

Conversation with the Mayor March 19, 2007

Vicky Daly

It's Funny How One Thing Leads to Another

Eleventh graders throughout Rotary District 7120 are finishing up an oratorical competition which could net the winner a \$30,000.00 college scholarship. The topic on which all the contestants spoke was 'The Role of Ethics in the Life I Plan to Lead'. It is a marvelous contest for many reasons, but the reason I cite it is the wording of the topic. The planning committee which created the oratorical contest spent an extended period of time discussing the wording - '..will lead...', '...hope to lead...', "...plan to lead...". Each one says something different. We went for planning.

The fact is, though, that few of us, no matter how thorough and precise the planning, find ourselves living the life we planned to lead. There are just too many situations over which we have absolutely no control. That is not necessarily a bad thing. Good things happen, too, and if we ignore the opportunities they present, we will miss out. The same is true of communities. Specifically, Palmyra is not the community it was when my grandfather worked at Garlock. Nor is it the community it was when we moved here in 1960. It isn't even the same place it was when our children were graduated from Pal-Mac. It has continued to evolve and to change, and, I think, to improve.

Palmyra, in its hey day, was an Erie Canal village of note, the busy, bustling center of the region. 'Queen of Canal Towns' was an appropriate nickname. Time moved on. The railroads prospered. Cars replaced horses. Rochester grew to be the hub for the area. Strip malls and big box stores came into existence. But, guess what? Palmyra is back to being known throughout the region and state as an Erie Canal community of note. How did that happen? Opportunities to be part of the statewide effort to revitalize the canal and its communities were offered and we said yes. We work with the NYS Canal Corporation; the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission (hereafter known as 'the feds' for obvious reasons), and the Western Erie Canal Alliance.

Besides our location on the Erie Canal, our niche shops and world class museums, our virtually intact nineteenth century business district is a major draw. No one else has what we have. Who says so? The Landmark Society of Western New York; The Preservation League of NY; Western Erie Alliance. You don't need to take my word for it.

If you want to hear specifics, do plan to join us at the Palmyra Fire Hall on Sunday afternoon, April 22, 2:00 PM, to hear Cynthia Howk, Landmark Society, give a presentation entitled "Discover Palmyra: 200 Years of Historic Architecture". It is free and should be great. Finish up the afternoon at Historic Palmyra's Annual Spaghetti Dinner fund-raiser at the Alling Coverlet Museum, another historic site. Palmyra is full of them and each and every one is an asset which draws people to Palmyra. Tourists coming not only makes us proud of our community, it brings outside money into it. Who'd

have thought that the Erie Canal plus historic buildings housing unique shops would translate into economic development? It will if we seize the opportunities we are offered to make that happen.