

November 2024



"It's your New York!"

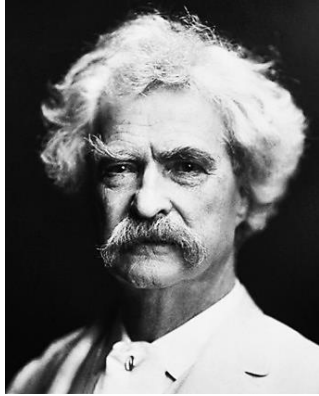
The Rondout Reader

ELLENVILLE TO KINGSTON



OUR MAGICAL VALLEY

by Kevin Ahearn



"We do not deal much in facts when we are contemplating ourselves."

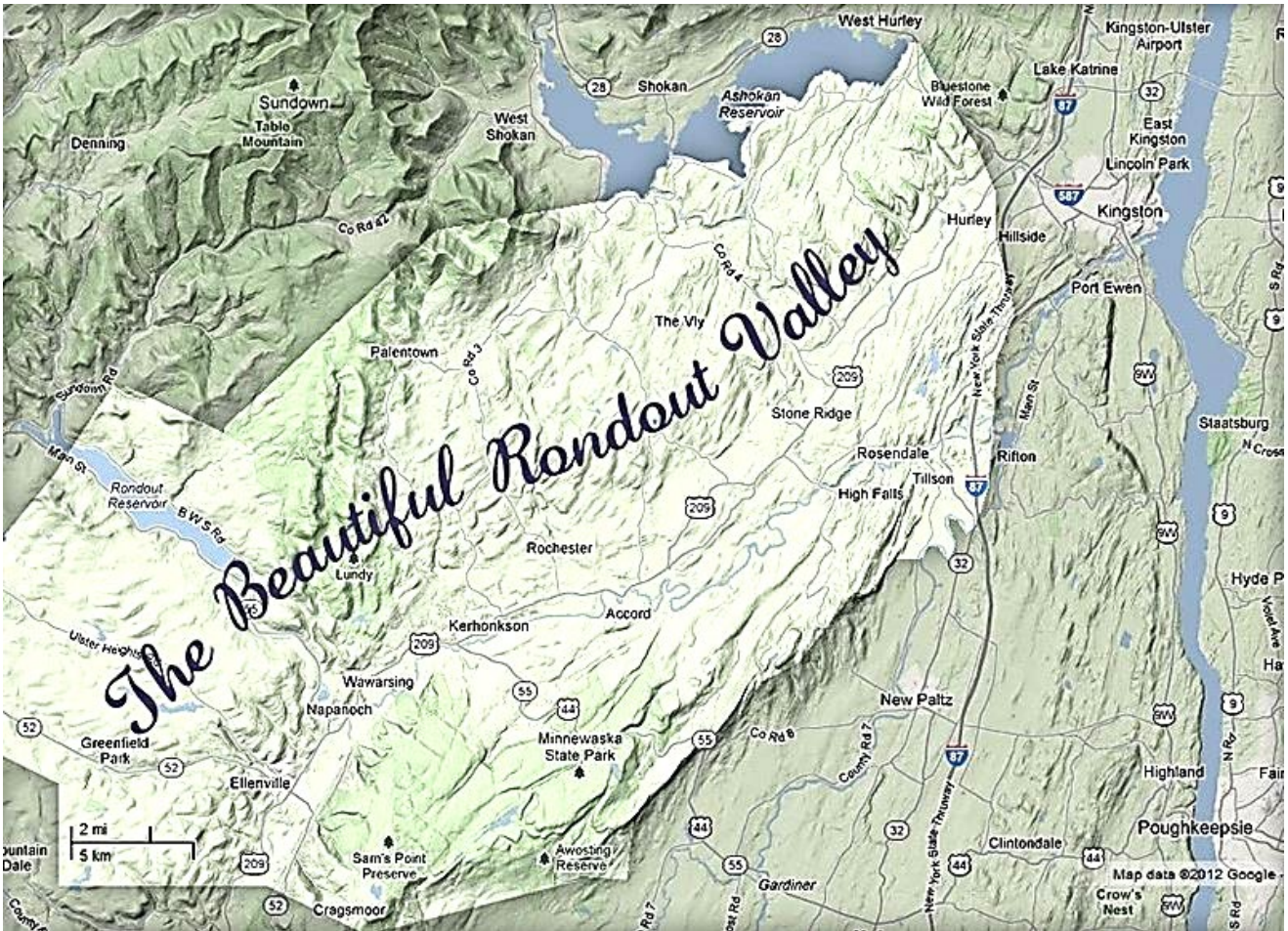


"I am always at a loss at how much to believe of my own stories."



"What, me worry?"

In Memory of Frank Lynch 1954-2014



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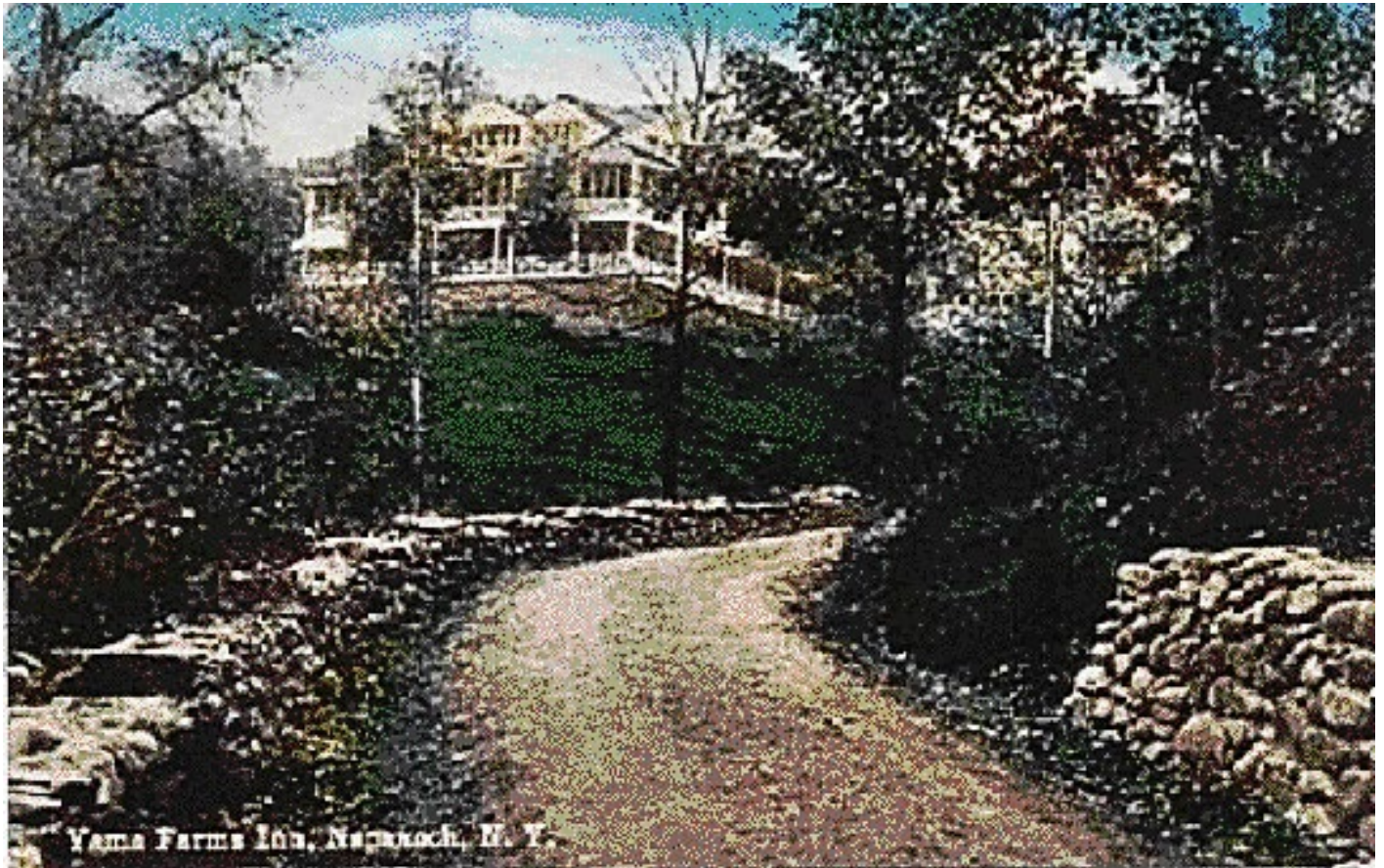
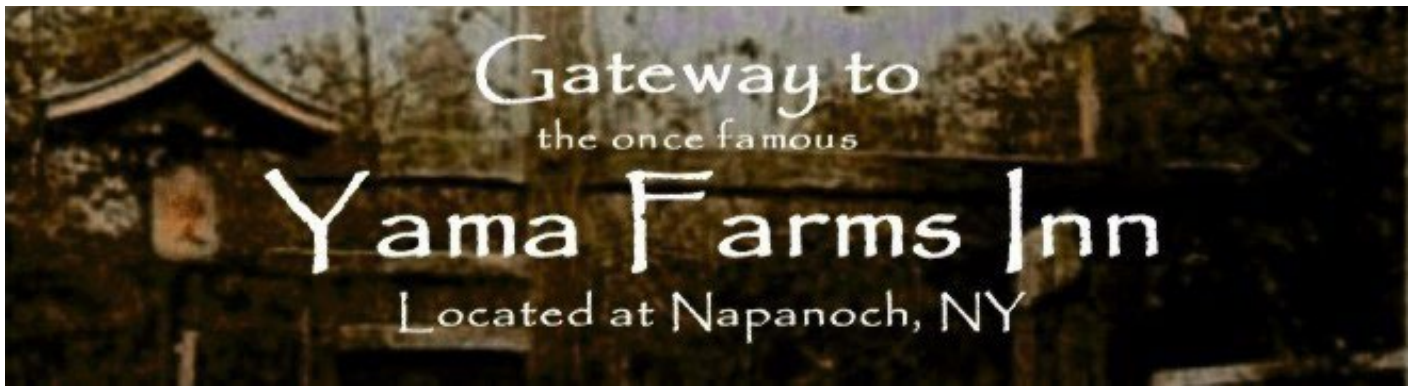
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The Rondout Reader is fantasy.
 All references to actual persons, alive
 or dead, made for a good story.

© Kevin Ahearn



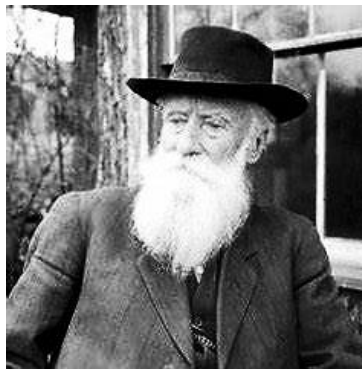
A HOME IN THE MOUNTAINS



FRITZ

THE WARRIOR DOG

Inspired by the Cragmoor Historical Society



"The most wonderful thing about the dog is not his intelligence, but his capacity for loving."



I don't remember being alive and not flying. My master would tuck me inside his pilot's uniform just before we got into his winged machine. A great roar unlike any bird and I could feel us bounding and then bouncing and UP we went!



I couldn't see anything on our early flights. I'd feel snug and safe when suddenly, the machine would climb or dive or tumble over and over, its engine screaming.

Ratatat-Ratatatat! My master's body shook every time the big noise sounded. ***Ratatat-Ratatatat!***



Again and again the machine would twist and turn, and as quickly as the chaos began it would end and all would be peaceful, but I wouldn't feel at ease until the flying machine was rolling on the ground and finally stopped.

"Voila, Fritz!" He'd hold me up high and cheer. "Two more 'kills' thanks to you, my good luck charm!"



Count Andre DeMaille was the bravest pilot in the French Armée de l'Air. And what a lucky dog I was to fly with him. Of course he named me 'Fritz'; I was a German Shepherd!

The Count had a sharp eye for the enemy, and an even sharper one for the ladies. A royal princess, a countess, a common farmgirl, my master was in constant pursuit.



Down from the sky, the Count would be off, leaving me alone. And when he'd bring one of his companions home, he'd order me out of the bedroom. Then I'd hear sounds I'd never dream of making.



Soon I was too big to fit inside my master's flight jacket, so I'd sit on his lap, the wind blowing back my ears. Under the crisp, clean sky, a dirty ugliness was raging.



High in the clouds with my master I felt secure until...Ratatat-Ratatat!



The Count would flip over his machine and a couple of times I almost fell out. Whizzing past my nose, what kind of insects were up this high?

Five, then ten, fifteen, twenty, I'd count with the Count as the enemy fell before him.



My master became a hero with almost as many decorations as he had ladies.



"Not me alone," he'd say to his fellow pilots. "I'm fighting with 'Fritz, the Warrior Dog!'"



Twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five, forty-six, forty-seven...the highest number of victories in the Armée de l'Air. Then...



"Great news, my warrior dog!" said the Count. "We've been invited to America, Yama Farms in Napanoch, New York!"

'Arf!' I barked in bewilderment. 'Napanoch, New York'? I was hoping for Pigalle in Paris!



We would have had a more relaxing voyage, but my master could not keep his hands off a pretty young hostess and I spent almost every night alone outside his cabin.

At long last we arrived at a gigantic city.



We didn't stay long. Got on a big chugging machine and headed north.



When the long smoking carrier stopped, we were soon rolling again.



After a short, bumpy ride...



"Voila, Fritz!" The Count dropped to one knee to look me in the eye as he used to before a flying mission. "We've come to a new world, and a new life. At Yama Farms, we will find peace."

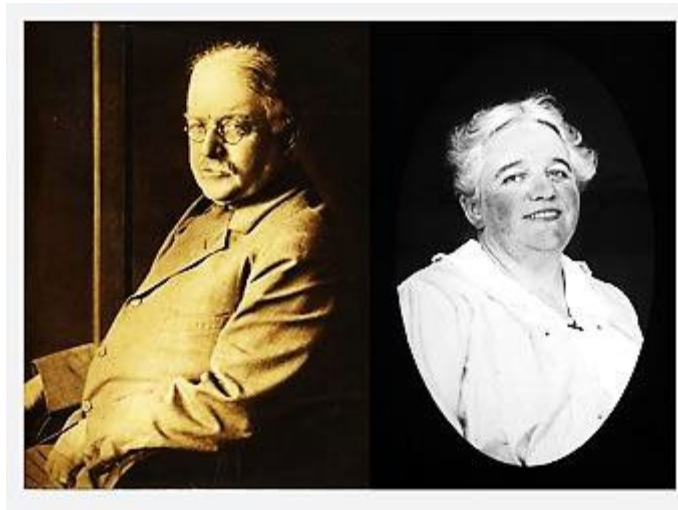


'Arf!' I tried to sound confident. My heroic master and I had been feted in castles and palaces, mansions and fortresses, but 'Yama Farms'? What kind of a place was this?

起承転結

'Yama', 'Home in the Mountains', was founded in 1913 by Frank Seaman who fostered a deep love and respect for Japanese culture and architecture and knew absolutely nothing about running a hotel.

But Seaman did know *business*. An ad exec, he envisioned Yama as a private retreat for the champions of American industry, the arts, sciences and commerce, an exclusive enclave where friendships and deals would flourish.



"Not like a hotel at all," said Seaman of forty-room main house on 1300 plush acres on the Shawangunk Ridge in the Roundout Valley. "But a place to entertain friends and friends' friends."

Olive Sarre, the co-founder and later Seaman's wife, was a world traveler and an accomplished artist greatly influenced by her experiences in the Orient. Centered on her design, an authentic cluster of rural Japanese buildings and gardens sprung up on the outskirts of Napanoch.



Guests did not reserve a stay at Yama; they had to be invited. Railroad magnates, bank presidents, inventors, industrialists, philosophers, naturalists, historians; Yama soon became a status destination just a notch under the White House.

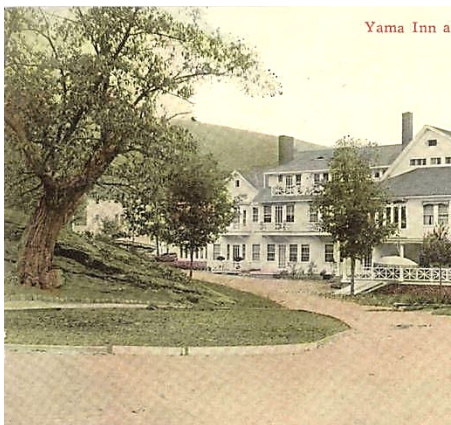
"I wanted the furnishings to be exceptionally well chosen," said Seaman. "And allowed a mild extravagance in carrying out the scheme."



Each bedroom featured rare and unusual furniture with exquisite linen detailed with Japanese script. The private bathrooms were tiled. Sleeping porches gave the guests up-close natural experience. Individual telephones, electric lights and fans could be controlled from the head of the beds.

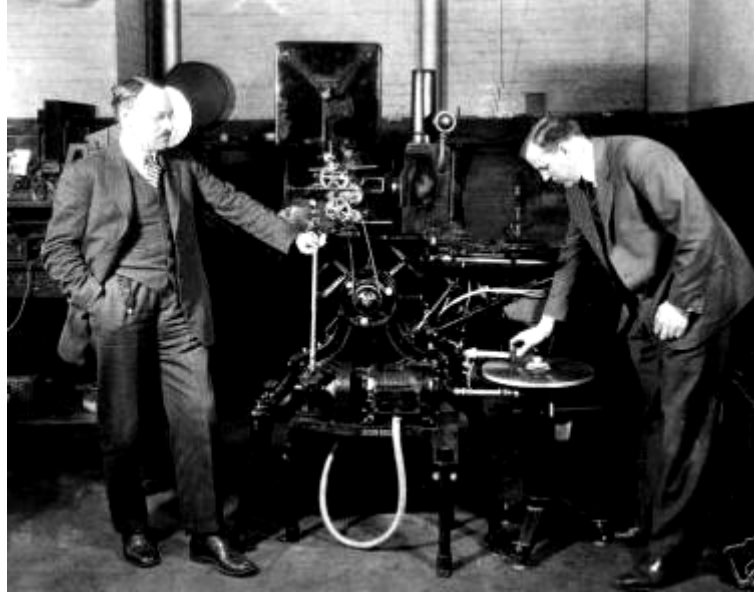


Luxury, privacy and ambiance, Yama was an intimate joining of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden Pond* and TRUMP Tower with a Japanese motif.

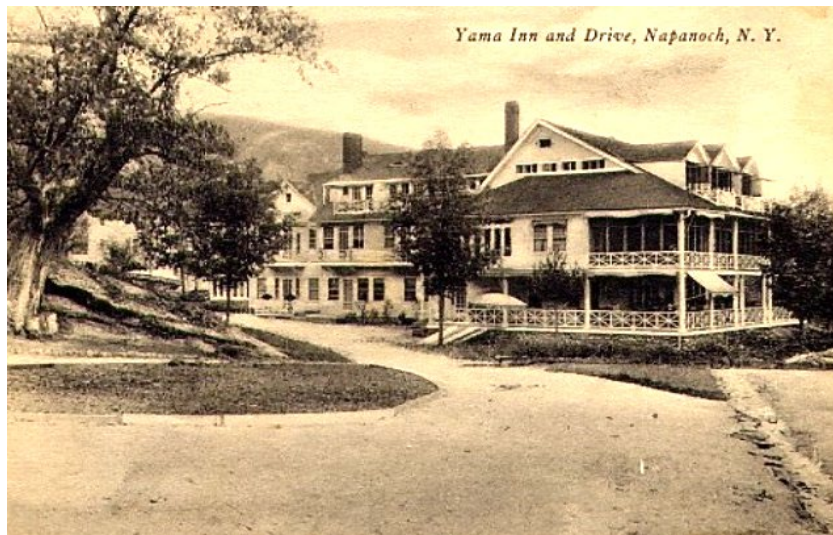


In 1913, its very first year, a group of high-level politicians, bank presidents and industrial leaders met to lock up a billion-dollar bonanza: getting the United States into World War I and established Yama as a safe and secure meeting place for the movers and shakers of the early 20th Century.

That same year, scientists scored.



Sixteen AT&T engineers came up and built an experimental plant designed to allow them to send photographs by wire. The Vitaphone or “talking moving picture machine” was first shown to Bell Telephone Company bigwigs at Yama Farms.



In 1914, 40 guests paid \$15,000 a plate (a stupendous sum at the time) to have dinner at the inn with fellow earthshakers from politics, finance, and the arts.

Admission was by invitation only and paid in genuine Yama Farms gold minted in \$20, \$50 and \$100 coins embossed not with the American Eagle, but a Japanese inscription.

The menu priced French caviar on ice for \$750. Milk-fed Yama chickens went for \$900 a bird and mushrooms under glass cost \$1,250. The privileged diners were advised not to tip the staff more than \$1,000.

The pricy gathering was a stunt by Frank Seaman, the ad man owner with a Madison Avenue appetite for free publicity; Yama made headlines.



The 'Conference Board', a non-profit, non-partisan business and research group started in 1915 with a meeting of 12 corporate CEOs and six of the foremost industry associations. The organization has since grown to 12,000 executives from 1200 corporations in 60 countries.



In 1916, a Wild West 'impersonator' drove a stagecoach through the 'Indian village' to climax the outdoor pageant.



Chief Peter

'Buffalo Bill' wasn't real, but Chief Peter was. A Mic-Mac from Nova Scotia, he came every year to teach Native American nature skills and philosophy.



We had come at the onset of winter and everybody came out to greet us.

"Joyeux Noel, mes amis!" declared the Count.

'Arf! Arf!' I barked politely.

All Yama became a party. People big and small, old and young, petted me and patted my head and gave me delicious bits of food. The men and especially the ladies gathered around my master.

One he paid special attention to...



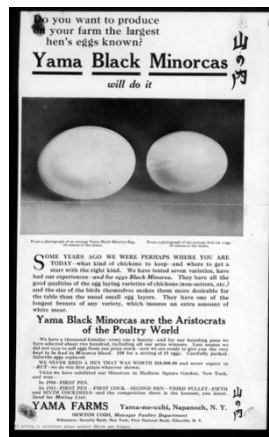
That night I slept at the foot of my master's bed for the last time.

We were up and outside at the break of dawn.

"You like these Yama Farms, my warrior dog?" asked my master, stroking my coat.

I sniffed the air, then again to confirm.

'Arf!' So many?



Seaman owned some 7000 chickens, mostly Barred Plymouth Rocks and *Black Minorcas*, said to produce 'the largest eggs in the poultry world.'

Yama Farms also had a herd of Jersey cows, a flock of prized sheep, a trout hatchery, tennis courts and a golf course.



"We've come from a different place into a new time," *said the Count*. "And where will you and I fit in?"

This 'Yama Farms' was far bigger than the Count's estate, and larger even than the grand tracts of kings, but I felt something missing inside of me. Every time I'd see a bird take to the sky, I'd wonder, did I want to fly again?



That night came a gentle knock on our bedroom door. My master let in the pretty maid, then ordered me to sleep in the hall.

'Arf! Arf! Arf!' *I'm old enough, big enough and dog enough. When do I get a mate?*

At first light, the Count let me outside to dispose, then went back to his lady. I sniffed and discovered a new scent, strong with the flock.

"I am a hunter. I am a killer," *my master had once knelt to tell me*. "I have a home to fight for and to protect."



Stealthily, by the house full of clucking birds, I stalked my target.



*I got on the enemy's tail and pounced. **Ratatat-Ratatat!** It was over quickly, yet I felt none of the joy my master had. I turned away, leaving the body where it lay.*



Yama Farms catered to its guests' every wish. The Count got a horse from the stables and he and his dog explored the forest.



www.vondailygermansheperds

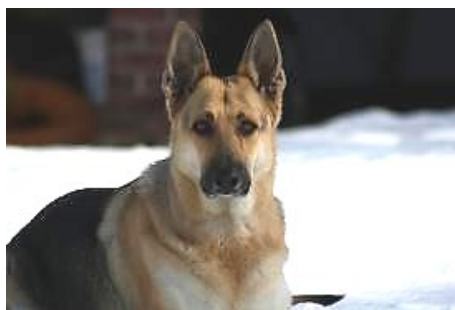
The woods were alive with the scent of squirrel, woodchuck, and deer. And something more, a kind of magical spirit I'd never sensed before. What was this Yama Farms?



Again the maid came to our room in the guesthouse and I had to sleep in the hallway. When the sun came up, he took me outside.

"Fritz, my warrior dog," *my master said, hunching down to catch my eyes.* "This woman I love and want to be with for the rest of my life. But not here. We have other places to go.

"Not you, Fritz. Please don't feel that I'm abandoning you. The woman and I are going away to find a home for ourselves. Here at Yama, you have found yours."



We went back inside together. He and the lady left, and closed the door on me. I'd never see them again.

Frank Seaman called his hotel staff together.

"This morning," he said. "Our heroic Count Andre DeMaille commandeered a coach and left with one of our chambermaids,"

"Oh, how romantic!" signed a young woman. "I wish he had taken me."

"The cad!" said another. "He'll probably ditch her when he's had his fill, just like his dog."

"I'll gladly take Fritz," volunteered the chef. "Give him the best meals a dog ever had."

"I want the dog!" said the headmistress. "Let him come home with me to Napanoch."

"Mister Seaman," said the hotel chief of staff. "May I suggest the hound be a gift to one of our influential guests. A favor that would have to be appropriately repaid."

Frank Seaman was about to announce his decision when...



"Fritz is a Yama dog!" declared Chief Peter, with proof for all so see.

For the rest of the winter, I slept in front of the grand fireplace.



A couple of quick vermin 'kills' in the kitchen and Viola! I never killed after that, making me wonder, had my veteran scent scared away those who would prey on Yama Farms?



'Don't go to the 'Home in the Mountains' seeking a free lunch!' I imagined the animals in the forest spreading the word, 'Fritz, the Warrior Dog' guards Yama Farms!

As much as I missed my master, I understood that he was right: Yama Farms was my home and my mission. No longer a passenger, I'm the pilot of my life!"!



The Automotive Age was in first gear. Most spring guests arrived by train, some in their own private cars, at Napanoch Station.



Grand Opening: 1902 Napanoch Train Station Museum

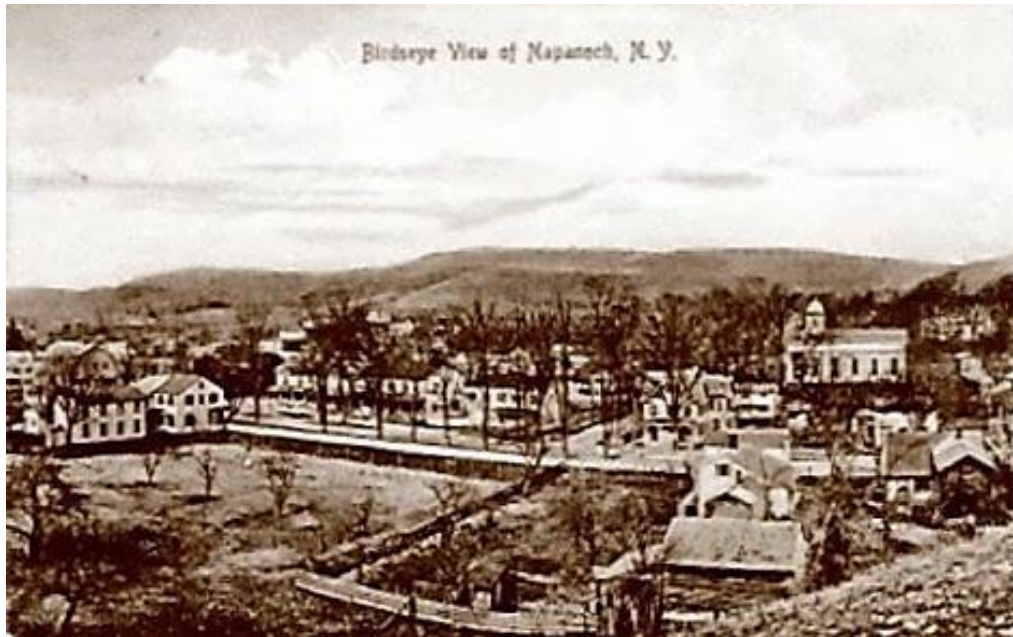
Napanoch, like many other small towns in the Rondout Valley, grew up during the operation of the Delaware & Hudson Canal from 1828 until the turn of the century.



Railroads usurped canal traffic, then gave way to the automobile. After World War Two, hotels big and small were built for New York City vacationers and local factories produced everything from TV antennae to T-shirts.

Time marched on and over the Rondout Valley. One by one the hotels went out of business as cheap air travel killed the tourist industry. New technology and taxes shuttered the factories leaving the area in a state of permanent recession.

But not Napanoch.



The last major D&H Canal contract called for the delivery of 50,000 bricks per day to build a massive structure that would forever dominate the town: Eastern Correctional Facility.

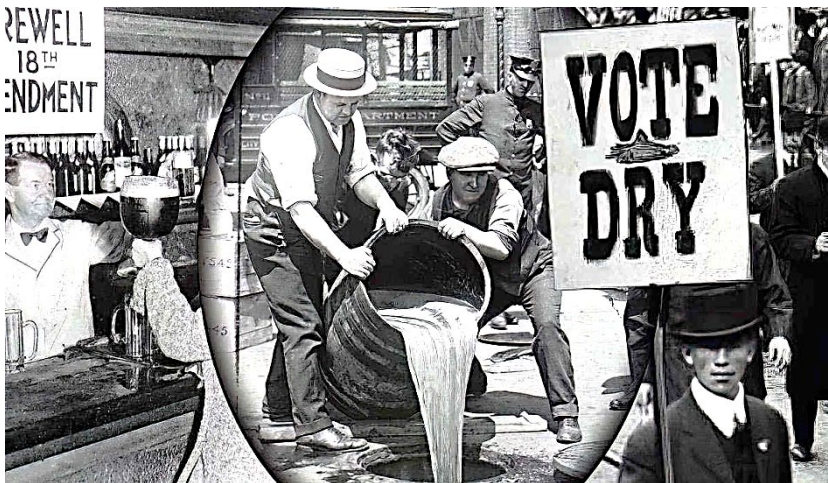


A growth industry hard at work since 1900, an adjoining sister prison was added in the 1990s. Together they house some 1200 inmates and supply more than 600 jobs.



