to work, how often do you change your usual route, even when there are several possible choices? Centerville residents, for instance have four different possible routes to Hyannis.

Depending on where they live in the village, of course, they can use Route 28, Pine Street or West Main with equal ease. Phinney's Lane or Craigville Beach Road are alternates.

Osterville residents share Centerville's choices, plus South Main Street and Skunknet.

Cotuit, Marstons Mills and Santuiters have the widest choice of all. They can take the shore roads through Osterville and Craigville, go straight down 28, or vary their course in a dozen different ways.

But how many do? People seldom vary their travel patterns.

Not many weeks ago the whole country switched to Daylight Savings Time. After a lot of growling and complaining, everyone got used to it. Since mid-February I've not heard a murmur about it.

When the last Sunday in April rolls around, I'll bet most will feel relieved the annual "spring ahead" needn't be made this year.

Admittedly there were a few weeks in mid-winter when we needed lights to get started each morning, but all through March the sun

was up ahead of me, and best of all, there's
still plenty of daylight when I get out of

The lengthy meetings, the talk-talk, the hours of spine-aching sitting-sitting, listening-listening. The votes. Aye. No. The night-after-night of it, 'til it's done.

Why? Why, if it's such a nuisance, do we do it? Why bother? Why not chuck it, and have a Town Manager with an advisory board and lay Town Meeting and the Selectman system to rest?

I speak only for myself, yet I believe I speak for most Town Meeting members. It's a privilege as well as a duty to contribute if you can, all you can.

Not everyone can give the time; not everyone cares.

Almost everyone is critical, however; almost everyone complains about taxes, schools, highways, services.

Everyone wants more and better police protection. Everyone deplores unplanned growth. Everyone wants town services to operate at top efficiency -- automatically, unobtrusively and inexpensively.

Too few will put time or energy into the machinery itself. There's nothing automatic about it.

There's enough talent in this town, talent sitting around going to waste, talent doing lots of the complaining, to bring efficient and inexpensive local government.

The retired businessmen have brought with them some of the finest brains in the nation; brains like these are needed in town government. Those people would be happier making worthwhile contributions again -- if they'd volunteer to serve.

Instead, many of them don't even vote, or if they do vote, they feel they've done all they can -- except complain.

Why? Why are they not active on a volunteer basis? Why is their chief contribution unconstructive criticism, refusal to see the merits of our traditional system, and determined efforts to change our ways to patterns with which they are more familiar, but not necessarily better?

The Selectman system, they aver, is obsolete; to my way of thinking, it's the closest thing to true democracy in existence in the world today.

Like many other typically New England characteristics of our corner of the country, it's part of home, and well-worth preserving.

More and more, people from "away" seek to change us and our ways, to scrap our system for theirs.

If the places many of them came from -- and I've lived in some of them and visited many of them -- are any example, let's do all we can to keep our system intact.

Maybe -- just maybe -- if enough of us believe in it, we can in time persuade the outsiders to view its merits fairly; maybe we can prove to them, by illustration, it's not as bad as they think.

The systems they're proposing are far from perfect, and that's one of the reasons I came home to live, where I know the system and the people in it. "Go fight City Hall", in the city, means what we mean when we say "shoveling sand against the tide".

Come on over to Town Meeting.-- speak, be heard, listen and learn. See if there isn't something too precious to be cast aside in this old, but good, way-of-doing.

You get out of it, as in most things, only as much as you put into it, in any season of the year.