

First Impressions

of

Polo, IL

by Albany, WI

Visits conducted three different days in March and April

A program for community improvement

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As you approach the community..

I. What was my perception before visiting? What did I expect?

- According to the brochure, I was very excited, expecting more than what was there. I was hoping this visit would give me great ideas for Albany.
- After receiving requested information from Chamber of Commerce telling me there were no empty storefronts I was disappointed to find them. When we read the brochures we said (not completely seriously), "Let's move there - it sounds good." After being there, we're reconsidering.
- Looked forward to seeing it - thought it had more than we did.
- At first, I expected a town about the size of Albany, not more than twice our size. Other than that, I wanted to be very open-minded, with no pre-conceived notions.
- I thought that Polo was going to be very similar to Albany.
- I expected to see a small town with a lot of tourist attractions. I expected a lot of old, Victorian style houses. I perceived a small, farming community -- somewhat similar to Albany.
- I knew little of Polo, except what I had read in brochures received from the Chamber of Commerce, per Sally Braem. I noted that there would be five eateries, two pharmacies, hardware, groceries, dress shop, second hand rose clothing sponsored by nine churches.

II. The "five minute" impression:

Take one drive through the community without stopping. As you exit the community, pull over to the side of the road and write down what you felt about the town with only this quick look. Do this in silence, don't talk with the others in your group for this part.

- I thought that the town had much of the same problems and pluses as Albany. A few empty buildings, a quiet town.
- There's a nice iron fence around nice cemetery but fence needs painting (or removal of paint) to be all one color. Saw a dilapidated gas station. Just out of town on 26N I saw what might be an old school just waiting for restoration. some beautiful churches, business district off to side but no signage. Town lacked sparkle. At south end of town turned left on side road and discovered Tri-County Bike Trail, a little haphazard, not found in advertising. Chuckled over 'Hair It Is' Business District piqued my interest.

- Clean residential areas, Tri-County bike/snowmobile trail, EMS Service, Business District off of main highway, no sign showing direction to business district, Highway 26 enters Polo from north over viaduct (valley). Streets appeared clean, little trash, good and poor residential areas. Many houses in "poor" district need paint and trash, junk hidden. Some old homes being restored.
- This seems to be a very nice town, larger than I expected. Some very nice homes and businesses. I was very impressed at the cleanliness of streets and sidewalks. No litter!
- Polo looked like a nice little town. It seemed clean.
- I felt the town had a lot of good signs and road side markers telling you where places and things were located. I thought there was a good variety of businesses for the community. I didn't feel that there was a lot of new growth to the community. It seemed like there was land for building purposes, but not a lot of construction in the past 5 years.
- The drive through was uneventful. It was an overcast, and at times snow day. Very few people visible. Lawns were starting to green up. Raking had not been done. Most homes were cared for on Route 26. There were welcome signs. Quiet. No odors. Neatly kept Fairmont Cemetery (fence needs to be all same color -- it is white, grey, and rusting.) Did not see a business sign for the two blocks of shops. It did say Antique Mall.

As you "drive" around town:

You now divide into your teams: one team will drive the town for about an hour while the other members will hoof it and start visiting businesses, city hall, etc. After lunch the teams will switch roles so everyone has a chance to drive the community and to personally walk into stores and visit with people.

- Found business people friendly - very helpful. Streets clean and wide. Most buildings occupied. Many second floors seemed empty. One had windows boarded up.
- The people in all the stores, restaurants and places we visited were very friendly, almost as if they knew who we were and why we were there.
- Mason Street (Main Street) north side had a few kept up buildings, but had several that would need a lot to save them. Hardware was in old theatre. A pharmacy was on the stage of theatre. People were pleasant and informative.

South Side of street had a factory (P and N, Inc.) that made coils of many sizes. There were no signs stating what places were. Beauty shops had window signs.

The factory was locally owned, had a south plant (south edge of town) that had 350 employees. The downtown one was actually two store widths, and had many people very busy. Old street lights with probably mercury or sodium lights, and horns for disaster soundings. There were square metal receptacles for trash periodically spaced.

Some attractive windows of stores. No parking meters. Second stories were mostly vacant and most had nothing showing (junk). Asked for: how to find Chamber of Commerce place -- bath store. Found Tri-County Information Center. Was taken by employee to Aplington House for tour.

