

Observing the Scene County Home Rule; A N.Y. Dutchman

By MYRA CHANDLER

Are you in favor of County Home Rule?
Do you know what County Home Rule is? Six out of 10 persons to whom I asked this question this week said they didn't. And yet, should it come to pass, it would greatly affect all of our lives.

In its purest form, county home rule would streamline a home-rule government. This is exactly how our county government was geared. People couldn't always get to the state capital in their horse and buggy and so county seats of government were established.

A lot of other things have changed. In the past 150 years, but county government goes on in the same old fashion... duplicating services because, as the cities and townships grew up they began to provide their own.

Streamlining (remember, in pure fashion) would establish a sort of "County Mayor" as well as a governing body representing individual districts throughout the county, probably a Board of no more than 38 members. It would build down approximately 170 agencies into a compact form.

The responsibilities, now duplicated, which the Board could assume, might include roads, water and sewer service, air and water pollution, public safety, garbage collection and sanitation, to name a few.

So much for the pure form...

Unfortunately, however, County Home Rule is the most tangled web of legislation ever styled in committees, as it was in the Legislature last year. Originally, Governor George Romney's County Home Rule Bill had the support of the League of Women Voters when it was introduced last year, but by the time pressure groups got through watering it down, the bill couldn't even be recognized by its own mother (in this case, its father). And so it died, by one vote.

Why was it weakened so?
Politicians, who aren't statesmen, want to protect the status quo. They don't want to let it all go. They don't want the next election, rather than how it will affect the community.

Now, it's starting all over again.
Last week, the Committee of Chairmen of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors sent a proposed draft of County Home Rule to the Towns and Counties Committee of the State Legislature. The entire Board of Supervisors hadn't seen it when it was sent out. Strange.

Supervisor Jack McDonald (R) of Redford Township said he objected to it "disfranchising" Republicans in the county" through his partisan election proposal. Then, within the same meeting, he moved his unanimous adoption. Why? Maybe because he wanted to elect the chairman of the Board so he could be elected his chairman next Thursday.

What McDonald objected to (but didn't stick with) are a few amendments sent along with the bill, some of which we find objectionable.

- Provide for partisan election of the Charter Commission which would draw up the new County "constitution";
- Compel the partisan election of the new legislative body to be created by the Charter Commission; an experiment for the present 12-member Board of Supervisors (the League of Women Voters was adamant in its belief that this should be a non-partisan body); and
- Require the consent of the legislative bodies of local cities and townships before the County could take over any new service being performed by a local government.

The last would be all right — if it weren't for a ringer which reads as follows:

... or by the authorization of a majority vote of the electors of the county voting thereon."

In plain English — if Livonia or Redford didn't go along with a County proposal to take over services, a majority vote of the residents of the County-at-large could do the trick. Call it self-preserving, selfish, Ayn Randism, or any other name — but suburbia does not want to take over Detroit's giant welfare problem... or... program — and this is one agency Detroit would want to share with its out-county cousins, namely us in Livonia, Plymouth and Redford Township.

Francis W. Beeson (D) from Muskegon is the new County Committee Chairman in Lansing. If this legislation is to come out of committee to be voted on this session, he will be an important person to listen for. James Tierney (D), Representative from Plymouth, is on the committee.

Delos Hamlin, Chairman of the Oakland County Board of Supervisors from Farmington, said last week he expected to see county home rule and reapportionment come out of this year's legislative session; which would, of course, also affect Oakland county. "Michigan county government is a rural government. It's still suitable for a lot of upstate counties, but it's no longer adequate for counties like Oakland." He said also the Wayne County bill is all right in theory, but needs "major surgery" and he has observed the scene at Supervisor for 23 years, the last nine as chairman of the board. He also favors non-partisanship, at least, for the charter commission.

County government in its present form is a luxury we neither need nor can afford.

William L. Oltmans, Dutch correspondent and Livonia's Town Hall speaker last week was something else again. I'll bet many a lady went in to her dinner table that evening saying what a delightful speaker she had heard that morning, so stimulating! He was. He was beautiful — he trilled his R's with the alacrity of a cross between a ski-jumper and an operatic tenor. And he did stimulate the ladies' thinking.

HOWEVER, he was also glib, touched lightly on many serious subjects, too lightly for fatalism. Oh, he made absolute sense on many items — stressing the importance of educating our youth in how they live; the hypocrisy in the U.N.; the importance of talking instead of shooting.

