

Hearths & Crafts

Destination Wawarsing

by Dr. Richard Craft

While other communities are featured in articles entitled "Fifty Reasons for Living in Podunk," I'd like to submit our fifty. I will stay away from the generalities such as, "where all our wives are good looking and our children are all above average" (even though that is the case).

1. Spectacular scenery overlooking the **Roudout Valley** from **Rte. 52 & Rte. 44/55**.

2. The family resorts centers at the **Nevele Grande (Rte. 209)** and the **Ukrainian National Estate (Fordmoore Rd.)**.

3. Thirty-six holes of golf on three courses within a one-mile radius

4. The availability of affordable housing, the best deals in southeastern NYS.

5. A rural atmosphere throughout most of the town.

6. The lack of traffic congestion.

7. The lack of large housing tracts with their cookie-cutter homes

8. Thousands of acres of protected open space available for your enjoyment.

9. Visiting the unique character, charm, and surprises of the art colony of Cragmoor

10. A visit to the **Cragmoor Library** will stun you as you enter the door. I'd love to hear of your first impression.

11. Be enthralled with your exposure to the **Stone Church** and its spectacular view of the valley while cruising through Cragmoor

12. Journey over to the soon-to-open **Sam's Point Interpretive Center** and hike to the **Ice Caves** and the unmatched beauty that awaits you at every turn.

13. The exploration of **Lake Maratanza** next to **Sam's Point** and the unique flora and fauna on the top of the mountain at any season of the year is unsurpassed in any other region.

14. For those of hardier stock, a hike to **Kaaterskill Falls** is worth the mile trek.

15. Of course the crème de la crème is the visit to the **Ice Caves** themselves. Carefully constructed paths wind around massive boulders, through grottos and areas where ice and snow can be found year round

16. If you are a hiker, you may want to complete your tour of Cragmoor by hiking to **Bear Cliff** to experience its "on the edge" panoramic view, particularly at sunset.

17. If hiking is still in your blood you might enjoy the challenge of walking the **Long Path**, an extension of the Appalachian Trail, which eventually will connect with the hiking trails of the Catskills.

18. Observe the abundance of

wildlife as you travel our country roads. Deer, fox, bear, turkey can often be sighted along any road.

19. Visit the **Canal Lodge on Canal Street**. This is a Senior Citizens Day Center. This landmark building, dating back to the famous **D&H Canal** has been totally renovated by the community service crews from our correctional facilities. It also serves a dual purpose, with the attached **Family of Ellenville** as a center for the needy.

20. Be sure to stop at the one of a kind **Chamber of Commerce** Office on **Berme Road**, up the street from the **Canal Lodge**. It is housed in the former ticket office of the **D&H Canal**.

21. While there, explore the old canal locks still in place just up the road and slated for complete restoration in the near future. Coal boats plied this 108-mile waterway (America's first million-dollar private enterprise!) from the coalfields in Pennsylvania to Kingston, NY through most of the 19th century.

22. Don't forget to stop and shop at the **JM Originals Factory Outlet Store on Canal Street**. Its factory, located by the canal locks on the **Berme Road** (in the site of the old **Sun-Ray Water Company**, once the world's largest such plant, where the world's purest natural spring water – still unchallenged! – from the nearby

Sun-Ray Tunnel, was bottled nearly a century ago) manufactures high-end children's wear. Special clothing treatments such as appliqué and embroidery are their features.

23. Retrace your steps a few hundred feet and take advantage of the seasonal sales at **Top Shelf Jewelry**, (**Canal Street**, site of the old **O&W train station**) makers of costume jewelry and Hudson Valley Magazine's Best Jewelry Shop for 2004.

24. While in the center of town, walk over one street to **Center Street** and buy some world-famous raisin pumpernickel bread at **Cohen's Bakery**. Take home a 10 lb. loaf or have it shipped

25. Stay for a summer evening's performance at the **Shadowland Equity Theatre (Canal Street)**. They feature four different plays throughout their season, which runs from May through September. Another "Best" by Hudson Valley Magazine.

26. Before the show, have dinner at the **Aroma Thyme Bistro**, next door to the **Shadowland**. Another of Hudson Valley's "Best" is a sure treat.

27. Other important landmarks include the "Boy with the Boot" fountain that graces the center of town in **Liberty Square**. Other "must see" highlights are Roger Baker's new village mural at the corner of **Canal Street & Rte. 209**, the reconstructed chapel adjacent to **St. John's Church (Market Street)**, the **Old School House** and **Quaker Meeting** →

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