

Hearths & Crafts

Please Turn Our Radios Back On

by Dr. Richard Craft

Several months ago, my wife and I attended the *Ellenville High School* production of "Annie Get Your Gun." It was a marvelous performance. The cast was letter-perfect. Too bad more people didn't show up; it was estimated that fewer than 500 people were in attendance for the three evening performances. It was *Ellenville High School* showcased at its best; alas, the efforts of cast, crew, orchestra, and backstage volunteers were diminished by a poor community showing.

Did you know about it?

There was a time when the local newspapers and local radio would have given plenty of prior notice, as well as thorough coverage during and after such community efforts.

As I see it, one of the greatest needs of our community is regular, consistent, unbiased coverage of the events taking place almost daily.

Wawarsing.Net Magazine, sponsored by the *Chamber of Commerce*, is doing an outstanding job of covering the Town. We are better informed, but still there are gaps, since this is a monthly periodical. They make an excellent effort at anticipating upcoming events but nothing achieves greater coverage than regular reminders.

The very best of Ellenville/*Wawarsing* is being presented by a host of contributors who deal with events past, present, and future. Articles about our Town's and Village's history, current health trends, education advances at our school, human interest stories, news from the governmental agencies in the Town and Village, organization news, and much more is being presented with total community advertising support, which makes each issue better and better.

There was a time when everyone tuned into WELV, where there would be on the menu: items of interest, items for sale, interviews, the never-to-be-forgotten "Talk of the Town" with Bob Mangels, the weather, school closings, sporting events, parades, school and community events, world news, along with a background of music you could listen to.

Since Bob Mangels was WELV, he could have easily turned it into his

own personal soapbox and taken potshots at whoever crossed his path. He chose not to go this route and instead took the high road, never tearing anyone or anything down, always building up. As a result he sold radio time and respect for him and his station. We need that type of presence in our Town and Village again... and now.

The message is getting out in villages smaller than Ellenville and towns smaller than Wawarsing. Jeffersonville is booming, as is Woodstock. Liberty and Monticello are attempting positive changes, and I expect that radio is an important link in that process.

When WELV left town, and some of the local newspaper editors of yore retired, "There went the neighborhood." Nothing has been the same since, and it is my opinion that we have all suffered. When they spoke or wrote, they were short and to the point, but always with community betterment in mind.

It's time the Village and Town officials got their act together and gave us back some form of public communication other than what is presently in place. Maybe we need a nightly TV news broadcast over a cable TV access channel. Maybe we need to convince WELV to come back live to Ellenville instead of the current canned and unlistened-to "stuff." While written TV announcements do help, there is no substitute for the human element to bring in the listeners.

As I view it, media coverage needs to be a part of the solution for communicating with our citizens, not the problem itself. It seems a shame that all that is good – all those working hard to "make our town thrive" – get inadequate or no coverage. I'm talking about school events, concerts in the square, Citizen of the Year Dinners, and many more.

I venture to say that there is more going on – more positive things happening here in our town – than in any other town our size in this region of the State. It is a sad state of affairs when the many hard working volunteers and programs of this town are met with silence.

I ask the powers that be: "Please turn our radios and TVs back on so our citizens can get tuned in to what's happening." Maybe, then, the next concert, school play, or baseball game will be an item of note rather than an item of passing. ☆

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