Part of the area where we parted company was his telling me the charms of Sukarno of Indonesia. And his absolute sophisticated view of the United States, both on the podium and in a later interview, where he frankly thought America stupid for always "betting on the wrong horse, for example General Chiang Kai-Shek in Taiwan (Formosa). And wrong for not embracing the French — and getting out of Viet Nam as they did — when they couldn't win, they left.

"Why does America always take up the ruin? Ach — I don't understand," says he.

Of course you don't, Dutchman — as the correspondent for 12 Dutch newspapers — you know a good county to live in. Yes, William L. Oltmans lives in New York, New York, U.S.A.

The United States is the number one world power for one reason. We work for freedom for people everywhere. We cannot stand to see any man go to bed hungry, cold or wet or sick; we spend billions to improve the lives of other mortals in trying to build a world that would be pleasing in the eyes of God. Maybe this is why we are a world power — and France — the smart one has the world image of being scheming, cratty and selfish — and a second rate nation.

Arthur Gotts Elected New Kiwanis Leader

Arthur Gotts has been selected president of the Livonia Central Kiwanis Club.

Others elected include Carl E. Wright, first vice-president; John Moore, second vice-president; Don Schneider, treasurer; and Robert Luter, secretary. Gordon Priest is the retiring president.

The Kiwanians meet each Tuesday at noon at the Livonia Penthouse, 21735 Plymouth Rd. and the membership consists of business, institutional and professional men in the Livonia area.

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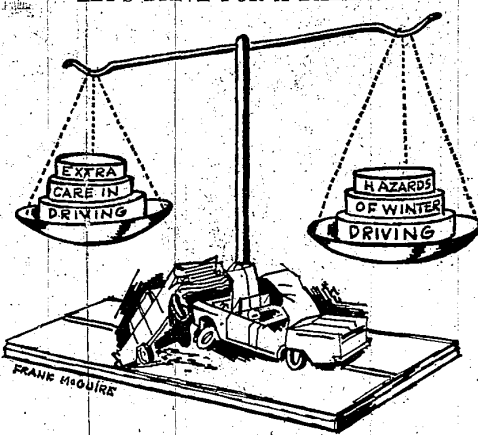
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LET'S DRIVE FOR A BALANCE



READER SPEAKS UP: Hot Lunch - Who Pays?

Editor:
There are very few schools that do not participate in the federally subsidized lunch program. The cost of lunch programs in schools is paid for from funds received from the children who buy their lunches, the five cents per lunch provided by the Federal government (approximately one cent for milk only), and surplus commodities which are received from the federal government. The cost of the surplus commodities is approximately five cents per pound. The reference recently made regarding charity, therefore, is not true.

One can check the records of Clarenceville School District and find no evidence that local tax monies were spent for the food and the labor directly related to the lunch program. The monies received from the sources mentioned above — the pupils and the government — plus the surplus commodities received from government surplus, have made it possible, with careful planning by persons involved in the lunch program, to enable youngsters to obtain a hot lunch at noon and yet not use local tax dollars for the payment of it.

It is evident from the letter by "A Taxpayer Who Asks No Charity—Just a Change to Live" that perhaps some people have not had an opportunity to really receive full information regarding the operation of school lunch programs. The Board of Education of Clarenceville School District and the administration appreciate the opportunity of being able to present the information above so that the people, not only in this school district, but in other school districts, may have a better idea of how the program is operated.

L. F. SCHMIDT,
Superintendent

For Ed Kennedy

Editor:
It is my sincere wish that you print this letter — where in the paper this is done, I leave to your discretion.

I'd like to say a word about Edward Kennedy, Redford Township Treasurer.

What happened in Lansing is old news now. What is important now is the understanding, or the lack of it, we each afford his family — abd Ed.

I believe in the basic good in people. I believe in the concern Redford residents have for their community and their own citizens. I can't believe that a week's end's activity, however one would care to express it, erases a lifetime of civic concern, caring, good neighborliness, friendliness, fortitude, and honest good citizenship which has been exemplified.

I've known Ed Kennedy for almost six years. During that time I've met a single time Ed ever turned down a request to be of help. He gave of his time to his community when physically he should not have. He gave of himself when there was little left to give. He spread his arms widely through his community — but he gained a wealth of respect and a multitude of friends — and the satisfaction that he did all he

could to better his community. He has a fine wife, a host of children, the boys almost numbering a baseball team — and it is my wish that the next time these children read a paper — it is this edition. For I'd like to give them the knowledge that because our mistakes or misfortunes become news — makes us not less a responsible person — merely a little less fortunate.