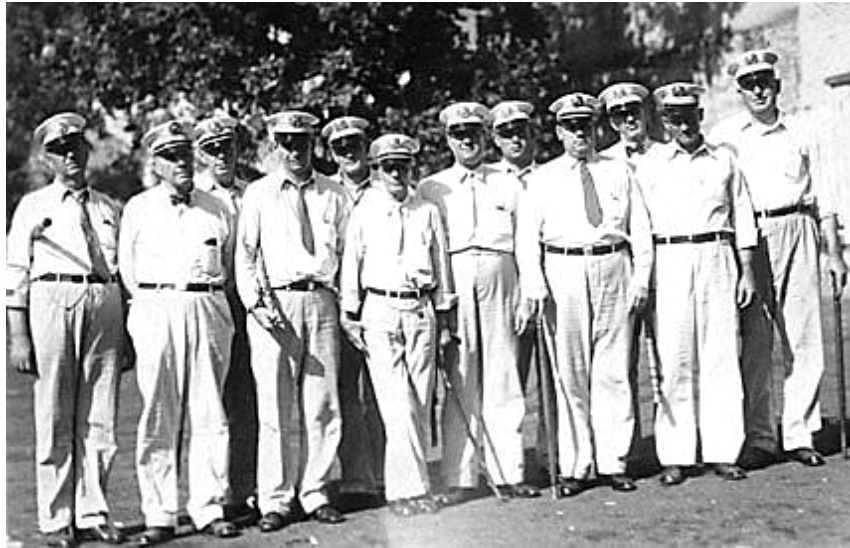
I was proud to be a Yama dog! More and more visitors came in rolling machines that reminded me of war, but they couldn't fly. Almost everyone wanted to pat me on the head or rub my coat. Every day I was free and every night at peace, but still I felt an open space inside me.

Was I the only German Shepherd left in the world?



The 'Roaring Twenties' began with a sobering BANG! Not that Yama Farms was affected much. The Inn had never sold alcohol to its guests who quickly learned to bring their own. Cocktails would no longer be available. Seaman added a French champagne maker to the staff and wine produced on the grounds kept the party going through the 1920s.

The Department of Corrections in 1920 was hardly the professional organization it would later become. Prison security at Napanoch had yet to be mastered.



The two killers were serving life sentences and had been working on their plan for months.



Just after dusk, they went over the wall and into the woods.



Neither inmate knew the lay of the land. A hour out, they came upon an oddly shaped cabin. They broke in to find guns used for skeet shooting and target practice.

"Jackpot!" declared the taller one, grabbing a shotgun and quickly loading it with two differently colored rounds, then pocketed a fistful of shells.

"Put the screws to the screws," said the shorter one, loading a pistol.



Frank Seaman and his 'Four Famous Cronies' were debating the future of the world when the killers charged in.

Boom! A buckshot blast sent ceiling splinters raining down.

"Fancy gentlemen," said the shorter one, brandishing the pistol. "You belong to us now."



"You dare!" said Henry Ford, a frequent guest.

"Let's talk this over," said Thomas Edison, up from New Jersey.

"We can make a deal," said Harvey Firestone, the third member of 'The Millionaires' Club'.

The noise had awakened me. I was about to jump up, but...



The Red Baron, locked impassively in his cockpit, shooting down scores of allies.

'Never be afraid of the *sound* of the guns!' *my master had ordered me.* 'Lay in wait for the perfect strike!'

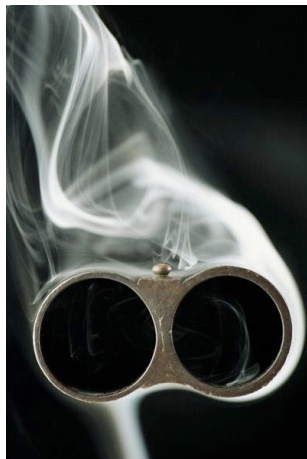
"Please," said John Burroughs, the famed naturalist. "There's no need to..."

"Shut up!" said the shorter one, pointing the revolver at Frank Seaman.



From behind a plush chair, the German Shepherd leapt and clamped his jaws on the arm holding the pistol.

"Yeow!" cried the escaped convict. "Shoot."



Blam! The shotgun emptied its second barrel.

As Fritz fell to the floor, the 'Cronies' flew into action.

Henry Ford hit the shorter one head on. Then Thomas Edison knocked out his lights.

Seaman and Burroughs tried to subdue the taller convict. They quickly got help from the hotel staff rushing in.

"My god!" said Ford. "He's the bravest dog in the world."

"He's going to die a hero," said Burroughs softly.

"Yama will always remember him," said Seaman.



I couldn't open my eyes. The world was spinning around and around. Was this how so many of my master's 'kills' had felt in their final moments? Now it was my turn.

Chief Peter ran his hands over the bleeding animal.

"The luck of a warrior!" he exclaimed. "Birdshot! Had it been buckshot, he'd've been splattered all over."



"There are two renowned surgeons as guests," Seaman ordered his staff. "Bring them here *now!*"

The police arrived and took the convicts away.

Setting Fritz on the conference table, the surgeons quickly extracted more than a dozen pellets.

"The animal will recover," announced the doctor. "But it'll be a couple of months before he's chasing rabbits again."

"I will have a special car built," said Ford. "So that Fritz can be driven around Yama until he recovers."

"With my lights," said Edison.

"On my tires," added Firestone.

"Save your money, millionaires," said Chief Peter. "I know what this warrior dog wants, needs and deserves."



Every morning I awoke in pain, but the Yama people did everything to take care of me. Day by day I could feel myself getting stronger.

Two weeks later, Chief Peter came to see 'the warrior dog'. The Mic-Mac did not come alone.



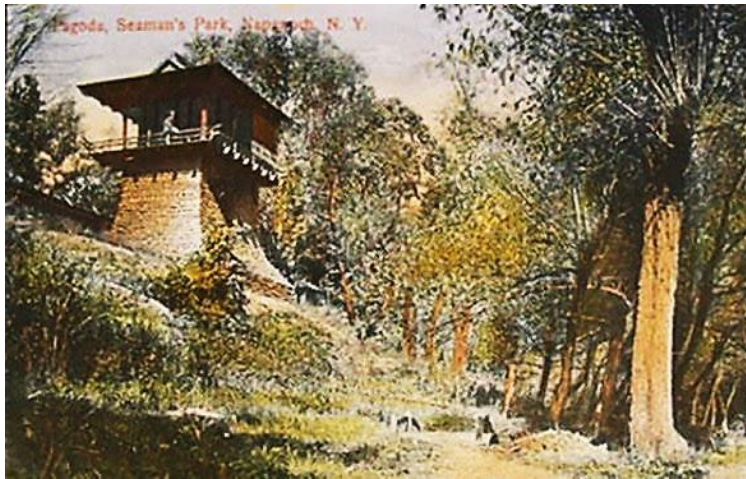
"Her name is Gertrude," he said. "And I think she likes you a lot already."

I may be a German Shepherd living in America, but I'm still very French.

The winter was cold, yet wonderfully warm.



Spring came...



And by summer...



Viola!

Fritz and Gertrude would raise more than 40 puppies at Yama. All were given to good homes of rich guests or Napanoch residents. Each family had to solemnly swear that none of the dogs would ever go to war.



In 1930...

"A hero has died in his sleep," said Frank Seaman to his cronies.



"I have friends in the French embassy," said Harvey Firestone. "I'll ask for a color guard and a band."

"A special hearse from Detroit," said Henry Ford.

"My new company will film the ceremony," said Thomas Edison.

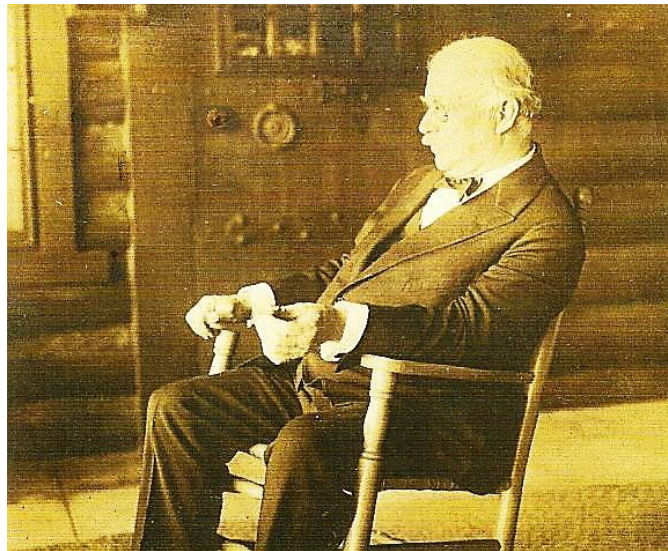
"And I will write the eulogy," said John Burroughs, the Pulitzer Prize winning author.

"Please, 'Millionaires'," said Chief Peter. "We are not interring a French hero, but a Yama dog. Let us do so privately and respectfully."

"You're the smartest redskin in the tribe," said Ford. "How'd you like to manage one of my factories?"

"Thank you, sir," said Chief Peter. "But I rather be my own dog."

Just six weeks later, Gertrude was buried next to Fritz.



Frank Seaman died in 1939. That same year the Great Depression ended in the United States. Politicians credit the government; historians blame the Nazis.



The economic upturn should have sparked investor interest in 'The Home in the Mountains', but its Japanese origins weren't playing well in America.



On 'a date that will live in infamy', Pearl Harbor doomed any chance for Yama Farms' survival.

The acreage was divided into parcels and sold. A few of the structures are still in use.



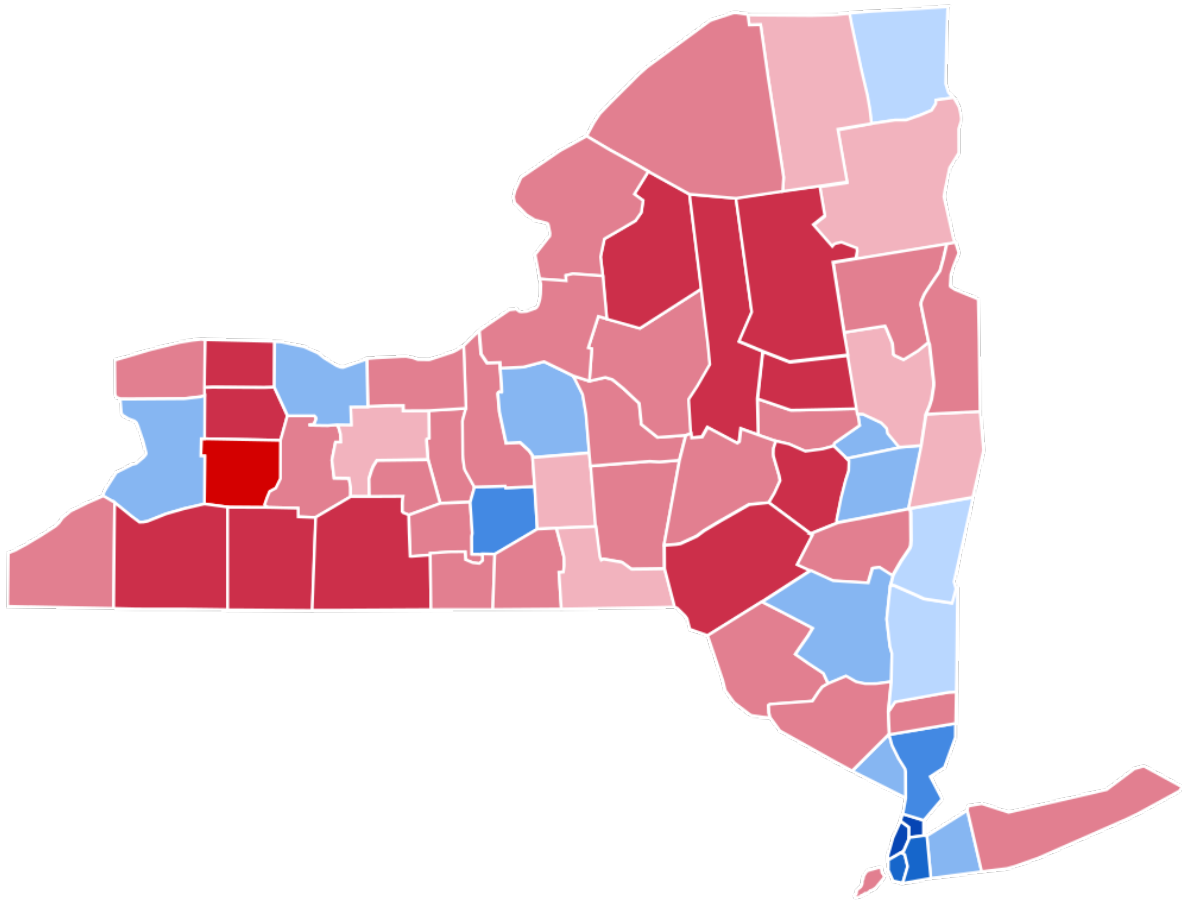
But many more were left to decay.



No one knows exactly where Fritz and Gertrude are buried. Like Yama Farms, may they rest in peace.



Viola!





NEW YORK DUEL

**A FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE
OF THE EMPIRE STATE**



"There is nothing I love as much as a good fight."



*"In New York it's not whether you win or lose
--it's how you lay the blame."*



*"Don't be alarmed, ladies and gentlemen.
Those chains are made of chrome steel!"*



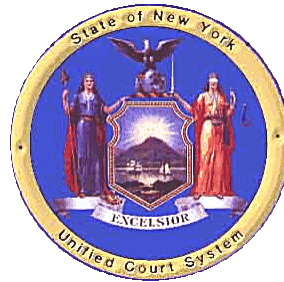
BIG STATE was founded by patriots fighting for their lives.

With the signing of the Declaration of Independence, 'New York' existed only on paper. To establish an official capital, the Provincial Congress began in New York City. As the British advanced on Manhattan, the new Congress ran north to White Plains, and in July of 1776, established the "Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York." On the run again when Washington's army abandoned New York City, the Congress stopped briefly in Fishkill. With the Redcoats still on their heels, in February of 1777, the delegates ran further up the Hudson Valley to the city of Kingston.

'The Breadbasket of the Revolution,' Kingston welcomed the new State Government. For two months, the convention met in the Ulster County Courthouse, and on April 22, 1777, clanging churchbells rang in the State's first constitution. In June, the State elected brigadier general George Clinton as New York's first governor.



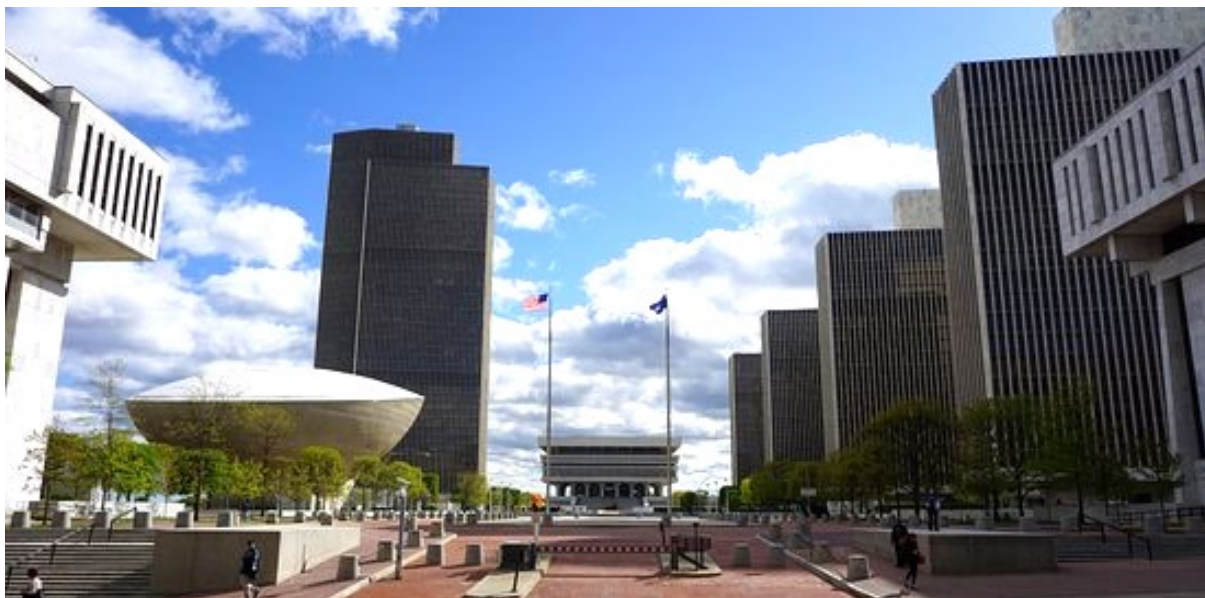
Three months later, the first session of the New York Supreme Court convened in Kingston. A local patriot offered a room in his stone house to the Senate; the larger Assembly met in a local tavern.



The British kept coming; the first New York Government kept running. On October 16, 1777, the Redcoats arrived in Kingston. Declaring the city 'a hotbed of perfidy and sedulous disloyalty,' they burned the birthplace of the State to the ground.



The Government ran up to Albany, where after more than 240 years of unsustainable growth, **BIG STATE** had run New York into the ground.



35 PROGRESS STREET, KINGSTON NY



David and Dorothy Spar had lived in Kingston all their lives. A star quarterback at Kingston High School, he had led his team to the State Finals in 1963.

This time he'd be on his own.



"I'm going to do it because it has to be done!"

*"But...you'll be alone against **BIG STATE.**"*

Dorothy, a former Kingston High School cheerleader, had her concerns.

"I've got a name, an image, and a message. What's Albany got?"

"Must be illegal."

"Not according to the State Constitution."

"Resources?"

"Online, face to Facebook."

"And for how long do you think this 'Kingston Coup' is going to fly?"



"Maybe a New York minute."

'David Spar,' as a name, is all-American plain, hardly heroic. That would be corrected.

An All-Kingston boy, the son of a storekeeper, he married his high school sweetheart. A week later, he enlisted. His academic and athletic prowess got him into West Point, then Vietnam.

In the [Battle of Ia Drang](#)...



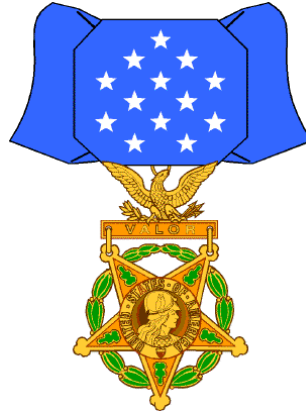
In deference to Tennessee's Sergeant York, a smalltown boy who made good in WWI, a local reporter dubbed David Spar 'Captain New York'.

The editor 'pushed the envelope'...

Daily Freeman

Our Hero CAP NY!

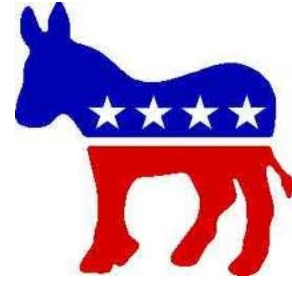
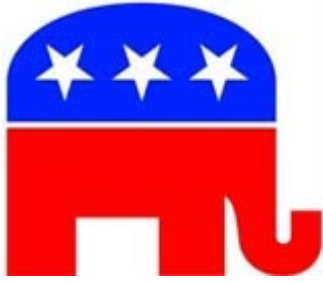
Kingston's "Favorite son" wins *Medal of Honor*



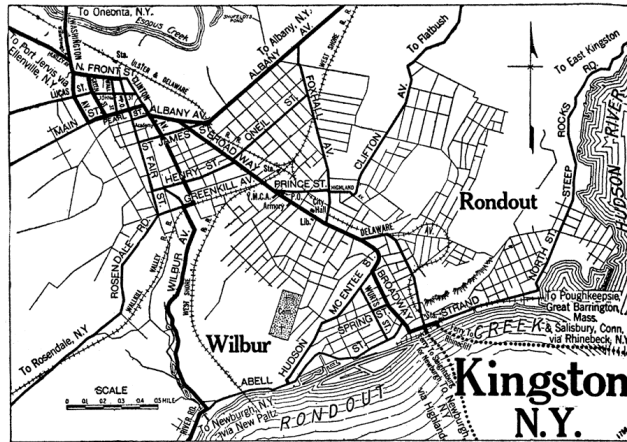
With a law degree from NYU, '**CAP NY**' rose to become the 'First Capital's' District Attorney. Fair, firm and 'untouchable', he'd been re-elected unopposed for the last 35 years.



And he kept flying: a vintage Boeing Stearman biplane hangared in nearby Rhinebeck Aerodrome. Painstakingly restored, Spar was lucky to spend 20 hours a year in the air, and he treasured every minute.



The Democrats wanted **CAP NY**. So did the Republicans and the Libertarians and the Independence Party. Over the years they had offered him judgeships and cushy Capital, New York City, even Washington appointments.



BIG STATE didn't get it; **CAP NY** loved *Kingston*. Growing up in the historic small city where the Rondout Creek met the Hudson River had made him who he was. But in his lifetime, he had seen the former 'Breadbasket of the Revolution' reduced to scratching for the crumbs left by the Albany tax collectors.



Kingston dated back to the Dutch in 1652. The Netherlands controlled the Hudson River Valley from 1609 until 1664, and established New Netherland, a series of trading posts, towns, and forts up and down the Hudson River, including Wiltwyck, known today as Kingston.

The slow expansion of New Netherland, however, caused conflicts with both English colonists and Iroquois Confederacy. In the 1630s and early 1640s, the Dutch Director Generals carried on a brutal series of campaigns, largely succeeding in crushing the strength of the "River Indians," but also managing to create a bitter atmosphere of tension and suspicion between European settlers and Native Americans.



By 1652, 60-70 settlers had moved down from Fort Orange to where the Rondout Creek met the Hudson River to farm the fertile flood plains of the Esopus Creek with the Esopus Indians. Inevitably land disputes brought the brink of war. In 1657, Director General Peter Stuyvesant sent soldiers up from New Amsterdam to crush the Esopus and help build a stockade with 40 houses for the settlers. Board by board, the settlers took their barns and houses down, and carted them uphill to a promontory bluff overlooking the Esopus Creek flood plain. They reconstructed their homes behind a 14-foot high wall made of tree trunks. By day, the men left their walled village, 'Wiltwyck,' to go out and farm their fields, leaving the women and children largely confined within the stockade until 1664, when a peace treaty ended the conflict with the Esopus tribe.

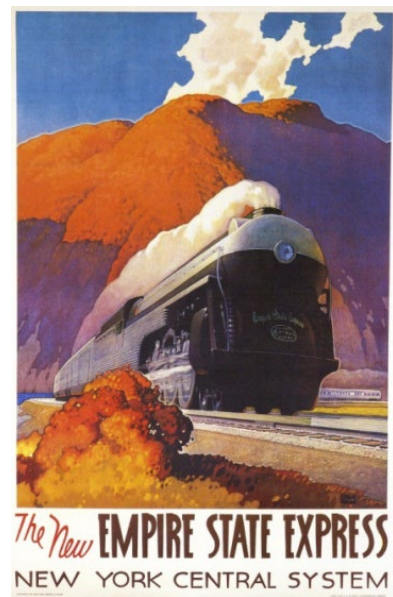
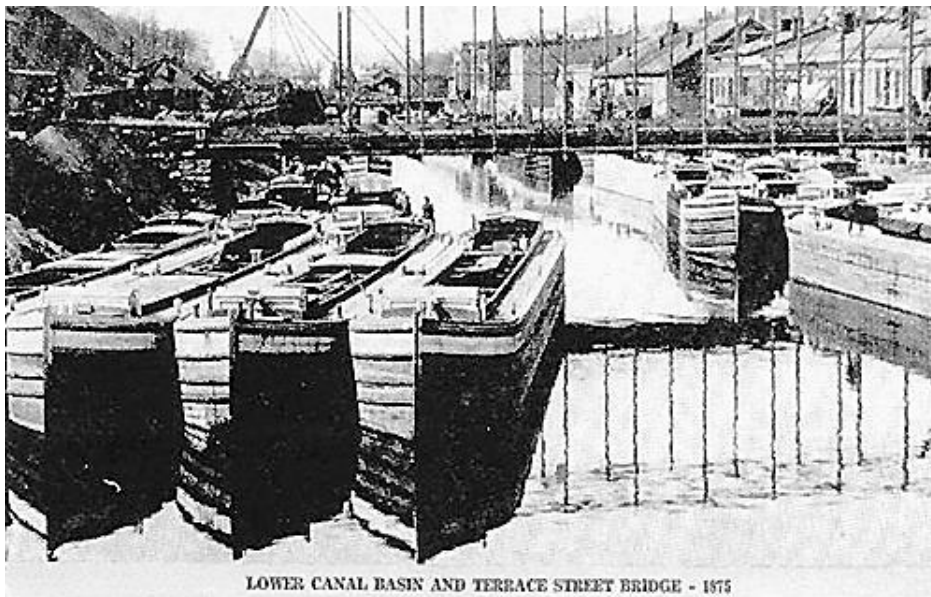


A few years later, the Dutch lost New Netherland to the English during the Second Anglo-Dutch War. In September of 1664, 'New York' was born.

For its role in the American Revolution, Kingston paid in flames. With many of the Dutch stone buildings gutted, reconstruction was slow and painful. As the years passed Kingston rebuilt, and by the beginning of the 19th century was once again the largest, most dominant town in the Rondout Valley.



In the 19th century, the "canal-building era" transformed the valley when the Delaware and Hudson Canal chose the nearby hamlet of Rondout as the terminus of the D&H Canal, and the starting point for river traffic down to New York City. By the end of the century, Kingston boasted a booming economy almost completely reliant upon the canals and rivers.



Prosperity ended in 1899 when the canal closed down and became the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. Progress in the building trade also killed the local cement and "bluestone" industries, which sank the local shipbuilding and ship-repair businesses. By 1932, only a few small industrial companies still operated in Kingston. Despite its unique contributions to the American Revolution and Industrial Revolution, the 'River City's' decline continues to this day.

For **CAP NY**, there came that last straw.

The Kingston Model Railroad Club had begun in 1937, its members and enthusiasts gathering to build and maintain an extensive layout, miniature railed worlds in the Rondout Valley.



Every holiday season, Spar's parents had taken their David to see the trains. Continuing the tradition, **CAP NY** brought his son.

But this year may be its last; an eviction notice will soon force the clubhouse out in the street. Hardly a fancy showroom, the structure doesn't even have running water, yet its rent has become unaffordable. Not designed to be moved, after 83 years, the layout would be chopped up for parts like a used car, and vanish forever.

CAP NY had other plans.



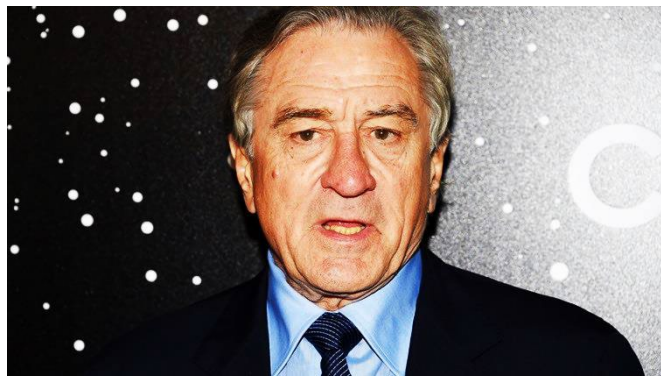
Income tax week in New York during an election year was also 'I'm running for Governor' week. The Right-to-Lifers announced their righteous candidate, then the Greeners and Legalize Potters, and of course, the New York Communist Party had to top it all. Not running with any way to win, their 30-second sound-bytes proclaimed their continued existence.

Then the media received word.



*"It's him, finally! We got **CAP NY!**"*

Fittingly, on April 15th, on the *Six O'clock News*, just before local sports, Kingston's 'Favorite son' took to the airwaves.



"I'm David Spar and I'm announcing my candidacy to be your governor.

*"Call me **CAP NY.**"*

*"From the Roosevelts to the Cuomos, great men have built an empire to govern, creating an Albany colossus. **BIG STATE** has taken over New York, billing us for a two hundred and seventy-five billion dollar 'King Kong' bureaucracy.*



*"The damsel in distress trapped in the monster's grip,
that's you, New York taxpayer!"*



"I'm the Baby Boomer in the bi-plane."

"Within a year as governor, I will cut the State budget in half by privatizing or abolishing departments throughout New York, but my first action will be to move the State Capital back to its rightful place, Kingston."

"I need your New York signature to get me on the ballot and then your vote to put me in the governor's chair...but not in Albany."

"No more 'King Kong', Kingston!"

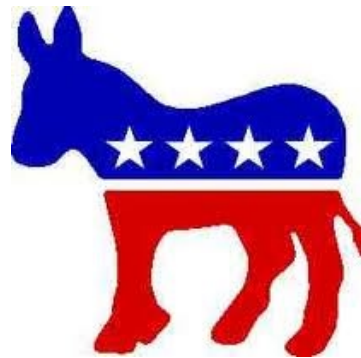
"It's your New York!"

DAILY NEWS

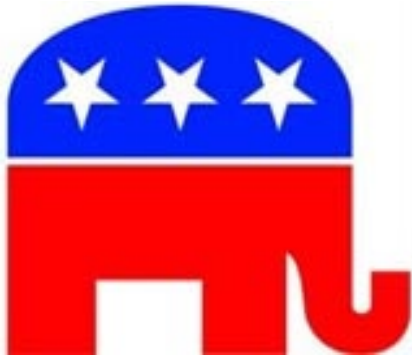
CAP NY VS. KING KONG!



Kingston's 'David' against Albany's 'Goliath'
'Community Capital' over BIG STATE?



"A 'Frank Capra' candidate. CAP NY's not running for office, he's specking for the movie rights."



*"An old, bold pilot with a Kamikaze platform.
Fourteen minutes, fifty-nine seconds and counting."*



*"Kingston, population less than twenty-three thousand, (Two interns looked it up.)
'Capital of the 'Empire State'. Kingston, like it owns the (bleep)ing naming rights!"*

*"As we've recently been told, Kingston was the first capital of New York. 'A nest of villains',
during the Revolution, the British burned the Rondout city."*

"So what? In the whole state, less than twenty-three thousand voters actually care."

*"The rest of us love our much more than eight-hundred-pound gorilla running our New York
lives."*





"BIG STATE *knows what governor* **CAP NY** *would mean..."*



'A disaster of Biblical proportions...dogs and cats...living together, mass hysteria!'



CAP NY on **facebook**

"I am a New York American, the strongest stock in the country. I'm not a 'political machine'. I don't have campaign workers, no special interest groups, no 'war chest' filled from fundraising dinners and photo-ops. No corporate donors seeking favors, no managers, no spokespersons spinning and respinning politics as usual.

"I'm one New Yorker talking to another.

"We face challenging times, and we're either going to stand up and change a government that no longer works, or lay down and let New York fail."

*"**BIG STATE** has become an Albany Empire, a bunch of Babel towers, ever-expanding its power and influence, fueled by fatcats and fear, playing one party, one people against another, creating bureaucracy after bureaucracy, a pyramid scheme with all the money and power at the top looking down on the rest of us."*



*"The 'Age of Equalization' is just beginning. With technology in hand, we have instant access to the world. Over-sized, overpriced, and underperforming, Albany remains trapped in the 'Boom Box Era'. We no longer need **BIG STATE**, but an intimate 'Community Capital' open to the people...in Kingston."*

"No more 'King Kong', Kingston!"



