From My Front Window

By Byron Higgin, Mascot Publisher

How time flies when you're hav

ing fun?
One year ago I filled a truck with possessions and moved into Minneota. I didn't know what awaited me, but I was empowered by the excitement.
Little did I know what lie ahead — but then we never do know, do we?
It was a gamble ... running a small town newspaper in the depths of a recession at a time when the newspaper's very survival was being threatened by the powerful Internet and a rapidly depleted business economy.
Counting on my newspaper savvy as a backup has always pulled me through tough times.
This time, the challenge was enormous. One look up and down Minneota's main street indicated a serious lack of potential advertisers.

But two thing kept pushing me on ... the need for survival of the Mascot, and the community pride I felt amongst the people.
The challenges were many: to mold the Mascot staff into my style of newspapering; to convince the community they need to support their hometown newspaper; to find ways to make the Mascot financially solvent and to develop an informative and entertaining product.
It didn't matter what the family before me had done — it was all up to me, or so I thought.
So much happened the first year it would be impossible to fit it into one column.
High on the list has been community and business support.
It's great to have ideas, but to see others help them become reality — now that's a real treat.
It started at Boxelder Bug Days when we needed advertisers to help us print a special edition after this very special event.
Everyone responded and we produced a four-page color section from Bug Days.
When the fantastic Minneota Volleyball Team took second place at the state, again, we asked

for support and printed four pages of color in a salute to the team.
The football team's state championship and the wrestling team's third place found us asking again for support and each time the community responded and we had eight-page color editions each time.
Christmas ads in color and a graduation edition also came along and the community supported them.
Hey, I'm aware of the fact a sports-loving guy like me came to a sports-nuts town at just the right time.
Who could have dreamed of the success Minneota had this year.
I'll never forget the celebration the football team got when they came home with a state championship. It was thrilling.
So were the state honors in volleyball and wrestling.
Nobody could have asked for more.
Also this year we cried — losing Mayor Paul Larson was a real blow. And when we lost at least three small children, two because of problems suffered at birth and the third due to an accident, well, we were shattered.
But as I suspected, these losses were followed by an outpouring of community support in each case.
The loved ones left behind were shown so much love and concern by members of the community they were almost overwhelmed.
But then, I thought Minneota was that kind of community.
Maybe I expected things to be slower in this small town than I'd experienced in the past. But if that was the case, I was wrong.
"So much happens in this little town every week," I've said often. And I'm right. This is a very busy place.
From terrible storms in the winter to hailed out crops in the summer — we've seen it all.
Yes, it's been quite a first year.
But now it's over and it's time to move on to Year No. 2.
We'll have another Bug Days soon and after my first fantastic Bug Days, I've got to admit I'm highly anticipating this year's event.
We're going to have a new sewer and water system, some new sidewalks and new street lights.
That's going to be fun — even though it's difficult to wade through the construction zones.
Now that my Year One is history, I've got to admit I'm highly anticipating what the second year will bring.
I've loved being part of Minneota and the area this past year. If the second year is half as much fun, well, it's going to be a great ride.
Thank You people of Minneota. Not a day goes by when someone doesn't tell me how much they enjoy the paper or how they like it. That's been good for the soul.
Thanks for taking me in Minneota, Ghent and Taunton. You are the best.

LAUGH A LITTLE: This fellow died and when he got to the pearly gates St. Peter asked him if he'd ever done anything that showed how he really gave of himself for someone else.
The man told him, "Well, yes, there was this time when a big bully was hurting this girl and I was afraid he was going to kill her so I stepped in and told him to stop."
"That's wonderful," said St. Peter. "When was that?" he asked.
The man looked at his watch and said, "About two minutes ago."

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: As my Ole Pappy used to say, “I’m so proud of you I popped my buttons.”
Ole Pappy was good at letting me know when he approved of me and I was constantly trying to get him to pop the buttons on his shirt in deepest pride.