And human. And I would have them remember the hearts of many in this Township that ache with them, for what they all are going through — and tell Tom Kennedy, who had an especially difficult time going to school the day the news "hit" the papers, to hold his head a little higher, his chin a little firmer. His dad is still a great guy to more than just be.

I'm proud to know Ed Kennedy as a neighbor and friend — and as soon as he can return, I'll be just as proud to have him as Treasurer of this Township. He won that office by a majority vote of the people — and I hope many will realize that perhaps now is the time to give a little in return — to a man that has given much.

Hospital Probe

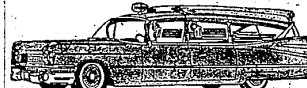
Editor:
The article which you ran on the tragic death of my father, after his mistreatment and lack of treatment at Wayne County General Hospital, has stirred considerable sympathetic comment in the community. A number of people have called, including a Farmington City official.

He told us that he had a similar complaint against Wayne County General. He said he had contacted his lawyer, to see what legal action he can take.

I am still hoping for an investigation into the conditions at the hospital, so that what happened to my father will never happen to anyone else.

MRS. H. O. MARTIN
Farmington Township

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THAT'S THE WAY IT IS
Only one man in a thousand, plagued by this predicament does something about it — in time. But those who do often choose the same remarkable leap taken by nearly 1,000,000 other men and women: Dale Carnegie training. This is the practical education program which quickly helps a man to assess his own abilities, make a personal plan for progress.

Why not look into Dale Carnegie training and see for yourself how it can help you avoid or overcome mid-career crisis? The opportunity to do this is not always available — but we have arranged a way to show men who want to get ahead what the Dale Carnegie Course is like. Be our guest!

FREE!

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Voters—It's Up To You: Open Space Or Density?

Livonia's City Council took a sensible step Wednesday when it approved a \$4.4 million parks and recreation bond issue for inclusion on the April 15 ballot. The Observer supported a similar proposal last fall, and does so again without hesitation.

In a nutshell, voters are being asked to set aside \$4.4 million for the purchase of bonds to buy up to 1200 or more acres of new land for park development.

Last November, 57 per cent of Livonia voters said "yes" to the question. This spring, if a few more pull the affirmative lever, the 60 per cent level necessary to pass the issue will be reached.

Why a "yes" vote?

No greater need exists in the suburbs than that of providing our residents—from young people to senior citizens alike—with adequate recreation facilities. The outcome of the fight against juvenile delinquency, and the need to give senior citizens a meaningful life in retirement, rests largely on the productive environment offered them.

That Livonians will have these productive surroundings as our population barrels upward to 200,000 and, as automation gives us more leisure time, is a number one on our list of community goals.

Other fast-growing suburbs could take this to heart. Now is the time to develop a master park plan in communities like Plymouth and Farmington Townships, where so much vacant land exists today. It's regrettable that Redford Township failed to plan for parks 15 years ago. That community reached its saturation level with only a little vacant land left for recreation use.

At Wednesday's meeting, two Councilmen voted "no" on putting the issue before voters. They asserted their case on the point that specific plans for land purchase should be made available before citizens are asked to vote on the issue.

Council President Rudolf Kleinfert correctly reminded the Council, however, that its only function was to decide whether or not to allow voters the right to pass judgment on

the issue—not to make the final judgement itself.

We expect that Livonians will be hearing both pro- and anti-arguments in the weeks to come. We would ask, therefore, that voters bear in mind their future.

The Parks Commission has proposed a tentative land purchase plan. They hope to buy 1200 acres of land for parks. And, after a city-wide survey, they've listed the acreage they hope to get.

• When you vote April 15, you won't know for certain what land will eventually be purchased for parks. What Livonians are being asked to support is the community principle of setting aside \$4.4 million for parks development in general. Nobody can guarantee that every single acre of land now listed by the Commission will be bought—and the Commission will make a darn hard and honest attempt to get it.

• And, finally, as a safeguard—the Council will have the last say on every single acre that's proposed for purchase. City attorneys advise that the Council can't buy more than the \$4.4 million bond issue as is needed has to be sold each time a land parcel is proposed. And, again, the Council has tight control over how the money is spent. No land will be bought without the majority's approval.

As an added inducement, one-third of the \$4.4 million is expected to be provided by a federal grant under the Open Space Land Program. And, to top even this, the \$4.4 million bond issue as is needed has to be sold each time a land parcel is proposed. And, again, the Council has tight control over how the money is spent. No land will be bought without the majority's approval.