"It's your New York!"



*"I admire **CAP NY**, a genuine hero, but the man simply doesn't understand how politics works. Albany is the grandest, most impressive, most intimidating Capital Complex in the world because it has to be. New York is the 'Empire State'!"*

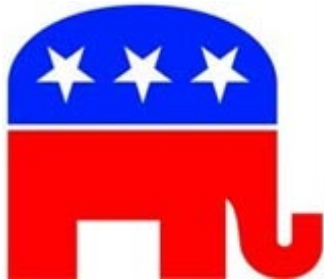


*"Kingston? Kingston as the new capital, are you kidding me?
I wouldn't hold a tractor-pull in that dump!"*



*"I love Captain New York! A lone American hero in a dogfight with **BIG STATE**. Oh, the political flak from all sides, as the Air Corps warriors used to say, 'So thick you could walk on it.'*

*"God speed, **CAP NY!**"*



*""We live in fame or go down in flame', **CAP NY** will be cinders in a week."*

His campaign manager handed him a blog print out.



"Sir, Statepolitics.org just posted what the Spar family had always downplayed."

"Not exactly. The citation for Cap's Medal of Honor. You don't wanna read this."



"A fatal hit already?"

New York did.



*"'Favorite son' David Spar, aka **CAP NY**, is a Baby Boomer piloting a New Millennium commando raid to de-capitalize and decapitate the almighty State. A Rondout rabblouser, he's gunning for a people's government. The Capital returns home to its Revolutionary roots - a flying dream scheme."*



*"'Captain New York' is less than a party and more than a candidate, He is...a Twenty-First Century political fantasy. Instead of **BIG STATE**, you want a 'Community Capital', then **CAP NY**, he's your guy."*



*"But only if he can muster fifteen thousand New York signatures to make the ballot. We can expect a 'barnstorming' tour of the State, **CAP NY** in his bi-plane, doing barrel-rolls over Empire Plaza."*



Spar did not leave Kingston. No need; technology got his message out. By the end of May, **CAP NY** had more than 25,000 confirmed New York signatures, all submitted online.

In the middle of June, the poll numbers:

Dem	- 55%
GOP	- 37%
CAP NY	- 06%
All others	- 02%



Which put the Ulster County Legislature and the Kingston city fathers in a 'Rosendale pickle.'



"We stand with Spar and Albany'll unleash its wrath. We'll have to beg for every dime."



"What's new about that?"



"Persona non grata, ignore him and he'll fade faster than skywriting in the wind."

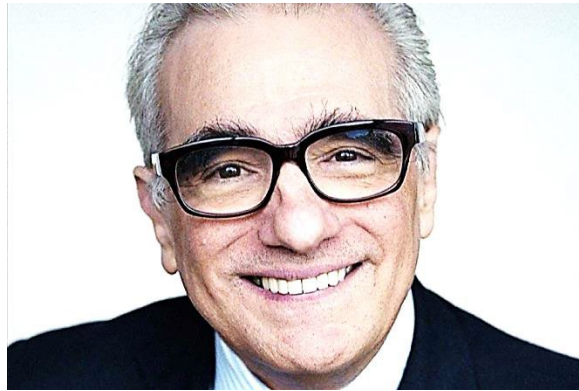


"We could tighten the county screws, make him retire."



*"Turn on **CAP NY**? The people of Kingston'd never forgive us."*

"Burned by the British and smoked by Albany ever since!"



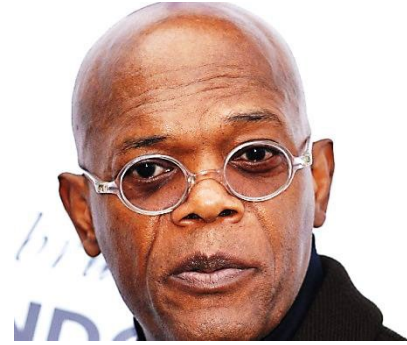
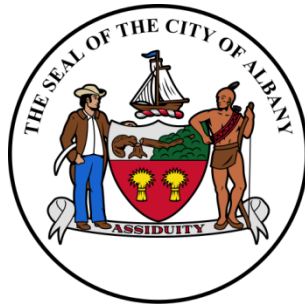
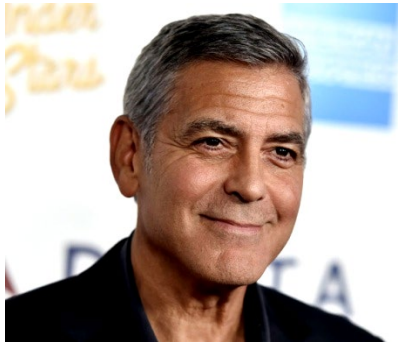
"Anybody here think our Kingston isn't good enough to be the capital of New York again?"

"Show the State, show the country..."

CAP NY, Kingston's 'Favorite son!'"

While in Albany...





"The novelty factor, New Yorkers getting their web jollies. By November, Spar won't even leave a vapor trail."

"A temporary distraction. A quick blip on the fringe radar. CAP NY's got nowhere to go but down."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
ONLINE



'The Stock Market is up, but over the last two years, New York has lost more than 150,000 jobs while The State payroll continues to increase.'

NY VEGAS BOARD

- Dem - Even Money (Safest dollar in town)**
- GOP - 3/1 (Action comatose)**
- CAP NY - 50/1 (Bet now, odds dropping)**

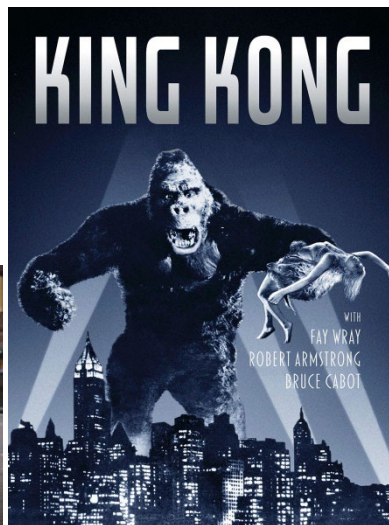


CAP NY on **facebook**

"Hello, New York.

"A shrinking tax base funding an unaffordable Albany or a smaller government in Kingston serving a striving work force?"

"This election is about jobs! Not more State employees we don't have the money to hire-- private sector careers! But with New York's 'King Kong' taxes, no American or foreign company wants to invest in us.



"We've got to make New York the 'Opportunity State' by slashing taxes for small businesses and start-up companies with bonuses for every new job created. And it's got to be done now.

*"Outside NYC, one in four employees works for the State. **BIG STATE** is becoming the middle class. When Albany runs short, it borrows more. Do we wait until the budget busts three hundred billion? Until the interest on our debt drives up taxes even more? What little industry we have now will flee for greener pastures and New York will be a Third World State of corn, cows and Quicky Marts.*

"It's your New York!"

The New York Times

Why CAP NY Can't Win

The lone idealist takes on the almighty State. David Spar is speaking to New York as *a people*, not pandering to business and labor or promising the poor and the sick, not talking about race or religion, immigration or the environment. Not State's rights or State Law, State *expense*.



Terminating more than forty thousand State employees will cause short-term chaos and hardship, but we *must* significantly lower State taxes, and in the long run, become a more viable workplace for ourselves and more importantly, our children.

Of course, CAP NY will fail, for two obvious reasons: One, because he's right, and two, because he's telling the truth. The 'King Kong' State is out of control and no one wants to admit that he or she allowed it to happen, including me.

'Long live **BIG STATE!**'

After the Fourth of July Weekend...

Dem - 51%
GOP - 36%
CAP NY - 11%
All others - 2%



Built at the crest of Albany's State Street, the Capital has been the seat of power since the 1880s. Designed by five architects and constructed by hand over 25 years costing \$25,000,000, the ornate mansion was a conglomeration of Gothic Revival, Romanesque and Moorish influences with three regal staircases and a Senate Chamber adorned with 23-carat gold leaf, Italian marble, and massive fireplaces.

By the 1960's, the State had outgrown it. While America was in upheaval, Albany was expanding, destroying the historic town center to make way for the 100-acre, \$2 billion 'Empire Plaza'.



Eighteen years in the making, the State complex is a city unto itself. The 44-story Corning Tower faces four identical 22-story structures and the matching Legislative and Justice Buildings at the north end. The 1200-foot Swan Street building dominates the west edge with the 8-story Cultural Education Building housing the State Museum and Library.

From his luxurious penthouse office, the former Chief Justice of the NY Supreme Court had a commanding view of The State. Nearly eighty, with connections throughout Albany, the Chief Justice was a political 'bookie' who saw the gubernatorial election as the Super Bowl.

The trick to making money playing the two-party system is to keep the election close from start to finish; a landslide which would be bad for business. When the Dems got ahead, push for the GOP, or the reverse. The closer the 'point spread', the more the Chief Justice got paid.

He called for an 'emergency caucus' and his top influence peddlers came running.



*"Gentlemen, we have a challenge that is not to be underestimated. David Spar was the best law student I ever had. Outworked everybody to get his degree. He may fly a vintage bi-plane, but as **CAP NY**, he's trying to zoom past the lot of us."*



"Kingston leadership in a New York revolution. The more things change..."



"And he's gaining! How? Those who can afford the old tax system will continue to pay through the nose while the poor will lose vital services. Who'd vote for this guy?"



"It's the struggling and the 'have nots' CAP NY wants to lift up. He's taking aim at the dying middle class and doing it scott-free."



"Fully exploiting the new technology. He's not calling us 'incompetent' or 'callous', but worst of all, unneeded! We've got to shoot him down."



*"But he's bulletproof. We've dug into his life, his records, his finances. Compared to **CAP NY**, Tim Tebow is Bernie Madoff!"*



"This election has become about The State itself. Not about parties, but our very survival. That's where we push. Every New Yorker is a closet 'State enabler.' They complain about taxes yet cry out for services. Make them believe that they must have the huge budget, have to have Albany.

*"Because if Kingston's 'Favorite Son' wins, this former capital's gonna be **Love Canal!**"*



By mid-August...

Dem - 45%
GOP - 31%
CAP NY - 22%
All others - 1%



Sixty Minutes did a quarter hour on **CAP NY**, half of it in the air over the Rondout.



Colorado Air & Space Museum
www.Air-and-Space.com
©2004, Brian Lockett



"Voters need to feel that the State stands for them, leadership worth looking up to. The Constitution places the individual above the State. We New Yorkers define the State, not the other way around."

On the ground, she took him to task.



"You understand that if you're elected, a lot of good, hardworking, dedicated people, are going to be hurt. Union members!"

"But the vital services that would be cut. Health, education, social programs..."

"Albany's promised real change."



*"But if we 'stay the course'... We need unions to protect workers from exploitation by employers, not to push up wages and benefits pricing job-creators out of the market. The days of **BIG STATE** union contracts are over— New Yorkers can't afford them."*

"At the State level, not locally. With 'King Kong' off the top of the Empire State, individual counties will have more money to hire at county wages and benefits. Yes, the transition will be difficult."



*"Albany will always be Albany, the **BIG STATE** mindset. Pay top people, or 'connected' people, top prices with full benefits and hefty pensions. For a full generation, Albany's been flying too high, too big, too slow, and too heavy. Too much for too long has sent New York into a crash dive."*



"Bail on Albany?"



"Before it's too late. Kingston is our 'parachute'. We're still going to be hurt when we hit, but we'll recover, and spending half as much for a smaller state government, thrive..."

"It's your New York!"

NY VEGAS BOARD

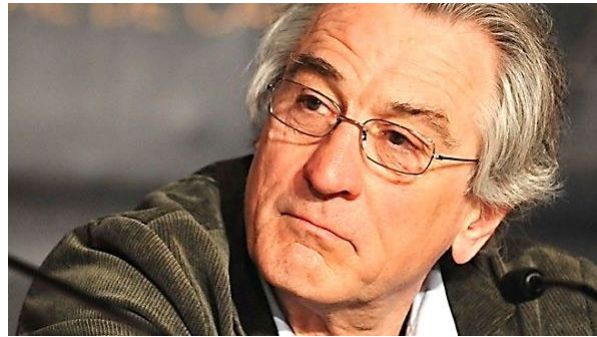
Dem - 7/5 (bet 7\$ to win 5\$)
GOP - 3/1 (Slow as yet)
CAP NY - 15/1 (Surge will lower odds again)

35 PROGRESS STREET



"Wow! You've been flying so well

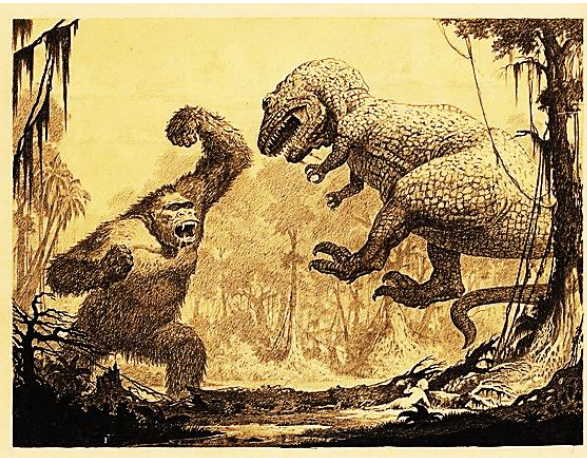
"An anti-Albany hurricane is more like it. Will I get to decorate the new Governor's mansion?"

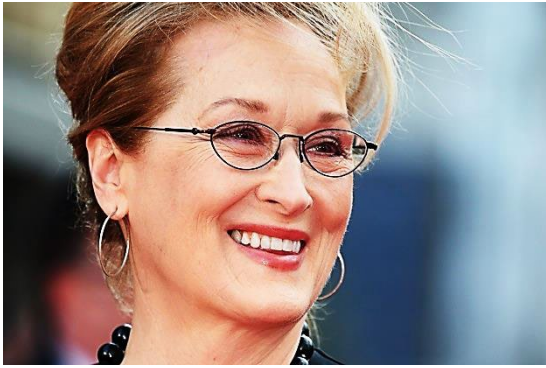


"Seems I caught a Kingston 'tailwind'."

"The future is happening a lot faster than it used to. Small, fast, cheap technology is flattening the world like the small, fast mammals overthrew the dinosaurs.

"And we ain't no 'dinosaurs'!"





*"Hell no, we're New York Americans
And when things are at their worst
we are the best."*

*"I found out that I could never ever
be any happier than the first time we
woke up together. And I'll always
feel that way."*

That brought back sweet memories.



*"Pity our party hacks! Not about 'me' or 'my legacy',
but for every small city and town overgoverned and overburdened by
BIG STATE. We overvalued our homes, our goods and ourselves, gambling
money we didn't have in the belief that, in the end, we could beat the house.'*



'My husband, the politician!'



"Well, sorry 'bout that, but we're gonna have to cut way back on the service staff. That's right, New Yorkers, we're gonna hafta do more ourselves by ourselves for ourselves."

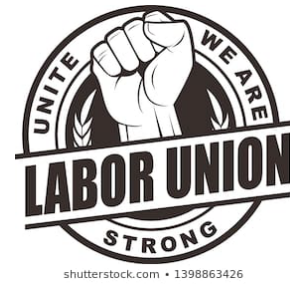
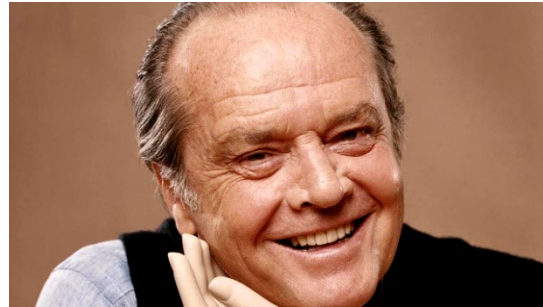
"Oh, please! Don't tell them that. I'll never be First Lady!"

While in the state capital...



In 'The Egg', the [performing arts](#) center in Albany, a political strategy was hatching.

On the northeast corner of Empire Plaza, the inclined structure housed two amphitheatres. The larger 982-seat [Kitty Carlisle Hart](#) Theatre was packed with union leaders and shop stewards from across the state.



*"If we lose, every last one of us will be out of a job, but we can't win by attacking **CAP NY**, can't be seen as the Capital 'monster' out to squash the crusading hero."*

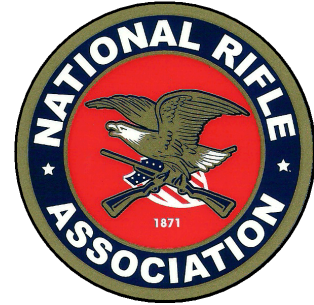


The audience grew intent; *what did the 'Grand Old Man' have planned?*

"Union members are the best people we have, loyal to your brother and sister workers, and committed to the State. Time to put on a new face--proud and dedicated to serving New Yorkers, and baby, you know what an adventure that can be.

"You don't work for the State or the union, you work for New Yorkers!"

That got some applause.



"But let's get this straight. Many of your members have legal access to guns, pistol permits and hunting licenses, and all it's gonna take is just one union diehard who thinks he or she can save Albany with a single shot, that our problems will be solved, plus we'll get another paid holiday.

*"No way! Somebody makes a martyr out of **CAP NY** and the State will put up a larger than life statue of him in front of the Capital Building...in **Kingston!**"*



'We will win our way, the New York Way!'





The made-in-American clock hadn't worked for nearly 17 years, its hands frozen in time as if commemorating an unthinkable event which changed so many lives. The hub of a 28-building complex spread over 260 acres with a heliport and its own power station, the aptly named 'Tech City' was a prime real estate 'ghost town' in the center of Kingston.



After two world wars, the Atomic Age and the Jet Age, the beautiful river city might have faded into history, but the dawn of the greatest technological marvel ever to hit civilization made Kingston the first capital of New York's 'Silicon Valley', a proud, bustling small city with a future that knew no bounds.



In 1956, International Business Machines (IBM), the most successful company in American history, opened its newest high-tech sprawling factory complex in heart of Kingston to build and test its giant mainframe computers, employing 7,000 Hudson Valley residents.



The result was an economic bonanza, pumping up the tax base, benefiting everyone in Ulster County, especially Kingston. Abandoned by the State for Albany nearly 200 years before, IBM had given the city a winning identity.

But IBM's profit streak crashed in 1990; banking on computers becoming bigger and more powerful for business and government, International Business Machines had failed to envision the smaller, cheaper personal computer. Cutting its work force worldwide, IBM jobs in Kingston dwindled to 1,700 and rumors ran rampant.



"We have no plans to close our Kingston factory."

In July, seeming without plans, IBM shut down its plant and left. Like the D&H Canal closure in 1899, the local economy found itself 'Up the Rondout without a paddle.'



Over the years, a parade of governors, senators and congressmen have made all kinds of promises to make 'Tech-City' a 'shovel-ready' destination, including a Master Plan 'to transform its campus into the Hudson Valley's premiere location for clean technology companies and related businesses', but except for a few minor takers, the site has been 95% empty ever since.

CAP NY had other plans.

On alert for an appearance and hoping for a sound byte, up and down Progress Street, media vans formed a chain around Spars' three-bedroom Kingston home, On a crisp September morning following the Labor Day Weekend, they'd get a lot more.



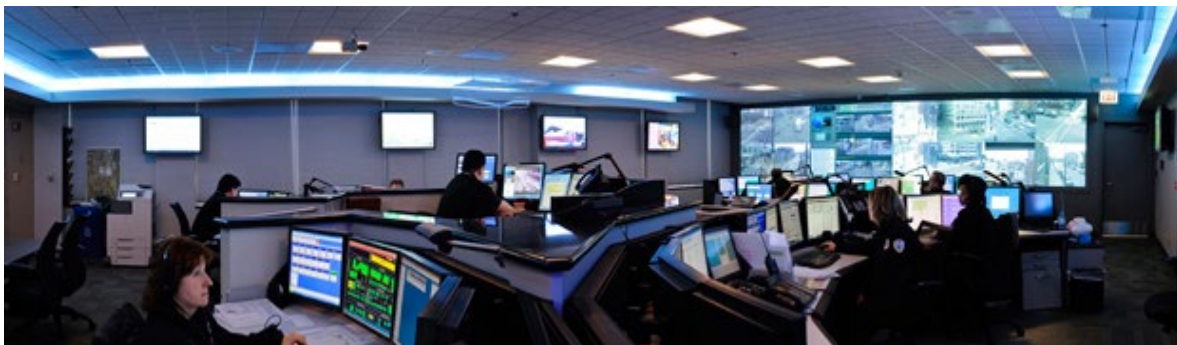
Touring the 18th Century 'Stockade District' and then the waterfront, CAP NY and 'the future State First Lady' led the caravan through neighborhoods historic and scenic, poor and seedy, to City Hall and the Hudson Valley Mall.

The finale was 'Tech City'.



"Welcome to the 'shovel-ready' green capital of New York State."

From empty building to vacant parking lot totaling 2.5 million square feet, 'Tech City' stood as a stark reminder, not unlike the State-abandoned Kingston Senate House, of what used to be, of what could have been.





"There's one department I'll expand in my administration ...law enforcement. Technology has helped us and thieves. You defraud or cheat or steal from New Yorkers, you will be caught, tried and jailed."



"What about 'Empire Plaza'?"



"Oh, the grandiose Albany! Those gleaming towers could become the ultimate corporate mega-complex, the headquarters' address for businesses around the world."



'And if that doesn't pan out, the definitive setpiece for a Hollywood sci-fi franchise that'd gross billions and then be turned into a theme park...'



*"Empire Plaza – 'Eighth Blunder of the World!'
A monument to the folly of **BIG STATE**."*



"My condolences, America, but only in New York. For four years, while the incumbent served out his term, Democrats and Republicans have been building up their forces for the Great Gubernatorial smackdown only to find out that this election has become a three-horse race and a tale of two cities."



"And Kingston's 'Favorite Son' is the one hero. Not because he has the Medal of Honor and a bi-plane, but because he's got vision and guts, long lacking in each major party.



"There's no sense in him debating. He's going to lead New York from Kingston for one hundred and fifty billion dollars a year, and they're not.

*"CAP's 'the canary in the coalmine'---in the New Millennium, **BIG STATE** has hit an iceberg and the Democrats and Republicans are stuck rearranging the deck furniture.*

"'King Kong' can't land a paw on him!"





CAP NY on 

\$149,999,999.99

"My budget when I'm elected governor. And to the tens of thousands of State employees who are going to lose their jobs, to each and every one of you, I apologize.

"Because I am sorry.

"New York State employees are the hardest-working, most skilled force in the country, but to survive in changing times, IBM and GM had to down-size. The State can be no different.



"You may lose your job, but not your skills or your spirit, and I'd like to believe that when lower taxes brings businesses back, that you'll work a lot harder and better for yourself and your family than you did for the State.

"None of this is your fault. No State worker is to blame for Albany's mismanagement.

"We will not be in a fight, but a stand. We're going to have to stand up together without fighting, to remake our state.

"It's your New York!"

NEW YORK POST

BIG STATE Strikes Back!



CAP NY to Crash?

A Rondout Miracle!

'TechCity' has been reborn! Bids for leases have come in from around the state, the country, one from China and another from India. In a sudden flurry of transactions, every last building of the former IBM site has been secured, guaranteeing thousands of quality jobs for the Rondout area.

'No good deed goes unpunished'? We have CAP NY to thank, but will his proposed "Green State Capital" doom his campaign?



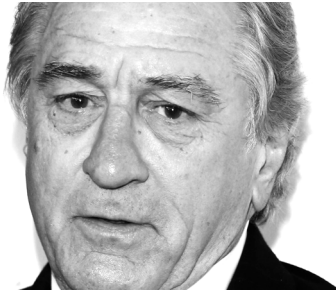
*"CAP NY is KIA! Because he no longer has a capital. **BIG STATE** couldn't buy the 'Favorite Son', so they bought Kingston. Not just New York money, **CAP NY** had every overfunded, overstuffed state government in the country scared to death. Money well spent to knock that 'Rondout rabble-rouser' out of the sky!"*



"Not so fast. Not so fast! If New York were truly prospering with real longterm jobs, not these stats counting low-paying positions with few benefits, well, then you could have stuck a fork in this 'Rondout rabble-rouser' right there!"

*"But **CAP NY** hit **BIG STATE** in the pocketbook. People like this guy, believe in him, trust **CAP NY**."*

"It ain't over till it's over!"



CAP NY on

"Hello, New Yorkers.

*"The leaders of Kingston, Democrats and Republicans, have attributed the **CAP NY** 'effect' to the sudden resurrection of my hometown.*

"Imagine, as governor, what I can do for your town or city, for you!

"A state capital must be more than a collection of buildings, whether they be billion-dollar ivory towers, a formerly abandoned corporate site, or a string of vacated factories. The heart of The State is the 'New York American spirit' burning in its leadership and its people working together.

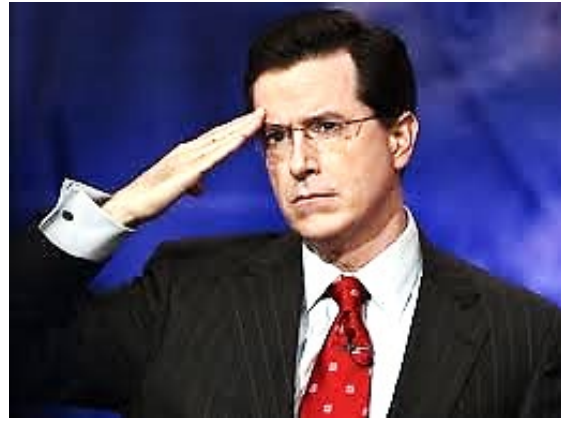


"Overtaxed and under-represented, New Yorkers will vote, not out of fear for 'King Kong', but for a leader who will re-energize 'The Empire State' not from 'Empire Plaza' but from Kingston.

"It's your New York!"

Mid-September poll:

Dem	- 41%
GOP	- 30%
CAP NY	- 29%



*"CAP NY is still in the fight! After the 'Tech City' buy-out, the **BIG State** political machines were pounding their chests singing, 'Bye-bye, **CAP NY.**'*

*"But wait, polls don't lie, even though only front-runners believe them. There are still some pesky New York voters who want this **CAP** without a Capital, either that or they're replying to those robo-calls just to keep this story flying, thank God!*

"And now, Nation, 'Capital creation on the cheap'. Good news, prime real estate is still available!"

*"The Internet killed the Downtown Mall," sang the futurists. Anybody remember the **HUDSON VALLEY MALL?** "*



"Once the very heart of Kingston shopping, all of its major vendors have long left for greener pastures."





"Instead of shuttering all those square feet of dead space, make it over as the 'Capital Complex' anchored by the NY Senate and House. Put the governor's offices in the empty multiplex. Think of the psychological ummph--Doing business with the Kingston government would almost be like shopping and a movie.

"That's my wife's New York!"

By early October:

Dem	- 40%
GOP	- 30%
CAP NY	- 30%



"Something new in New York politics? Not really.

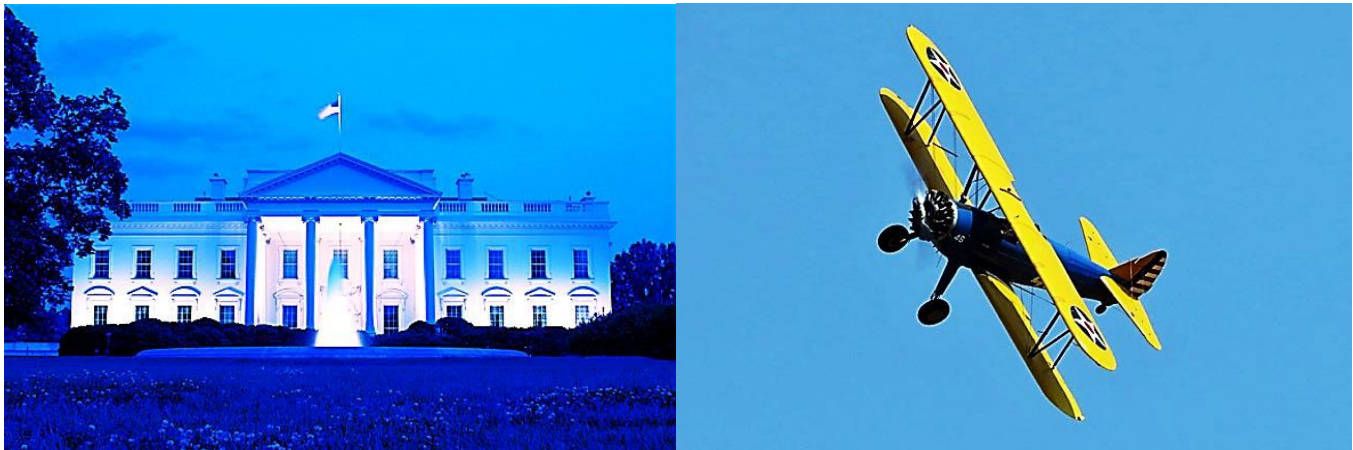
"CAP NY is not the first Medal of Honor winner to run for governor in New York. That precedent goes to Teddy Roosevelt in eighteen ninety-eight."



"Once the New York City police commissioner, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt resigned to fight in the Spanish-American War. In the Battle of San Juan Heights, he was nominated for the Medal of Honor, but not officially given the award for almost one hundred years.

"Back home a hero, Roosevelt was elected governor of New York, but was so bent on State reform that his own party wanted him out and pushed him to run as the vice presidential candidate in 1900. When the Republican ticket won, New York lost a governor and America got a Nobel Prize-winning, 'Mount Rushmore' President.

*"Like Roosevelt, the Republicans and Democrats want Kingston's 'Favorite Son' out of New York. Time is short. President **CAP NY**, America?"*



"With a brand new Air Force One!"

NY VEGAS BOARD

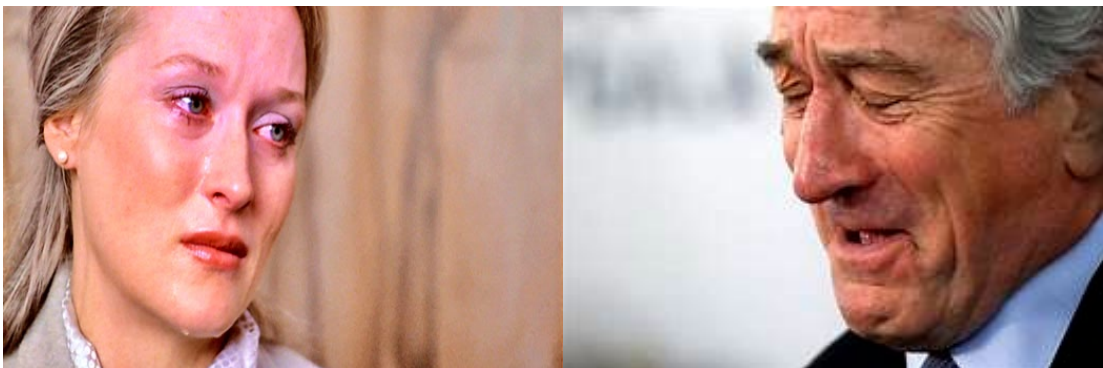
Dem - Even Money
GOP - 3/1 (Continues to sink)
CAP NY - 5/1 (Rising despite bumps)

Albany provided State Police to protect David Spar 24/7. The networks and paparazzi followed his every move including...

