

Conversation with the Mayor - October 4, 2010
Vicky Daly

One Balloon Popped

Never one to let misconceptions and erroneous rumors to go unquenched, I must speak to a rumor that is making the rounds. The rumor is that because Finger Lakes Ambulance Service is now answering calls in Palmyra village and town there will be a noticeable decrease in village and town taxes because we will no longer be supporting a local ambulance corps. It is a logical supposition, but it isn't so – and here is why.

Since the founding of the ambulance service as part of the Palmyra Fire Department years ago, the people of the town and village have been recipients of a huge, ongoing gift from the Palmyra Fire Company and most of us didn't realize it. In fact, many people don't realize that the Palmyra Fire Department and the Palmyra Fire Company are two totally separate organizations. True, the membership of the two is identical, but the organizations are distinct. The Palmyra Fire Department is a department of the Palmyra Village government like Highway, Buildings & Grounds and the Police Department. Members of the Fire Department, of course, are volunteers, not employees. The Palmyra Fire Company is a private, 501c3, charitable organization that supports the fire department and, until August 31st, the ambulance squad. It is not part of village government. Its funding comes from bequests and fundraisers. It is from the Company that you receive the annual request for support, not the village Fire Department.

If one were to go back to the founding of the ambulance service and calculate just how much money the company has put into supporting the ambulance service, the number would be staggering. It is enough to say that it was the Company which funded the ambulances which they then sold to the village for a pittance. It was also the Company which stocked the ambulances with equipment and consumable supplies – for years. So what have the town and village taxpayers paid for? Housing the ambulances in the fire hall, insuring them, maintaining them, and fuel. The wages of a part time mechanic who services both the fire trucks and ambulances was also part of the cost. The fire hall will still have to be heated; the mechanic will still tend to minor needs with the fire trucks; the difference in insurance premiums will be minimal if any. There will be a reduction in the number of gallons of fuel used, but with the cost of fuel, it may very well not even be a savings. So, as a radio personality from many, many years ago once said 'Tain't so, McGee'.

When you see a member of the Fire Department, who is also a member of the Company, say thank you. They have provided an incalculable gift to Palmyra for a very long time.

What is so that on Thursday, October 21st you could have the distinct pleasure of hearing Dr. Judith Wellman, Professor Emerita, SUNY Oswego, present **The Struggle for Equal Rights in America: The Underground Railroad, Abolition & African American Life in Wayne County**. Dr. Wellman's talk, which is brought to you by the Palmyra Historic Preservation Commission as part of its 9th Period History Class series will be in the Village Hall at 7:00 PM. Admission is free. Join us if you can. You will be glad you did.

And, finally, a request from Chief Dalton: Please lock your cars, even in your own driveways or in front of your home. An unlocked vehicle can be just too much temptation for people with too much time on their hands and a questionable sense of right and wrong.