Town Hall was not the Town Hall, but used for Karate classes. It seemed to have been a theatre at one time. Had built-in ticket booths. Residential had many areas that were being redone, some were just total disasters, and then many had been updated with paint and good landscaping. For the most part villagers seem to have pride in their surroundings.

Schools were busy and neat. Children were playing with supervision. Parks (two) had many baseball areas, bleachers, one swimming pool. Old school building with broken windows at Locust and Congress.

111. Driving...evaluate EACH entrance.

Go about 1/2 - 1 mile out each road and return. List each road (61 North, etc.) and list positive and negatives for each.

- The town was marked well at each entrance. Nice welcome signs and a place for flowers. We did notice the cemetery fence needs painting.
- I did most of driving so missed some street names. Driving west on Dixon out of town is pleasant. Enjoyed the railroad overpass with its wooden base -- a treasure. Enjoyed seeing small culvert or low area bridge with arched bottom off to right side, also an almost triangular park-like area to north of road. Found the town's sewage processing plant -- did not appear unkempt. Saw historical marker for cabin and store -- very nice although losing a little soil around base. Came back into town on Milledgeville Road. Came to dead end on a couple of streets with no signs warning it. Went east on Oregon Trail, narrow road. Discovered lovely farmstead in parklike setting on right. Pines Road east of town very nice with welcome sign. Also welcome sign when entering from south on 26.
- "Polo Welcomes You" sign entering from south.
- 26N and 26S were fine. The other roads we travelled out on weren't marked, in one case we drove quite a distance and never did find out where we were. There were very nice "Welcome to Polo" signs, but I noticed only one population sign.

- Two of the major entrances were marked that you were entering Polo, but one entrance didn't have any signs.
- There were good welcome signs, but I only viewed one population sign out of the many entrances. Polo seemed very clean and well kept-up. As you were driving out of town there were no signs telling you what road you were on, or giving you directions to the next city.
- Checked each entrance to Polo. There were welcome signs. West entrance was gravel road on south side of Millard Deuth Westside park, ran out into farm area, had wooden trestle for railroad, Dixon Street. At end of street was sign Galena Trail/Buffalo Creek, sewage treatment plant was here. Across the road was historical sign: First cabin Ogle County 1830, Galena Trail Izak Chambers. The sign needed paint.

East entrance -- Dixon street black top, welcome sign, also mentions White Pines State Park. North and south entrances were Route **26** and were ordinary. Concrete road. Mostly residential.

IV. (a) Driving...evaluate the downtown business area:
(signs, appearance, size, etc.)

- There were a few businesses that didn't have signs so you didn't know what was in them. The signs were adequate for finding places such as the parks, library, etc.
- Generally pleasant, nice size, compact, upper facade still intact mostly, some signs, some missing. Saw boarded windows, empty fronts, some "remodeled" on lower level, some diamonds in the rough, some falling apart.
- Liked store and building fronts. True Value Hardware, two pharmacies, restaurants. A "coil winding" business factory on main street. Only noticeable from inside.
- Nice downtown area -- wide streets, sidewalks and lots of parking. Some businesses looked very nice, some could use sprucing up. A couple needed more help,
- The business area looked pretty good except for a few uninhabited buildings, but that can't be helped. One business on the outside of town didn't have a sign so we didn't know what it was.
- I thought the downtown **area** was of good size. There were many businesses, bars, and restaurants. For most of the business there were good signs -- except for one.

- Downtown depressing, too many wires hanging on street lamp posts. Some businesses had signs, but mostly it was a guessing game as to what was now being used for. Bank was insurance. Theatre was hardware, etc. Street signs apparent.

