

## Writing county charter a tale of comedy

It took more than 750,000 photocopied sheets to complete the 34, single-spaced typewritten pages of the proposed Wayne County Charter.

It's a decent enough document. George Ward, charter commission president, was probably right when he said it's "better than I dared hope." But you can find out someplace else what's in it.

What I want to talk about is how what's in it got there. This was Michigan's first county charter commission. Not even Oakland County, where reforms usually start, has gone this route.

LIKE MOST other public bodies, the commission is composed of two main groups: dedicated, hard-working, public-spirited citizen types and people of a different ilk altogether.

Your public-spirited citizens are a necessity for public bodies, of course, but your different-ilk-altogether sort are a lot more fun from a spectator's point of view.

Whatever group anyone fell into, none of the 27 charter commissioners got everything he or she wanted. And some of them didn't want much.

All Tracy Salisbury wanted was a quote from the Bible, a data processing department, and a 27-member Board of Commissioners. All the Ecorse Democrat got was a reference to "God's grace" in the preamble.

John J. Fitzpatrick, a Democrat from the Ver-nor-Junction neighborhood in Detroit, is a nice guy who only wanted language about senior citizens. He tried to get it in March but didn't. He tried again in April, and still didn't.

About 11 one warm May night, as the commission labored through a collective mental fog at a meeting that reached out and grabbed five hours as neatly as Bob Lanier touching the rim, Fitzpatrick finally got the senior citizen language.

If anybody was more surprised than Fitzpatrick, it could only have been the other 26 commissioners when they woke up in the morning and realized what they'd done.

ALL WILLIAM COPELAND apparently wanted were roll call votes. Hundreds of them altogether, and sometimes dozens of them at one meeting.

Now, roll calls are fine in their place, but when you take roll calls on something like breaking for lunch, they tend to get kind of time-consuming and a little irritating.

But all in all, it was a good thing the Wyandotte Democrat got them. The roll calls proved useful when Copeland forgot how he voted, and they were even more handy when Copeland forgot how votes themselves had occurred.

From time to time, the 72-year-old Copeland wanted to reconsider votes when he'd been on the losing side, sort of the parliamentary equivalent of



Mike Scanlon

trotting in from the outfield holding the ball when there are only two outs.

But even when he didn't appear to know what he was doing, Copeland never stopped trying to shame his fellow commissioners — "fellow colleagues," Inkster Democrat Roman Tafelski called them one night — into remembering "The People."

Copeland pleaded for the people to be remembered even as he voted to preserve powers of the drain commission, the county clerk, the sheriff.

"I don't have to worry about it, I've got mine. But you young guys, you'd better quit cutting out all these jobs or you won't have anything to run for," Copeland said one night in June.

ON THE OTHER HAND, there was Timothy Manning. The Redford Democrat showed up with laryngitis two days running and you couldn't tell. All Manning wanted was an end to debate, dozens of ends to dozens of debates.

The nicest thing about having Manning on the commission was his uncanny ability to drive Alonzo Bates to a paroxysm of rage by simply calling for an end to debate.

Bates, a black Detroit Democrat, is fun to watch when he is in a paroxysm of rage. Sometimes he threw crumpled pieces of paper at his fellow colleagues. Usually he just called them insulting names. Sometimes he called them the kind of names you can't print in the newspaper, and sometimes he just called them racist.

I was kind of mystified about how calling for an end to debate is a racist action, but when Bates wasn't throwing pieces of paper or calling names, he was sometimes threatening physical violence. I decided not to bother asking him about it.

LYN BANKES, a Livonia Republican, was involved in a polite, informal disagreement one evening after the close of a meeting with Michael Einheuser, an east side Detroit Democrat and an aide to Mayor Coleman Young.

The two weren't getting much of anywhere during this disagreement. Einheuser finally said, exasperated, to Ms. Bankes — a member of the League of Women Voters — "Oh, you good government types."

A nasty breed, those types.

## Gardens and greenery inspired early suburbs

By Robert Woodring  
special writer

Pioneering Californians traveled west in search of gold. Civil War veterans wandered into the Southwest and raised huge herds of cattle to feed an expanding nation. And in 1980, Michiganians head to Houston in search of jobs.

The rush to the suburbs by Detroiters in the 1950s was not inspired by untold wealth in countryside pastures, although a handful realized enormous profits in real estate investments.

Most pilgrimages were made by city dwellers in search of a little elbow room, a backyard garden and cool breezes undisturbed by baking carpets of concrete.

What they created were clones of their past



dwellings and thousands of acres of indistinguishable bedroom villages.

