

# Teamwork makes things happen for O-D, region

By MARLENE B. BROWN

The morning began with my questioning whether this was the best day for me to be "Editor for a Day," an auction item I had bid successfully on at the New Hartford Rotary Club's annual fund-raiser.

As I scanned email and faxes and listened to early morning voice mail in my office, my glance strayed to the picture of 6½-year-old Rachel Marie, my granddaughter and apple of my eye. Grammy's taught her perseverance and focus and the importance of keeping promises.

So with a slow grin crossing my face, I headed out the door for the O-D offices. I was quickly ushered into the morning planning meeting, where I was warmly greeted by Managing Editor Mike Kilian. After a discussion with other editors of the issues the paper would be covering that day and for the next day's issue, we headed off for a meeting of all department heads with President and Publisher Donna M. Donovan. We had worked together on Leadership Mohawk Valley projects and once again, I was warmly welcomed into the inner workings of our local newspaper.

As a business futurist and Internet marketing strategist, I was impressed with the positive cohesiveness I experienced during the meeting, largely due to Donna's leadership style. Listening to reports and watching the interaction of the key players, my mind flashed back to the analogy of a successful symphony performance — where the talents of all the players were skillfully orchestrated by a knowledgeable conductor. Warm smiles, encouraging words to on-target reports, soft yet strongly spoken probing questions, requests for future action, all blended with just the right amount of humor.

As we left the meeting, we swung by the cafeteria to pick up a cup of coffee, and I was shown a computer station where I could begin my guest column. What to write about? I decided to combine my experience of the day with a topic I had presented for the past two years at the graduation ceremony for the College Corps Program, "Keeping Bright Minds in Oneida County."

As the mother of five and grandmother of two, and owner of three small businesses, I also feel the impact of family units far apart geographically and the ongoing challenge of getting and keeping bright minds essential for business growth.

I remember when I graduated from Clinton Central — like many others my initial thoughts were to move away — as there was a world out there to be explored. While I have traveled extensively in my business, I have chosen to remain in the Mohawk Valley, and have not regretted that decision.

Why?

In 1994, when I coined the word



Marlene Brown, editor for a day, attends the 4 p.m. news meeting at the O-D last Wednesday.

By WILL YURMAN, Observer-Dispatch

TechnoTouch. I meant it to convey that high tech combined with high touch would equal high return. As we enter the year 2000, we're realizing more and more that as we continue to embrace technology, we also need to remember the importance of combining online communication with in-person communication. I don't see that going away.

So why stay here or relocate here? In the midst of our increasingly busy days, with never enough hours to do all we need or want to do, having a strong network of business associates, colleagues, and some family close enough to be able to pick up a phone or pop an email to and stay connected is an invaluable asset.

Those relationships take time to form. Trust must be built and value associated. There's a wonderful small-town feeling about the Mohawk Valley that shows up in a strong work ethic and a spiritual belief combined with a talented, caring community who gives generously of themselves to help build a better place to live and do business.

Even though we're all local citizens, able to watch live television coverage of the arrival of 2000 sweep across the planet, I felt like a world citizen, connected by both what I was viewing on TV and what I was

reading and responding to from emails sent by colleagues worldwide. As I gently remind people in my keynotes, I've never seen a Brinks truck or a U-haul hooked up to a hearse.

What we leave behind are the memories others have of us, and the relationships we've made. How do you make a community stronger so bright minds want to stay or come here? By strong leadership and open communication, by community involvement that makes a difference, by fostering business-to-business transactions that keep companies productive, by inviting and appreciating the need for innovation and willingness to change.

After a stimulating and enjoyable lunch with Donna, we returned to the O-D, where I visited the new online offices. The O-D's web site, uticaod.com, went live Jan. 2. It's an exciting new venture that is offering one more service to its customers.

After talking shop with fellow Webmaster Jim Murphy, I returned to my computer to finish my article and get ready for the 4 p.m. meeting, where the determination is made as to what stories go where for the next day's issue. The newsroom is even more abuzz as the day winds down

and deadlines loom and day and night shifts converge to pull it all together and put it to bed.

1999 was an exciting year — both locally and globally — and 2000 promises to be even more so. Most of us have money in our pockets, worthwhile goods and services to sell, and relatively minimal problems in making things work for the benefit of ourselves, our customers, our co-workers, and our investors. The Internet and Web have changed forever the way we live and the way we work.

It's a great time to be alive, and to be living and working in the Mohawk Valley in the midst of so many bright minds. The area is alive and well with great leaders in the many sectors that make a place a home.

Rachel Marie, you'll be proud of Grammy. I kept my promise — I learned a lot — and I enjoyed my day.

Marlene B. Brown is a business futurist, marketing strategist, Web designer and CEO of Marmel Consulting Firm in Clark Mills. She served as "editor for the day" this past Wednesday as part of a fund-raising auction conducted by New Hartford Rotary Club.