

## **JUST ME, OR DO YOU, TOO, SEE MORE ROAD RUDENESS?**

**August 19, 2003**

The older we get, the more aware we become of how things change. Younger people are not nearly as aware of that fact. It takes a while for the full impact of that statement to sink in.

Those of us who have lived away from areas where we were born and brought up after years of absence know it full well. The same holds true for those who have spent all of their long lives in the same area.

Generally speaking, most things change for the better. As hard as it is for many old-timers to admit, it's true. It's a little like your army days; we only remember the good times.

I was reminded if it awhile back when talking with a real Old Forge original. He talked about cathing lake trout and whitefish by the bushel as a kid and selling them to the summer visitors. In the fall they canned venison and salted down the fish in brine. His narrative was couched in words that let the listeners know it was a necessary part of their diet. They could afford little else. I have heard the same story repeated over and over again by all of the old North Country natives.

I know it's true, for it echoed much of my own upbringing. We took no more than was necessary and wasted nothing. The answer to one old-timer as to the best time to shoot a rabbit was when you see it. Thankfully, those days are behind us and we can all afford to vary our diet and provide sustenance for our families much easier than in those days. As one old native opined, "It's a wonder we didn't sprout horns from eating so much venison."

Notable to me is how the topics of conversation have been transformed as well. Among locals it centers around the great influx of tourists and summer residents. Not all of the comments are complimentary and have some merit as such.

In the winter months it's safety concerns about snowmobiles and nearly year around about highway safety. Route 28 from Old Forge to Alder Creek and Moose River Road from McKeever to Port Leyden are becoming more dangerous with each passing year.

How many reading this have had to take to the shoulder of the road as some idiot tears around you or others over solid single or double lines? I have had people pass me on a daily basis when I have been driving the speed limit where it is not permitted or necessary. So have you.

Excuse me if I display the same decorum those jerks do in stating how I feel about the danger they place others in. Friend Gary Lee has tried diplomacy in addressing this issue in his column. I will not be so forgiving in my assessment of the situation. It is much more pronounced with increased seasonal traffic. The overwhelming evidence points to seasonal visitors as being the bulk of the transgressors. Local businesses depend on their patronage for their livelihood. They tend to be much more forgiving than I of people who trample on the rights of the rest of us. I say if you do so, stay the hell away.

This is becoming an escalating problem and should be the primary focus of our elected officials and citizens groups. It should take precedence over everything else.

What say you? Tell me where I am going wrong.