IV. (b) Driving...evaluate other business area.

- Three other businesses had no sign.
- To west of 26 on Mason, corner shop nice (flower) antique shop and lovely entrance above crumbling steps, shop from converted apartment building perhaps. That area has historic brick street! Other businesses as related in other places. generally good. Antique mall excellent. Also bathroom shop, crafters shop (Ma and Pa), Restaurant rather large and good on Mason near 26. Enjoyed "Black Dog" for lunch.
- John Deere suppliers, small "hidden" factory on Mason Street, large restaurant on Mason Street (a positive), antique stores (a positive).
- Judging from the many, different businesses there were, and the traffic, I assume that people from smaller, nearby towns, drive to Polo to do business. Also noticed empty buildings.
- Polo seemed as if it included a lot of businesses -- not just downtown. There seemed to be an industry or some sort of industrial park -- but there was no sign telling you what it was.
- Other business areas -- farm and lumber had signs on buildings. Motel was neat and appealing, signs visible. Found police building on off street. No sign pointing for person not knowing where it was. Saw squad car prominently.

V. Driving...comments on residential:

- There were some homes that needed work. I also noticed that there wasn't much curb and gutter/sidewalks. Many new homes.
- Large restored homes on W. Mason, lovely! Several others in that area real jewels also. Saw wonderful one on W. Fulton, I think. Huge lot with carriage house or barn. There are also, unfortunately, many really badly rundown, unkept properties! These are in many areas of town, often with very junky yards creating something of blight. New housing on east side is fine. Noticed some old homes being renovated -- some which could be.

- No B&B. 603 North Street, junky, unpainted houses.
- There were many beautiful historic homes that were well maintained. Many smaller homes that were neat and well kept yards, also many homes in need of repair.
- The only bad things about the residential areas were lack of sidewalks, curbs, and sewer drains.
- The residential areas seemed very clean and neat. Not a lot of garbage around town. I didn't view many houses for sale or opportunity for growth.
- Residential had good and bad areas. There was a fairly new section on east side of town. Many homes need help! Some homes are getting help now though.

VI. Driving...comments on:

a. street signs

- The town did have good street signs and directions. More would only make things even better.
- Street signs mostly OK, some bent or paint-peeled but usually there
- Readily seen.
- Intersections were well-marked. Did not notice signs on all streets.
- The signage in Polo was very good. Polo uses direction signs very well. I especially liked the map of the town when we first entered Polo.
- Good street signs. I thought the map of the streets was an excellent idea.
- Street signs were present and legible.

b. traffic patterns/street conditions

- Some streets needed work on, however, overall street conditions were OK.
- Rather an easy lay-out to get around in. Street conditions could be better. No curb and gutter in much of residential area. Some haphazard street maintenance.
- Good traffic pattern (we didn't get lost) and streets in good shape and clean.
- Streets seemed to be in good condition but there didn't seem to be a lot of sidewalks for people to walk on.
- Traffic pattern was one way for the two blocks of business. Others both ways. Street toppings were mixed, brick, gravel, blacktop, and concrete.

c. welcome signs (at entrances)

- Good signs by the Lions Club.
- Yes -- pleased about that -- said welcome. Even banner in downtown was good, even though ragged.

- Saw welcome Polo sign entering city from the south.
 - They were nice, and at all entrances.
 - Great welcome signs, but no road signs.
 - Welcome signs at all entrances.
- d. direction signs to parks, schools, hospitals/clinics, attractions, services (i.e. police), etc.
- More could be helpful for the school and other services.
 - Saw some signs: White Pines Park, one sign on Pine Street to park but perhaps should also have said "pool" -- had to ask to find it. Nice signs at parks -- might need more signs to parks. Need much more signage: for library, downtown (or business district), city hall (never found it), police, historic district or museum.
 - No sign indicating business district
 - Saw a sign to city park only (found the other park on our own).
 - Good signs to fire station and police, but I didn't view any to parks, schools, or clinic.
 - Direction signs not noted, signs were usually on door of business. No hospital. Had dental office on Route 26.

VII. Driving...comments on industrial park/area:

Sign well defined.. .busy.. .growing., .new...etc.

- Didn't see industrial park.
- Saw several industrial type places, somewhat scattered and unrelated and unsigned. Lovely factory setting on E. Mason with pleasant facade but no company name. NPC or something (we went in). Each site seemed active in some way but usually unsigned. Saw no designated industrial district
- Saw no sign indicating industrial park
- Did not see a specific, designated industrial park.
- There was some kind of business but no sign telling us what it was, also some offices without signs, also.
- I did not see a lot of growth. Good industrial park, but could not tell what kind of industry - no sign.
- It was not defined for me as to an industrial park. There was a cattle place on the south side. Railroad on north side. Factory on Mason Street and south side of town. It seems they have utilized old buildings for what ever they could.

