

Public Domain

by Steve Krulick, Village of Ellenville Trustee

Priming the Suggestion Box

*"Hey Jude, don't make it bad. Take a sad song and make it better.
Remember to let her into your heart, then you can start to make it better."
-- Paul McCartney*

From my very first discussions with Stefan Spezio (the *Journal's* Content Editor) I freely offered him suggestions on how to "do" a community publication. Or, at least, how *I* would do things *if* the *Journal* were mine. As a former publisher (*Ellenville News*), and editor (*Wawarsing.Net*), I felt I'd earned the stripes to presume to give him the benefit of lessons learned the hard way.

Of course, *I* wouldn't have to bear the financial or public consequences of implementing those suggestions! Also, what works for one person or publication may not apply as well to others.

Some ideas may be implemented... others won't (for example, I would rather there not be a police blotter). But I will continue to offer suggestions, and make my case for them, because that's just my nature. And I'd really like to see this newspaper succeed... and also be the *best* community newspaper it can be.

Likewise, on the Village Board, I routinely offer suggestions on how to "make Ellenville more livable and more lovable" (my campaign slogan). Alas, many of these don't come up until the Trustee Concerns segment, way at the end of the meeting, when most of the audience has left, and the Mayor would like to get home and watch the Yankees. I'm not saying they fall on *deaf* ears – only few and distracted ones. Hence, lacking a standing ovation (or even some heads in the gallery nodding in agreement), they don't seem to have as much *oomph* behind them (as they might otherwise) pushing for their adoption.

But I press on, because I'd really like to see the Village prosper, and be the *best* community it can be.

So when the opportunity to write a regular (or semi-regular) column was floated, I wanted it to be a win-win... something that could help make the *Journal* and the community better. Otherwise, why bother?

It's somewhat liberating not to shoulder any Publisher or Editor burdens, and only worry about one column every other week (the current plan), and be free to speak for myself alone; accordingly, opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the *Journal*, its owners or staff, nor of the Ellenville Village Board and municipality... so please don't tar any of them if you disagree with *my* opinions.

Further, if I use the word "we," it's neither the royal *we* (of government) nor the editorial *we* (of this paper). Rather, it's the greater communal *WE*, as in "We the People." Not that I presume to speak *for* the People, nor even that I am a representative voice, and certainly not a typical one. No, it's the collective *We*, stuck with each other for better or worse, a community that shares the common wealth of this locale and has to face the problems we share in common, as well.

First, what *is* our community? As a resident and public servant of Ellenville, much of what I suggest and refer to will naturally gravitate there. But the surrounding Town of Wawarsing (sometimes, half-jokingly, referred to as "the Greater Ellenville Area"), and, even the Rte. 209 Corridor from Rte. 17 south to Rte. 213 north, (i.e., the Rondout Valley and its flanking Shawangunks and Catskills), *feels* to be part of a cohesive locale (as the new Scenic Byway and new 209 Coalition confirms; so, too, the *Journal's* own circulation area).

So, here's my plan... as much as possible, I want to fill these columns with ideas, suggestions, examples, brainstorm, inspirations – even some flights of fancy – that can make our community a better place in which to live, work, and thrive. These ideas may come from my own noggin, or from things I've read or seen, or things I'm told by friends and neighbors... and, now, with *this* vehicle, from YOU, the *Journal* readers. They may be ideas already in effect somewhere else, or in the proposal stage, or just mere seeds of a notion.

They could be ideas for individuals, families, neighborhoods, hamlets, towns, etc. to implement. Let's put them on the table, poke them with a stick, and see which ones have promise, and then see if we can't push to make those become reality.

I'd also like to use this column to recognize and pat on the back local citizens who have made a positive difference to their community, and who deserve a nod, but usually go unsung. A little appreciation can go a long way, so if you have any persons or groups in mind to recommend, contact me with the details.

Finally, I may, on occasion, choose to comment on local issues, though I've promised Stefan not to be "pugilistic" about it, and to leaven it with some humor and historical perspective! Suggested topics/questions of public interest are always welcome.

To be continued.

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