THE CREATION of Southfield and Lathrup Village were a combination of politics and a real estate gateway to happiness.

Garden City is another story. Little imagination and a lot of common sense are required to envision Garden City's creation. It might have unknowingly been developed as the result of an automobile giant's company policies.

Arnold Folker plotted this area in 1921, providing large enough lots for landowners to plant gardens which would enable them to acquire food during employment droughts. Folker became Garden City's first president in 1927.

It's possible this garden concept originated in the fertile mind of Henry Ford, whose first home was moved to a lot behind the Kmart store at Middlebelt and Ford Road — also Kresge's first discount department store.

That Ford's honeymoon home exists in Garden City is pure coincidence, but auto assembly-line veterans do recall days when premium pay — such as the \$8 day — was only available to family men who followed certain company rules.

By violating the following rules, an employee lost his higher pay:

- A worker must attend church services every Sunday and a prayer meeting each week.
  - A worker must not frequent taverns or pool halls.
  - A worker must grow a vegetable garden.
- Whether these alleged company rules inspired Folker is uncertain; what is certain is that Ford

never forgot his agricultural heritage and neighborhood factories were prominent in the western suburbs.

If Ford did not hold an affinity for water power, land comprising the river flats along the Middle Rouge never would have been acquired nor have been converted to become Hines Park.

Ford — a business acquaintance of Adolph Hitler prior to World War II and himself an anti-Semite — employed company spies to enforce the discipline, according to some sources.

THERE IS NO PROOF that anti-Semitism inspired early residents of central Southfield to build an invisible wall around their community but such a wall does seem to exist and those of Jewish faith reside outside of that wall.

When traveling through this vicinity of 10½ Mile, 12 Mile and Southfield Road, it doesn't take long to discover that you can't drive from Southfield subdivisions into Lathrup Village.

You have to return to a main east-west artery. Other newly developed suburbs are now following this practice of limited access and it was all the inspiration of a very imaginative woman.

Early land speculation was practiced in the Lathrup area by Charles Mott and Walter P. Chrysler, among others. Louise Lathrup purchased 1,000 acres with her mother's help, in this center of Southfield in 1926. She created for herself (and later her real estate editor husband Charles Kelly) a mother lode of cozy tree-lined realty.

Only approved bungalows were allowed in this restrictively zoned empire called Lathrup Townsite. These California bungalows were situated on streets called San Jose, Goldengate Boulevard or Sunset Boulevard, inspired by Lathrup's visits to that state.

The village of Lathrup was incorporated in 1953 from a 1½-square mile chunk of Southfield Township in one of the slickest political maneuverings of one-upmanship.

When Charles Kelly was leaving the Oakland County courthouse after filing incorporation papers, he met Emanuel Christensen, a Southfield petitioner also seeking incorporation for his city.

If Kelly had been 30 minutes late, he and his wife, Louise, and their California bungalow residents would have found themselves residents of the city of Southfield.

OTHER LEGAL PARLAYING also enable Franklin Village, Beverly Hills and Bingham Farms to escape city limits. All of them share Southfield's roots.

A remarkable display of pioneering spirit inspired John Daniels to settle in the Southfield hills and swamps in 1823, 100 years before Louise Lathrup fantasized her hamlet. Most settlers had been avoiding this spongy ground since it represented the great swamp that explorers and surveyors insisted would continue deep into the Michigan Territory.

Originally called Southfield Centre because it lay in the southern portion of Bloomfield Township, most early settlers arrived by way of the Indian path called the Saginaw Trail (now Woodward Avenue) because the swamp was so difficult to travel.

One pioneer did come by swamp, traversing the old Shawassee path. Mose Rodgers settled along the Rouge River near present-day Beech Road.

While environmentalists decry cities of concrete, the building of 1-696's western arm in Southfield helped curb frequent flooding which existed in this marsh.

Before the existence of official flood plains and the accompanying laws, much of Southfield's construction took place on flood plains, causing a very wet life for homeowners.

A tour of the Tel-Twelve shopping area will enforce this if you notice a house built on stilts in this business area.

The name *la thrup* in old English suggests a group of country homes or a hamlet. While this is a coincidence because Lathrup is the namesake of Louise Lathrup, it's existence as a hamlet surrounded by the Southfield giant is not.

## Life can be as good as you allow it to be

It was the day after the gala time he had at the high school commencement exercises and the young graduate sat there with his diploma in his hands and suddenly realized that he now had to face the world on his own.

He made no effort to conceal that he was a bit frightened at the thought of what lay ahead in his life — and he wondered how he would fare.