VIII. Driving...comments on schools:

- Need signs on schools, Middle school?? High school?? Elementary school??
- Located what must have been an elementary school with no identification on it but kids were playing outside. **Saw** nice identifiable high school with nice tennis

courts, football field with lights (nice planting of trees along it near roadway, perhaps flowering crabs on Pine Street, I think. Good looking school - rather near it at Mason and Union was another attractive building with date 1925 (or 6).

Lovely building with no signs - perhaps a school? At Locust and Congress is a school-like building, perhaps abandoned, vandalized - sad - hope it's preserved.

- Had elementary and high school - two different buildings not on same property.
- They were nice looking facilities, good locations, but no signs telling which school was which.
- The schools looked very nice, except I didn't see much parking space.
- Very nice looking middle and high school. The old, unoccupied school looked very rundown and unsafe.
- Schools were on east side of town. Neat and clean areas. Lights for outside activities. Water fountain by high school.

IX. Driving...comments on parks, play grounds, athletic facilities, etc.:

- Very nice large parks, swimming pool, etc. It would look nice to have newer equipment at the one park.
- Lovely park on west side, very inviting, good picnic areas, shelter, ball fields, open areas, parking. Had some difficulty finding pool -- commend your small town on having a pool, big and little, nice sign there too.
- Nice ball parks (lighted). Swimming pool, adult and children. Foot ballfield (lighted). Tennis courts by high school.
- There were 2 nice ball park facilities with lots of parking, pool, picnic areas and playground equipment, some of which needed repair and updating.
- Both parks were really nice, especially the one with the swimming pool. The other park could use some updated playground equipment.
- There seems to be an effort to entertain the youth. There were many baseball sites, a swimming pool, playground equipment present.
- Physical appearance of Mason Street was plus and minus. One side - south - was the better of the two. Again the business has window signs, like temporary!

X. Driving...comments on other:

a. hospitals/clinics

- Didn't see any clinics other than I think it was a dental place and a vet place.
- Didn't see any, or doctor's office - saw chiropractors office, I think.
- Railroad tracks, wooden bridge over tracks outside of town. Several churches. First cabin site in Ogle County. Saw no hospital.
- I didn't see a hospital or clinic, but did notice a chiropractor (old building) and a veterinary clinic that looked nice. Very nice nursing home facility!
- Did not see a clinic.
- No hospital, saw no clinic, did see a dental office.

b. billboards/advertising

- Could have more information out on the main street.
- Saw Antique Mall sign, "Hair It Is," could not tell what synod the Lutheran church is. Church signs and signs directing one to off-streets for churches. Saw helping hand signs in house windows.
- Nice historical society, restored two buildings.
- Did not see lots of advertising.
- Billboards were **seen** for cattle company on south side of town, neat.

c. other

- Some nice old trees: maples and pines - treasurers! However, some of them would be so improved by proper pruning. Also was "junk" trees which would best be removed.
- Nice size brick library building. Historical buildings being restored.
- There was an old building (perhaps an old school?) that looked dangerous and needed to be tom down. Also the fence around the cemetery is very rusty, unsightly.

XI. Walking around...comments on businesses (physical part):

Appearance, displays, signs, etc.

- Many of the businesses looked neat and very professional. Nice clock by the bank.
- Signs for stores much harder to see walking, often having to back up to street an look up. Some store fronts very pleasantly displayed! Antique mall best of all! It's obvious much effort has gone into it. Most stores surprisingly good (if open). Some improvement needed but not too bad. Looking at south side of street (Mason) from other side much better than vice-versa. Nice to see a few flags displayed. Street poles too cluttered with speakers and "stuff."
- Flower shop on W. Mason, cement stoop deteriorating. Mason Street quite clean. Building on Mason Street, 2nd floor, windows boarded up.
- There were neat, attractive signs, some places with no signs, and some signs in need of repair or replacement.
- The antique mall was really nice as well as the Mason Family Restaurant and the Black Dog Cafe.
- Good signs telling what kind of business or store. Older building looked well kept up.

