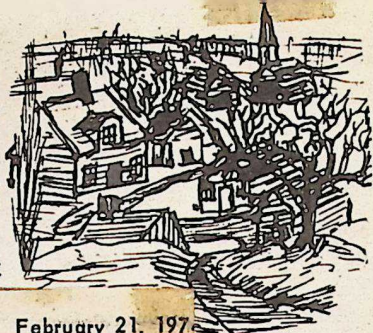


# Village View by Andrea Leonard



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You deserve good government, don't you? It's your due, isn't it? It's your right on every level -- town, county, state and federal.

Sure, it is. You're an American citizen. You're a self-respecting law-abiding citizen. You pay your taxes and you don't cheat on your tax returns.

You work hard at your job, you do your best to raise your children to be good honest citizens, and you try to keep your spouse reasonably contented and satisfied.

You provide for your family to the best of your ability. You contribute your share -- maybe more than your share -- to the support of your government on its various levels.

You believe in democracy, in the freedom the flag of our nation represents, in the Constitution of the United States and its amendments, have faith in God and you love your country.

Therefore, you deserve good government, don't you?

Do you have it?

If you don't think you do have it, who do you blame?

How much more responsibility for good government lies with you?

How much effort do you make to inform yourself about what kind of government you're going to get?

How much effort do you make to go to the polls and vote?

How well do you know the candidates? Do you know what their qualifications are? Do you know where they stand on the various issues? Are you knowledgeable about what their goals are if they succeed in winning an election?

When you're invited to meet a candidate for public office, whether on the local level or someone running for state or national representative's seat or for the Senate, do you take advantage of that opportunity to find out about the person who's asking for your vote?

Do you question him about himself and his position on issues when you do meet him? Do you find out if he's qualified to fill the po-

sition for which he's a candidate?

Do you attend meetings where he's scheduled to speak? Do you make an effort to go to Candidate's Night to hear the people running for election state their views?

If you like the cut of a person's jib, do you chose that candidate? Or do you chose someone who "needs the job," whether or not he has the necessary qualifications?

When you get inside the polling booth, only you know what you do. It's nobody else's business. Do you vote for a candidate only because you like that person?

You deserve good government -- but unless the person you like is qualified to do the job, your loyalty isn't going to help him adequately fill the position. It usually takes more than being just a nice guy or a fine girl.

Whether you're voting for President of the United States or for Dog Catcher, supporting a candidate who's lacking necessary qualifications just doesn't make sense -- not if you want to get what you truly deserve -- good government.

How do you decide which person is best qualified? To do that intelligently, you've got to know something about each of the candidates. You owe it to yourself, as well as to them, to learn what their backgrounds are, where their interests lie, and why they want the job.

A candidate will welcome questions about his previous experience and his knowledge of the position in which he wishes to serve. He won't be offended if you show curiosity about his past involvement with government, administration, business or his present reasons for running for an office.

You've a right to know the answers to these questions, and it's the only way you can find out about the people who want you to put an X next to their names on the ballot.

Candidates will also be glad to have an opportunity to let you know what they hope to do, where they stand on issues such as schools, taxation, and legislation that may come before them.

You may even, if you wish, ask questions that may put a candidate on the spot. Such a question may give a person who has a new and fresh approach to some perennial problem a chance to explain how he believes a solution can be found.

This might increase your own knowledge or provide new insight into a situation that may be different from your understanding. Knowing how your government works -- even on the local level -- is part of our education most of us have neglected.

Yes, you deserve good government -- but your only way of assuring you're going to get it is to take part.

Only after you've become an informed citizen are you really qualified to make a wise decision regarding candidates.

And finally, you do deserve good government, but only if, after informing yourself, you VOTE!

If you don't vote, you don't deserve good government at all. What's more, you won't get it; and if you don't get it, and you don't vote, you've got no kick coming.