

Saxonburg's synergy

After leasing space overlooking the breakneck traffic on Route 8 for six years, it was time for a change. I needed to slow down and hear the birds chirping and watch the animals frolic from my window. I needed a place where I could walk to lunch and maybe occasionally stop to hear someone playing a guitar.

"If I could only buy an affordable little property zoned commercial situated nearby but away from the hustle and bustle, then that would be ideal," I said to myself.

So one day I drove up and down and all around until I found a perfect fit in the greatest small town in America — Saxonburg. In case you couldn't tell, I've become a HUGE Saxonburg fan. One thing I've grown to like about this town is that you have to drive 25 mph to go through it. Now that's the pace for me.

Another thing I like is the nifty little businesses. I have all the admiration in the world for any small business owner because I understand the mind-set of doing whatever it takes. Particularly in this age of bailouts, it's heartwarming to remember what made this country great.

But perhaps what I like best about Saxonburg is that harmonic convergence feel. Its almost like the Sedona of the east but without the nutty palm readers, soothsayers and magic crystals. There is a communal synergy to it, a feel that makes you want to exercise both sides of your brain as you walk through town. And heaven knows I've been using only one side for far too long.

And so I've said my good-byes to Wendy's, McDonald's, Burger King and Arby's and I'm saying my hellos to Kelly's



RAY MUTH

In this age of bailouts, it's heartwarming to remember the small business owners who made this country great.

Family Restaurant, Zacherl's, Cafe Contrary and my all-time favorite — Hotel Saxonburg. I've said goodbye to my morning coffee at Starbucks and hello to the Fresh Cup Cafe!

And while it's off my food list during marathon training, my kids will tell you that the best pizza in the world doesn't come from Pizza Hut. It comes from homegrown Novotney's. I swear they could live off that pizza.

Now you may wonder what someone who is trying to cultivate the other side of his brain by relocating to Saxonburg does for a living. While our CPA firm, BankLogic, does have excellent financial planning expertise with a certified financial planner on board, we primarily get contracted by banks and credit unions to break into their places of business electronically, mostly through the Internet. It might sound a little quirky but it's necessary work.

Now before you fret, let me reassure you that our experience proves that the vast

majority of banks and credit unions are very secure. However, we do occasionally find an issue or two and when we do, we feel good about helping preserve the good reputation of a regional or community bank and credit union.

The real fun stuff is where we perform social engineering — using deception to gain unauthorized access by taking advantage of people who are proficient at what they do but are nonchalant about security. Some days we dress as telephone repairmen and attempt to plant wireless access devices inside the financial institution.

After we successfully plant a device, we also attempt to obtain usernames and passwords by impersonating someone inside the bank through a technique called phishing. Those results are always eye-openers. Employees get security religion in a hurry when they discover they've been duped while we sit with access outside in their parking lot.

So does it sound like we fit into Saxonburg or what? My only complaint is we iPhone wearers don't yet have AT&T 3G access out here.

As I peer over my monitor and through the window from my new office, I see two squirrels jumping from one tree to the other. Now I know why we came here. I'm beginning to wonder if I should find an easel to take out into the backyard and start painting. Who cares that I can't paint worth a darn. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and I may just be cultivating something that will help me work a little more efficiently.

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