

# Milestones

## Sam's Point Center Dedication

As was featured in last month's issue, The Nature Conservancy and the Open Space Institute opened the new **Sam's Point Conservation Center** on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. (For details about the building and Sam's Point Preserve, see *Marion Dumond's feature on pages 16-17 of Issue 30.*)

Anticipating either on-and-off rain or late May heat, a large white tent was set up for the scheduled speakers and refreshment table, but even then it was standing room only for the overflow crowd; as it was cold and wet, and the crowd was too large to all fit in the **Center**, this proved providential. To handle the extra cars, secondary parking was established near the Post Office and UCAT buses shuttled participants to the **Center** (photo, right).

Village, Town, County, and State officials were on hand, as well as top Parks, Conservancy, and Institute honchos. Here are some of the speakers and the key points they made:

**Katie Dolan, Executive Director, Eastern New York Chapter, Nature Conservancy Staff:** "Celebrate unique



landscape and people protecting it... This was and is a team effort involving: Mavens, such as Cara Lee, (photo next page top left), Shawangunk Ridge Program Director, and Gabe Chapin, Sam's Point Land Steward, and the building team; Connectors (people who work with the community and the many public officials who helped); Salespeople (Heidi Wagner and more than 100 volunteers who get people enthused)... But we need more help raising money for the education center."

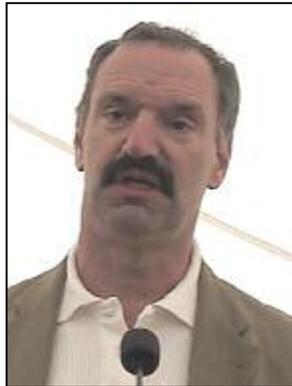
**Joe Martens, President, Open Space Institute:** "Today is not about the Center itself which is but a tool that facilitates deeper understanding of a place... We need to understand the uniqueness and how to treat and respect it for future generations... We have a responsibility to understand how it all works."

**Jeff Kaplan, Mayor, Ellenville:** "Today is validation of the people who supported



the sale of the Mountain... This is the start of a rebirth of points that will again make Ellenville a tourist destination."

**John Bonacic, NYS Senator (right):** "Sites in the State of New York, especially Ulster County, are second to none... This is a sacred place to get in touch with inner self. We need to protect those kinds of sacred places... This will be an educational facility and a source of economic vitality"



**Kevin Cahill, NYS Assemblyman:** "We see what happens when Nature takes charge (referring to recent flooding)... Tragedy is transforming landscape. This is building a buffer, saying 'Stop,' making it possible to save one of the most beautiful places on Earth, the Gunks, making a name for ourselves... This is what makes this place special when we treat it with reverence and respect... This important ecological area provides an education and can inspire and enlighten by preserving this piece of the world"

**Carol Ash, Executive Director, Palisades Interstate Parks Commission:** "People come here for extraordinary vistas... This building represents years of thought of people who went before us and understood what it stood for... Looking at the Shawangunks, one can stand and look for miles and see no built environment, which is rare so near to an urban setting."



A bench was dedicated to the memory of volunteer Peter Howell; **Heidi Wagner, Sam's Point Preserve Manager:** "The heart and soul of Sam's Point is our volunteers. Peter Howell was a volunteer" Peter's son Peter (photo, next page, top left) became tearful as he noted "Dad grew up on this"