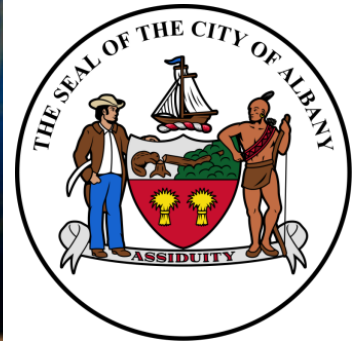


Across the avenue, in full view from Kingston's largest hospital, the modest Spar family plot in Montrepose Cemetery was halfway up a sloping knoll near an oak tree.

On February, 27, 1991, Major Thomas Spar was killed in Operation Desert Storm.



At the gravesite, **CAP NY** and Dorothy stood for a long moment; all the words had already been spoken.



*"CAP NY in Kingston. Can it be managed?
What will it cost? And who's next?"*



*"This is madness! Right off the runway, **CAP NY** has been Don Quixote, tilting at the Albany 'Windmill'. Without firm State management, there'll be confusion, chaos, and yes, 'mass hysteria'!"*



*"But it's not going to happen. The polls are inflated. New Yorkers have turned **CAP NY** into 'American Idol', but when it comes time to vote, do you really believe the majority wants Kingston on the Rondout over Albany and 'Empire Plaza'?"*

*"Forgetaboutit! **BIG STATE** forever!"*



"An 'impossible dream'? The Jets' Joe Namath faced longer odds against the NFL Champion Colts. So did the Giants' Eli Manning challenging the undefeated Patriots. Super Bowl MVP quarterbacks, they didn't 'manage' the game but led New York to victory!"



"Kingston's 'Favorite Son' has ignited a winning spirit in New York, not to beat the Democrats and the Republicans, but to topple 'King Kong'. Don't buy into the 'point spread'. Albany's going to fall like Humpty-Dumbty!"



*"But...even if **CAP NY** 'leads' New York to a 'Community Capital', how long can he keep it that way? Within five to ten years, the growth cycle will start again, and become too much for Kingston. The government will have no choice, but to move back to Albany.*

"Long live BIG STATE!"



CAP NY on 

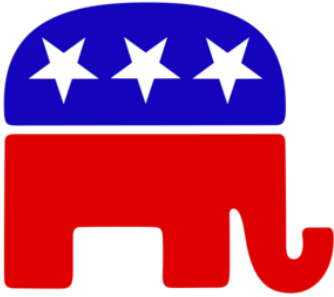
"According to the Democrats and the Republicans, my being governor would be the worst thing that could happen to New York.

"Because in our quest to downsize the State and move the Capital to Kingston, I won't have a single ally in the House or the Senate, of either party!"

"Well, the politicians are wrong. I do have one ally: You.

"Whatever your voting age, your color, religion or national origin or whether you're here legally or not, you live in New York, you pay New York taxes, you are a New Yorker!"

"Changing the very identity of New York is going to take hard work, guts and sacrifice. And those who have the most will sacrifice the most to lift up those who have the least.



"All our lives we've been paying for the privilege of having 'King Kong' atop the Empire State. The Democrats and Republicans are pushing platform and politics. This is about money and power and they've got too much of both and they will say and do anything and everything to keep themselves up and you down.

"Do you want more of the same?"

"It's your New York!"

In mid October, for the first time, Kingston's 'Favorite Son' was running second.

DEM - 38%
CAP - 34%
GOP - 28%



Again 'the Egg' was full, this time with both Republicans and Democrats, local bosses tasked with getting out the vote.



"CAP NY is not just a candidate, a face and a personality. Beyond a hero, PAC or a Party, he is an idea! Not challenging the edicts of Empire Plaza, but its continued existence.



"Everybody of every party get the picture? If CAP NY wins, our party is over."

The Chief Justice waited for the murmuring to die.



"We've come to a desperate juncture calling for definitive action. During World War Two, when Hitler's panzers were overrunning France, to somehow save the day, Churchill offered England's bitterest rival equal unification with the British Empire. Full of false pride, the French turned him

down. And the Nazis almost conquered the world!

*"This time, it's not about our petty party squabbles, our ceaseless infighting for money and power and control, votes. No more Democrat versus Republican, Liberal against Conservative, but a unified two-party invincible political machine that will crush **CAP NY**.*

*"Only together will we be able to save **BIG STATE!**"*



*"I have to tell you why I hate **CAP NY**. It's nothing personal, not the Rondout. Had anybody heard of the 'Rondout' before this guy flew in?"*

*"Since his first announcement, **CAP NY** hasn't spent a dime on TV ads. Think of it. Television delivered us Kennedy and when he was assassinated, left radio and newspapers in the dust.*

*"With **CAP NY**, it's new tech for old times, 'Facebook chats' like he's Franklin Delano Roosevelt."*



"CAP NY, save me!"

"'Baby Boomer in the Bi-plane', he's killing manufacturing jobs! All those hats and signs and banners that didn't get made.

The campaign staff and the managers and consultants and chauffeurs who were never hired. The deals with labor and 'special interest' groups he didn't make.

"Worst of all, those negative TV spots created by the most cynical craftsmen and women in the industry never even got an interview. Dozens more New Yorkers unemployed because Kingston's 'Favorite Son' doesn't need television.



"That's where I first saw 'King Kong'!"

With **BIG STATE** facing its most severe crisis since the British burned Kingston, the call went out.



In the original Capital Building, the Executive Chamber served as Franklin Roosevelt's office when he was governor. Called the 'Red Room' for its opulent rugs and drapes, the lavish setting came complete with gold-leaf trim mahogany wainscoting, and a coffered oak ceiling. Bronze leaf band covered the upper half of the walls, the State ideal for ceremonial occasions.



"Urgently requested," the GOP candidate came on time and alone, entering through the 'Hall of Governors' lined with framed portraits, paid for by party donors.



The Dem arrived twenty minutes late and left his protesting entourage downstairs. He took a chair across from his opponent facing the large desk, a bill-signing platform elevated for photo ops.

The former Chief Justice let the two of them stew for ten minutes before appearing through the secret door, installed by FDR to allow him wheelchair access without the media getting wise.



"Chief Justice, I demand..."



"And I want..."



*"Sit down and shut up! Don't talk to me of politics and parties.
Don't quote slogans or sing me your New York song."*



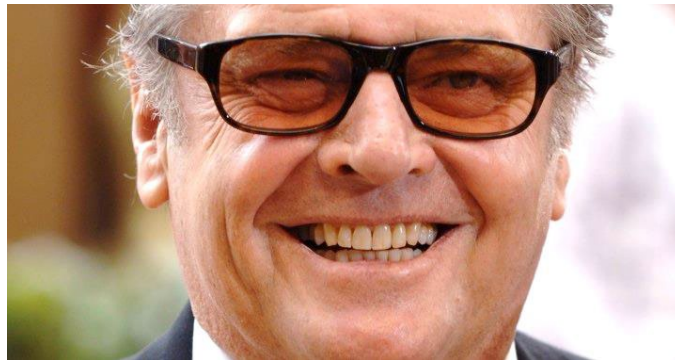
"The Honorable FDR will decide this. Call it!"



"No."



"Never."



*"Who here would jeopardize **BIG STATE?**"*

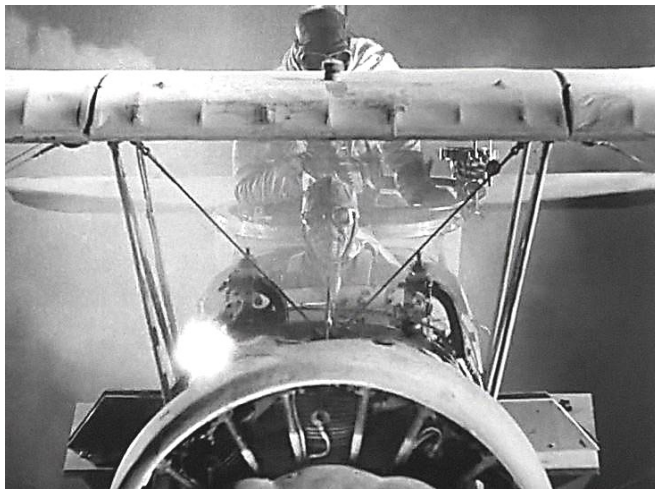
The Dem flipped the dime. GOP called it. The loser dropped out of the election.

The 'Bipartisan Candidate' would be Albany's man to beat.



*"Does anybody remember the two-party system in New York?
You know, Democrats versus Republicans, those dedicated
civil servants who're always falling all over each other proclaiming
how hard they are fighting for more jobs and cheaper health care
and better education for you, New York voter, right or left along Party lines?"*

"But on the way to the polls, an American hero happened."



"Kingston's 'Favorite Son' is on their six!"

*"And miracle of miracles, the bitter brown-nosing rivals have
united behind their 'Bipartisan Candidate', but not because they care
about jobs and health care and education and you, New York voter.*

*Oh, no, not this election. This time both parties are campaigning for
BIG STATE, their state, a collection of empires, gargantuan*

bureaucracies crammed into Albany.

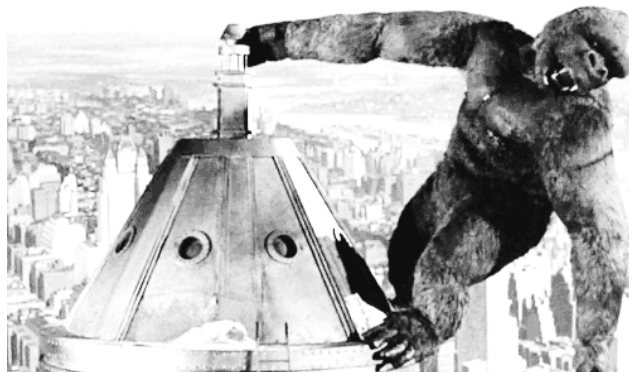


"Again the grand patriots must defend their home all costs!

*"Lotsa luck, **BIG STATE**, but yet another American Revolution is in the air. The 'Ninety-nine per cent' doesn't want the 'One per cent' running an empirical State government, over-managed, over-privileged and overpriced, made redundant and even more wasteful by technology."*



"Sorry, 'King Kong', but it's time to come down to earth...in Kingston!"





BIPAR - 50%
CAP NY - 49%
Others - 1%

In the final days, the **BIPAR** Candidate spent Democratic and Republican millions carpet-bombing TV, radio and the Internet. The ugliest spots were reserved for the State's hometown, New York's 'First Capital'. Made the Ulster County Legislature and the town board mad as Rondout catfish; either way, Kingston, the 'terminus city,' would be beginning anew yet again.

NY VEGAS BOARD

BIPAR - Even Money
CAP NY - Even Money



*"Twentieth Century Super Bowl numbers.
'Early birds' could score huge."*



CAP NY on **facebook**

"We are the 'Empire State', standing tall and free from the Newtown Creek to Niagara Falls, from the Hudson River to Lake Erie."



"New Yorkers aren't just 'born and raised', we are forged, tempered by triumph and tragedy. Don't put us down. Don't hold us back. And don't even think of conning us."

"We are moving on and we are moving up, going forward by returning to a state ruled not by a 'King Kong' empire draining our resources and humbling our future, but governed from a 'Community

Capital' uniting us for the challenges ahead at half the price.

*"Kingston gave New York State its revolutionary start,
and it's time to start over once again.*



*"There's a new 'fire' burning in New York, a spirit of change fueled by courage, confidence and cooperation of a people who want to rely more on themselves and their fellow New Yorkers than **BIG STATE**, a soulless, burnt out bureaucracy trapping us in a bygone age.*

"Your vote is your power. Cast it, not into the Republican and Democratic wind forever blowing hot air, but for a new time, a new capital and a new State working with you. Our future belongs to us.

"It's your New York!"



'Try and tell me that New York politics gets better than this!

C'mon, I dare you!

*"And the Number One reason for voting for **CAP NY**:
How could you not want a governor named '**CAP NY**'?"*



The dawn was clear, a good omen for a strong turnout. David Spar and Dorothy voted early, then headed down Route 9 and up into the sky.



From the air, New York State is not numbers or counties or demographics, but a *land* of farms and forests, rivers and streams, mountains and valleys, cities and towns...families working to achieve their dreams.



After lunch, in the Stockade Historic District, residents gathering in the streets outnumbered the tourists and the media reporters.

At dusk, it was filled with voters and their families. With darkness, the first flashlights, then camping lanterns, cell phones, cigarette lighters and candles cast a fiery light, a burning spirit, 'a hotbed of perfidy and sedulous disloyalty' not felt in New York's 'First Capital' since the Revolution.



WHO IS 'YOUR NEW YORK'?



THE GLENN BECK PROGRAM



"If CAP NY loses, he wins. But if he wins, then he loses. BIG STATE's 'Prime Directive' is not to serve the people, but to serve itself. 'An empire is like a plant,' said Catherine the Great. 'It either grows or it dies.'

"Albany, as a Capital, cannot die; its self-defense mechanisms will kick in, a tsunami of litigation to block any action the new governor, even with the full backing of the people, wants to take. By the end of his four-year term, David Spar won't be able to move a paperclip from Albany to Kingston."

I ♥ CAP NY

New Yorkers voted for their parties, for their capitals, and for themselves, their families and the future of *their* State...



Shattering records in Albany and Kingston.



Predictions flew left and right.

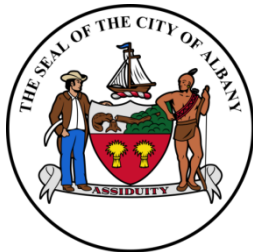


"He...could...go...all...the...WAY!"

As returns began to roll in...



"You've dared the people to make a capital choice! Never ever has New York been so proud...of Kingston!" *"You talking to me?"*





Long Live BIG State!

or



'Oh, no. It wasn't CAP NY. 'It was sanity killed the beast.'

“IT'S YOUR NEW YORK!”



Captain **Ed W. "Too Tall" Freeman** and Major Bruce Crandall, United States Army helicopter pilots, were awarded Medals of Honor for their actions in the Battle of Ia Drang during the Vietnam War when they 'flew through gunfire numerous times, bringing supplies to a trapped American battalion and flying dozens of wounded soldiers to safety'.



Greetings from



Totie Fields

Pearl Williams

THE

BUNSGENT

BELT

Ruth Wallis

Rachel Jordan
Sophie Tucker
Selma Diamond
Betty Walker
Rusty Warren

Jean Carroll
Betty Ross
Sylvia Stoun
Sadie Banks

Belle Barth

Patsy Abbott

Weela Gallez

Fanny Brice

**THE BEST BROADS
OF COMEDY**





Tower of Babel



Ellenville Gambles

Babel is from the Hebrew **balal**, *to jumble*.



In the *Book of Genesis*, a united humanity of the generations following the Great Flood, speaking a single language and migrating from the east, came to the land of Shinar where they resolved to build a city with a tower "whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

God came down to see what they did and said: "They are one people and have one language, and nothing will be withheld from them which they purpose to do...Come, let us go down and confound their speech."

And so God scattered them upon the face of the Earth, and confused their languages, so that they would not be able to return to each other, and they left off building the city, which was called **Babel** "because God there confounded the language of all the Earth".





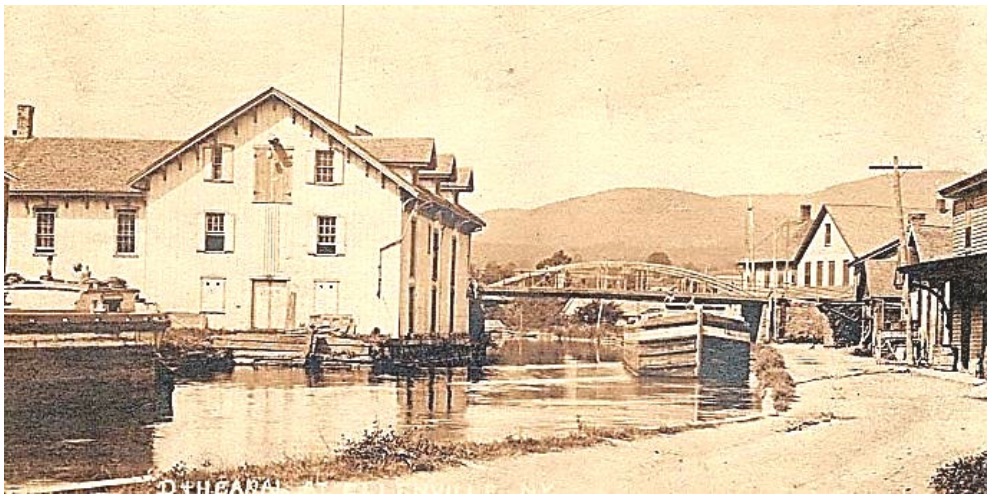
In the beginning, ninety miles north of 'New Amsterdam', there were only Indians on both sides of the Rondout Creek. The new Dutch settlers would drive out the Lenni Lenape and Esopus tribes. Then the English took over.



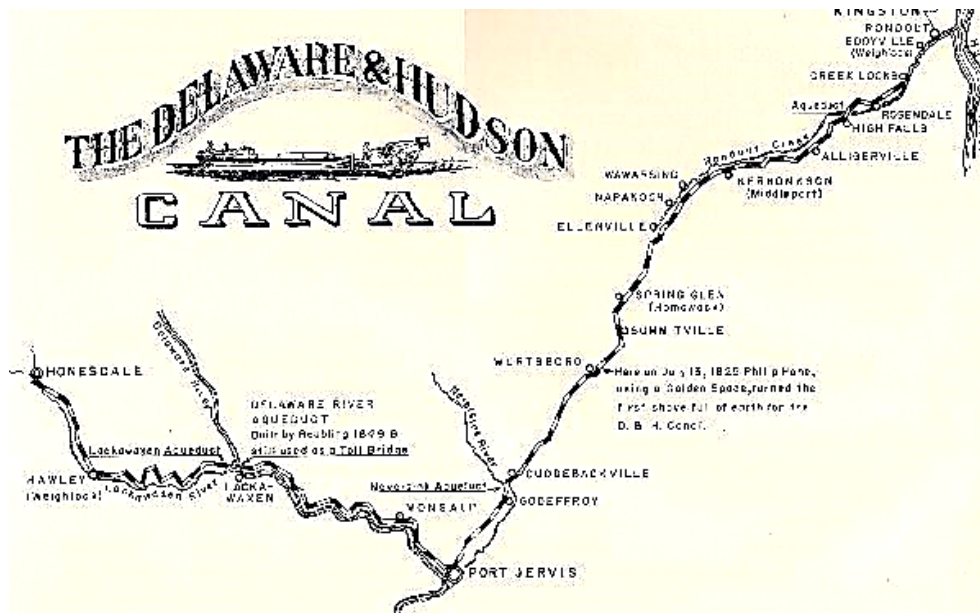
The first house was erected in 1803. At her suggestion, the growing town was named after a founder's sister-in-law.



Little by little, the wilderness hamlet grew. In 1828, Ellenville took a giant step when the *Delaware & Hudson Canal* came right through town.

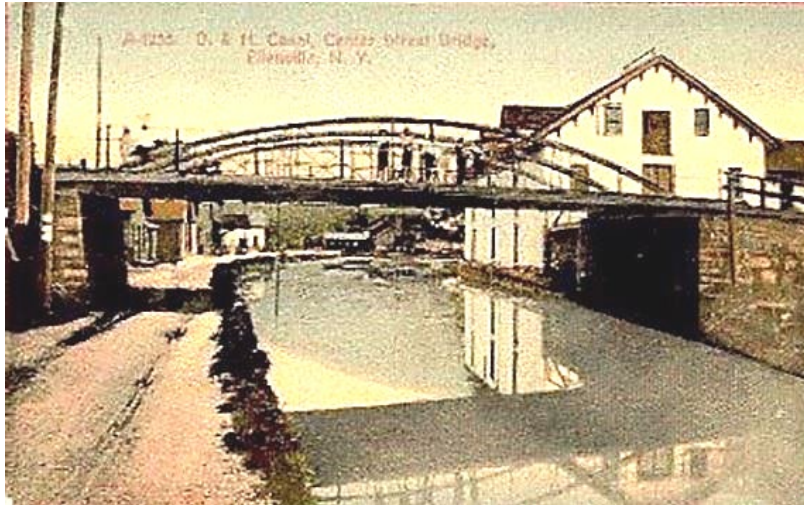


Conceived in 1823 by two Philadelphia dry goods merchants, and designed by the chief engineer of the Erie Canal, the *D&H* would be Ellenville's #1 employer through the Civil War until the end of the century.



Dug with shovels, axes and dynamite, four feet deep and thirty-two feet wide, the 108-mile ditch began in Honesdale, Pennsylvania wound through 108 locks, 137 bridges, 26 basins, dams and reservoirs to Eddyville, near Kingston where the Rondout Creek met the Hudson River.

Anthracite coal was the breadwinner. Up to a hundred boats a day would deliver thousands of tons to be shipped down the Hudson to New York City.



Canal work was seasonal, backbreaking and dangerous, but it was a uniting artery the length of the Rondout Valley. Until 1898 when the *D&H* was shut down and abandoned, leaving a 100-mile gash across the countryside.

The technology that had usurped the Canal brought Ellenville into the 20th Century.



Canal Street was soon seeing more buggies and cars than it ever saw boats.



Through the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression and World War II, Ellenville had its New York ups and downs. In the wake of The Bomb, the town would peak; peace in the 'Atomic Age' ignited an exodus of Biblical proportions, leading a million souls to the 'Promised Land' of the Catskills.



Middle-and upper-class Jews first came to the beautiful mountains in the 1870s. Anti-Semitism from other resorts increased their numbers. By the late 1890s and early 1900s, farmers started to offer their places as Jewish boarding houses and hotels that served kosher food. Eventually, it was more profitable to rent to visitors and most of the farmers gave up the plow.



In the early 1900s, a left-leaning Jewish group opened a sanitarium in the Catskills, providing “fresh air” for Jewish tuberculosis patients excluded elsewhere due to anti-Semitism. Unions such as the ILGWU opened up resorts where workers could recuperate.



The 'Borscht Belt's opening act was Boris Thomaschevsky, a Yiddish actor with an American vision; he opened a resort with large indoor and outdoor theaters;

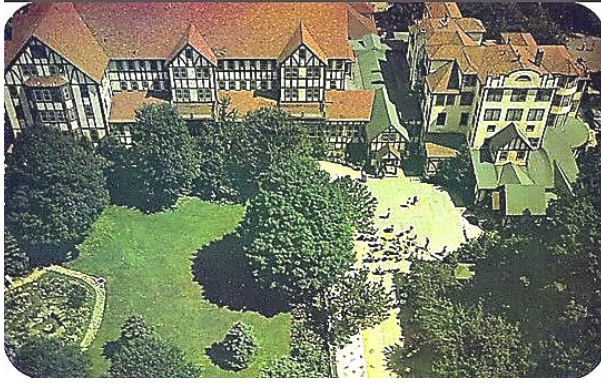


By the 1920s, improved automobiles and highways got the Catskills called 'The Jewish Alps'. Nearby Sullivan became 'Solomon County' and a flatrock stretch of the Rondout Creek 'Jew Beach.'

More than a thousand 'accommodations' were built, from single-family bungalows...



...TO GRAND HOTELS.



Welcome to the Catskills!

Jewish husbands would send up their families for a week or a month or rent for the whole summer, then show up on weekends. Singles would flock to meet a potential Jewish mate.



At the Brickman, a sprawling complex complete with athletic fields and a magnificently terraced swimming area, a section was named the "College Campus," where young lovers could stroll along "Flirtation Walk."



Influenced by Yiddish theater, entertainment ranged “from burlesque to nightclub to Broadway,” or “mock marriages” – raucous spoofs on the traditional Jewish wedding which heated up the dating scene. Golf, tennis, swimming, endless games of 'Simon Says' to *Mah Jong* Night and Bingo!, Bingo, Bingo!

Almost as many *non*-Jewish children made the trip north, families of WW II heroes on the verge of the Middle Class whose young Baby Boomers could 'go to the county.'

Most 'Solomon' children swam in a hotel pool.



Christian 'Huck Finns' inherited the 'crick'.



Greetings from LACKAWACK, New York

From Memorial Day to Labor Day, Ellenville swelled with vacationers. A half dozen kosher delis would stay open till two or three o'clock in the morning.



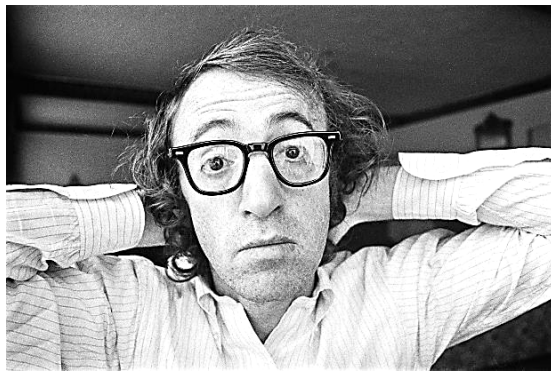
A magical phenomenon, not only bringing tourists and businesses and jobs to the region, the 'Borscht Belt' served as a proving ground for that noblest and most honest of professions: the stand-up comic.



*"Comedy is a lonely art. You're alone...alone on the stage.
If the laughs don't come, you have egg on your face."*



*"Comedy has to be based on truth.
You take the truth and you put a little curlicue at the end."*

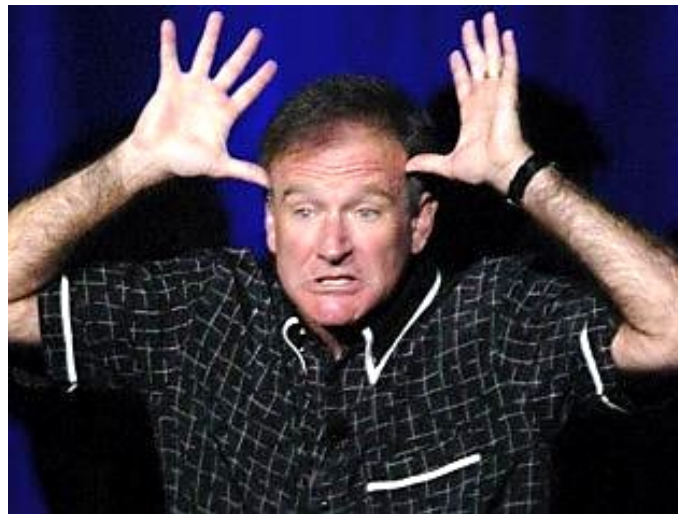


"Comedy just pokes at problems, rarely confronts them squarely. Drama is like a plate of meat and potatoes, comedy is rather the dessert, a bit like meringue."





"If it's funny, it's not dirty; and if it's dirty, it's not funny."



"Comedy is acting out optimism."



*"The chosen days of the Catskills.
I'm tellin' ya, we got some respect!"*

1955





"God parted the Red Sea; Tappan Zee spanned the Hudson River. Both saved the Jews serious travel time.

"Before...four hours on a dozen different roads, a torture! Friday afternoons...like the D-Day invasion. How long can you play word games with the kids?"

"Then, miracle of miracles, Tappan Zee cuts the trip in half and eliminated a whole state. No more in and out of New Jersey.

"So when I got almost 'comfortable', I hired a chauffeur and paid him by the hour.

"Drive my wife, please!"



"I can't pretend that I'm a great student of the art of comedy because anybody that becomes philosophical about humor doesn't know what he's talking about.

"You think it's about being a Jew? This is Yacov Moshe Maza from Sheboygan, Wisconsin talkin'. Like my three brothers, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, I was ordained a rabbi, but I was not so sure about God, but I knew for certain that I worshipped young girls, and that could get me into big trouble.

"The Catskills, oh, the Catskills! Started out as a waiter, broke all the dishes. Then they made me a lifeguard.

"I can't swim,' I said.

"Don't tell the guests,' they said.

"The only question I have about my success: Why did it take so long?"

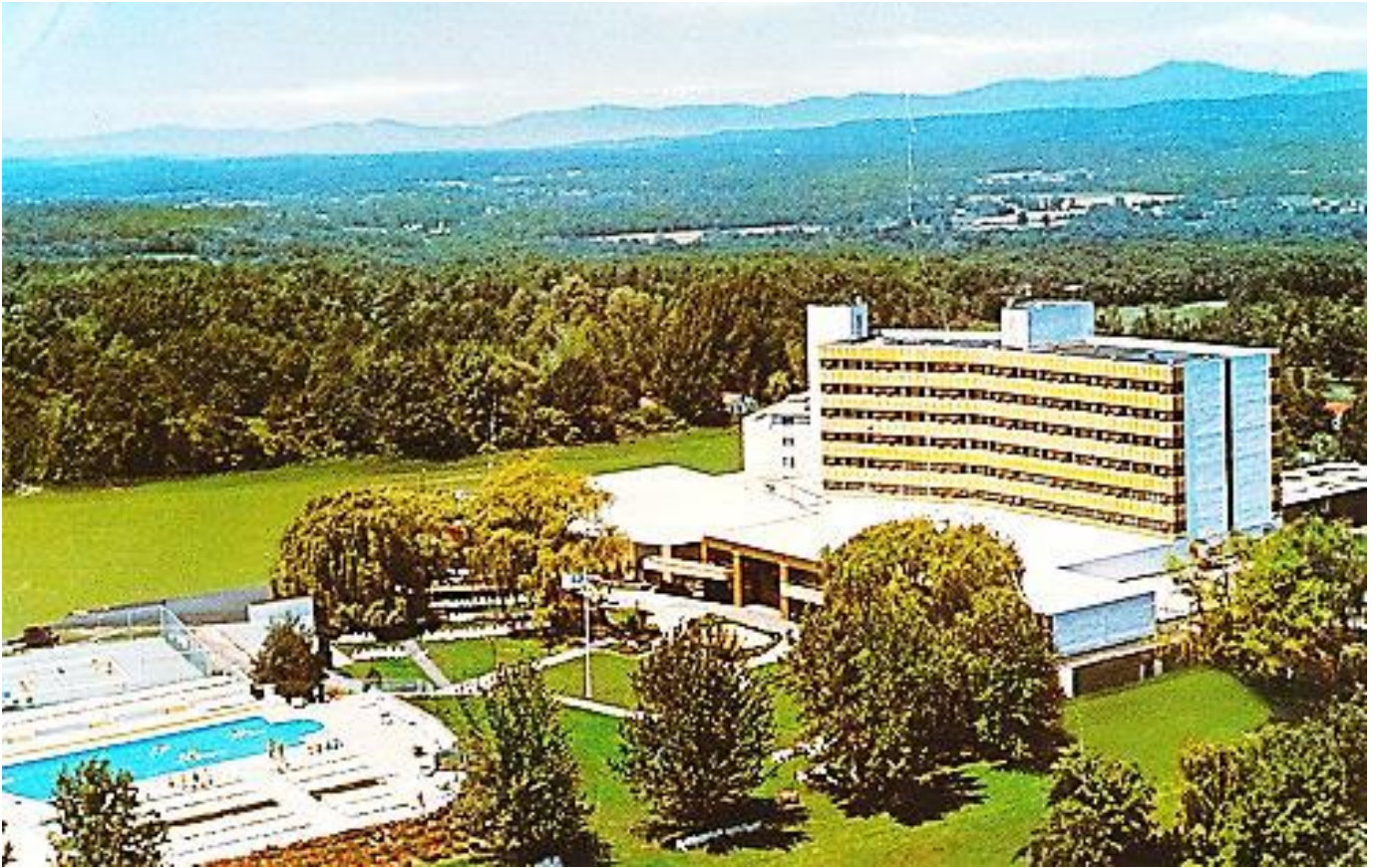


"This is me talking. There will be a slight pause while you say, 'Who cares?'"