XII. Walking around...comments on people:

- People were very pleasant, helpful. You could tell the "natives" to the city. They way they acted, therefore we stood out as tourists (strangers to town).
- Very friendly without exception! If they didn't know answers, they told us where

to find them for the most part, if pressed. Clerks were very neat, pleasant, efficient.

- Business people friendly.
- They were all very nice, friendly and helpful. They made you feel at home.
- All the people we talked to were very friendly and talkative.
- People were very friendly, but I felt that they could tell we were tourists.
- The people all were friendly and tried to be of help.

XIII. Community information: comments on....

a. community brochure (tourist type)

- Almost too nice
- Great! Even had "personalized" county map! Impressed!
- Area brochures, lots of info at Historical Center.
- A very nice brochure about the town and what it has to offer.
- Community brochure was very inviting. The old, Victorian houses looked very neat, but I didn't see any of those houses in Polo or signs telling you where they were.
- Community information was limited. Has much on Tri County (Polo is information center for three counties).

b. businesses/attractions brochures or directory

- Very good information on the surrounding places to see.
- Polo excels at this! Historical materials abound. Invitational and promotion pieces are exceptional - my guess is that professional help was used to put these together - well done! Having the four county "office" here with so much info is wonderful! Good staff too - showed up at Aplington house too. Great Historical Society!!!
- Great Historical Society. Had a very nice brochure from their Historic House Walk - very informative.
- I did not see any brochures at the businesses we stopped in to.
- I did not see any business brochures.

c. community profile (demographic, industrial type information for prospective business people, etc.

- Not much on industrial type or prospective business people. I felt it was not so much a town for businesses but rather a town for people to live in
- Didn't really find any.
- Did not see a specific brochure for business enticement - the basics were covered in the community brochure.
- I did not view any type of new growth taking place anywhere.
- Prospective business has many large homes useful as Bed and Breakfasts. Many large old homes.

d. map

- Coming into town the map under glass was nice. They could have had a little more information.
- Great on Ogle County map piece.
- I really liked the outdoor map of the town, but felt it would be more useful if centrally located.
- I really liked the map of the streets, excellent idea.
- I didn't see any.

e. other (ie. bulletin/notice, kiosks, etc.)

- Saw bulletin boards in several places, events on restaurant place mat, other events just "posted around."
- I only saw a very small notice board at the entrance/exit of the family restaurant.
- Had tourism center at information center. A rack of Illinois folders, tri county folders and maps for almost all the **U.S.**

XIV. City Hall...describe your visit:

a. appearance of facility, including signing.

- Looked nice and neat, well signed.
- Couldn't find city hall.
- Went into building marked "town Hall" -- it was open but nothing there -- never found a city hall which had life in it.
- Regretfully, we ran short of time, and did not realize that we had forgotten to visit the city hall until we were on our way home and didn't have time to return.
- Did not visit.
- Did not visit city hall.
- Never found it, no sign showing where. Chamber of commerce secretary has own bath shop. She keeps some info there. She was most pleasant and pleased that we stopped.

b. helpfulness of staff

- Very helpful and friendly.

c. other

- Tourism (visitor center) very nice. Has lots of information on the history of the town and the good places to eat.

XV. Chamber of Commerce...describe your visit

a. did people know where it was (or who to refer you to?)

- Drove around until we found it.
- Yes, come more specifically than others. Most referred us to four county building when chamber rep was really in bathroom store. Since I'd received materials from her by mail, I knew where to look.
- We did not find the chamber of commerce, but did visit the information center and found it to be very nice, and the staff very helpful.
- There was alot of broad ranged information at the chamber of commerce. Alot of different brochures were nice. The lady was extremely nice.
- People were rather vague but knew she would probably have information that is the proprietor of the bath store. She had some brochures of area interests of Illinois. There was no actual office for the chamber.

b. comment on information available

- Lots of information at chamber of commerce. Lots of information on Polo and other surrounding areas.
- Ample material
- Lots, I'm impressed, lady pleasant, helpful. She advised us their chamber met weekly. Again, impressed.

c. comment on staff

- Staff was very helpful, but very demanding on where we were from.
- Pleasant, helpful.
- It's so evident that they are very focused on tourism aiming at the "toward Galena" crowd. Also promote surrounding areas, like John Deere Museum and Reagan's home.

d. other (hours, appearance, locations, etc.)

