



People are funny; they sure are.

In the last ten years, thousands of people have come to live on the Cape from away -- Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and points west.

Presumably they chose Cape Cod because they like it. If they liked where they came from better, they'd have stayed there, right?

Yet no sooner do they settle down here than they begin to try to change everything so it'll resemble the places they came from, places they left to live here.

They build big houses with more room than they need and rattle around looking for something to do to fill empty hours.

Some get interested in their gardens, join clubs, become golf addicts or bridge fiends. Some develop an interest in local government, schools and "improving" Cape Cod.

Most of them clear off all the natural plant life on their property, destroying the natural habitat of wildlife, and plant lawns and shrubs unsuited for the Cape's acid soil.

They fertilize, water, feed and nurture their grass and shrubs and are reasonably successful in getting the results they desire. What they desire is to see the same things growing around their homes, here, as grew wherever they came from.

Not satisfied with changing the immediate environment physically, they get involved in local politics and government.

They form committees and study -- to some degree -- our town government -- successful for over three hundred years.

And some decide it's no good, so they get people all hepped up about changing it.

Those of us who've grown up here are bright enough to realize improvements can be made, so we go along with some of the recommendations.

Town meeting -- before we adopted the representative system -- WAS outmoded. The people WEREN'T being heard. Special interests were controlling the town.

So we went to the polls and changed that.

Still not satisfied, these people decided we should completely change the town's administration. The people went to the polls and elected nine men to a Charter Commission to study town administration and recommend necessary changes.

The instigators didn't get elected to the Charter Commission, however. The townspeople voted for men like themselves, men who know the town inside and out and who, for the most part, grew up in Barnstable and work here.

People like Jimmy Flynn and Bob O'Neil who know as much about Barnstable as anybody; Hugh Findlay, Bernie Wilber, Bill Eshbaugh, Warren Hansen, businessmen all; Selectman Marty Hoxie who knows how town government operates because he works in it night and day, and no one knows better what's good or bad about a job than the fellow holding down the seat; and Gary Brown, a young man who hopes to make a career of local government

None of these are happy about the growing atmosphere of suburbia, increasing traffic, decreasing amounts of open land, burgeoning population.

When these nine men first met together, there were nine different opinions about

needed changes. After 39 weeks of deliberation, they reached unanimous agreement upon changes necessary NOW in our town government.

They concluded changing the structure will improve it, and giving up the Selectman system for a Town Manager will remove from the townspeople person-to-person control of their government.

They believe the people want to keep the traditional New England system and have a right to continue it.

Barnstable has prospered under the Selectman system and managed to retain the characteristics which attracted to this area many newcomers from other parts of the country.

Town government hasn't been perfect in the past, although it served us well when the town was smaller. Now -- because of the influx of all these people from away -- it DOES need changing, updating and reorganizing.

That doesn't mean we need to scrap it altogether and recast it on a form of city government such as those all these off-Capers are used to having.

It's difficult not to ask "If you people were so happy with government where you came from, then why didn't you stay there? Why did you come here where it was different?"

It's difficult not to wonder why, if they like it so well there, and don't like the way we do things here on Cape Cod, they don't go back where they came from.

In fact, they have been asked those questions! One man said his wife wanted to live here. Another admitted he wanted to escape the city-like atmosphere of his previous home.

The severest critics of the proposed new Charter will, it seems, stop at nothing to destroy the work of the men you elected.

One asserts the Attorney General's office advised him the new Charter isn't legal. It's been approved, in writing, by the Attorney General. Furthermore, the Attorney General's office has no record of any communication whatsoever with the gentleman who made the charge.

It's hard to believe he would stoop to dishonesty just to get his own way, like a spoiled brat, but that appears to be the case.

Many statements made by Charter opponents are patently false. I know. I attended every meeting but two of the Charter Commission. Not one of the Charter's critics can - truthfully - make that statement.

There's no such thing as perfection in any system, but the new Charter goes a long way towards correcting the most glaring inadequacies of our present town government without destroying the traditional system.

I believe the Town of Barnstable will be a better place to live if the new Charter is accepted by the voters.

For almost four years in this column I've been "telling it like it is as I see it". Even though you don't always agree, you know I've been open and honest.

As I see it, there s a vociferous group new-to-Barnstable people who want the town to be like the places they've left.

They'd be doing us and themselves a kindness if they'd either accept our ways or hitch themselves off to someplace else.

If you want your town to retain some semblance of home, then it's up to you to protect the traditions we've loved and respected all our lives.

If you don't protect these traditions, control will slip from your grasp and into the hands of newcomers who want a mish-mash of city-suburban systems resembling the places they left behind them.

It's up to us to keep a firm grip on the reins of our own town government and not let this precious heritage slip from our fingers.

I shall vote for the Charter and I hope