

FROM THIS CORNER - September 2006

Good Seats Still Available

by Brenda Baird

Today Larry could write an article for the Spectrum or go fishing..... I sent him fishing. Sometimes you just need direction.

As summer draws to a close I have been thinking about one of my favorite spots. It is a place that can exist almost anywhere however in this corner of the world it is most enjoyed in the warmer months of the year. It can take many forms but there are some prerequisites. Wood construction is best, color can vary, size should be big enough for at least 2 chairs - rocking if possible. If you haven't guessed, I am thinking of a porch. The best example I know of in western New York might be the porch at the United Methodist House at Chautauqua Institute. It's large enough for lots of rocking chairs, lots of wicker, lots of tables and lots of fascinating people. Often there are snacks too on that porch - heaven! After the first Sunday night sacred song service in the amphitheater this past season, Larry and I were chatting on the porch with the Methodist House chaplain of the week and his wife from Pennsylvania. When host Dick Grove began turning out the lights and closing doors, we took our cue to call it a night.

I grew up in Wellsville, NY in a house that had a front porch - in fact I think almost every house on the street had one. You had to climb half a dozen steps up from the sidewalk to get onto our porch which meant that once you were up there, you had a good view of the neighborhood. There was a roof on the porch which

provided shelter for the neighborhood kids even on a rainy summer day. Our porch had a metal glider with green flowered plastic cushions. 'Gliding' could give you the illusion of a breeze in the summer heat, but on a humid day skin contact with the plastic was not so refreshing. Hot summer nights in the 1960's would find many South Broad Street residents on their porches waiting for the cool of the evening to find them. Unlike the Methodist House, the porch lights of my youth were often turned on, rather than off, as my cue to call it a night.

The summer of 2006 gave Larry and me a chance to sit on a new porch. Friends in Connecticut recently built their dream retirement home which includes a wrap around porch. It is wood construction, has a roof, has abundant space for all sorts of seating, can accommodate lots of people AND there is a view! On the last night of our vacation just Larry and I sat on that porch in the cool of the evening. We had comfortable wicker chairs, delicious snacks, a view of the ocean ... and the only light operator was the One setting the sun and lighting the stars.

If you did not have an opportunity to visit on the porch of the Methodist House at Chautauqua during the 2006 season I hope you will in 2007. Mark your calendars now... good seats are still available on the porch and we'll keep the lights burning!