

The Passing Of A Good Friend

by Lynne Belluscio

Wednesday morning I had stopped on my way to work to pick up some bottled water before I headed to school to teach "*Jack Be Nimble*", our program on early lighting. Just as I was leaving the store, I ran into Bruno DiFazio. "Did you hear about Seely?" "No. What happened?" "I don't know for sure, but I heard he collapsed and he didn't make it." "No. That can't be true!"

Well, when I got to work later that morning, Ruth Harvie confirmed the story. She had gotten a phone call the night before. "You know, Ruth, if you believe in coincidence, yesterday I was trying to catch up on accessioning donations into the collection and had come to some of Seely's latest "treasures." He would walk into the library with a pile of stuff under his arm. "Oh what treasures I have for you." He would say with that smile of his. And through the years there were lots of treasures. The collection that I went through on Tuesday included three large scrapbooks of photos and clipping from Union Steel Chest Company. I thumbed through them and wrapped them up and sent them up to the archives for safe keeping. And he had brought in some photographs. He was always snapping pictures in town - of Larry Reid's office before it was torn down for the new fire hall - Vic Blood's old building before it was torn down - the construction on



the new walk bridge - the power plant at the Jell-O factory. The pictures would arrive in an envelope, with dates and descriptions and we would carefully file them for posterity.

Seely was like that. He had a real sense of the need to capture the disappearing landscape. He knew the importance of saving the important - and sometimes mundane for the future. I am convinced he was a pack rat with a purpose. When Fleet Bank was cleaning out their vault, he made sure that the Historical Society received the second copy of the 1940 Book.

One of the things that was on my bucket list was to get Seely together with Ozzie Weigle in Rochester. Ozzie was the photographer for the 1940 book and I knew that Seely would be able to ask the right questions to get the stories, but now I will regret my procrastination.

There weren't too many

people who lived in Le Roy that Seely didn't know or know about. When we received a huge collection of photographs from the Woodward family, Seely took them out with him to Arizona and stopped to see Bill Woodward. Bill spent quite a bit of time identifying the people in the photos. When I told Seely that we were going to do an exhibit about aprons this coming summer, he provided a picture of his mother, in the kitchen with her apron. When I asked him if he had the apron, he laughed and said he probably did, but wouldn't know where to look. That's how I got the photograph of him on the 1908 Cadillac. I was getting ready to assemble the new transportation exhibit, and was doing research on the Cadillac. He came in one day with the picture of him on the front seat. He remembered that Mr. Kellogg who was

going to drive the car in a parade, had parked it in Trigon Park and Seely had his picture taken behind the wheel. It was a vivid memory with a wonderful story that Seely enjoyed telling.

Seely had great stories to tell, always with a dry sense of humor that left you with a smile. At Rotary meetings you were always guaranteed a good story when the president fined him for his latest escapade. Not that he was the brunt of the joke, because he had a way of laughing at himself which is a rare trait. More than once in the last couple of days, someone has said that Seely was Mr. Le Roy. Several years ago he had been chosen Le Royan of the Year, but most of us think it was an honorary title that Seely will hold forever. He wore his love for this community, its history and its people on his sleeve. He will be missed.