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Not a farming operation

At a recent county meeting Ulster County legislator Frank Felicello stated, in reference to the Rivendell Winery, that "a winery is part of farming" and that "the people in New Paltz are complaining, but our job is to do the right thing."

I have to shake my head in disbelief! Anyone who knows the facts on Rivendell knows that the Ransoms and Wines are about as far from farmers and "Rivendell Winery" is as far from being a farm or a winery as Felicello is from knowing the right thing! Both Rivendell and Felicello are trying to pull the wool over everyone's eyes by making false claims of this being a farming-related issue when is not! This is not a NIMBY issue, either!

Legislator Brian Shapiro commented about the "right to farm" and again, does he really know the facts or, like Felicello, are they both just blathering out farm or business-friendly sound bites that sound good! Neither Shapiro or Felicello live in New Paltz, and apparently don't have to care about the facts because their narrow minds do not see how the issue impacts them or their constituents!

Rivendell's false portrayal of themselves (I'm surprised they don't show up in overalls!) belies the fact that they are simply a commercial establishment that hasn't produced an agricultural product in over a decade! They get wines from the Finger Lakes and put their own labels on the bottles! They invite city people up and have made believe they are a winery for years now.

It is not a bad thing to sell wine, but it's bad to make believe you produce wine and advertise it in The New York Times! Of course, in stretching the word "agriculture" you can say they are selling New York State wine and of course that is a good thing, but it is not the same as local farmers selling their products or real wineries selling the wine they make.

The New Paltz Chamber and Maurice Hinchey have also voiced support for Rivendell, and again, hopefully, it is probably based only on the "farming lie" and the fact that Rivendell attracts some tourists as part of the Ulster winery tour. Of course the winery, even a phony one, does help with tourism. But certain very important facts have to be taken into account by our representatives in New Paltz and the legislature in considering the precedence and impact of granting a suspect designation to a non-farming entity in a sensitive area. Our representatives also should not be influenced by the threats of a lawsuit by these wealthy business people -- or campaign or membership donations, either.

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