

Sometimes we just don't notice the changes around us; like a wall that's been painted a different color or things that we had "better notice" like our wife's hair being styled differently. Unfortunately for some of us, these changes often go unnoticed and unappreciated until we're made painfully aware of them... forever. Maybe it's because the changes are so subtle. (Well... except for that red wall, but that's another story.)

On the other hand, the things that do catch our eye are often things that people wish we wouldn't notice. The bandage on the face, the coffee stain on the tie or the dreaded "unzipped zipper" seems to get noticed by everyone on the planet immediately. As a matter of fact, it's kind of like looking into the sun. Once we've seen it there in front of us we can't stop seeing it no matter how we try to distract ourselves. Or maybe that's just me.

When it comes to our City, the people that have been away for the summer seem more likely to notice the positive changes when they come back. My sister, for example, lives in New Jersey and quite often comes back "home" after being away for a year or so. She is immediately lost, because her reference points look so different, are hidden or are gone completely. But then, she remembers Bonita Springs back when we were kids and had to ride in the back of our Dad's dump truck when the family went grocery shopping. (Come to think of it... that probably has something to do with her moving to New Jersey)

Anyway, I think that those of us that live here year round are more likely to notice when the Cities "collective zipper" is down, when something is wrong, whether it's a bad headline or garbage on the side of the road. Also, we've become such a part of our everyday surroundings that we miss the positive changes that occur around us. These physical changes seem to gradually become our "new normal" without a corresponding adjustment in our perception or attitude about the improving conditions.

These perceptions, impressions and attitudes are stubborn, in all of us. Once they are set, they are often set for good. Maybe there's something strangely comforting about maintaining our old views and negative perceptions. I guess people that are so inclined are rarely disappointed; because they never have to admit that something has actually gotten better and of course they know that there will always be a stumble or incident along the way to "prove" them right.

Then there are those brave people that can look at and weigh new information, notice and acknowledge the positive changes around them and then translate that into a corresponding new or optimistic attitude. To allow yourself to grow and develop a new, fresh frame of mind that matches an evolving reality is risky. But if we don't believe in ourselves and if we're not the biggest fans of our community... then who will be?

My wife's right... that accent wall looks great!