He sighed as he told of the good luck some of the other members of his class had. They came from families that could afford to send them to college. He had no such luck, and with the unemployment ranks as the way they are and the economy still souring, he confided that his future looked dark.

As he sat there listening, The Stroller couldn't help recalling the day he left high school and had to go out and face the world to help feed his widowed mother and four sisters.

It was shortly after his father had passed away and things looked dark. At the time, The Stroller was head of his class in school and he was looking forward to a bright future when the loss of his father changed everything.

Then one afternoon his mother took him aside and talked very seriously about the future. And her words have never been forgotten.

"You must make up your mind," she said, "that you can't have what other boys have. But there will be a lot of enjoyment in your life if you just make the most of what you've got."

Then she hesitated to let those words sink in and went on to tell him that he should never look over the fence to see what the other fellows have.

"Don't envy anybody," she emphasized. "Their future may not be as bright as yours will be if you just make the most of your gifts and good health that the Lord gave you."

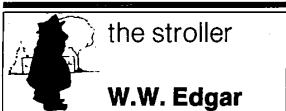
It was a very solemn moment.

It was no secret that The Stroller was heartbroken when his mother told him that he would have to leave school and go to work.

"And remember," she continued, "what you have in your head no one can steal from you. And whatever you decide to be, make every effort to be the best in your line. That's what your father would want you to do, and he'll be looking down from where he is watching you."

The very next morning, The Stroller managed to get a job as a clerk in the town grocery store. And who do you think was his first customer? His mother. She never said a word as she placed her order. But that night she asked him to go down the next morning and quit.

"You can aim higher than that," she said. "You should learn a trade. Any one, I don't care, but learn



the stroller

W.W. Edgar

a trade. That will be like going to school and you'll have it the rest of your life."

So he did. The Stroller learned the machinist trade. But every day he cursed the fates that had him working in muck and grease and wearing hob-nailed shoes.

"This is no place for me," he often murmured to himself, "and some day I'll get out of it."

That day finally came when he visited the home town newspaper office and took his first step along the journalistic trail. And he has been strolling along the river of printer's ink ever since, trying to make the most of the gifts the Lord gave him.

## It all adds up in the personals

Some folks are soap opera junkies. I'm a personal advertisement addict.

Personal ads really break me up. And you'd be surprised how much you can learn about our society in classified ad sections of most newspapers.

If you happened to catch them last week, you might have sent your favorite man a helium balloon bouquet for Father's Day. Or you'd have found out that Bongo the Gorilla would sing and deliver your message for that special occasion.

If your dad or husband is so inclined, he may have enjoyed a Bikini or Belly-Gram instead of a Gorilla-Gram or a Balloon-A-Gram.

And for the really liberal father who has everything, how about a Strip-O-Gram? A gorgeous woman would have delivered your message, practically stripped down to the last word. Gorgeous men will provide the same services for the women on your list.

Another thing I learned by reading the personals is that there's a family nudist resort in Michigan, billed for skinny dippers.

IF YOU'RE pretty and over 18, you're eligible



Jackie Klein

for the position of "Trophy Girl" for a local sporting event. Your picture would appear in five national sport papers. I didn't apply for the job because I don't agree that older is better. But I might try making the centerfold of "Popular Mechanics."

If you want to join a dating service, lose weight and stop smoking through hypnosis, have a healthy, fun-and-sun vacation sponsored by a body harmony club, locate a missing heir or get a \$1,000 reward for revealing the whereabouts of two guys who held up a gold dealer, peruse the personal columns. You'll also get a liberal education.

Couples unable to have children and willing to pay \$10,000 to a woman to carry their child — conception to be by artificial insemination — will find

someone to contact via the ads.

My second favorite classified advertisements are those placed by attorneys. Only recently has this practice been sanctioned by the legal powers that be.

You can get a divorce for the low price of \$70 — \$25 gets you started. It's a bargain you can't afford to miss, even if you're happily married.

"ATTENTION One Week Only — complete divorce \$140 (no extras) \$195 with children. If you're thinking of splitting up, rush on down to your friendly neighborhood legal service. Offer good for one week only, so don't wait."

Some attorneys specialize in slips and falls for personal injury defense. Others only take injury cases for motorcycle accidents, dog bites and assaults by drunks. Clients charged with a crime can get low rates from a few lawyers. Drunk drivers often get bargain rates too.

So if you're planning to fall and hurt yourself, get clobbered by a motorcycle, commit a crime or drive when you're smashed, consult the ads for the best deal. You too may become an ad-dict.