"Gags die, humor doesn't. The Catskills, for many of us, was 'student stand-up.' Coming from radio, this audience could see you. Presence, character, timing...mold them together until your signature is you and not the jokes you stole."

"I was working the Borscht Belt, but I was looking beyond...the cute young girls up front, the old ladies gathered in the back...beyond to the most powerful force since the Atomic Bomb...Television!"

"Well?"



"Can we talk?"

"I'm an actress, playing a comedian, and I'm terrified. Terrified before every show. My routines come out of total unhappiness. My audiences are my group therapy. I want them to know I don't think I'm wonderful, or better than they are. 'I am you and you are me, and we're all feeling the same thing.'

"Say what is really on everyone's mind."

"If Adolf Hitler had four good jokes, he'd be in the room. Custer did better at the Little Big Horn."



Photo Credit: PHOTOFEST

"I started out as a Borscht Belt musician; Buddy Rich taught me to play drums. Then I became a tumpler, the hotel jester. You had to be funny and fast. Get the party started. Make some noise. These people had seen everything You had to give them belly laughs, not just chuckles."

"If you're quiet, you're not living. You've got to be noisy and colorful and lively."



"Hotel after hotel opening up in the Catskills. And the servants' door in the back, creaked open just a bit. Long on ambition, short on skills, dozens, then scores of young Negroes became housekeepers and busboys.

"Always be smiling. This is our life. Thank you so much for visiting us.'

"Just a trickle, but against the current, black New York was flowing north.

"Here I am, a one-eyed Jew, and a star, getting insulted in places where the average Negro could never hope to go and get insulted."





"To be good, you need to believe in what you're doing. The Catskills and the Yankees got in my blood early. And my heart's bled for both of them. Nineteen sixty-two was a championship year. The 'Borscht Belt' had a terrific line-up: the Concord, Granit, Tamarack, Brown's, Grossinger's, Kutsher's Hotel and Country Club, the Nevele, The Pines Resort, and the Raleigh.

"Next two years we stayed close to the top, but in the late sixties the Catskills began to hit the skids. Like the once-champion Yankees, did everybody suddenly just get old?

"We blamed ourselves, of course. We worked so hard, but what had gone wrong? Weren't we Jewish enough anymore?

"Down, down, down went the Yankees until the proudest franchise in the world was in the cellar!

"Change is such hard work. The greatest team in sports' history had to be reborn. New money, a new stadium and new blood, and soon the 'Bronx Bombers' were back winning World Series'."

"While my beloved Catskills..."



"And there used to be a 'Borscht Belt' right here."



""You don't have to be the world's foremost authority to comprehend the 'Catskill Catastrophe', but it helps if you're still young.

"New York Jews grew up isolated in ghettos because of anti-Semitism, which is a lot like racism and homophobia, but in the name of God.

"Whether God cast divine direction down from heaven or secretly gave rabbis roadmaps, the Catskill Mountains became *The Chosen Country*."



"The question is not so much where we are as *when* we are.

"In the 'Borscht Belt', you just didn't make reservations, you were on one, not unlike an Indian tribe. Among our people, our traditions, our life in a rented paradise with room service and an all-you-can-eat buffet barely a hundred miles from..."



PLANET OF THE JEWS



"For more than half a century, the Catskills flourished, and then...?"

"In the last world war, scores of cities had been firebombed.



"Two others..."



"All have since been rebuilt, but in the 'Borscht Belt', only one grand Catskill hotel has survived.



"A farmhouse in 1907, Kutsher's expanded over the years and became a summer sports center in the 50s and 60s.



"Wilt Chamberlain once served as a Kutsher's bellhop. Muhammad Ali and other champion boxers trained at the exclusive facility.

"Kutsher's Camp Anawana and the Kutsher's Sports Academy are gone, but the hotel offers golf, tennis, indoor ice skating, indoor and outdoor pools, a health club, and various kids and teen programs. There are also winter sports such as snow tubing and downhill skiing. The menu is strictly kosher.

"Shut down in 2007 for renovations, the hotel was renamed The New Kutsher's Resort & Spa and remains in business."

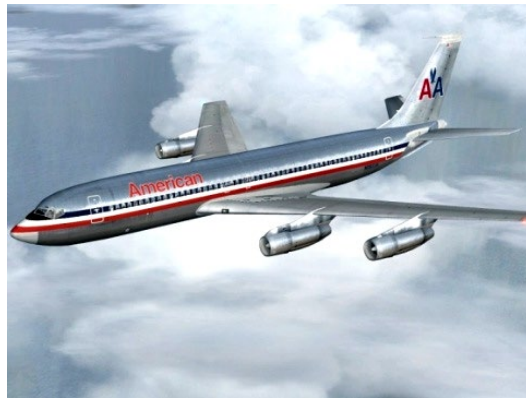
"Why did a thousand others vanish?"

"Lesser authorities have blamed the 'Catskill Catastrophe' on the invention of air conditioning. Rather than drive two hours for cool mountain breezes, former vacationers could stay home in comfort and watch 'big names' for free on television...



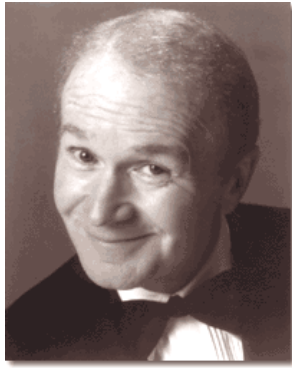
"...played very loud over the incessant hum of the air conditioner.

"Rubbish! Jewish Americans found paradise in The Chosen Country. No chintzy 'heat beater' was going to usurp a whole culture.



"Other less qualified historians have blamed a more sophisticated technology that, in the same two hours, could fly families to a new destination.





"Warm, sunny Florida. It's got everything, but if you don't get a move on, it won't have you."

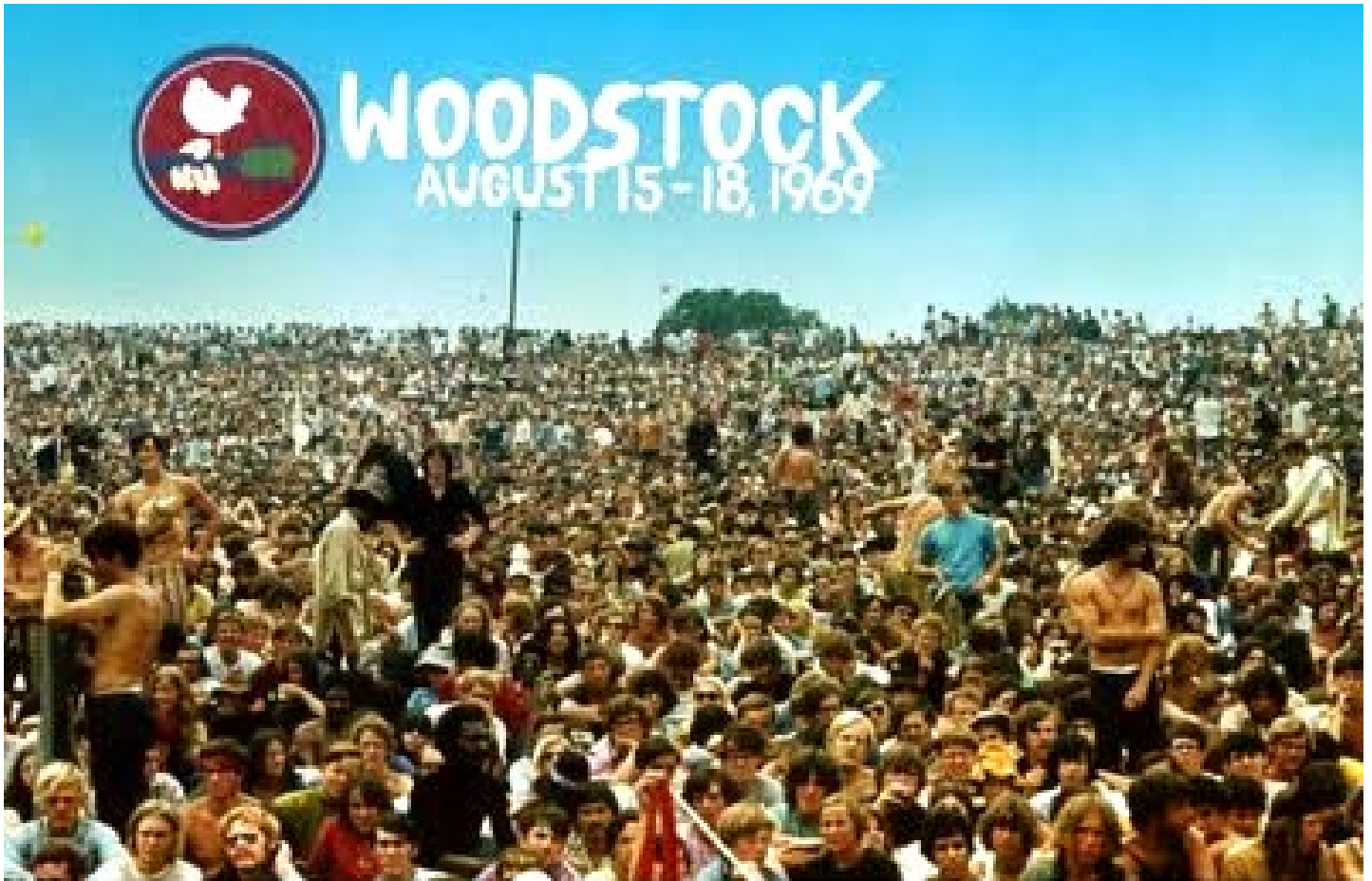
"No! There was another, controversial cause..."



"Be careful what you look for, sailor. You may not like what you'll find."

"On a peaceful farmland in the very heart of 'Solomon County'..."





***"Oh my God... We finally really did it ... You Maniacs!
You blew it up! Ah, damn you! God damn you all to hell!"***

Present Day

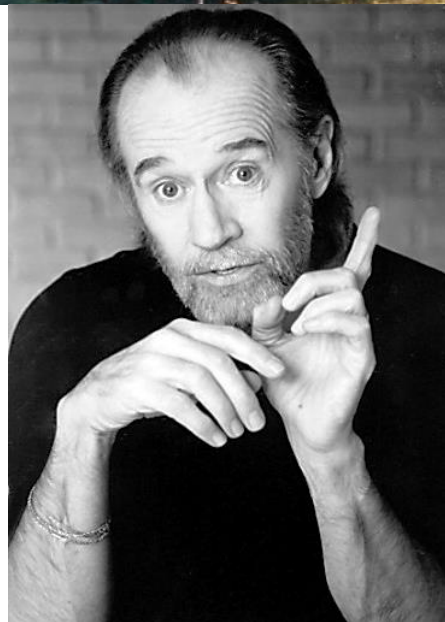




"The only honest art form is laughter, comedy. You can't fake it... try to fake three laughs in an hour, Hahahaha!, they'll take you away, man. You can't."

"Where are the laughs in Ellenville? No empty seat, it's got a real stage. But they only put on serious drama. The night ever comes when they do a 'Comedy Cavalcade', I'm showin' up. Only in spirit, but I'll be there."

"This town is in dire need of a joke."



"I don't have a fear of heights. I do, however, have a fear of falling from heights.

"Except in Ellenville. Most promising part of town is up, the "Hang Gliding Capital of the Northeast." The good news is that you train to fly, to soar above the fray, to see the glorious Catskills as a New York natural wonder. The not-so-good news is that when you graduate, sooner or later, you've got to come back to Ellenville.

"This is a town that wants to feel it's going someplace. Everybody's got questions, but we all know what the answer is doin'."



"I hate Ellenville, despise it with every mean bone in my body because of what it's doing to me personally.

"No typical backwater berg, Ellenville is 'Smalltown, USA' on the banks of the regal Rondout, and sinking into oblivion.

"Before the first matzos were ever served in the 'Borscht Belt', Ellenville was a 'blue collar' town. People made things here: custom glass, furniture, TV antennae, cutlery, clothing, aluminum machine parts.



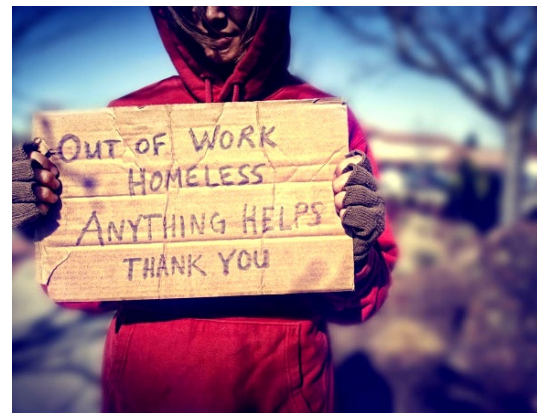
"Factory workers create stuff. 'Made in Ellenville', their handiwork went out into the world.



"Wanna see seven thousand jobs turn into one million square feet of vacant factory space? Go to Ellenville or half the other small towns in America.

"Not that factory positions pay big bucks and benefits, but they gave people, a town, purpose. Ellenville played a hometown part in American industry.

"That's all gone, wiped out by cheap labor abroad. I gotta tell ya what that does to hardworking people. Do you really want me to go into the social upheaval and family hardships?"



"But worst of all is the terrible effect all this misery has had on me.



"My job, my very livelihood, is to make...people laugh. Do you have any idea how much harder I am going to have to work to get even a smile from factory workers and their families thrown into the street? What the hell am I going to do? What am I going to say? What's funny about Food Stamps and Welfare?"

"Basically, I started on stage yelling and I kept yelling, and then I yelled some more, and then I yelled even louder. Thought I get modulated after a while, but I just can't handle this.

"This jobless multitude is killing me!"



"I have always grown from my problems and challenges, from the things that don't work out, that's when I've really learned.

"Big cities all make the same noise. Small towns are different in their quiet.

"At the center of Ellenville in Liberty Square, 'round the clock, water trickles from a boot, held up by a little boy.

"His mother made him those boots for his birthday, from leather scraps she snitched from the shoemaker's refuse pile. Took her weeks, struggling with the soles and heels. She made them a little big for him, of course. In these boots, her little boy would grow into a young man."



"When the great day arrived, she bubbled with joy as he tried them on. So proud and happy, he couldn't wait to show everyone in town. And as he strutted away, she called out to him. "Stay out of the water, especially the rocky creekbed."

"The little boy stands mute for all eternity, his eyes fixed on his leaky boot. It's the water that speaks, to him and to every little boy in Ellenville and everywhere else..."

'Listen to your mother!'





"People say I'm difficult and sometimes that's a badge of honor. It's the way I see things.

"Looking for the soul of a small town? Don't try city hall or a high school football game or the drunk tank at the police station. Visit the library.

"Ellenville was originally called 'Fairchild City', which sounds like an orphanage franchise. The first library was built nearly a century ago, thanks to the Women's Christian Temperance Union. How much fun could they have been?

"For a while, the library was stuck in the back of the town bank. A change of venue was long overdue. That's when Ellenville decided that not only would the town have a new, modern building...



"But right next door...a museum!

"All things Ellenville on the same block. That's centralized civic pride. Experience the heritage and history of 'Smalltown, America' from its earliest days to right now at no charge with no commercials and free parking.

"Plus the annual Blueberry Festival!



"Ellenville's got almost everything an American small town needs.

"Everything except leadership!"





"You know me, always thinking long-term.

"The Rondout was whipping the day I was born. A week later, the Ellenville wind began to blow and it's been blowing ever since.

"And for the last thirty years or so, a herd of 'Don Quixote's', have been arguing back and forth about building a windfarm and not a single breeze has been turned into money.

"Now you may believe that there's no rush, that the wind will blow for all eternity. But I'll be blowing longer. Long after the last ding-dong of Doom, somebody somewhere will hear my voice, see my face and have to laugh."



"It's good to be alive when you start thinking about what you want to be remembered for.

"What do you want to remember about Ellenville?"

"Hmm...There's always a demand for energy, especially where we live on.

"They're always gonna hafta have plenty in Ellenville. And if they don't step up and harness the clean, free wind....I'm sorry about the birds and bats that'll be hit and spun..."

"Or Ellenville can keep arguing about being remembered at all."



"Besides, there are lots of jobs in the nuclear and fracking companies."

"Good night, everyone."



"What's in a name? Hopefully who you are!"

*"The **Ellenville Blue Devils**....Supposedly from **les Diables Bleus**, French soldiers in World War One wearing blue uniforms and red capes. That's you since nineteen thirty-eight?"*

*"Earth to Ellenville. Duke University, the school with championship banners hanging from their rafters, they're the genuine **Blue Devils** since fifteen years before that."*

"Which makes the Ellenville Blue Devils Johnny-come-lately rip-offs. This town's gotta be more than that.

"Therein lies the rub: What's so special about Ellenville? What's Ellenville got no other town can touch?"

"Are we gonna go with history, really?"



"After D and H Canal workers or hotel bellhops? Is that Ellenville's claim to fame?"

"Sports has become a 'rooting for the clothing', 'scream the name' social ceremony. Athletes playing a numbers game from the backs of their jerseys to their latest contract deal. The humanity's been drained dry.

"You still don't get it, do you, smalltown Christians white then black and brown? You were as much a part of the summer Jewish blitzkrieg as the 'Chosen People' were. The aroma of Borscht is still in the air, flowing through your spirit with the spring current of the Rondout.

"There is a name for you, Boys and Girls..."

The Ellenville **BELTERS!**

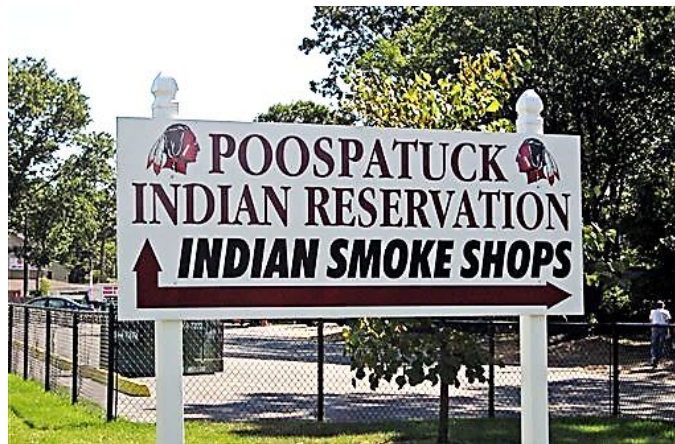
"Shout it proudly.

"All we need now is a mascot and a logo!"



"Nothing is above humor. There are a lot of things above taste, but nothing is above humor."

"Including New York Indian treaties. Take their land and their water, decimate their culture and heritage, then throw them a bone: on the reservations, tax-free tobacco."



"But wait, there's more. Read the fine print, Native Americans, you get the gambling rights!"



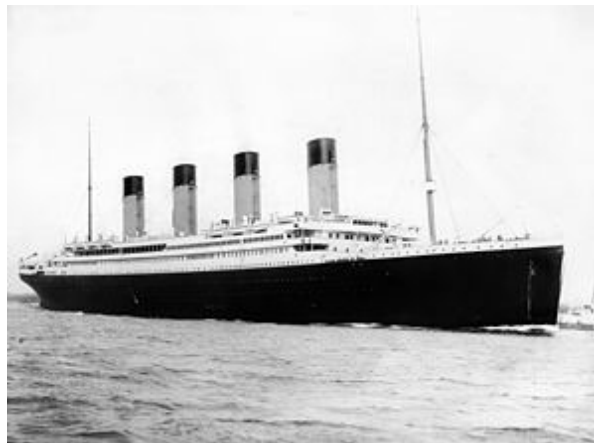
"Whoops, not anymore. Those New York 'Indian-givers'! The State has proposed allowing three non-Indian gaming casinos if New York voters approve a constitutional amendment to legalize casino gaming.

"Not in New York City, but up to seven locations in 'depressed areas' upstate. Holding all the cards, a Gaming Commission would choose the best spots. Revenues would be split ninety percent for education and ten percent for property tax relief.



"What a deal for the yokels running the government. The State takes no risk and expects 'depressed areas' to invest and then skims off the profits.

"Think of the desperate communities who believe that their ship has finally come in.



"Makes me so proud to be Canadian!"



"Tell me, coach. Who's on first?"

"Naturally."

"But coach, it's the bottom of the ninth and Ellenville has got to rally somehow. Their factories are closed, hotel business dead, few Catskills vacationers. 'Smalltown, USA's gotta swing away. Watta they gonna do?"

"I don't know."

"Third base!"

NOW





"A sense of humor is good for you. Have you ever heard of a laughing hyena with heart burn?"

"Told a few jokes, put on a couple of shows, made some movies, but what made my name live on forever is gambling."

"No such thing as a world class casino without my name on the golf course. I've got roads named after me leading straight to the slot machines."

"Have you placed your bet on my annual golf classic? When the odds are posted on the big board in Vegas, my name goes up in lights!"

"Ellenville...Ellenville? What's your ticket to immortality?"



"Simon Says'...save the Nevele!"



"Simon Says'...approve casino gambling State-wide.

"Simon Says'...Pick the Ellenville proposal over all others.

"Simon Says...Invest half a billion dollars and turn the Nevele into a world-class family resort with two golf courses, skiing, hiking, horseback riding, swimming and ice skating.

"Simon Says'...hire more than a thousand local people.



"Vote down New York casino gambling.

"Choose another site to approve a gaming license.

"No, no, no, you're out.

"Simon Says'..."





"Columbus discovered America. The Jews took over the Catskills. I lived the 'Borscht Belt', then had to watch as it almost completely faded away. And from the many mountaintops to the mouth of the Rondout Creek, so did so many around here.

"The Nevele casino has the local yokels scared of traffic? More than a thousand new jobs coming to a long-depressed area. Entry-level positions with minimum benefits, but paychecks. A lot less Unemployment Insurance, Food Stamps and Welfare.

"Or will the Nevele again have to import non-English speaking immigrants to be housekeepers and bellboys because locals refuse to take those jobs?

"Not this time. The town's ready, eager, desperate to work, but still there are those who hold a deeper fear, a long-festering dread."

INVASION ELLENVILLE



Return of the Jews



"I don't gamble because I don't need to gamble. All the gamblers I know are trying to do the same thing: break even. I'm already even."



"When you ain't got no money, you gotta get an attitude."

"Not gambling. Enough wives and mothers got pissed off enough and New York closed down its casinos before any of us were born. Husbands and fathers gamblin' away the mortgage and milk money."

"Now we're smarter than gambling; we invest."

"We partake in the New York Dream, to wake up a millionaire! Not at a casino or on Wall Street, just down the road or up the street.

"Look at all those beautiful one-way tickets!"



"No better way to dispose of 'disposable income', contributing to the education of schoolchildren. Oh, yeah, the thrill of the 'scratch-off' never gets old!

"Plus the 'entertainment value'. Watch a movie or read a book and escape for a couple of hours, but you buy one of those super-duper tickets and you'll be dreamin' all night about spendin' that money.



"I'm rich, rich, rich and never had to work!"

"Everybody in the dream. The more dreamers, the bigger the reality. The great treasure rush. Imagine a small business CEO spending only a couple of hundred dollars a week to make his company a multi-million dollar enterprise.

"You're doin' the same thing for your family!

"Now, I know something about 'gateways', been through a bunch of them. And there are these certified social experts who claim that lottery tickets are a 'gateway drug' to gambling addiction.

"Well, you know they're wrong. Have to be. Marijuana, that nasty grass, Yo, *that's* a gateway, that's why it's illegal. Gotta protect the kids.

"Lotteries creating a gambling frenzy, addicting millions to the Dream? No way. Otherwise, it'd be against the law, right?"



"It's only a gambling problem if you're losing."





"I used to be a heavy gambler. But now I just make mental bets. That's how I lost my mind.

"But anybody who believes that the Nevele Casino will bring back the 'Borscht Belt' is even crazier than I am.

"After World War Two, more Jews headed for the Catskills than ever followed Moses to the Holy Land. And for years and years, those Jewish Americans loved their 'Chosen Country'. So did their children. But as the years passed, the kids wanted something different, something new, that's what this country does to its peoples.

"Today there a still a few Jewish American families that treasure the kosher traditions of the Catskills; American Jews go everywhere.

"Are you Irish or Anglo-American? Italian or German-American? African or Asian or Latin American? Catholic or Protestant or Muslim-American?"

"Until you think of yourself as American first, you're still buckled up in a 'Borscht Belt' of your own."



"Well, excuse me!"



"Came from the Third World, fresh off the back of an eighteen-wheeler, illegal as weed, couldn't even speak English.

"Si, Senor! You knew who'd be doin' all the pickin' and diswashin', maids and waiters, minimum wage forever with no benefits, no hope of change.

"And all the while, high or low, slow or fast, dirty or clean, the Rondout kept rollin' by. Twisting tributary on its way to the Hudson, pulsing vein of the 'Melting Pot'. From Ellenville to Kingston, every race and religion, orientation and denomination...

"Then the factories and hotels closed down puttin' this stretch of the 'Crick' on the rocks. So ya gonna keep flowin' or stagnate, Rondout gente?

"Too many want to lay back and tread water, expectin' the state or the country to make ya float. Others promote their shallow self-interests. All kinds of outsiders tellin' your town what to do.

"Ellenville is 'Smalltown, USA'. Not on a backwater stream, but the rollin' Rondout. Time to stand tall, firm and close together, and decide for yourselves what this town is going to be.

"'Cause if you don't, if you just sit around waitin' for somebody else, then from Ellenville to Kingston's gonna look like that Third World we came here to get away from."

Nevele Grande

RESORT & COUNTRY CLUB



"A lot of people have gotten into comedy because of certain influences in their lives or events that were painful, and I really have wracked my brain to figure it out. I pretty much have had a normal childhood. Maybe it was too normal.

"But I do know 'major league'; my Daddy owned a baseball team.

"A 'major league' casino..."



"Two point four billion dollars for a futuristic Atlantic City mega-complex. And in nearby Connecticut..."



"By comparison, in Ellenville, Ellenville?"

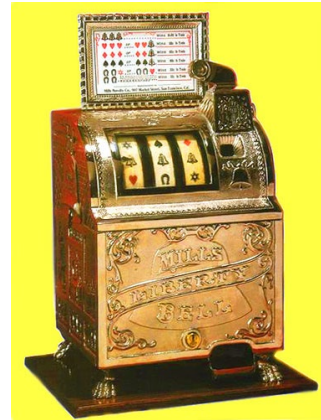


"Not 'major league'. Not 'minor league', not even 'bush league', but a 'Charlie Brown' casino making peanuts. For 'those people' and we know who they are!"





"Anyone who thinks law enforcement plays a major role in casino gambling has been watching too many TV cop shows. For more than a hundred years the business has been run by a machine."



"Always evolving, an all-consuming army of eight hundred thousand strong sweeping across America."



"The Nevele Grande 'vacation destination' won't be fully operational until two thousand and nineteen. Long before that, with the litigation cleared, 'Phase One' will be the establishment of a slot machine 'beachhead.'



"Two thousand dollar-eating invaders devouring Social Security checks, former lottery money, every last desperate buck. And if it's not enough, the backers will fold and pull out, leaving 'Smalltown, USA' flat broke, and back where it started."

INVESTMENT ELLENVILLE



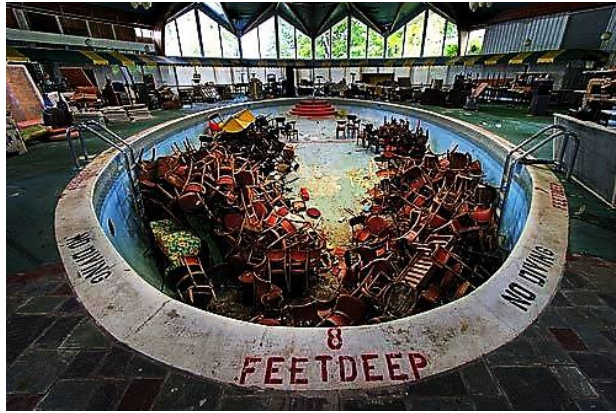
In debt, everyone can hear you scream!



*"At the Nevele!
There's so much to do!
Or don't do a thing!
People do that, too!"*



*"As long as people will accept crap, it will be financially profitable to dispense it.
So you have to wonder how casino owners see themselves in the high-tech revolution.
Didn't anyone learn anything from the ruins of the Catskills?"*



"The 'Borscht Belt' did not gradually disappear because it wasn't 'good enough'. The hotels, the staffs, the food, and of course, the comedy, fought to remain first class until the very end.

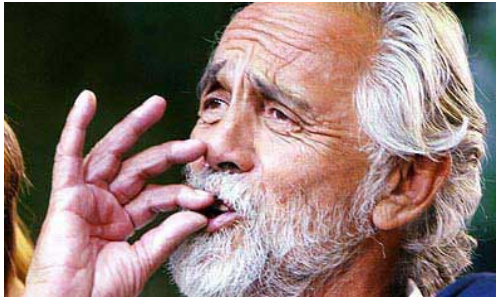
"It was the 'cultural experience' that came and went. American Jews no longer needed to go back.

"There will always be gambling, but will gamblers always need to go to a casino?"



"'Nothing will ever replace the casino experience,' the owners huff and puff as the 'asteroid' comes closer and closer."