- Perhaps a sign could be put in her window saying chamber office.

XVI. Other stuff...

a. public restrooms (available, condition, etc.)

- At the different restaurants and gas stations -- they were clean.
- Only in restaurants.
- Saw them in parks and at pool but wonder if they'd be open this time of year.
- Did not notice any "public" restrooms, but those the restaurants had were just fine.
- Bathrooms were clean and in good condition.

- No public restrooms open for winter.

b. pay phones (working, phone book intact, etc)

- One pay phone had no phone book.
- Saw none.
- Saw someone at pay phone -- forgot where -- I think on east end of Mason.
- I saw two pay phones and neither of them had a phone book.
- Saw a pay phone but no phone book.
- I did not see an outside public phone, or any sign saying there was one available.

c. parking

- Plenty of parking.
- Parallel parking on main (Mason Street), other parking available.
- Plenty for March -- how's July-September?
- There was lots of convenient parking spaces.
- Lots of parking in downtown business area.
- Parking was available, no meters.

d. water fountains, benches, etc.

- Were still off because of the winter.
- Hard plastic benches, good condition. No water fountain on main street.
- Saw one **near** tennis court. Love all the benches in downtown area. Can you buy an ice cream cone downtown?
- There was a downtown bench and a water fountain (still shut off for winter).
- Didn't see any water fountains or benches to just sit down.
- Street benches were at intervals, plastic frames with wood seat and back rest.

e. Other

- Metal trash containers bent, not too attractive.
- Saw several metal trash containers -- good -- hope they do the job, not especially attractive though. Too much stuff on light poles, strapped on plus wires. Pretty generic poles. Decorative ones would enhance the area.
- Could use more "homey" street lamps, Didn't see any flower boxes, but hope they are provided for summer.

WRAP UP

A. Using your "senses"....

1. What does the community TASTE like? (Specialty bakery/restaurant, etc.

- There was a little bakery (only muffins). Needs a little more of taste just that added little something. I can't quite put my finger on it.
- No unusual odors or bad tastes.
- Plain and simply, I'd say, except for "Black Dog" which is limited.
- Only had toast in one restaurant and soup at the other -- both good.
- Polo does an excellent job in using signs. The signs pointed us in the right direction. Sidewalks are the only criticism that I have. I also liked the digital clocks that were downtown.
- Restaurant had very good, home style cooking.
- There was no noticeable taste or odor. No bakery noted. There was home made bread served at the Black Dog Restaurant (It should have been called a tea room. It was two small rooms. You would not realize that a second room was available unless looking for a washroom.) There was a larger restaurant on Mason Street, Mason Family Restaurant, that was quite large and had good interior signs.

2. What does the community SMELL like?

- A community just waking up from a long winter.
- Like any other small town.
- Ordinary, not offensive. Once we smelled something burning, maybe trash.
- It was raining.
- Community smelled fresh and clean, not full of smoke or farm smell.

3. What SOUNDS did you hear?

- It was too quiet almost asleep.
- Was quiet, not much outside activity this Friday.
- Rather quiet -- good, traffic is all. Silence is good.
- Lots of traffic from highway.
- Sounds of semi trucks, birds, people.
- Sounds were none, death like, few cars. There was a noon whistle.

4. What did the community feel like (emotional response, i.e. cold/warm, crowded/deserted, inviting, etc., or physical response, i.e. rough streets, etc.)

- Cold, slightly deserted, I felt it had potential for bigger and better things, but the people are happy with the way things are.
- I liked the city, but needs a Dunkin Donuts place although restaurant on Main Street had good coffee.
- Streets could be better but that they're never as good in Illinois as Wisconsin (having lived 35 years in Illinois). It seems warm, like they're trying and in many cases succeeding. Some real run down areas that are always hard to deal with. The businesses are welcoming and efficient. There's an up-lifting

feel-positive attitude from those I spoke with -- a hope of things to come.

- I felt very much at ease there. People were talkative and friendly.
- The community had a kind of cold feeling. There were not a lot of people around. It seemed inviting with the welcome signs.
- Community was friendly, warm, but sparse. Streets were fairly smooth. No large potholes noted.

