

Holiday Lights Committee

by Mary F. Sheeley, *Chair, Holiday Lights Committee*

We hope that you have all been enjoying the beautiful sight of the American flags flying throughout the Village, and that they instill in you the same sense of pride of community as it does in the members of the *Noonday Club* and *Chamber of Commerce*. For the past twelve years, the members of these two service organizations have worked together for the betterment and improvement of the entire Town of Wawarsing. Nowhere is this more evident than in the lovely holiday decorations that grace the utility poles in Ellenville, Napanoch, Wawarsing, and Kerhonkson each year from the Saturday after Thanksgiving until the first or second Saturday in January (weather depending).

This is the second year of our five-year replacement program to retire some of the older, worn out ornaments and replace them with new, updated decorations. The committee members meet in May each year and begin the task of finding replacement designs. We are most fortunate to have located Rileighs Outdoor Décor in Allentown, Pennsylvania. They have worked with us since 1991 to design ornaments that will look good, withstand adverse weather conditions, and continue to be enjoyed year after year. The members of the committee submit their favorite designs, whether from magazines, photos of places they visited during the past year, or suggestions from the decoration catalogs. The choices are narrowed down to three or four and then submitted to the designers at Rileighs to custom design ornaments unique to the Town of Wawarsing. Last year's gift box ornaments have now been added to Rileighs own catalog for this season!

Like everything else, this requires a lot of volunteer hours and a lot of money. Twelve years ago, we raised over \$13,000 through donations and we promised we would not be back for five years. True to our word, we did not start fundraising again until 2002... well past the five-year mark.

Last summer, we held a very successful Steak Bake fundraiser. Through the generosity of our friends at the *Ellenville Elks Lodge No. 1971*, we raised over \$4000!!! This year, again with the help and assistance of the *Elks Lodge*, we will be having a Spaghetti Dinner on **Saturday, October 18th** from **5 to 7 PM**. Tickets are a nominal **\$5** for an all-you-can-eat dinner which consists of salad, bread, spaghetti (with marinara or meat sauce), dessert and beverage. Our good friend Joe Verdino will be our Chef du Jour and we can promise you a good time and a great meal.

During the last couple of years, Deputy Superintendent Bill Brown of the Sullivan Correctional Facility and his staff have come to our assistance in Wawarsing and Kerhonkson by hanging the decorations in those communities and then returning in January to take them down. Thank you all.

And finally, no article about our holiday lights is complete without mentioning the continuing generosity of our neighbors at *Schrade Cutlery*. For each of the past ten years they have donated 100 knives, specially cast with scenes from Wawarsing's rich history. The sale of these knives helps to pay for the care and maintenance of the ornaments. Did you know that we need over 3,804 bulbs to keep our ornaments lit each year? Without this generous neighbor, we could not accomplish this goal.

As part of this year's fund raiser, we will be selling raffles for some of the past commemorative knives, so if you missed out on them in the past, here is your chance to

make up for it.

Members of the *Noonday Club* and the *Chamber* have the raffles, or you can contact the *Chamber* office at **647-4620**.

Don't forget to mark your calendar now for a great meal on the 18th. If you would like to help us with this, or any other *Chamber* or *Noonday* project, please give me a call. Volunteers are always welcome!

Committee members: James Dolaway, Jane Eck, Bob Fontaine, Ron Matthews, Earl & Karen Thornton, Bernie Wainer. ☆

New Bicentennial Ornaments!

Bicentennial ornaments celebrating both the Town of Wawarsing's 200th birthday and the area's houses of worship are right on schedule, with the next pair to be available in late October. *St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church* and *Shiloh Baptist Church* are the two ornaments currently in process. As soon as they have been received, an afternoon sale at the *Ellenville Public Library and Museum* will be scheduled.

The first two ornaments released earlier in 2003 memorialized Cragmoor's *Chapel of the Holy Name* ("the Stone Church") and Napanoch's *Reformed Church*. The *Stone Church* ornaments sold out very quickly and more have been ordered with the fall releases. *Reformed Church* ornaments are still available at the *Ellenville Public Library and Museum*.

St. Mary's, *Shiloh Baptist*, and *Stone Church* ornaments are all available in light tones, many designated as a "mist" shade. *Napanoch Reformed* ornaments are in strong colors of deep red, blue and green, as well as white with gold ink.

The Bicentennial ornaments are part of the effort to raise funds for the celebration of the Town's celebration in 2006. They are reasonably priced at **\$10** per ornament, which drops to **\$9** each if three or more are purchased at the same time. Buyers have indicated that they plan to buy the full set for their children as historical mementos and/or holiday gifts. Some were purchased as bridal party gifts for a wedding to be held at one of the churches. Others were shower gifts, birthday remembrances, or, in many cases, memories of the churches buyers had attended since childhood.

Four ornaments will be released each year – two in the spring, and two in the fall. There is no commitment to keep all releases in stock throughout the four-year project; each decision will be based on demand.

Mary Sheeley and Marion Dumond are coordinating the ornament project as members of the *Chamber of Commerce Pride Committee*, which is also functioning as the *Town Bicentennial Committee*.

More projects are in the planning stage, all to benefit the Bicentennial celebration. ☆

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