

# Blueberry Festival Special!

## Welcome to The Shawangunk Mountain Wild Blueberry & Huckleberry Harvest Festival!

by Dianne Turner, Chairperson, Blueberry Festival

This year, the *Board of Directors* of the *Ellenville-Wawarsing Chamber of Commerce* has taken the opportunity to combine the fairly new (4<sup>th</sup> year) but well-received *Shawangunk Mountain Wild Blueberry / Huckleberry Festival* and the *Annual Harvest Music Festival* (previously held in September), to present one major event that can be enjoyed by locals and tourists alike.

The *Wild Blueberry & Huckleberry Harvest Festival* will be held on **Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2003**, in the Village of Ellenville.

This event is meant to celebrate community – a day of fellowship, fun, and local heritage.

I would like each and everyone of you reading this to become as excited as the *Board* is. I invite you – as individuals, organizations, and businesses – to participate in making this event as great as it can be. We have a lot of good ideas. We welcome more. This is your opportunity to showcase your group and our area. You don't have to be a member of the *Chamber* to be involved.

If you wish to participate in some way – even just to volunteer to help out on the day of the festival – please call the *Chamber* office at 647-4620, or me at 647-4700. Vendor applications are still available. (Non-profit organizations do not have to pay for their booth space.)

I look forward to seeing you at the *Blueberry Pancake Breakfast (6:00 to 9:00 AM)* fundraiser at *Pioneer Engine Co. #1 (Norbury Hall, Center St.)*. A great start for what looks to be a really fun day! See the schedule of events on the back cover of this issue for details!

Think Blueberry!

## Behind the Blueberry Festival

by John Adams

When the *Ellenville Farmers' Market* needed a promotional event in the summer of 2000, I was fortunate to run into Irwin Rosenthal, owner of *Ellenville Lumber Company*. He told me that author Marc Fried once mentioned the possibility of celebrating the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century wild blueberry-picking industry in the **Shawangunk Mountains** with a Blueberry Festival. Since this was a dream of mine as well, I contacted Marc and he agreed to come to the *Farmers' Market* and sign his book, *The Huckleberry Pickers - A Raucous History of the Shawangunk Mountains*.

We heard that the community was being asked to raise a large sum of money to save the *Ellenville Regional Hospital*, and we contacted the hospital's Ladies' Auxiliary. We asked them to organize an all-blueberry bake sale. They graciously agreed and we started talking about having "the mother of all bake sales," with the help of the Sullivan County Area Farmers' Market Association, the market's sponsor. A half-dozen volunteers and I went on hikes to **Sam's Point** and other **Shawangunk Ridge** locales to pick berries. The Ladies' home-made blueberry treats flew out of the market by noon on festival day, and most every copy of *The Huckleberry Pickers* was sold by the end of the day.

In 2001, we added a blueberry pie judging for bakeries in the Rondout Valley. The *Press and Wilson's Market* sponsored the prize, a silver pie stand. *Saunderskill Farms* won with their crumb-top pie.

Each year, Rev. Julius Collins provides a mouth-watering chicken BBQ for lunch. This year, *Pioneer Engine Co. #1* starts the day off with a blueberry pancake breakfast at **Norbury Hall on Center St.** from **6:00 to 9:00 AM**. June Strand of *Ulster County Cooperative Extension* does a cooking demonstration with berries and gives away samples. ↗

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