

Bicentennial Enthusiasm Grows



More than three dozen local government officials, representatives from community organizations, and Town of Wawarsing residents answered the Town **Bicentennial Committee's** invitation to a public planning session at the **Community Room** of the *Ellenville Public Library & Museum* on March 10th.

Bicentennial Committee Chairman Mark Craft presided at the meeting that he opened with a warm welcome and background on the committee, its members, and its progress. He reported a variety of possible celebratory events and opened the meeting to comments and further suggestions.

The Bicentennial celebration will open March 14th, 2006, with a ceremony recalling those events which led to the legislative action cutting off a section of the Town of Rochester to form the Town of Wawarsing. The official celebration will continue for approximately six months, closing in the early fall.

The committee envisions a true town-wide celebration encompassing all usual and special events held within the town as Bicentennial events. A calendar is planned to incorporate all events, from penny socials to special church services, suppers to reenactments, alumni reunions to parades, street fairs, and field days.

Dr. Richard Craft, president of the *Ellenville Wawarsing Alumni Association*, announced that they are planning an all-alumni, all-class reunion to be held on Saturday, August 26th, 2006, immediately after the annual *Ellenville-Wawarsing Chamber of Commerce Blueberry/Huckleberry Festival*.

Diane DeChillo, representing the *Ellenville Public Library & Museum*, reported that the 2006 *Katharine T. Terwilliger Lecture Series* will be a Bicentennial event.

Jeff Rubin agreed to assist with plans for a special post office cancellation in commemoration of the event.

Other suggestions (which *Marion Dumond* logged on flipcharts, below) included a town-wide cleanup early in the spring so that the town can put its "best foot forward" for the many visitors who will be drawn to the area.

Completion of the *D&H Canal Heritage Corridor* in the Town of Wawarsing by 2006, or at least enough to

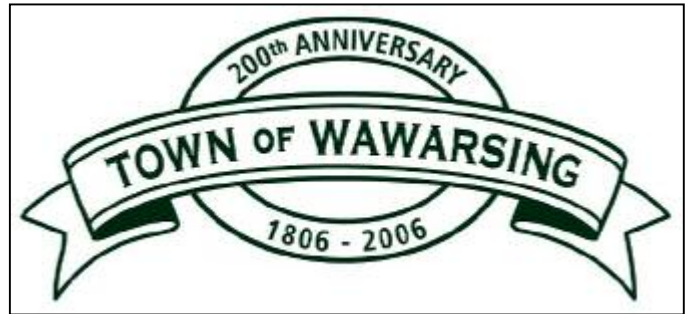


conduct walking tours, was considered an important project.

Building on the existing collections at the local museum by donation of historical documents and artifacts should be encouraged, even if copies are given rather than originals.

Discussion returned repeatedly to the calendar, what would be included, where it would be publicized, and the importance of every community group planning early enough that their events can be listed by the fall of 2005.

So much enthusiasm was generated and so many suggestions were offered that the meeting lasted almost an hour longer than originally planned. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled in late May, with notices posted in the community, listing in the calendars of *Wawarsing.Net* and *The Press*, on TV channel 20, and telephone calls to those who signed in at the March 10th meeting and listed their phone numbers.



A special, unadvertised event at the meeting was the release of the second of the Bicentennial fundraisers, large tote bags silk-screened with pictures of **Hunt Memorial**, **Ellenville Post Office**, and **Wayside Inn** buildings, surrounding the official Bicentennial logo (above).

A quarter of the proposed supply was sold at the meeting. The bags will be available when the spring release of two more Bicentennial ornaments is held. The tote bags are priced at \$12.50 for one, two for \$20. Dr. Mark Craft said that a supply would be available at the office of *Craft Chiropractic* for the next month or so. ☆




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