

## Yard work: matter of pride

WHILE ON bended knee one morning pulling weeds from the sunken garden in his front yard, The Stroller had his solitary work interrupted by a sightseer who stopped his car and called, "You've got a fine-looking place here in the woods."

Before The Stroller could accept the compliment, the sightseer added, "But it must make a slave out of you." Silence for a moment. Then The Stroller answered, "It isn't slavery if you own the place. It becomes a matter of personal pride."

The visitor smiled at this retort and said, "I couldn't do it. I have too much fun playing golf and going to other major summer attractions in the area. I have no time for weed pulling."

As the sightseer departed, The Stroller couldn't help recalling the challenge that he and his wife Leona accepted 45 years ago.

WE WERE GIVEN a chance to buy two acres of ground in the wooded area of an old abandoned farm in what was then Livonia Township.

The purchase was made for two reasons: First, it gave us the chance to say we "owned" something; second, it would be a fine place to work on and fix up for a hobby later in life.

At the time, the two acres were covered with weeds several feet high. We were told the ground hadn't been plowed in years. So the first thing to do was to get it plowed so we could see what we had.

What next? A friendly neighbor suggested we plant fruit trees, and soon we could have an orchard. So 100 little fruit trees were planted, and we were on our way to having something we could call ours.

Well, the years have gone on and on, the trees are now fully grown, and many have seen their best days. A house was built, and we began the challenging process of trying to



make something out of a bit of abandoned weeds. It was a challenge of trial and error. If we didn't like something, we changed it. You couldn't do that if you were renting.

AS THE YEARS slipped by, the words of The Stroller's mother often came back to him. Years ago when he was a mere youth, she said to him, "Make the most of what you have. Don't bother about the folks next door. Learn a trade, and you'll have something in your head that no one can steal."

The first mistake we made was to get the "orchard" plowed each year. After several seasons, the fellow with the plow quit, saying he no longer could get close to the trees.

He suggested we allow the weeds to grow, then cut them, and soon we would have grass the full length of the two acres.

That's what happened, and it has become an eye catcher. The long area of green grass interspersed with fruit trees and the little white house with the green shutters present a picture in the old wooded area that now causes sightseers to stop and pay compliments.

So weed pulling to keep the place neat and trim is far from slavery. It is a matter of personal pride.

## oral quarrel

This week's Oral Quarrel asked our readers what they would change about the U.S. Constitution if it were up to them. Following are the responses:

The senators to serve for one year with a requirement of one term out of office before they could run again. This way, they would really know what is going on out here, and power wouldn't be in the hands of somebody that has been there for 20 years and doesn't know what is going on in the rest of the country.

I would add the Equal Rights Amendment, the women's ERA.

I would pass the Equal Rights Amendment because I think it is important that it be recognized that all people, including women, are equal and their rights should not be abridged or opportunities because of sex.

Basically, there should be no changes in the Constitution of the United States, but if I had to change anything, it would be to add an amendment that takes government out of business and private affairs totally and get out of social programs. It should only protect citizens from foreign interference and military harassment or attack and make foreign policy only. Stay out of private sector.

I am not sure the Supreme Court is part of the United States Constitution, but I would like to see the elimination of the United States Supreme Court. This is a lifetime appointment that they have, and they don't have to answer to anyone.

the law, shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex. The ERA will provide citizens of all 50 states with a constitutional guarantee of legal equality and will strengthen the family unit and enhance the role of the wife by providing for the retention of legal rights after marriage, Susan B. Anthony said men, their rights and nothing more, women, their rights and nothing less.

I would change the amendment to the Constitution on abortion. I would do anything to ban abortion in this country.

Limit the term of the congressmen and senators to four years and six years, same as we limit the president to eight years.

Regarding the Constitution, it's great the way it is and probably one of the greatest documents ever written. I think our problem today is we are not enforcing it properly and we are not listening to its intent. Instead of adding multitude of laws and so forth, why don't we look at the Constitution and what it meant in the first place and stick to it?

If our American values of individual rights including the right to private property and the pursuit of one's own happiness are to be preserved, then the Constitution must never be changed but protected, understood and preserved and read.

The ERA should definitely not be added to the Constitution.

## Theater dead? Not around here

THE GREEK POET Thespis is reputed to have "invented" tragedy on stage in the 6th century B.C. But I'll betcha' cave people entertained themselves with comedy and tragedy before that.

Every year the demise of live theater is gloomily predicted.

Don't you believe it! When movies, records and radio were invented, the doom-sayers thought they would threaten live theater. Television brought the same pessimism and now there's cable TV.

Theater flourishes in our high schools — in West Bloomfield, Farmington, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Troy, Southfield, Rochester and all over.

Rochester High School, for example, recently initiated a number of its students into the International Thespian Society. These young people's motto is, "Act well your part, there all honor lies."

What impressed me was these thespians are recognized for more than appearing on stage. Some usher, some paint scenery, some are promoters, ticket sellers or assistant directors. Their teachers not only act as their directors and producers, but, even more importantly, are supportive of all the talents the theater demands.

Groups like these are staging plays all over the country. The Rochester group lighted candles to recognize the contributions of writers, artists, musicians and dancers to their craft.

I THOUGHT OF this while watching the televised Tony awards honoring the best of Broadway's 49 productions last year.

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It's all theater — dinner theater, backyard theater or tent theater.

Go sit in a courtroom or watch a newscast. They're theater, too. In a way, we're all on stage the minute we leave our houses.

Nothing makes a point better than a little dramatization.

Mary Lou Callaway

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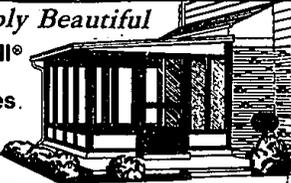


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We still need the Equal Rights Amendment, which would provide equality of rights under



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