

Pride in Ownership

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It's the end of April as I write this. I was out raking my lawn before it snowed again, cleaning up a winters worth of schmeg. When I thought to myself "the yards lookin' pretty good". Why not rake the whole yard this spring, not just the bad areas". My chest starts to swell. I'm proud of the way the yard is looking. Then my son came out

and said, "ya know dad. Where you've raked doesn't look any different from where you haven't". MAN! Talk about takin' the sail out of your wind. With my ego slightly bruised, I continued raking. I knew I was making a difference, making our home look better. I knew at the end of the day I could sit back, look over my yard, and feel good about myself, knowing I did an honest days work the best I possibly could.

When I was running a plant, I felt much of that same pride. As an employee of the Town, I considered myself part owner of the plant, and, as part owner, it was my responsibility to not only operate, but also maintain the plant to the best of my abilities. I didn't get a lot of "attaboys", but then again, I didn't really seek them. On the contrary, I got a lot of "why are you doing?" or "what are you doing?" or "how come?". Now, you may think that was an awful blow to my confidence, and it was, but the ultimate critic, the DEC, was satisfied with my performance. That little bit of recognition was all I needed to keep my chest swelled, knowing that as part owner, I WAS doing the best I possibly could.

I could hire a landscaping contractor to come in and take care of MY yard. It would be a heck of a lot easier on me. I'd come home after being on the road and have the lawn cut, the gardens wed, etc. Oh, wouldn't it be great! But then again, is it really MY yard?

Each year the New York Rural Water Association honors a wastewater treatment plant operator and a wastewater treatment plant. One of the things we look for is that "pride in ownership". We look for that operator that considers his/her job as more than just a job, who feel they have a stake or "ownership" in that plant. Those who take pride in the job they do and the service they provide to their community. With regard to wastewater treatment plants, we look for those that not only consistently meet permit, but also are well kept and pro-active. These plants are reflective of the people that staff them, as well as the people that are responsible for their fiscal health. Do you feel your chest beginning to swell? Perhaps you should. DEC and APA have similar awards both statewide and nationwide. Pride in

ownership, it does pay off. Somebody does notice. We notice.

My son says pride will kill you. He is 16 and knows everything, while I, on the other hand, am 43 (almost) and dumber than a box of rocks. He is referring, of course, to pride being one of the seven deadly sins (quick can you name the other six?). The only way pride can kill you is if it gets in the way of rational thinking. Do your job to the best of your abilities. Don't be arrogant. Take criticism, any criticism, and learn from it. Be proud of the job you do. Take pride in owning part of the community.

As for me, I'm going to keep raking (when the snow is gone), then plant the garden, then weed, cut the grass, harvest the garden, SHOVEL SNOW. But, hey. It's MINE. ♠

(Envy, Anger, Sloth, Greed, Gluttony and Lust)