B. List the 5 most positive things you observed about the community:

1. • Good directions (signage) more wouldn't hurt.
 - Clean Streets.
 - The printed "lure" pieces were above average!
 - Cleanliness.
 - Map of streets
 - Friendly people, helpful.
2. • Tourism place (nice).
 - Street signs.
 - A tremendous, busy, hard working "Historical Society."
 - Friendliness
 - Signs.
 - Pride in homes, caring for their children.
3. • Growing (new homes).
 - Wide Main Street
 - A real focus on important things like schools!
 - Many businesses -- even a Veterinary Service
 - Very clean.
 - Good schools and places for their energies to be exhausted.
4. • Beautiful older homes (some need work).
 - Nice big restaurant on Main Street
 - A real focus on important things like schools!
 - Nice combination of old and new.
 - Variety of businesses.
 - Saw meals on wheels being delivered.
5. • The businesses that were open (nice people). Large variety of things, hardware, antique mall, etc.
 - Ample businesses on Main Street.
 - A true sense for the need for historic preservation.!
 - Chamber of commerce, lots of information
 - Had second hand shop that was sponsored by nine churches.

C. Describe **ONE** idea that you will steal for use in your own business/community and describe how you will start to implement it within the next 72 hours:

- More signage
- Right! Ha! Anyway, present the idea for "tourist info" site (have one in mind) to Pro-Albany Association and plan to work up "lure pieces" for Albany to put in it. Does getting lights on the bridge count?
- The outdoor sign with the map of the town, great idea. Will talk to Industrial arts teacher at school about building and Lions Club for funding.
- I think our community needs signs telling you where things are located.
- I didn't see any idea I would copy. I would not want to live in Polo. There is nothing of interest for me. There was an antique mall-a store. It had many nice items that are supplied by many different persons. Being the back gateway to the White Pines State Park seems to be one biggie.

D. What will you remember most about the community six months from now?

- The quietness of the community (almost too quiet). The one empty building on main street that was very dirty inside, ceiling falling in, animal waste on the floor, the windows partially covered.
- Let you know in six months, please call.
- I'll want to visit it again in summer or fall to give it a fair "in season" chance. The community is focused on tourism and expending much energy to make it happen. With good schools and a "blight removal" program, it'll happen.
- That I'd like to go there again.
- The idea of the map of streets and businesses.
- In six months I would be able to direct someone to Polo.

E. Other comments (that just didn't seem to fit anywhere else!)

- The old school looks terrible and unsafe I know it's hard to find something to do with a building that size. However something should be done. The one business out of town where there's a big lot (empty), very dirty, needs fence or something done to it.
- Didn't find too many negatives. Poor choice of town to compare. Saw very little in common, if anything.
- I'm really impressed with the "working core" of folks who know where they're going and have the unfailing positive attitudes to make it happen. They see the value of their historical heritage. In "Black Dog" the paintings and prints lend an artistic feel -- great! Brick streets are worth keeping -- work to do but enhance old feel. Polo has not forgotten the elderly. Recycling property makes so much sense and there's plenty there to do -- but there -- not torn town thoughtlessly! Make more of your old churches, like the First Presbyterian at Division and Dixon -- historical marker for sure and some enhancement. Have incentives for

home-site cleanups. Maybe "most improved structure," "most improved landscape," etc. awards. If you can get those folks involved in anything, or their kids interested in community improvement, things will begin to clear up, perhaps. Summer kids groups -- **learn** to garden, creative recycling (getting rid of junk), some elementary "fix-it" skills, kids groups volunteering to help elderly or needy or anyone who asks, etc. under supervision, of course. Polo has a great **start** at new life! Saw interesting short walkway, maybe on Green or Jefferson, with square tile-like (maybe) grain storage bin.

- I made a purchase at the hardware store and the clerk (owner?) gave me the discounted price despite the fact that I didn't have a coupon. I didn't realize this until I was home. He could have charged me the regular price, but didn't. That's impressive!
- A good face lift would help! I imagine finances are a big thing here. There are a few people trying to get things rolling. Those are the ones who fix their windows to be more cheerful. Flower boxes would help. Less wires hanging above the street.