

Conversation with the Mayor - May 17, 2010  
Vicky Daly

**“That is not us”**

Usually these conversations are relatively easy to write. You suspected that, right? I have an idea, let it sit a little while, write, and then circulate it within the office and at home for critiques, and then, suggestions incorporated – or not, send it along to the paper. That isn't happening this time.

The idea is there. The concern is real, but putting it together is harder than expected. That may be true because I believe that this is a more serious matter than usually addressed here. This column normally deals with what Don Alhart calls the 'bright spot' or addresses specific village related matters that may need clarification. The bright spot columns are the easiest to write in part because they show us at our best – the volunteers, the Scouts, the many, many collaborations and helping hand situations in Palmyra. The explaining and clarifying is part of my job as mayor. The residents and taxpayers of any community need to know and are entitled to that knowledge. And then, of course, I am a retired librarian and firmly believe that information should be shared.

The serious matter that alarms me is the level of discourse, how people speak to and about each other that grows more and more prevalent in this country. Perhaps I should say sinks, lower and lower. My grandmother called it gutter talk. To my mind, the language that comes out of a person's mouth says more about the speaker than the person or group spoken to or about.

We are in a difficult economic time and fear and anger can perhaps cause this lowering of standards when, in reality, this is a time to do just the opposite. Rudeness, nastiness, vulgarity in person, in unsigned letters, in the social media, cannot be unsaid or undone. Nursery rhyme aside, words do hurt and can take longer to heal than broken bones. The example adults set for our children when this language is heard far outweighs adult injunctions not to use it.

This is a lovely community in a beautiful county where most people are working very hard to make things better for themselves, their families and neighbors. The foul mouth folks are few, but like the scratch on the brand new car, they stand out. Let's be able to say, when this topic is discussed, as it is frequently, but “that is not us.”