"I know, because I tried all sorts of ways of being in character, and the best way is to be totally straight."

"Going all-in on State-approved casino gambling? The way the cards are falling..."

"Don't think 'tower'...silo!"



"Presenting the Nevele Grande 'Testing, Certifying and Distribution Center'!"

Indulge in Ellenville



Pot Capital of the Country!

NEVELE



"Too much of a good thing can be wonderful.

"Especially if the government can tax it. Take a firm stand on a widespread problem while protecting America's most vulnerable work force.

"Four hundred plus rooms, from bungalows to the Presidential Suite. Hire dedicated professionals of every gender and trans-gender, honest, hardworking caregivers of every race, religion, and nationality with a full range of legal ages.



"Reopen the fabled Stardust Room, every amorous amenity plus a full medical and security staff on call twenty-fours a day, every day. Come on up and see us some time."

Erotic Ellenville



Best **LUV** in the Land!

"Slots, cots, pot or have not?"



"The 'Chosen County' has a choice to make."

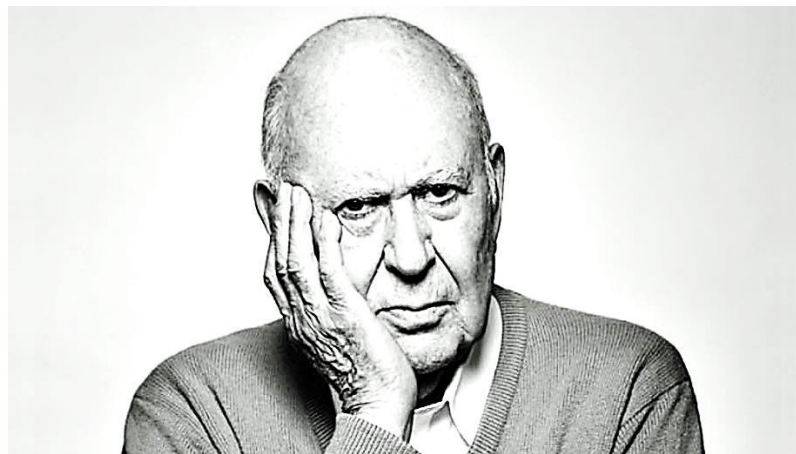


"Gambling is part of the human condition. I love it. I have the best time gambling. I've been winning fortunes, and I've been losing them."

MADE IN ELLENVILLE



"A casino is not unlike a factory. For a factory to be boon to the local economy, it must produce a viable product at a competitive cost."



*"To thrive in a small town, a casino must produce only one thing over and over again: **losers!**"*



"Gee, ain't we got enough of them in New York!"



"Say 'good night' Dick."





THE TOWN THE KING CHOSE



Inspired by the Rosendale Historical Society



*"The image is one thing and the human being is another.
It's very hard to live up to an image, put it that way."*



*"If you enter this world knowing you are loved and you
leave this world knowing the same, then everything that
happens in between can be dealt with."*



Technology negates geography. Had their nationwide search been conducted twenty years ago, it might have taken five weeks, even five months, but after only twenty-five minutes on the net, the conspirators hit paydirt.



"The brick Methodist church was built in eighteen ninety-six after the first wooden one burned down, but the congregation thinned out in the Twentieth Century. Abandoned and sold to the local fire department, it was the site of parties, meetings..."



"Perfecta! Ideal small town, a Main Street location with the telephone and power lines on the other side of the street."



"With a coming venue and a guaranteed audience. Crowd not too big to get out of hand."



"It's the flat roof's that's money. The highest point in town. We'll be able to set up with no one the wiser."



"The nearest helicopter?"



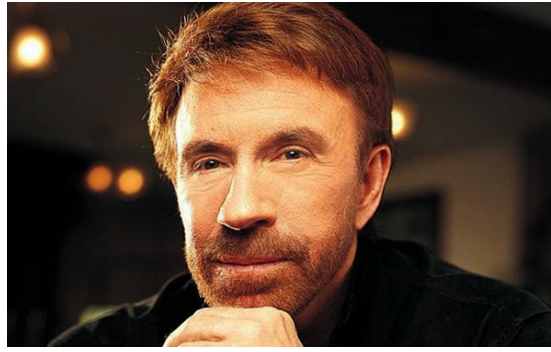
"Twenty, maybe twenty-five minutes. The scanner'll give us lead time."



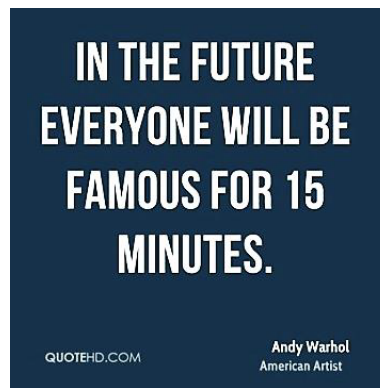
"There's a loading dock in the back. 'Getaway' will be a walk."



"A glassblower bought the old church some years back and is still trying to make a go of it. Three thousand square feet, he calls it 'The Belltower', an event space' with no events since COVID-19!"



'We'll rent for six months, a full year if he insists on a lease. And then...have we got an 'event' for him!'



Shortly, for a bit longer, Rosendale would astonish the world.

On St. Patrick's Day weekend, a 'loving couple' flew to Albany, leased a green Humvee and headed south on the New York Thruway.



Entering Rosendale on Route 213 is prettier going with the current of the Rondout Creek which cut through the center of town. Like a giant black widow spiderweb, the Walkkill Valley Trestle spanned the waterway between two minor mountains.

Built in 1872, by 1885, the bridge structure was reinforced and the track converted from broad to standard gauge. Three years later, the Delaware and Hudson Canal allowed the railroad temporary use of its property for repairs. The 'Crick' beneath the trestle could be treacherous; a dozen innocents had drowned, but many more were guided to safety, the locals still claim, by a 'ghostly apparition'.



'Coming home at night took a lot of nerve, walking in the dark on 'Deadman's Curve', read the legendary poem. 'No streetlights, just a narrow trail, and that little white dog of Rosendale'.



The couple came into town against the current, turning left by the town library, yet another abandoned church put to community use. Past mostly wooden homes on Main Street, the barbershop, the post office and volunteer fire department, a bar/restaurant, the bicycle store, and just before the town movie theater...The 'Belltower'

Only two minor stained glass windows remained from the late 19th Century structure; the rest had been sold at auction. Down Main Street on the other side of the Rondout, the Catholic church was still serving its parishioners, but had to shut down its elementary school a few years back.

The 'Belltower' owner was waiting with a big smile. He had to be about seventy, but an artist with the fire still burning, his spirit could pass for half his age.

After they shook hands...



"Please tell me you haven't come to Rosendale to grow weed, make bombs or shoot porn."

"No, sir. We're a start-up company. Don't even have a name yet. Competing for a Defense contract vital to National Security."

"Why here?"



"We want God on our side,"

The owner gave them the tour--vaulted tin ceilings, a small stage (Excellent!) and idyllic natural lighting. The blond noted the electrical system that'd need special attention. Also the big front window would have to be tinted like the glass in a fancy limo. The Company "VP" climbed the set of shaky ladders to the Belltower. No way to get the roof, but he had equipment for that.



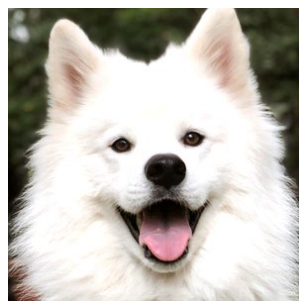
They closed at \$30,000 for six months. Signatures on the lease, the owner clutched the check as if it were manna from heaven. He wouldn't return until after...

The CEO and the Asian came in the first truck. Pulled around back, the four had it halfway unloaded when the Hispanic and the African-American arrived with the follow-up. They'd spend most of the day unpacking and positioning. Calibrating the technology would take the rest of the week.



Rosendale was 'cemented' in New York history. The discovery of a limestone deposit along the Rondout Creek, a mother lode that extended for miles, turned the quiet little town into a full-fledged industrial center for most of the 19th Century with the Brooklyn Bridge and the base of the Statue of Liberty to its credit.

'There was a dog, the miners say, who guided men who'd lost their way. At night on the towpath of the canal: a little white dog of Rosendale.'



From fourteen mills, sixteen *million* bags of cement a year until 1910 when the whole thing collapsed; a better, faster, cheaper, stronger cement put all of Rosendale out of business.

The town kept trying to recover. Without an industry to call its own for a hundred years, Rosendale had become yet another American small town pressed by rising property taxes, falling real estate prices and fewer and fewer local jobs.



But Rosendale wasn't giving up. The Town Board is considering whether to support the 'Valley of the Giants' grant application through the Hudson River Valley Greenway to erect large statues of fictional storybook characters to help increase tourism.

The figures would be similar to the 16-foot tall gnome at Kelders' Farm in Kerhonkson, another small town upstream. By the end of 2011 group members hope to have selected three mock-ups of giants for one of the locations and would have figures at all locations by the end of 2012.

In Rosendale, which *'the little white dog'* would enjoy, a 15-foot 'Cement Miner'.



Halfway up Main Street, the Town Justice lived in a blue-and-white cottage with a lovely porch. With spring coming, he had his garden all planned out. A retired tax lawyer, the Judge was tasked with setting fines for the local speed trap and an occasional 'disturbing the peace' violation. From his second floor window, he watched every move of the new 'start-up company.'



*Would they be hiring locals?
How can Rosendale cash in?*

By the middle of April, the preliminaries done, the six set up the 'floorboards' (resembling solar panels) on the Belltower stage in the big room and ringed them with the projectors, each no bigger than a breadbox. An array of programmed spotlights on the high ceiling shone down on the stage.



"Optimum afternoon daylight."



"On *tres*, dos, uno..."



The product came on, floating a foot above the floorboards. For a long moment, the six could only stare. Then they scrutinized.



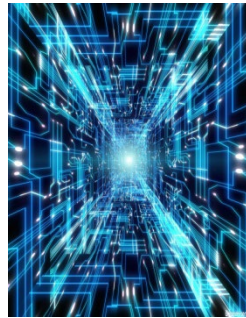
"Like a painting with the color blocked in, but the fine detailing..."



"I've seen better in video games."



"How far north can we go with these power levels?"



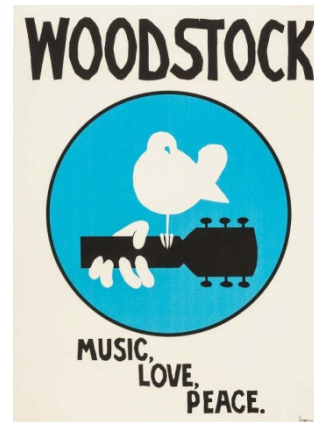
"Maybe a hundred feet,"



"Up it! Get a dozen generators and feed them in. We'll have to muffle them good. Can't have a sound coming out of here."



"Like a surprise attack. Rosendale won't have a clue."



Woodstock was a 1968 musical 'atomic bomb'. Within two years, Rosendale would become a 'fallout center' with the 'radiation level' set on *loud*. Main Street was peppered with bars, a party haven in the heart of a blue-collar town. In 1970, the street festival began as a glorified hippy parade. Seven thousand music lovers showed up.

By 1980, the locals were fed up with the 'long-haired freaks'. With Main Street shut down over the festival weekend, residents felt 'trapped like a rat in a box'. The crowds, the noise, the mess; worse than the bikers and the drunks and the druggies were the dogs of all breeds, colors and sizes pooping up and down all over town.



Finally, local officials cracked down and for a long 15 years, Rosendale had no festival. But the dogged spirit of the town refused to quit and in 1995, with mass gathering regulations strictly enforced, what had begun with a half dozen bands playing a continuous concert on a single stage had ballooned into 74 bands on five stages. Though still a 'distant second-fiddle to Woodstock', the Rosendale Street Festival was back.

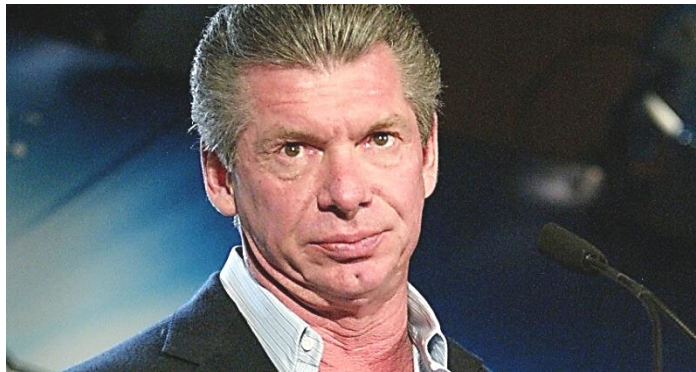
And became a 'perfect fit' on a summer weekend 'to celebrate friends, community, music and the arts', thanks to countless volunteers who worked year-round to put on the show.

Not just for the locals. The festival continued to support Operation Music Aid to send instruments to our wounded soldiers by providing a booth and holding a raffle drawing on Sunday afternoon.



In February, 'Winterfest' was held indoors at the Rec Center and maybe 200 people showed up. Good music, good food, but half the turnout from the year before.

On a cool night in May, the organizing committee met again. The Festival Chairman took the floor.



"Thank you for coming. We're in trouble. COVID-19 killed our sponsorships. Twenty-five hundred short. We're either gonna hafta go begging door to door or..."

A foreboding silence gripped the Rec Center. Then a newcomer stepped up.



'He was never seen in broad daylight; he only appears in the dark of night. He'd come out of nowhere to show you the trail, that little white dog of Rosendale.'



"If that's all it'll take, let me write you a check."



"Whoever you are, you just saved the future of the Rosendale Street Festival."



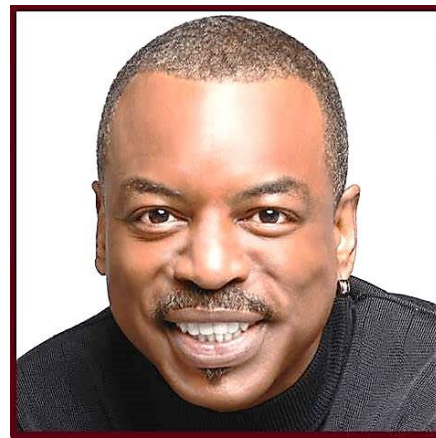
*"New start-up company with the best view on Main Street!
Wouldn't miss it for the world."*

The six shopped at the newly reopened Rosendale supermarket. No fast-food franchise in town, they dined at the Greek or the Chinese restaurant or had burgers at a bar & grill down the street. They washed their clothes at the local laundromat and had their dry cleaning done by the funny Italian-American who looked like a retired soccer coach and sounded like Gepetto.



And then there was the Barber, a Rosendalian, born and raised who considered himself the conscience of the town, plus being the Grand Marshal of the annual fall 'Pickle Fest.'

ROSENDALE BARBERSHOP



*"You got everybody buzzin', you know.
What're you doin' in there?"*

"National security."

"But what are you making?"

*"Thirty-seven fifty an hour, plus
health care and dental."*

Every other Tuesday, the six headed for the Rosendale Cafe Community Night with a vegetarian menu and deep wine list.



Their favorite diversion was their neighbor with whom they shared the rear parking lot: the Rosendale Theater. Small, clean, and intimate, for the six, going to a movie was not unlike time-traveling back into the past.

Too bad they'd be gone by the spring opening of the Rosendale Theater Group, featuring 'ten-minute plays' by local playwrights.



A whole other show would soon be premiering, ushering in a new age. Life is a story you want to be living; the six were on an adventure as American as apple pie, a quest beyond Manifest Destiny. Not to make machines more 'human-like', but to imbed technology with the most incomparable power in the universe: *humanity*.

A couple days after the Fourth of July weekend, the "Start-Up" team was ready for a 'dress rehearsal.'



"Engage generators."

"Optimum daylight, making adjustments!"

Thoroughly shielded by thick insulation, a faint hum was barely heard.



"Bypassing 'strobe' intro."

"Going to finished program."



"Three, two, one."

"Show time!"

In unison, they slapped on earphones. The music came on clear, definitive, and most of all, *real*.

Beyond sight and sound, the six could feel the finished presence of royalty. If Hollywood had a 'Garden of Eden,' it was Rosendale, New York. The "creators" took different takes.



"Ladies and gentlemen, seeing is believing."



"It's alive!"



"Tenemos la tecnologia!"



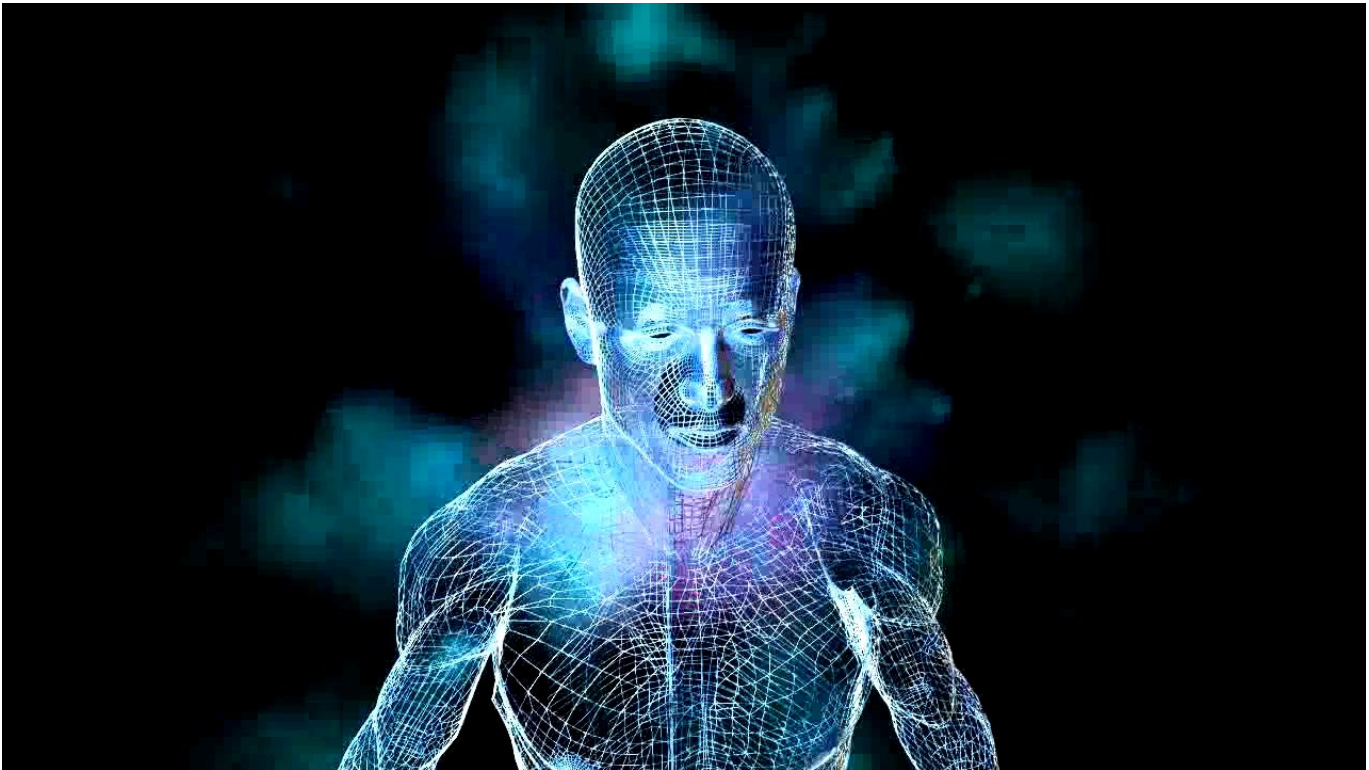
"Fascinating!"



"The Eagle has landed."



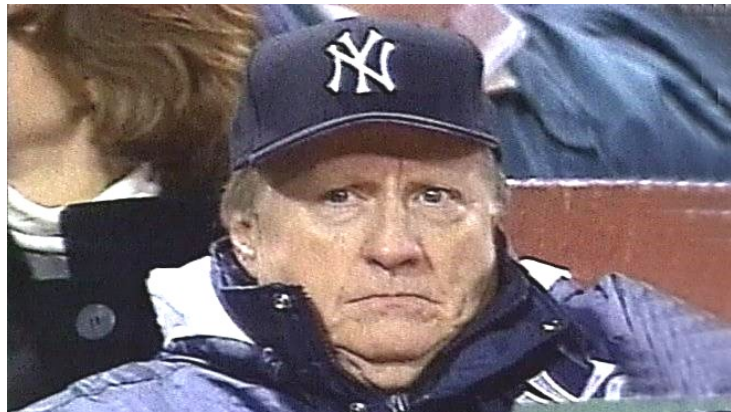
"No, I am your father."



*"Welcome to the Rosendale Street Festival,
'Your Majesty!'"*



The Rosendale Street/Music Festival began long ago in the fervent/creative mind of the late/great William Guldy, affectionately known as 'Uncle Willy' who arrived in the aftershock of Woodstock and shook the town to its roots. In his mid-thirties, rotund with a flowing beard, and a diehard Yankees' fan, 'Uncle Willy' would don his stately crown, royal red cape and show up at the Stadium to cheer for his team. And more often than not, get himself on TV.



George Steinbrenner was not amused.

On Main Street in 1970, down from the Astoria Hotel, 'Uncle Willy' opened 'The Well', a bar & grill with live music every night. took over the Astoria Hotel on Main Street and Neither performer nor manager, 'Uncle Willy' was a prophet who saw talent and heart and launched the careers of a hundred plus singers and musicians.

A hopping place, there was no such thing as 'Going to "The Well" once too often'. By royal proclamation, 'Uncle Willy' willed the Rosendale Street Festival into being.



A spiritual activist, 'Uncle Willy' believed that certain Rosendale Victorians were homes to ghosts and that the nearby 'mushroom caves' harbored leprechauns. He'd run for mayor of the town and came in second by a nose. In 1976, on the 'Heart Party' ticket, he ran for the U.S. Presidency, but finished way up the track.

The Rosendale establishment worked overtime to force 'King Willy' out of town. "There were some people who didn't want anyone to have any fun," was the royal explanation, but there were rumors of 'The Well' serving up more than beer, wine and other legal spirits. But his worst habit was being late paying his taxes.

Undaunted, 'Uncle Willy' later opened bars in Kingston and Belize. Far beyond 'sex, drugs & rock n' roll', the local 'King' wanted his own humble place in Music History, and with the Rosendale Street Festival, he had found it.

Two days before the start of the Street Festival, the Judge was up early, working in his garden when he saw one, then two of the 'start up' employees on the square roof of 'The Belltower'. Within minutes they were hauling up...



"Solar panels? National security's going 'green'?"

Later he'd remember what a fool he'd been made of.

'Festival Saturday' dawned a beautiful day for a good time. The street wouldn't open until 10AM, the music would start at noon. For this little New York village, today was Christmas morning, New Year's Eve, 'Fat Tuesday' and Halloween rolled into one!



No one was more excited than the Festival Chairman.

On Main Street, vendors were still laying out tables laden with 'garage sale' stuff or homemade eats. Many of them were residents who paid a fee for the spot in front of their homes. This year's T-shirts and hats may make a few bucks. Volunteers and local musicians were setting up their sound stages which gave the Chairman a surge of hometown pride, and he hoped more locals felt the same.

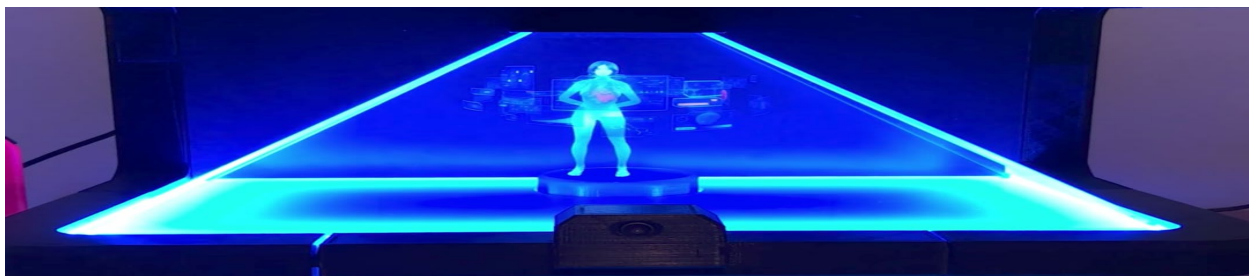
While in the Belltower...



"Que festa!"



"The ultimate test aud!"





"No mass crowd at a game, not even the Super Bowl, could match an eager bunch of music lovers!"



"Ground Zero! If we can stop the Rosendale Street Festival, we can conquer the world!"



"Brace for impact 'KingMakers'! A lot of dreams are about to come true!"



"Ours...and theirs!"



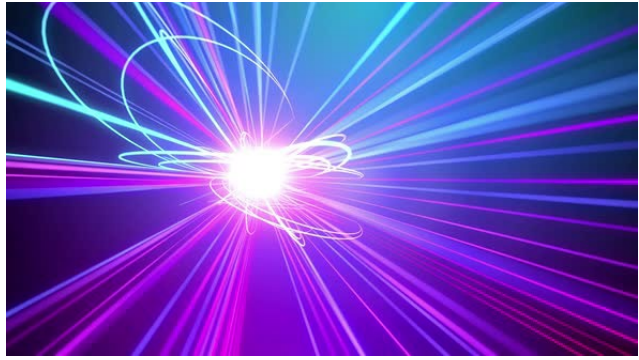
At noon, the bands stuck up--rock, folk, salsa, country and folk tunes. The 25-member Kingston High School in uniform played their anthem. Glad-handing the volunteers, waving to the vendors, and applauding the bands, the Chairman gave a nod to the Barber selling hotdogs in front of his shop. A wave to the Judge sitting on his porch was not returned.



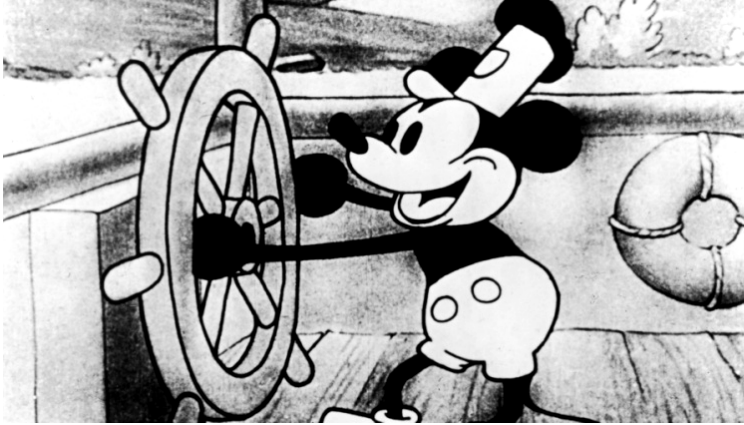
Okay, so it's not Woodstock, the Chairman conceded yet again. No 'Royalty of American Music' ever played the Rosendale Street Festival. But that wasn't what it was *about*: families and couples from around the Ulster County area had shown up for a rockin' good time. This is Rosendale! This is who we *are*! Maybe they'd hit 5,000 and make a few bucks for the local kids.

Right before noon the Latina and the Asian left the old Methodist church by the back door. The Asian carried a fancy camera with a long lens.

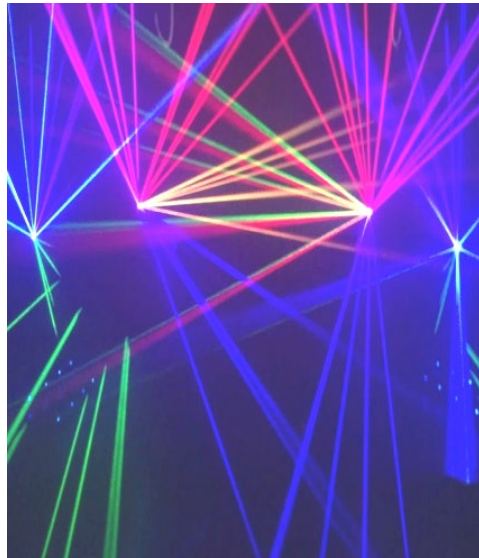
The ex-SEAL had been on the flat, square roof since early in the morning when he removed the padded tarp from the 'floorboards'.



"The 'Royal Window' is at optimum!"



"Engage generators! Now I know how Walt Disney must have felt. And we're in 'Living Color!'"



"Preparing 'strobe'-- max audio."

"Technology imitates Life, and Life buys it!"



Main Street was buzzing with that county festival din, a choir of happy voices, chewing mouths and guitars and drums warming up when suddenly was heard an overpowering sound... a single note, *His* note, the revered Royal Note that sang the song of a thousand trumpets.



All knew that magical sound and couldn't help but look around.

WTF?

Suddenly a flash atop that old brick church on Main Street, a fresh brightness glowing like a star in the heavens. In Rosendale?

Eyes adjusted as the glare faded to reveal...



"Look, up on the roof...an impersonator!"



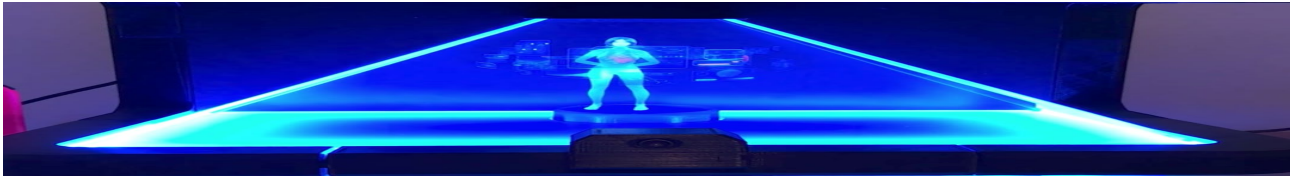
*"That's what we all thought at first. We couldn't believe it.
I mean, c'mon, you know."*

Clad in signature black--a long sleeve silk shirt and tight-fitting jeans---the Royal Image did not look down upon the crowd, but *at* them, his majestic 'music stare' that had reduced stadiums and studios to breathless anticipation throughout his reign.

Faced with the unbelievable, the crowd turned to the one man they did believe in.



"It is...*The King!*"



"WELCOME TO THE ROSENDALE STREET FAIR."



"It was him, young and beautiful and full of energy and love and soul, before the business and the deals, the doctors and those goddam drugs. He'd come back to..."



"'Pareidolia', people find patterns where there are none. 'We believe what we want to believe because we need to believe it.'"

Up and down Main Street every band went silent, every eye high. Cell phones flipped opened and cameras aimed up.

At least one grandmother reached for her rosary beads. As the stunned crowd gathered before the old church...



"Now and forever, the King is on U-Tube in HD."

The trademark Royal Pause ended when the Image began to sing *that* song, the one that had vaulted him from young phenom to mega-star, an immortal icon on the 'Mount Rushmore of American Music'.