Wrapping it up, Livonia voters hold in their hands a decision on what kind of future community they wish to build. Will it be one of homes, stores and factories alone? Or will it be one where green, open spaces, golf courses, swimming pools, and cultural centers provide the creative and recreational environment our people need?

For the 71 cents per \$1000 valuation that this program will cost, we can't think of a better investment for Livonians.

We urge a "yes" vote.

DAVID ELSILA

Is 'Me Tooism' Here To Stay?

Gov. George Romney's "State of the State" address, Neil Staeble's high praise of it, and the Democratic claim that Romney lifted their platform, is another example of the fact that there exists in this country a broad consensus of opinion in favor of liberal, progressive, moderate government.

As Walter Lippmann often reminds us, the big majority of the American electorate inhabits the middle of the road.

The great and successful political figures of this generation—Stromberg, Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, and Eisenhower—have been men of the middle. They have been liberal

and progressive. At the same time they have been conservative and moderate. Conservative in perpetuating the eternal verities of our democracy, and moderate for fear of tearing the precious fabric of that democracy.

"Me tooism" is not, as Barry Goldwater has stated, a political ideal. The liberal Republican and the Democratic platforms are very similar, because they are responses to the needs and desires of the majority. George Romney and Neil Staeble both know this. All who would seek high elective office in this country had better keep it in mind.

ALLEN ROSENFIELD

THE BEST OF PAUL CHANDLER A Newspaper's Pledge

(Editor's Note: The Observer concludes the current series of "The Best of Paul Chandler" today by reprinting the first "Facts and Opinions" column ever to appear, published on Jan. 1956. Paul Chandler's statement of what should guide the contents of a suburban newspaper is one which he followed throughout his life on this newspaper. The staff of the Observer pledges to continue to uphold it.)

LAST WEEK in these columns Sterling Eaton explained the reasons why he had sold two of Wayne County's finest community newspapers. It is proper now that the new publisher outline the thinking which he brings to the community.

It is well understood that the transfer of a newspaper is considerably more than a naked business transaction. It is the transfer of a trust. A newspaper is an absolutely indispensable service organization—it informs its people and it sells goods for its businessmen. It has the responsibility of telling the truth, regardless of how it might affect the annual balance sheet. An ethical newspaperman comes to a community dedicated to the idea that he will serve it in the best way he knows how. To anyone trained in journalism, that kind of work is its own reward.

We embark on the job with that idea firmly in our heads.

In the particular case of Plymouth and Livonia at this moment, there is an additional thrill contained in operating the newspapers. Our communities are growing so rapidly that only agile minds are able to grasp the vastness of the thing. The steady rumble of the moving van toward the suburbs is the most amazing social movement of the current era. Whole social units—with governments, schools, homes, streets, sewers, stores, parks, and all the rest—are rising overnight on wheels before had been flat acreage. In some ways,

there is a pioneer feel to the trend not unlike that of the infant days of our nation when the forefathers pounded westward, ultimately stopping to stake out the main street of their new home town.

The challenge of Plymouth and Livonia's growth today we take as our own. We are going to provide newspapers—growing newspapers—worthy of the cities of these cities.

SO WHAT, specifically, is the policy?

It is to cram our newspapers, from front to back, with LOCAL news, news that no other paper or journal possibly can provide for our readers, but for which they hunger. Our readers are adjusting our youth in how they live; the hypocrisy in the U.N.; the importance of talking instead of shooting.

Part of the area where we parted company was his telling me the charms of Sukarno of Indonesia. And his absolute sophisticated view of the United States, both on the podium and in a later interview, where he frankly thought America stupid for always "betting on the wrong horse, for example General Chiang Kai-Shek in Taiwan (Formosa). And wrong for not embracing the French — and getting out of Viet Nam as they did — when they couldn't win, they left.

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In advertising, we have the weapons to help OUR advertisers in the earning of profits. This is their newspaper, going to the customers located closest to them, and mutually we are bound with another. A customer who reads a newspaper is a trusted messenger—an adviser who places his message through automatically gains intimate contact and personal confidence from his most logical customers.

Inevitably, the question arises about the publisher's politics. We are independent, in the purest sense of the word. We select our candidates as they come along. We are not pre-committed to a party or label, but, fear not, there will be no fence-straddling.

The Kiwanians meet each Tuesday at noon at the Livonia Penthouse, 21735 Plymouth Rd. and the membership consists of business, institutional and professional men in the Livonia area.

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