

New Paltz Times July 31, 2008

Traffic and Rivendell are much overblown

It has taken ten years of living in New Paltz and reading letters to the editor to finally motivate me, admittedly lazy, to give my opinion on a few topics.

First, I would like to weigh in on the traffic brouhaha. What traffic?

As a refugee from Brooklyn, I remember bad traffic in the NYC area. Trying to portray waiting at a light for five minutes, or the 10 days a year (fairs) as traffic problems, is laughable. Even I, who make little effort to learn all the roads in the area, know how to bypass the bottlenecks that happen perhaps two hours a week. In my job I drive through many towns and villages in the Hudson Valley. I see the constant efforts of these communities to try and build a fraction of the traffic we get. We are blessed to be a destination town, and as such, must deal with the occasional negative, in addition to the many positives.

Even if Ms. Hokanson needed 30 or 40 minutes to get from North Putt to McDonald's, this does not give our town supervisor license to threaten the village with regulatory overrides. Being elected supervisor seems to make the supervisors somehow feel they know better what's good for everybody (see previous supervisor).

On another note, I just read Mr. Dan Winfield's letter about Rivendell Winery and must respond.

I do not know Mr. Winfield, but I have known Bob Ransom and Susan Wine for 10 years. I know them to be wonderful people. I am not fully knowledgeable about the fight between them and the town, but I must take issue with a few points in Mr. (NIMBY) Winfield's letter. (I don't know he's a NIMBY, but he sure sounds like a one). You say "the insidious backdoor dealings of the Wine-Ransom team."

My readings in the paper seem to show straight forward filings and disagreement over the rulings of a town official. I challenge you to show how their actions are insidious and backdoor. You say you "witness the unsightly strictly commercialized, shabby and unkempt lands of the Rivendell Winery" These "unkempt lands" have hosted many wine trail events, lobster fests, chili cook-offs and many other events over the years. They also bring thousands of tourists and their dollars to New Paltz. I do not remember reading of any of those many DUIs and DWIs that you speak of.

And finally, the crown jewel of your letter, "can Wal-Mart be far behind?" I think you probably forgot, but you could have also linked September 11, China and Tibet, and even global warming to Rivendell Winery.

I know that the winery has contributed much to the New Paltz area since its inception. Mr. NIMBY Winfield, all I can tell that you have contributed is a toxic letter full of distortions and worse.

Barry Berner

New Paltz