"This just in. The King, yes, The King, has miraculously reappeared on a rooftop, and he's singing..."



"At the Rosendale Street Festival!"



"Lip-synch', The King? That'd be like God showing up and readin' off a teleprompter."

*"You saw the computerized interpretation of what a camera recorded. I was here. To all those who weren't---It was **The King!**"*



"This future-tech demonstration embodies what every small town in the United States wants most of all: its past. The Royal Era of the American Superpower, The King of the greatest nation the world had ever known.

"His were the days!"



"Rosendale? Where the hell is...Rosendale?"

Suddenly, Rosendale was everywhere.



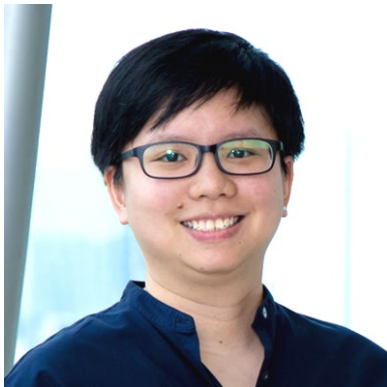
"IT'S SO GOOD TO BE WITH YOU AGAIN."

The opening number had 'won the room'. Every musician in the crowd had run for his or her instrument---guitars, drums, horns, banjos---For the next song they'd be ready, and their every note would be perfect.



"That's right, baby, me! At the Rosendale Street Festival, I played with The King!"

With the very first note, everyone knew the second song, that it had to be sung. The Royal Anthem that had changed music forever.



"Digitalized nano-holographic telepresence? Is that what you were watchin'?"

*"I saw The King in person
Got all his DVDs, his CDs and a
room full of posters. I lived for The King.
It was The King. Had to be!"*



"'The Lourdes Syndrome'. The 'crowd mentality' quickly took over. All were convinced that they had been blessed with a miracle. To suddenly doubt what they were seeing and hearing meant not just betraying others, but their own sacred belief system."

Around and around the earth, the Royal Image played on and everyone everywhere who had a screen saw and heard, and for maybe a quarter of an hour there was world peace.



The King would have been pleased.

In the minds of presidents and premiers, prime ministers and potentates, despots and dictators, the Pope and the postmaster general...In the hearts of the stars of music and movies, television and the stage...In the bank accounts of giants of business, finance and media...there occurred The Royal Notion: *Today, The King, tomorrow...ME!*



"Impossible! The Royal Gravesite is guarded day and night."



"They've made AVATAR look like the first talkie."

"Technology has woven 'The Emperor's New Clothes'"

Forty years in the news game; right out of journalism school, the Reporter had set out to tell award-winning stories and found himself long left behind by younger, faster and better-looking 'professionals'. After a week of covering the State Legislature (Yawn!), he was at the Albany airport when the news came in.

Like a madman he ran out on the runway to the closest helicopter, and confronted the pilot.



"How'd you like to be famous for fifteen minutes?"

The second song ended with a flourish and the Royal Image appearing to wipe its brow.



"Are you God now?"



*"Tell us about your life beyond.
Can we go there, too?"*



**"PEOPLE OF ROSENDALE AND THE WORLD. I AM WHO YOU WISH TO SEE
ME TO BE, AND I'VE COME TO GIVE YOU LOVE AND HOPE."**

From deep within the hearts of all came his beautiful ballad and everyone knew its every word, the timeless lyrics flowing from the immortal image as if divine.

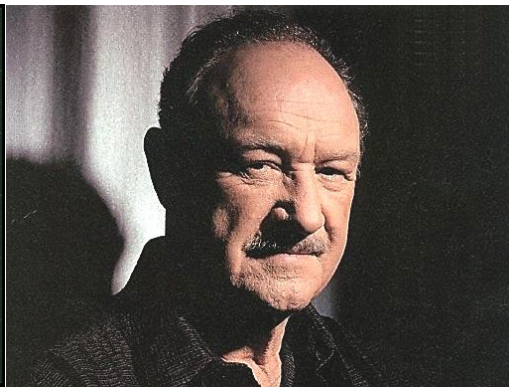
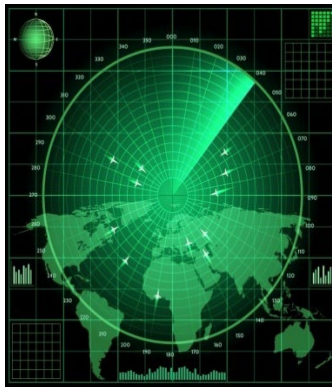
The local musicians put down their instruments, deferring to a lone guitarist they felt deserved solo honors...

And he would later address the media...



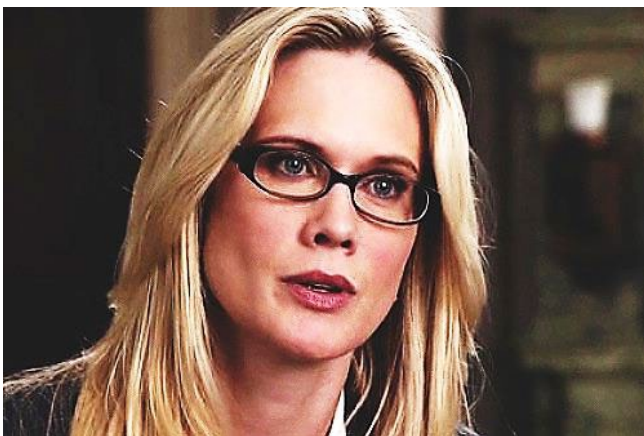
"I jammed with immortality. No one in the Rosendale Street Festival organization had any prior knowledge of, or in any way contributed to the appearance of The King, We do know, not what, but who we saw and heard and felt."

In 'The Belltower', halfway through the ballad...



"A helicopter! From the north, coming fast."

"How much time?"



"Two, three minutes."

"We've got to cut it now!"

A bird's eye view would reveal the 'floorboards' apparatus. Worse, a powerful spotlight shone into the image, and it would 'Macbeth.'



"No! The King never stiffed an audience in his life."



Holding hands and swaying together on Main Street, the residents of Rosendale cherished every word sung to the last. And when the ballad came to its crowning close, they cheered the King with all their might.



**"THANK YOU, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
I LOVE YOU ALL VERY MUCH."**

At that moment, the Royal Image *rose* from the rooftop.



"No, please don't go!"



*"Not like **Superman** or some movie freak.
He kinda lifted, like by magic."*



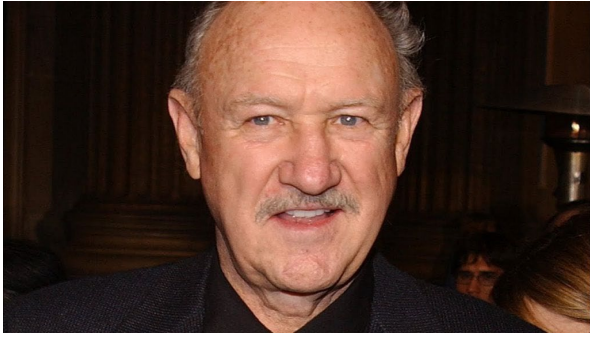
"LOVE EACH OTHER AS YOU LOVE THE MUSIC.'

Closer and closer to 'The Belltower' came the helicopter. Ready to aim his cell phone down at the roof, the Reporter couldn't believe his eyes.



*"It is **The King** and he's flying like an angel!"*

While from below...



"Prepare for 'strobe'."



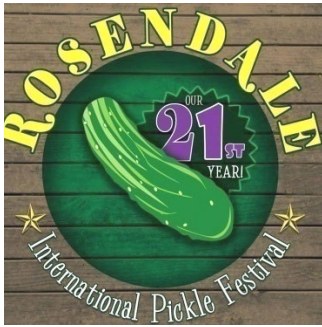
"And a Royal Farewell,"

The Reporter covered the final flight exclusively. At 500 feet, almost within shouting distance, the Royal Image flared like a birthing star and disappeared.



*"I was the last person **The King** ever saw. I saw him going to heaven. He waved at me. At me!"*

High above the multitude on Main Street, the flash in the sky signaled an end; was the magic over and done? The people of Rosendale converged on 'The Belltower', desperate for reassurance. It was the Barber who pushed his way through the crowd to stand in front of the old church's doors.



"Wait! Right now, right now! The whole world is looking at us, Rosendale, our Rosendale, 'THE TOWN THE KING CHOSE'. Is this what you want the world to see...a mob? Or a town full of New Yorkers proud to be here!"

He made so much sense.



"Woodstock, who? We saw The King at the Rosendale Street Festival!"



"The Paparazzi Air Force!"

The six had practiced their Rosendale exit. Gathering up the projectors and mini-speakers on the rooftop, the ex-SEAL lowered them in a padded duffel bag and then came down to help the others secure the hard-drives into backpacks. In a couple of minutes they were out the back door.

Everybody else coming towards 'The Belltower,' the four linked up with the Asian and then walked across the Rondout bridge to meet the Latina in the Humvee. They left via Springtown Road, up and around the hill behind St. Peter's to New Paltz and then south on the Thruway.



Early the next morning, the Judge met the owner at the church door with a search warrant. As the locks had been upgraded, the State Police had to break in. They found the technology intact with its heart still beating, but all the brains were 90 miles away.



"Like bein' in the Bat-Cave!"

The next morning, on the Stock Market...



KINGMAKERS OPS



*"The 'Kingmakers', the Six call themselves. 'Every customer a king!'
Opens on Wall Street tomorrow. The Money believes; by Monday noon,
they'll have three, four billion in the bank."*

The Rosendale Street Festival had always been free, with volunteers at both ends of Main Street encouraging donations. On the Sunday after the King, with traffic backed up for miles around, every food vendor, every restaurant in town served meal after meal till they ran out of food. The lottery sold enough tickets to buy a full orchestra for disabled G.I.s.

And every last band played to an overflowing house.



"How far ahead are they?"



"Three, maybe six months. 'Reverse engineering' to exhume The King..."





"Trademark and copyright violations!
We'll nail these thieves for millions!"



"But they didn't make any
money directly from **The King**,"



*"The King generated billions!
And his new savvy subjects
are scrambling for their piece!"*



*"Are we going to accuse them of
creating a false King? Are we going to
prove that **The King** is a fake?"*

As DVD, CD, and licensed memorabilia sales again shot into the stratosphere, the owners and lawyers sat back, shut up, and raked in the royalties.



The Rosendale Town Justice was not so inclined. Outraged that his historic small town had been victimized by a futuristic big corporation, suffering 'irreversible mass trauma,' he filed charges against the Six and demanded that the state Attorney General seek their extradition.

The CEO could have mounted a lengthy and costly defense, but instead, he embraced the edict and he and his team returned and met with the Judge behind closed doors.

By noon, it was all arranged. In front of the gathered media, the Six would appear in handcuffs and when the CEO wrote out the check, paying the fine for 'disturbing the peace', off came the bracelets and the six would be free and clear.

The lawyers had agreed on \$1,000,000, but when the CEO was handed back his checkbook, the Judge, cold sober but tipsy with power, got a hometown inspiration:

'If you were lost or had a fright, that dog would get you home all right. If you'd had too much applejack or too much ale, that little white dog of Rosendale.'



"Five million dollars! That'll pay the school and property taxes and the rent of every Rosendale resident for a couple of years, plus the library would get its moldy basement refurbished and maybe find a place for its VHS and 'audio tape' collections."

(Warm up a seat on the County Legislature!)

The leader of "The Kingmakers" quickly wrote out a check.



"Long live The King, a PR bargain at twice the price."



*"You... You... You are a humbug, a liar and a fraud.
We want, we need truth. What you gave us is...science fiction."*



"Not anymore."

The way was clear to the limo, but suddenly, the Festival Chairman burst between two police officers and called out...



"Thank you."

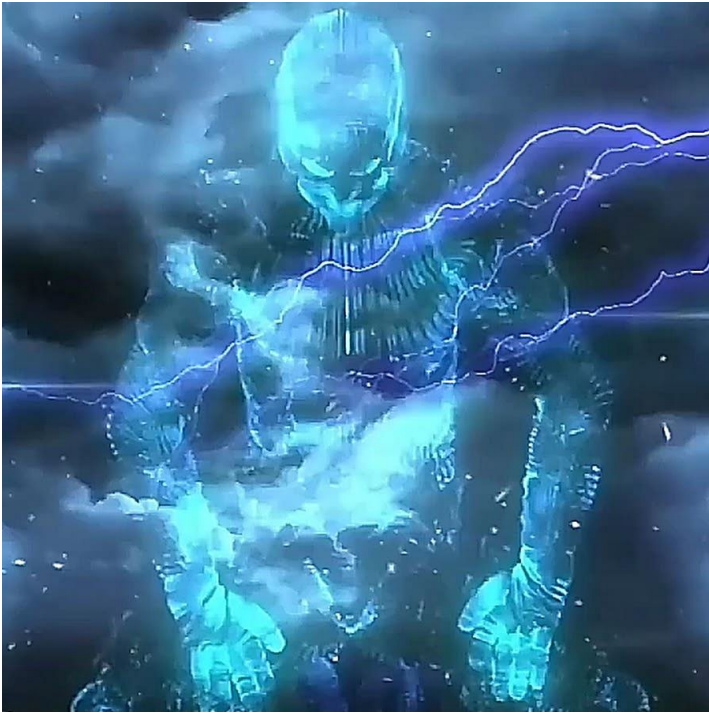
The next morning, two big trucks pulled into the rear 'Belltower' parking lot. Their crews stripped the old church of every scintilla of the six and were gone before lunch. Then the artist owner showed up; in addition to creating exquisite glassworks, he'd rename his beloved building 'The King's Church' and go into the wedding business.



Relocating to another state with a better tax deal, 'Kingmakers Inc.' hoped to hire between 1,500 and 2,000 well-educated, highly-skilled American workers.



The 2021 Rosendale Street Festival will be on July 23th & 24th. Rain or shine. Parking and admission are free. Donations are encouraged. Bikes and skateboards must be walked within the event. Please be prepared with water, sun hat and sunscreen. Illegal drugs, weapons, glass, alcohol and pets should be left at home.



'If you die and don't know where to go. Here's the only thing you need to know: Just say a prayer then follow the tail, of that little white dog of Rosendale.'

The King sends his regrets.

Special thanks to Linda Tantillo, the former Local History Coordinator at the Rosendale Library. Her professionalism and enthusiasm inspired me, as did her hometown poem.

That Little White Dog of Rosendale

*There was a dog, the miners say,
Who guided men who'd lost their way.
At night on the towpath of the canal:
A little white dog of Rosendale.*

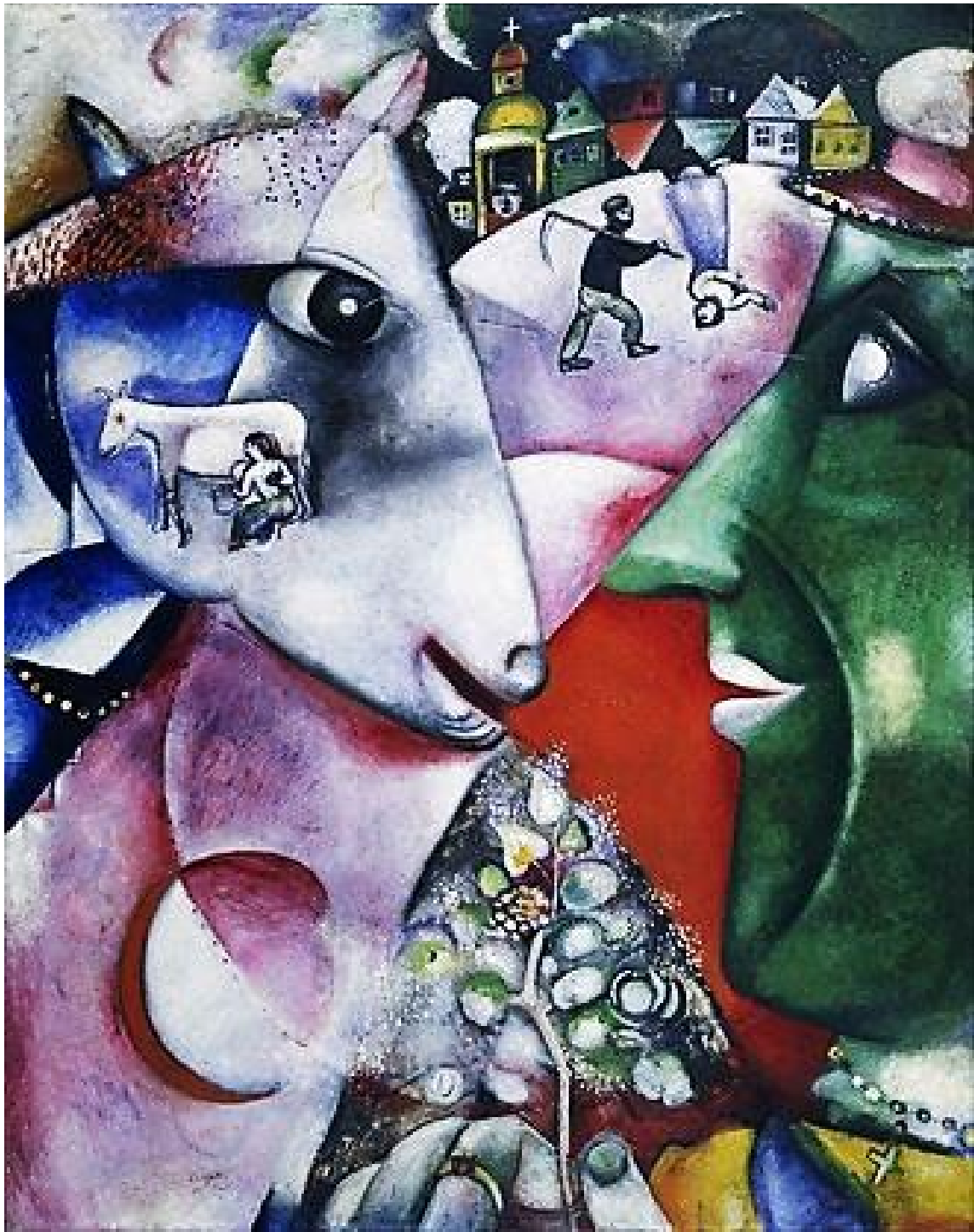
*He was never seen in broad daylight;
He only appears in the dark of night;
He'd come out of nowhere to show you the trail
That little white dog of Rosendale.*

*Coming home at night took a lot of nerve
Walking in the dark on 'Deadman's Curve'
No streetlights, just a narrow trail
And that little white dog of Rosendale*

*If you were lost or had a fright
That dog would get you home all right.
If you'd had too much applejack or too much ale,
That little white dog of Rosendale.*

*If you die and don't know where to go
Here's the only thing you need to know:
Just say a prayer then follow the tail
Of that little white dog of Rosendale.*





וְאֵת הַכִּפּוּרִים

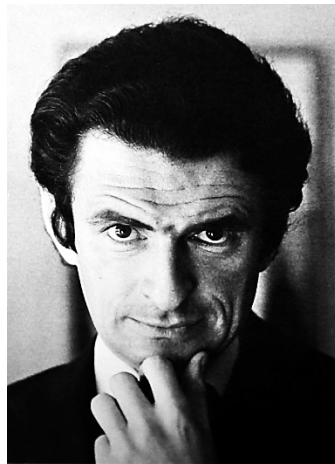
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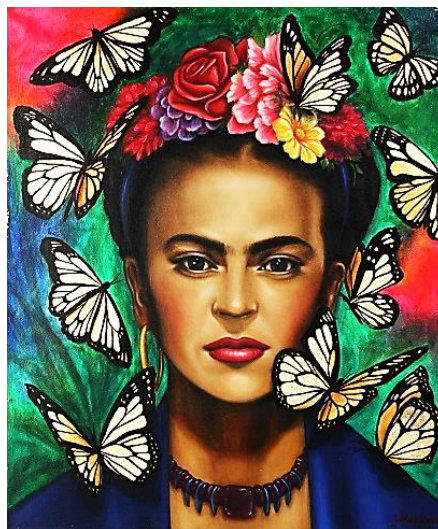




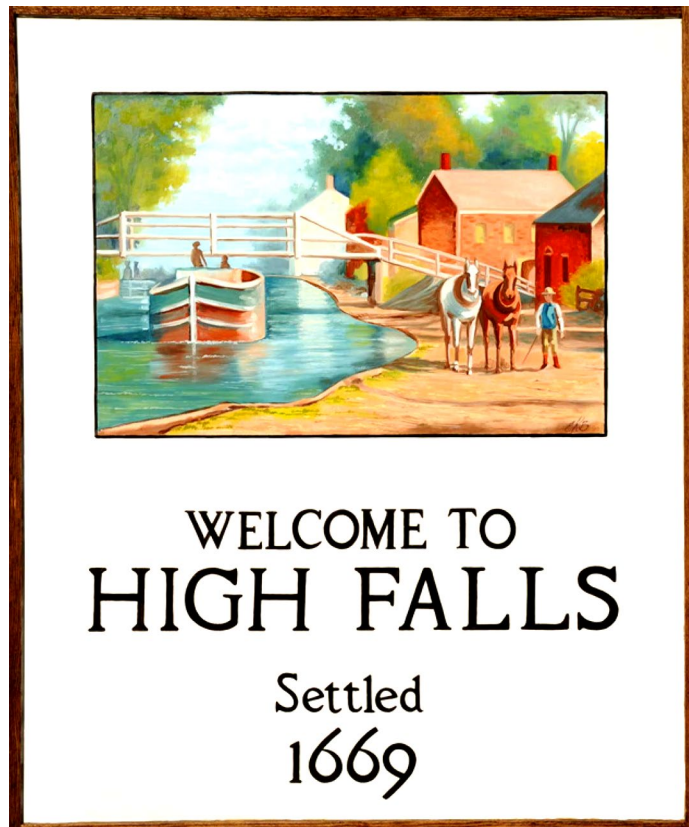
‘Marc Chagall is no artist. He’s a degenerate!’



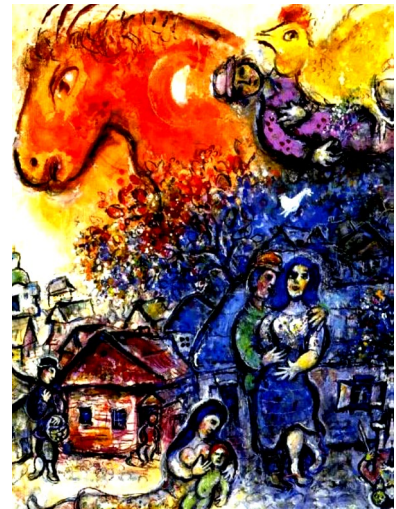
“The principles of true art is not to portray, but to evoke.”



“I never paint dreams or nightmares. I paint my own reality.”



J'm Marc. My emotional life is sensitive and my purse is empty, but they say J have talent.



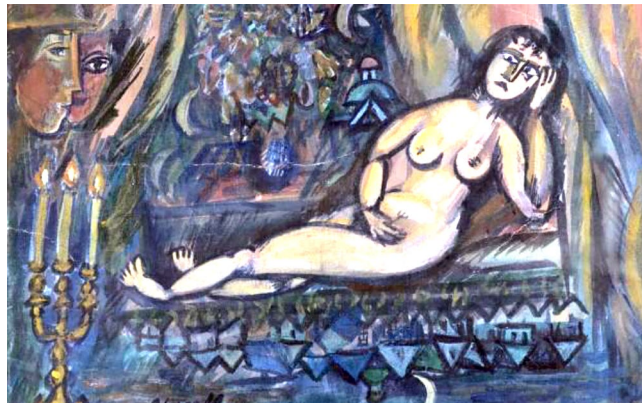
In this Village just a hundred and fifty kilometers from New York City, J never felt freer and safer in my whole life. J'm a 'meteque' in High Falls, and at the same time, J'm at home because J'm a Jew.

My parents named me Movsha (Moses). and for most of my life, it looked like no Jew would ever get to the Promised Land.

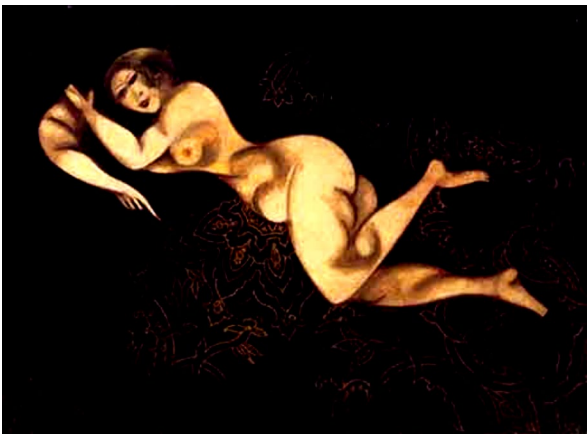


"My colours first blossomed on Pekrova Street."

I came from a big family in Russia. Vitebsk, my sad and joyful town, would indelibly brand my life and my paintings. Mama bribed me into art school, and full of ambition, I moved on to St. Petersburg where I nearly starved, but I kept painting.



"It is because I remember my mother, her breasts so warmly nourishing and exalting me, and I could swing from the moon."



Then I met my Muse who ignited my life and my art...



"Though I saw Bella for the very first time. I knew this is she, my wife. Her pale colouring, her eyes. How big and round and black they are! They are my eyes, my soul..."

We supported the 1917 Revolution and I was appointed Commissar for Fine Arts in Vitebsk and then director of the Free Academy of Art. But the Godless anti-Semitic Bolsheviks--they would make me compromise art.



"We 'voted with our feet.'"

Arriving in France in 1922, I soon got my first engraving commission to create etchings for a special edition of Nikolay Gogol's novel Dead Souls.



"If I create from the heart, nearly everything works. If from the head, almost nothing."



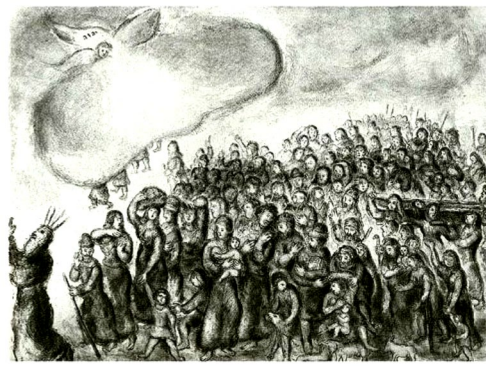
Next came 100 gouaches for poet Jean de La Fontaine's Fables, and a series of etchings illustrating the Bible.

"The entire world within us is reality, perhaps more real than the visible world. If one calls everything that seems illogical fantasy or a fairy tale, all one proves is that one has not understood Nature."



"Not just an artist. Buy my book!"

In the 30s, I became the 'Wandering Jew' traveling to the Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Italy and Palestine. I stayed two months in the Holy Land that would inspire my Bible etchings. When I finally returned to France I was fully ablaze...



"I didn't paint the Bible. I dreamt it."

But there was trouble brewing nearby...

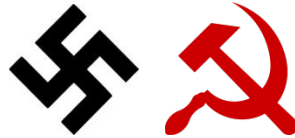


"Anyone who sees and paints a sky green and fields blue ought to be sterilized."

Bolshevik madman! Stalin has a new mate. The Russian people have been wedded to the Nazis!



The very next day, the first of September, 1939!



The Wehrmacht and the Red Army quickly divided Poland. In France, we felt safe. Churchill had called the French Army 'the strongest in the world' and we had the Maginot Line to protect us.

While the rest of the civilised world awaited the Nazi's next move, in love with being alive with Bella, I worked and worked.



Spring came and so did the Germans, routing the French and the British.. Just in time, a group of Americans with help from the Museum of Modern Art, smuggled us out via forged visas!



"The new 'Babylon' and 'Mecca' to artists and creative zealots the world over."

On June 22, 1941, the day after we arrived in New York City, the biggest army in history invaded the Soviet Union.



"The destiny of Europe's Jews will be decided by the Bolsheviks!"

Bella, Jean and J stayed in Manhattan apartments. Bella took me clothes shopping where they spoke French--As if we never left Russia or Poland or Germany or France - Yiddish spoken everywhere!

J got a new commission. Bella and J went to Mexico to design the sets and costumes for a new ballet, Aleko, by Léonide Massine.



"All colors are the friends of their neighbors and the lovers of their opposites."

July 10, 1941...



"My hometown conquered and occupied!"

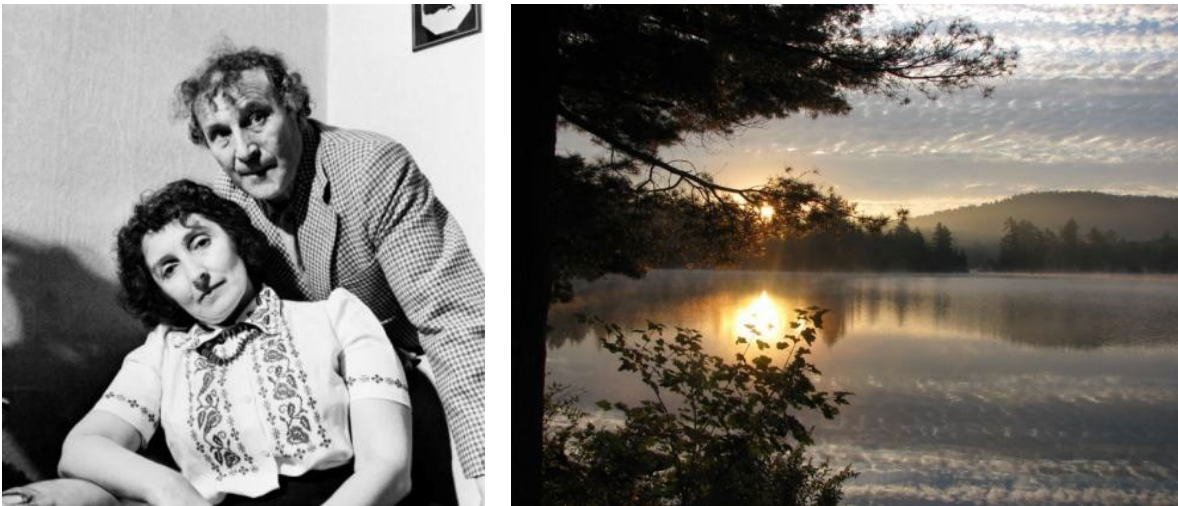
*"Should I paint the earth, the sky, my heart?
The cities burning, my brothers fleeing?
My eyes in tears.
Where should I run and fly, to whom?"*

J locked myself in the dream that was New York, designing the backdrops and costumes for Stravinsky's Firebird.



*"The dignity of the artist lies in his duty of keeping awake
the sense of wonder in the world."*

Bella was not feeling well. We had to get out of the city and into the country for peaceful beauty...at Cranberry Lake in the Adirondacks.



