

COMMUNITY

I'm sure if I could ask each of you individually what a community was I would get a number of answers. People living together in a common area would be one answer. A geographic area such as a city, town or township or County for that matter, would be another. There are numerous definitions in the dictionary and I agree with them all. However, it seems to me that the geographic, people of common back grounds and other definitions miss that intangible feeling of belonging and common concern that you find in a good community like ours.

How do you otherwise explain the reactions of people who, with genuine concern and even grief signed petitions and wore ribbons to express our support for the Black River Cheese Company? The main topic of conversation was - "will they rebuild?" This was always accompanied by the genuine wish that they would but also an expression of understanding that it is difficult to run a small business against the competition of major industries.

Even my son called from Toronto to enquire about the future. He always buys Black River Cheese when he visits and we always take some when we visit the children. As a matter of fact Valerie says Black River Cheese is the secret to her famous cheese straws which our children and grand children seem to inhale when she makes them. I'm sure our friends and neighbours heaved a great sigh of happiness when the decision to rebuild was taken.

This is not only good for our local community but also for the County as a whole. It is a magnet that attracts visitors and permits them to see our beautiful County, meet it's friendly citizens and cause in them a feeling of envy that we, will stay in this splendid place while they have to return to other locations.

I'm sure we're not unique here but I remember with victorious fondness the battle for Mt. Tabor and fairness in garbage collection. An acquaintance, not from this township said to me one day; "you have to be real careful in South Marysburgh: if you try to do something they don't like they present a formidable united front and won't rest until they feel justice has been done".

This applies to many things in the township. The way charities are supported, the benefits held for families that have suffered setbacks and the concern for neighbours. Of course not everyone agrees with everyone else on

everything but that's what helps to make a community. When strangers have the temerity to join in a local discussion of differences, the two disagreeing parties will suddenly agree that this interlopers input is not really wanted.

I thought of this on many occasions since September when the reaction, grief and phenomenal growth of community spirit in New York City became apparent. This huge city whose residents were usually defined as being too business oriented to behave as humans, became a caring, friendly and helpful spot.

It's difficult I think to put your finger on this "community spirit". It's pride in our facilities, schools, churches museum, library, fall fair, shed parties, theatre and most of all, I suppose citizen involvement.

By the way, some of you are aware of the activities going on at St. Philip's church in Milford. The congregation, last summer, decided, among other things to beautify the grounds of the church. To date the parking lot has been paved, foundation walls protected by white river stone, flowerbeds prepared, stone walkway built and the stone walls and steps of a memorial garden prepared. This rapid progress has been due not only to the fine weather we've been having but also to the work of the paving contractor and the design talent and hard work of Jason Morris and his crew from Four Seasons Landscaping.

The idea behind the Memorial Garden was to provide a quiet spot for sitting, contemplating and communicating with nature. Valerie had a plaque once that said "you're closer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth" and I think sometimes this is true. What better than a garden spot for the community to enjoy on the grounds of one of God's houses.

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