

Town Topics

“A Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On”

by Dr. Richard Craft, former Supervisor of Wawarsing

This irreverent tune was all the rage several decades ago and, thank goodness, it died a natural death. In searching for a title for this month’s article, my fertile mind put together the sounds I’m hearing coming out of our town and like magic that tune came immediately to my mind. The shakin’ I hear goin’ on is ushering in a new generation to our town.

The hammering you hear is the sound of carpenters driving home the various pitches of #8, #10, #12 common nails as the new hangars at the airport are being framed. At the same time, dozens of homes are being renovated or constructed from Cragmoor to Lackawack and from Spring Glen to the Ukrainian. No wonder Wawarsing is the second-fastest growing town in Ulster County.

Accompanying the rhythm section of hammers is the melody played by chain saws as they level land for building and especially removing the grove behind *Hydro Aluminum* in what is officially called Airport Obstruction Removal. In addition, chippers and dozers add their own music to the concert being played there, thanks to the generosity of the FAA. Hopefully these melodies can continue into the fall and early winter as grant money has also secured for us a much-needed extended taxiway. We just didn’t have the right harmonics for the new maintenance building. That is now being planned for Opus #2.

No doubt you’ve observed the rumblings on **Main Street** in Napanoch as the hamlet becomes front stage, first chair in Wawarsing’s revitalization. Sidewalks, period lighting from *Peters* to the *Napanoch Firehouse*, planters, special seating, will grace **Main Street** with ornamental trees planted next spring (compliments of the *Shawangunk Garden Club*). To fill out the score in this lovely operetta is the imminent sale of the *Hornbeck Store* and its environs to a couple anxious to restore its yesteryear beauty with modern application to today’s musical ear. *Shanleys Hotel* is still actively seeking its niche and it is apparent that the new owners are listening to the heart of Napanoch, namely the *Napanoch Public Interest Group*. There are also well-founded rumors that new construction is slated for downtown as well. This is music to my ears (although they mostly just ring these days). According to Doug Hart, president of *NPIG*, other good things are being planned and he assures me that “the Melody Lingers On.”

Above the din of traffic on **Rte. 209** you undoubtedly heard the sound of loud clapping, not to a musical beat but to the efforts of *Noonday’s Citizens of the Year 2003*, Mary Dumond and Mary Sheeley. Affectionately known as the M&M twins, this duet can be found everywhere in the Town with their upbeat tempo. Excellent choice.

The rhythmic clapping has reached an encore status as the Town of Wawarsing and Ellenville were blessed with four “Bests” by *Hudson Valley Magazine*. Roger Baker, artist from Cragmoor, was nominated for his yearly sculptures in the hayfield below the **Rte. 52** overlook. The Statue of Liberty, Elvis Presley, Albert Einstein, Jimi Hendrix, have all been honored making their appearance in live green. The *Shadowland Theater* was selected as best in show (pun intended) while, next door, the *Aroma Thyme Bistro* was selected best new restaurant in the Hudson Valley. To complete this quartet of rising stars, *Top Shelf Jewelry* received their “Best” as top Jewelry Shop in the Hudson Valley. I’m telling you, I’m a shakin’ with pride for our whole town. I feel like dancing.



At the October 7th meeting of the Wawarsing Town Board, former councilman Gus Hull, left, and his wife, presented a 150-year-old copy of the Ellenville Journal, preserved in archival plastic, to Wawarsing Supervisor James V. Dolaway, right. The item will be displayed in **Town Hall** when a suitable location can be determined, so both sides can be seen.

The action never stops in Wawarsing and Ellenville. In spite of the *Schrade* tragedy, our community has been there before and revived. We’ve been side-swiped and stepped upon but always got to our feet. We are still in there and haven’t missed a beat. We are making ourselves known and our people and “those” people know it. The *Citizen of the Year Dinner*, the *Annual Hospital Dinner*, 75 year recognition given to the *Shawangunk Garden Club* by the NYS Federation of Garden Clubs, recent community sale of mums by the *Garden Club*, the designation of Critical Access for our *Hospital*, new infusion of funds (it’s here to stay, folks). Have I missed something?

Look around you and hear the music of change, hope, investment, and growth. Promise. New homeowners are thrilled to be here, our town roads are receiving new life, our infrastructure is improving. You can actually feel the ground moving. Has it been easy? No, there have been mis-steps, gasps, several kicks in the shins, some embarrassing moments, a few intemperates but those who are doing are dedicated, committed to making Wawarsing a better place to live, work, and even dance and sing. Several years ago I could see Wawarsing Rising. It is happening. They’re playing our song, dear, so let’s dance (foxtrot, please). ☆

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A Special Thanks to Maurice Hinchey and his staff for helping our little school in such a big way. It is nice to know our local congressman cares about his littlest constituents.