

New Paltz Times February 18, 2010

Misleading statements

I have been mulling over a response to some questionable Rivendell support letters that have been printed in the last six months, but felt compelled to write after reading a press release in a recent issue of the New Paltz Times.

The press release stated that Susan Wine purchased the property at the corner of Route 299 and Albany Post Road "in order to move her established winery operation there." It was not a winery operation and the New Paltz Times should know this simple truth! The Rivendell "Winery" did not make wine, it was not a farm and did not grow grapes. I wonder if the appeals judge in Albany is aware of those facts? The town, with good cause, legally and ethically prohibited Ms. Wine from operating a retail wine tasting, catering facility and sales store in an agricultural and pristine area. Contrary to the press release, the decisions of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Building Inspector were not "motivated by a few prominent and vocal neighbors" as Ms. Wine states, but rather a large number of justifiably concerned people. Her portrayal of herself as the "poor farmer" or the "poor business person" just trying to make a go of it against what she calls "tree hugging environmentalists" and anti-farmer/anti-business types has unfortunately been believed by some in our county, mainly outside of New Paltz. This is not an issue of "farmer's rights" or being anti-business at all. Susan whines about the ruling being "bogus and political," but she is the one falsely presenting herself.

Even supposed unsolicited letters in previous "Feedback" sections had people from outside of New Paltz stating how they were "saddened" they no longer have a winery in the area to visit. Evidently, they were hoodwinked if they thought they had actually visited a winery! These suspect "tourists" said things like..."I'm a big corporate executive from New York City who used to come to New Paltz to the Rivendell Winery and spend a lot of money with my large staff and I won't come to New Paltz anymore." Another letter was from a person who stated she used to come to New Paltz to mountain climb and said something to the effect..."I'll do my mountain climbing in Westchester County and spend my money there because there is no Rivendell anymore"! (that one was funny!). Apparently, these writers are not aware of the number of real wineries in the area and most importantly that Rivendell was not a winery.

This is no laughing matter and our community needs to address this issue before her lawyers hoodwink a judge!

The New Paltz Times should do a real report on the facts.

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New Paltz