

Conversation with the Mayor January 5, 2009

Vicky Daly

A New Year Brings New Concerns

The juxtaposition of the holiday season and the start of the new year has always struck me as interesting. There are historical reasons as to how this happens to be, but I have my own theory, which has absolutely no research to support it. The holidays, at their best, provide a shot-in-the-arm at the end of the year to prepare us for the new year and the demands it will place upon us. Priorities change, as do work schedules during the last two weeks in December. Try to find someone in an office during this time, especially on Fridays, and you'll agree. Family and friends gather to celebrate the season and the fact that they are together. People seem to recharge.

That was just a few weeks ago and now we are in an entirely different place. January presents a clean slate and an opportunity to make changes and/or to reinforce habits in the making. There is a different kind of energy in January. Almost anything seems possible.

Your Village Board needs that energy because January is a month of preparation. In addition to the everyday business of the village, we are in the early stages of budget preparation. With the assistance of our financial advisor, Roy McMaster, we will construct over the next two and a half months a budget for the 2009-2010 village year. Our department heads have already begun the process by preparing their individual budgets. We will meet with each one individually to scrutinize, line by line, the requests, seeing where collaboration with other departments or other approaches may be possible. An adage I remember from my grandparents comes to mind here, '*Use it up; Wear it out; Make do; Do without.*'

The information from the departments plus that from Mr. McMaster in those areas over which we have no control - health costs, pensions, workman's comp, etc, will be our starting point for the most difficult task the Village Board faces, creating the actual budget which will determine the tax levy and, ultimately the tax rate for the coming year. To reach that point, we spend hours and hours and hours going through the budget line by line determining where cuts can be made. As village taxpayers all, we are very much aware of the tax burden on our fellow residents, but recognize also that we are entrusted with providing services to protect the health and safety of our people and to protect the quality of life in the

village. Rest assured that none of us enjoy this exercise. It is difficult and painful because we have to make major decisions. Everyone has to give for the greater good. On my office wall is a political cartoon which says "How to Pass a Budget - A. Listen; B. Compromise; C. Close the Deal."

All of this is done in open session and the public is urged to come and listen. We will have already met with three of our department heads by the time you read this, but here is the rest of the budget prep schedule:

Thursday, January 15	6:30 PM
Monday, February 2	6:00 PM
Monday, February 16	6:00 PM
Monday, March 2	6:00 PM

PUBLIC HEARING: Monday, March 16 6:00 PM

All meetings will be in the Village Hall.

And when you join us, take a moment to admire the Palmyra History display in the hallway show case. Vintage postcards may jog your memory of the village in another time. Arrangement, Mary Piccola; Images, Ken Bradstreet.