The war would not defeat me. Hitler would not destroy my vision of life. Bella and J have been together for twenty-five years, J was more afraid of losing her than J was of the damned Nazis!



February 2, 1943:



"God at Stalingrad. He is on our side!"



"In our life there is a single color, as on an artist's palette, which provides the meaning of life and art. It is the color of love."

In the summer of 1944, my beloved Vitebsk was liberated by the Red Army. Once 240,000 lived there. Only 118 emerged from its ruins.



"The end of my origin, my Russian roots?"

On holiday in the Adirondacks. Bella suddenly got a sore throat. The next day she was feverish. I took her to the hospital run by nuns. Bella was afraid that they only served 'Christians and asked me to take her back to the hotel.

I obeyed. Penicillin might have helped but none was available, all sent to the war fronts.

The thunder rolled, the clouds opened at six o'clock on the evening of September 2, 1944, when Bella left this world. Everything went dark.



I wept and wept. Every canvas I turned against the walls. Couldn't bear to see them. Would I ever paint again?

Three weeks later...



"Paris free! We can go back now?"

J couldn't go on without a woman. Soon J became involved with Virginia, my housekeeper. Young and pretty, she idolized my art. She also had a young daughter and an alcoholic husband.

We gradually worked things out and suddenly, in addition to my grown daughter, Jda, J had a new family.



The Nazis were finished. Six million Jews murdered in 'The Final Solution'. Six million! To destroy Hitler and save European Jewry, twenty-eight million Russian men, women and children gave their lives. Write that in your Holocaust history books!

2





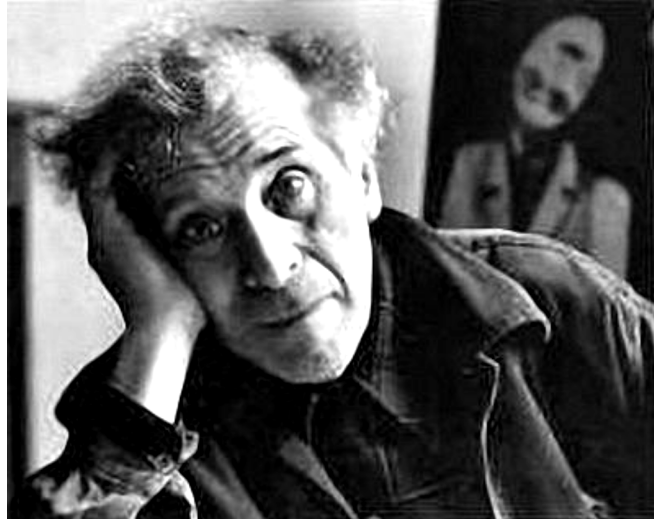
“Creativity takes guts.”



“Art is what you can get away with.”



“Nowhere man, the world is at your command.”



J needed new life, a new 'period'. America was dynamic, but the city was much too busy and J'd already done France. J wanted a pastoral setting, to find myself in the center of a yet-unpainted picture from where J would do nothing but paint pictures to astonish the world!

And Virginia was pregnant.

"Virginichka," J had Russianized her name. "Go and see if you can find a house in some quiet country place."

Virginia picked out a property and up we went to High Falls, a tiny village so unbusy that its central crossroads didn't have, nor ever would have...a traffic light!





Only a few miles from town, Virginia liked the bigger wooden house, its screen porches and the catalpa tree.

"That's my isba!" said J about the 'studio' cottage though it would need a lot of work before J'd use it. But we were off to a positive start: High Falls had its own aroma.

Back in my particularly stupid and happy days, my grandfather's house was filled with the sounds and smells of art.

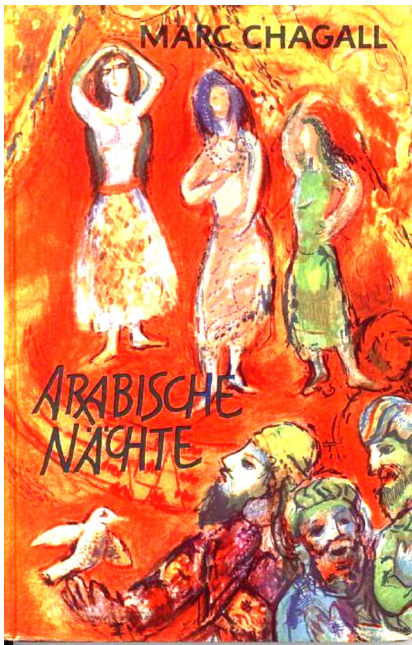


That's where they slaughtered the calves. The smells came from the hides, hung up and drying like linen.

High Falls, a world away, had a cleanliness in the air, a purity diminished only by the passing of a rare car and constantly enhanced by cows and deer, bear and fox.

My grandparents had ignored my art and valued their meats. How would I 'value' this unpainted High Falls?

I began painting in the living room of the big house even before we were fully moved in, painting gouache after gouache. And when I ran out of water to soak and drain them off, I'd spit.



To clean my brushes I'd use linseed oil and turpentine in the bathroom. The only casualty was the tub which underwent a colourful metamorphosis with each contributing hue.

The girls were less than pleased, but scrub as they might, the porcelain bathtub refused to surrender its Chagall endowment.



"There are no rules for technique; anything is permissible as long as the motives are genuine."

High Falls, a seemingly insignificant hamlet by a backwater creek, had the power to remind me of..not my beloved Motherland...but Communist Russia!

In the last century, the Village had been a vital hub in the Delaware & Hudson Canal. The 108-mile, 108-lock waterway opened in 1828, giving rise to a seasonal society complete with its own Police force, and rumor had it, a floating brothel.



"Oy, New Yorkers!"

In 1898, the D&H was abandoned, put out of business by the faster, cheaper year 'round railroads who are now looking over their shoulders at the trucking industry, hot on their cabooses.

Between 1931 and 1933, the Soviet Union built its grandest engineering project using convict labor from Gulag camps to dig 141 miles of canal by hand using no machinery or horses.



Thousands upon thousands of pitiful souls slaved on the White Sea Canal project with little food, water or warmth, giving the Party a way to do away with 'political disidents' and 'enemies of the State' without executing them. Under their Communist masters, more Russians were worked to death building the White Sea Canal than there are Jews in New York.

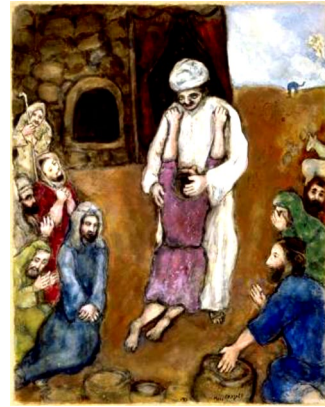


High Falls was historically etched with the fossils of the D&H Canal, a bygone collective no local industry has since replaced.



What future did I have here?

I wrote a personal letter to Comrade Stalin, begging forgiveness for my earlier Party squabbles, and pleading for an official invitation to visit the glorious and heroic Soviet Union.



"You can trust the Communists - to be Communists!"

I never got an answer.

Virginia had to clean out the cisterns wearing rubber boots. No one in the Village would work for us. We were 'strangers', 'foreigners', an older man living with a pregnant younger woman he hadn't married, Jews.

There are other Jews up here. The joy of Yiddish. A New York 'Exodus' is just beginning. Soon a host of Hebrews will be invading the Catskills!

My immediate Mohonk Road neighbors were cows. I'd take sunny constitutional's and argue art with them.

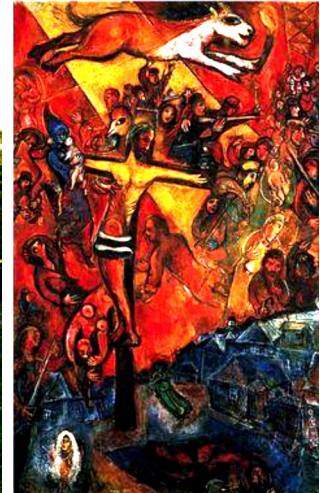


And appreciate their aroma.

We bought a secondhand Oldsmobile. Virginia quickly learned how to drive. She'd take us shopping.

"Don't leave the car too near," I'd warn her. "They'll up the prices."

Virginia and Jean went exploring, up Mohonk Road, around the hairpin turn and higher still, atop the mountain...an American matsuwad!



"One day, I'll go, when I'm selling like Picasso!"

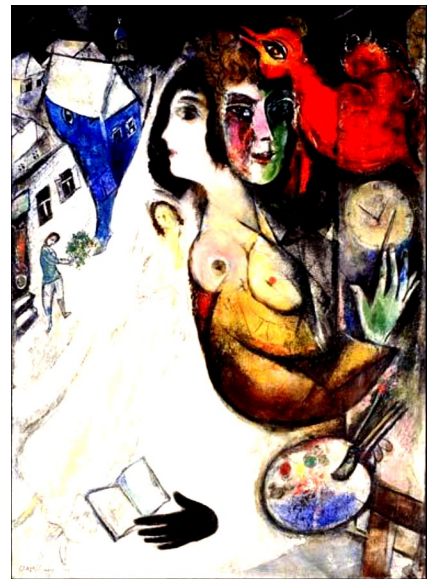
J was getting a monthly stipend from the Matisse Gallery which kept us breathing, but there were expenses. To see my pregnant Virginia, the doctor made a house call in his brand new Ford. J offered him one of my paintings in lieu of fifteen dollars payment.

He turned me down, demanded cash.



"Mark my words. I'm an excellent long-term investment!"

My beloved Bella disappointed me only once: she never gave me a son and my daughter Jda has been living with my frustration most of her life and she happily accepted Virginia's pregnancy and was praying for a boy as hard as J was.



"She'd later sue me, claiming 'her share' of my paintings!"

I don't create art merely to be seen and sold, but, if only for a fleeting moment, to 'instantly transport patrons away from their world into mine. Paintings that make people imagine!



*"Do that and I've captured a customer for life
---even if it's only a cheap print."*

That first summer we made a number of trips back to the city. They see old friends and seek new patrons. Virginia's growing belly made her condition obvious. Sales would buy the baby new shoes.

The soil which had nourished the roots of my art was Vitebsk, but my art needed Paris—like a tree needs water—otherwise it would have withered.



In May, with Virginia eight months pregnant, with crates of paintings to sell, and food and commodities for my suffering European friends, I sailed.

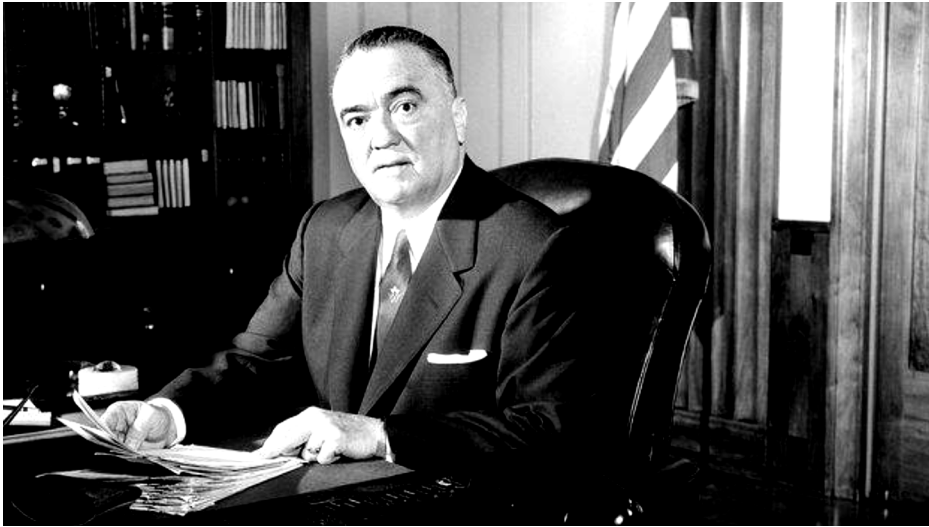
Postwar Europe was a much-changed place. Its ravaged structure made me long for the isolation and the innocence of High Falls. On June 22, I got the blessed telegram - 'It's a boy!'



I wouldn't see David for two long months.

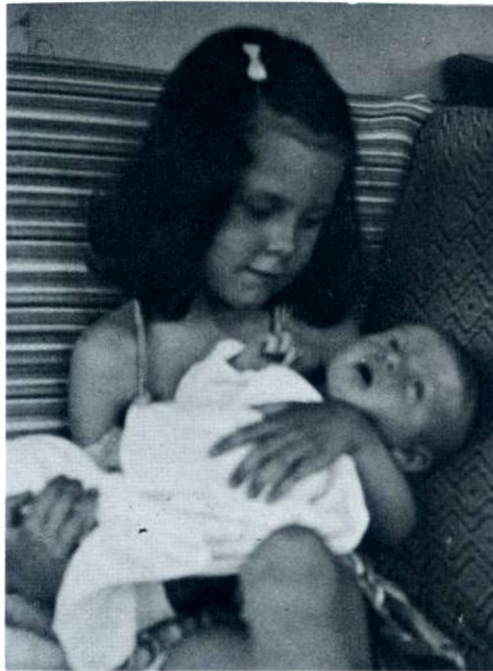
While I was away, a pair of FBI agents came up Mohonk Road with a warrant to search the house and the studio - 'un-American activities!' I'd been involved with Communists during the war. Fighting the Nazis!

They looked and looked and found nothing. Wish I had been there. They left empty-handed. I might have sold a painting to the US Government.



"Hanging in Hoover's office?"

Virginia, Jean and David met me at the dock. Had I come 'home'?

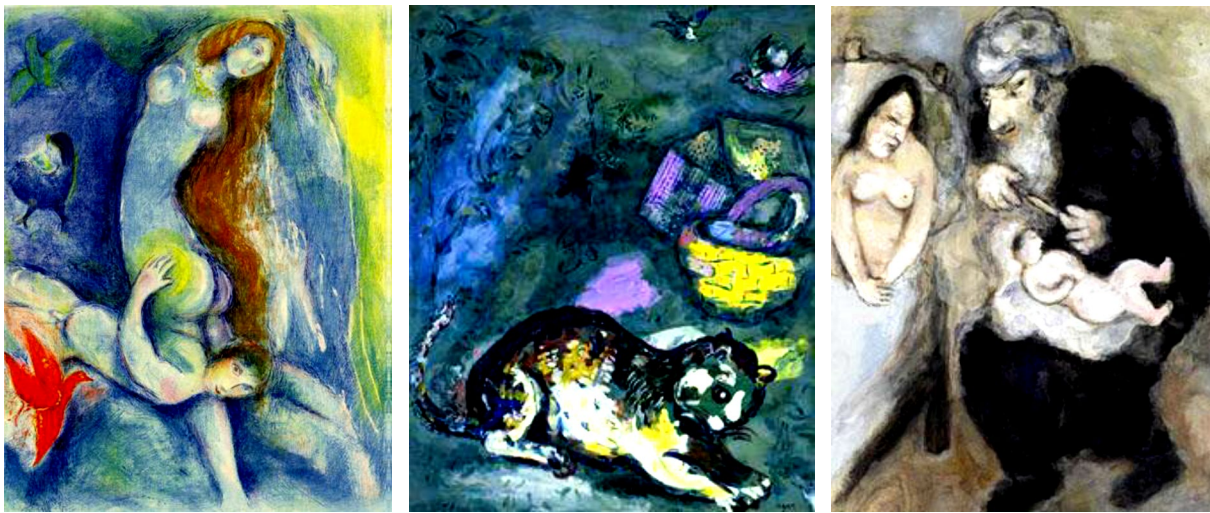


The studio had been readied for me. The garden was full of flowers and the sweet corn was ripening. (For Japanese beetles. Virginia refused to use pesticides.)

I went right to work, painting from dawn to dusk. Once you've been poor, you can never feel rich. Sell, sell, sell! I'd never have enough money.



Virginia and I would sleep upstairs in the studio which made for inspirational interludes: When daughter Ida was visiting, she couldn't get enough of the children which gave us an opportunity to perform 'additional housework' on the second floor. Of course, David got circumcised!



"For the children, and the mice, we got a cat."

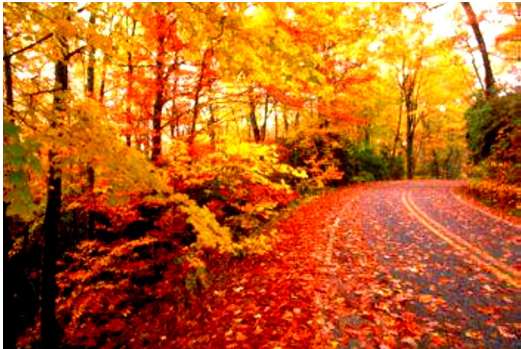
Art is the quest for the indelible: to make the world see exclusively as I do, to believe in My Truth. The Nazis had burned many of my paintings. But they would not be lost. I would re-find them by painting a 'variant' that I could sell as an 'Original Chagall Classic' over and over again.

The collectors whined until the prices went up.



"Not the Jew, the marketer in me!"

High Falls made me feel so wildly free. And J had a son to work for. Mohonk Road could be a palette in itself. Unlike the brick and stone city, the Village came with an annual colour spectacular--the changing of the leaves.

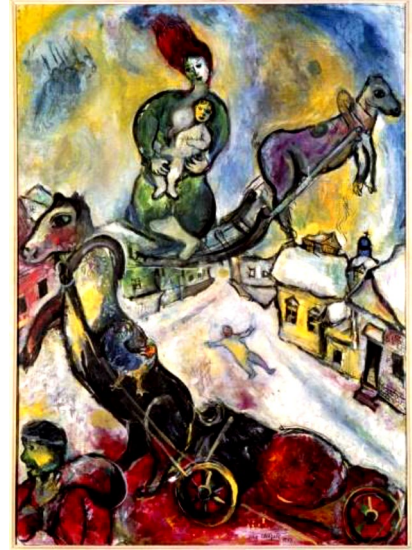
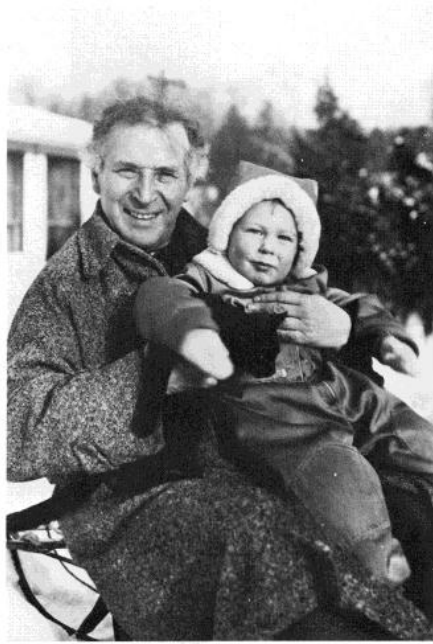


"Great art picks up where nature ends."

But J'd miss the 1946 show. In October, J went back to Paris for the opening of my exhibition at the Museum National d'Art Moderne. It was a huge success. People recognised me on the boat. J was becoming a celebrity.

A house is never more a home than during winter. The coal stove in my High Falls studio glowed with a red J was never able to capture.

The snow piled high on Mohonk Road, had to be shoveled and shoveled. The children loved riding on sleds.



"I feel like I've hardly begun, like a pianist trying to settle down comfortably on his stool."

3

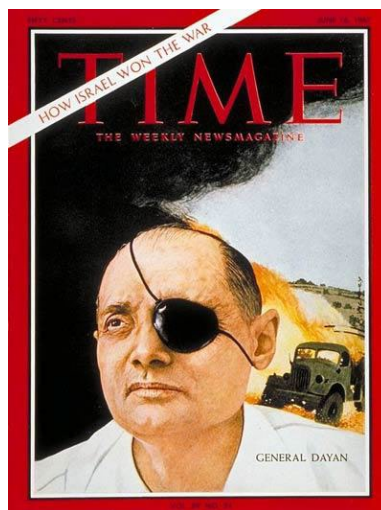




Jesus was the greatest of all artists."



"Painting is the grandchild of nature. It is related to God."

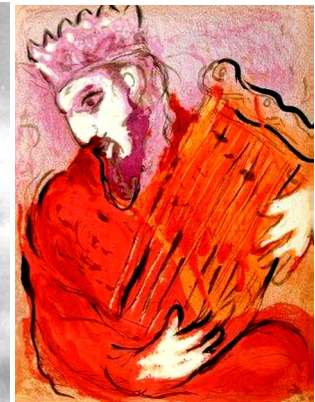
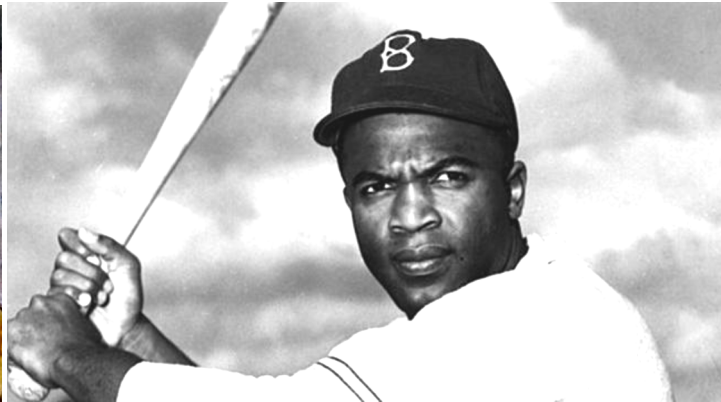


"Freedom is the oxygen of the soul."



Spring, with the Rondout Creek high and strong, brought forth new life and new possibilities...

April 15, 1947...

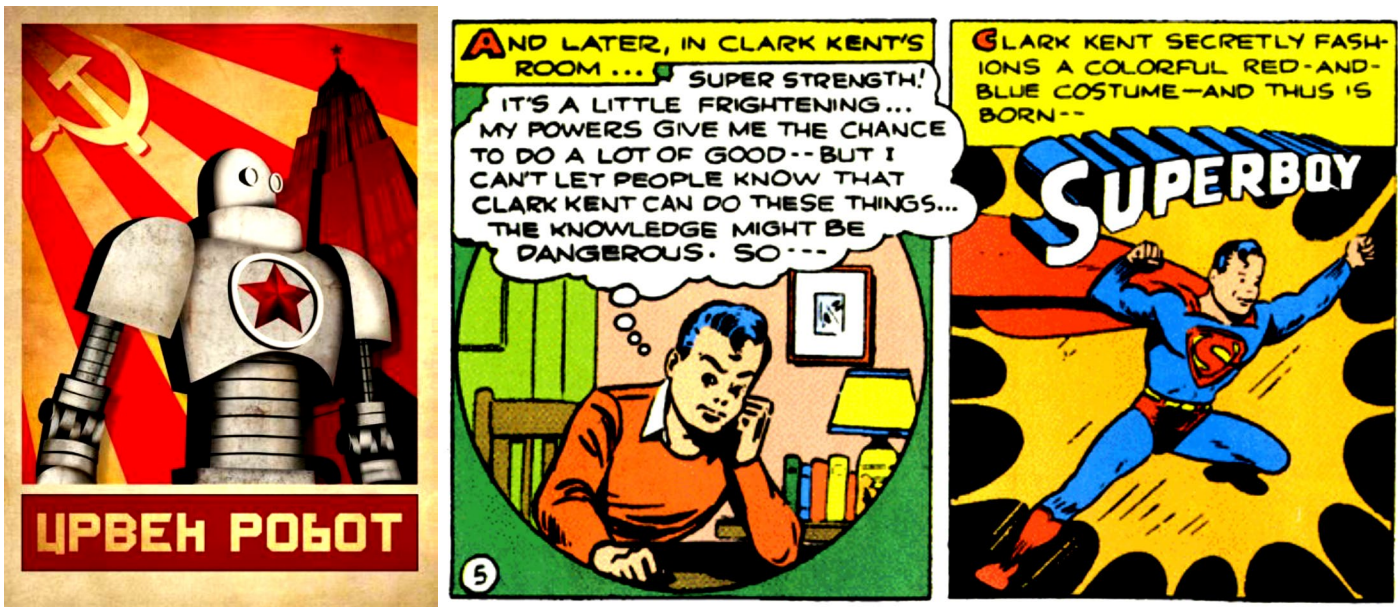


"Without a mystical element is there a single great picture, a single great poem or -- even -- a single great social movement?"

J wanted a wall to paint a mural, but my studio was hardly big enough. As hard as J tried, painting and repainting, J couldn't rediscover the passion of my Russian youth, so J cut the project into three pieces. And remained undiscouraged; there'd be other times and places for even grander productions.

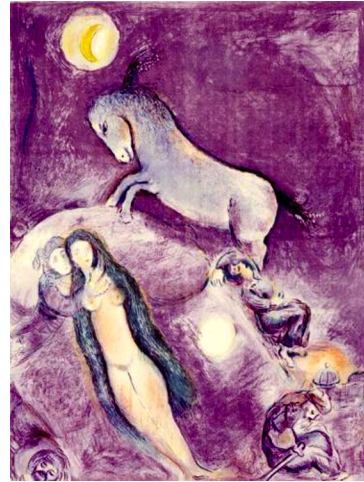


A 'Cold War' has been declared! The Godless Soviet Union versus the idealistic United States. And who will be the new homegrown hero, the role model for American youth?



"Yet another Jewish art-form goes 'Up, up, and away!'"

The Art Institute of Chicago and New York's Museum of Modern Art held retrospective exhibitions in my honor. Would I become a 'celebrity' in the Village?



I lived in America during the inhuman war in which humanity deserted itself... I have seen the rhythm of life. I have seen America fighting with Allies... the wealth that she has distributed to bring relief to the people who had to suffer the consequences of the war... I like America and the Americans... people here are frank. It is a young country with the qualities and faults of youth. It is a delight to love people like that... Above all I am impressed by the greatness of this country and the freedom that it gives.

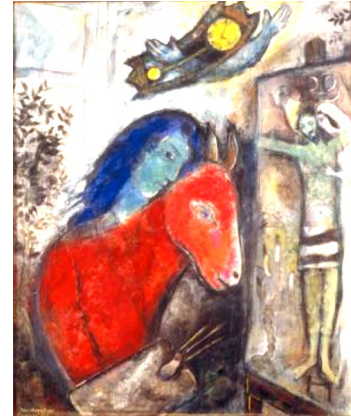
But America is not my country. Mine was in the bloody process of being born.

In the Middle East!



"Never again!"

Will painting ever become obsolete, no longer needed by humanity? Will we be usurped and surpassed by a machine of near-Biblical power, a magic picture frame in every last hovel, conjuring up endless imagery.



Not for a minute must this boxy device intimidate an artist. This 'television' lacks the talent to transmit colour.'

'People are waiting for him,' Jda wrote Virginia. 'Their expectation is something to be treasured, not despised. His return to Paris would be like a gift; it must be given at the right time.

'Don't be late!'

May 14, 1948



ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE DAY!

Joy to the world. We Jews have a homeland!

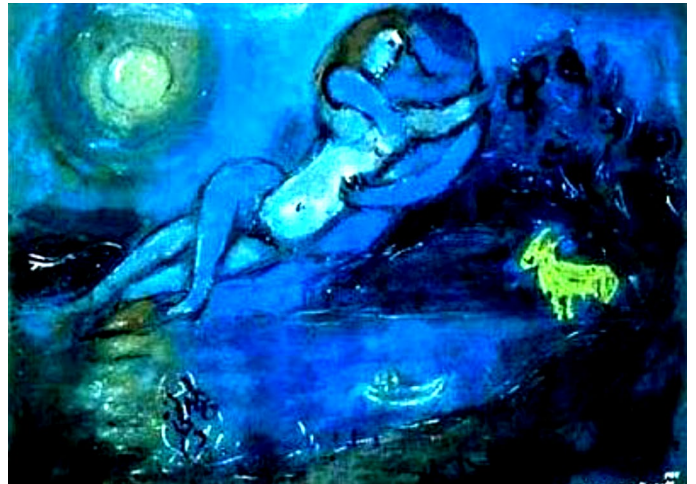


Our High Falls place is so beautiful, not Jewish at all--berries, worms chicken, wild grass--everything whispers to me; become an American, don't go.

But it was not to be. A good New York Jew, at best, but never an American. Assimilated far from the Bible, I'd have to learn how to drive and speak English. To be somebody I'm not. A kind of artistic Gulag.

I never made an effort to become part of the Village, never painted the town. So caught up with my art, and my family and the fate of My People that I failed to envision the fresh beauty up and down Mohonk Road. High Falls had been a culture awaiting its artist and it wasn't me. The Village remained a picture unpainted.

If I had taken the time...



"A surge of myth and magic gushing over High Falls!"



"Give the Depuy Canal House a menu of Jewish/Russian/French colouring!"

There had been one indelible sight, an American metaphor spanning the Rondout. I'd set out in late August, when the Creek is low and slow. Borrow a rowboat to get to the Stone Ridge side, a stretch of flat rocks. Set up my easel and paint box. And with just one day's work...A pale blue sky with darkened clouds, the grand arches bridging the centuries, and swirling about, the ghosts of too many workers who died on the Delaware & Hudson Canal.

There'd be children jumping off it all day, but I'd paint around them.



"As Matisse immortalized the Pot Saint Michel in Paris, I might have saved the High Falls Aqueduct."

But J did nothing. Painting in America had been like shouting in a forest - no echo.

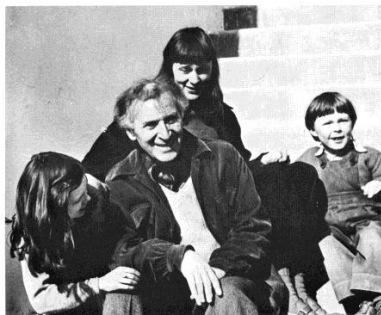
In 1956, the local power company tore down the High Falls Aqueduct. J and the Village have never forgiven ourselves.

If only J had...

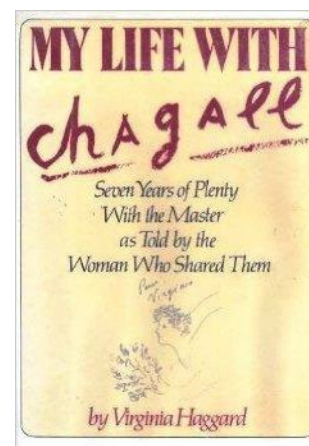
Wait one minute. J DJD paint something in High Falls!

August 17, 1948

We sailed for Europe in time to attend the opening of my exhibition at the Musée National d'Art Moderne. None of us would ever see High Falls again. Jda returned a couple of years later, gathered up any remnants and sold the place.



In 1951, Virginia left me and David went with her.



"Both wrote books about me. I painted more about them."

Not long after, J met and married Vana who inspired me, saw to my every need and managed my career happily ever after.

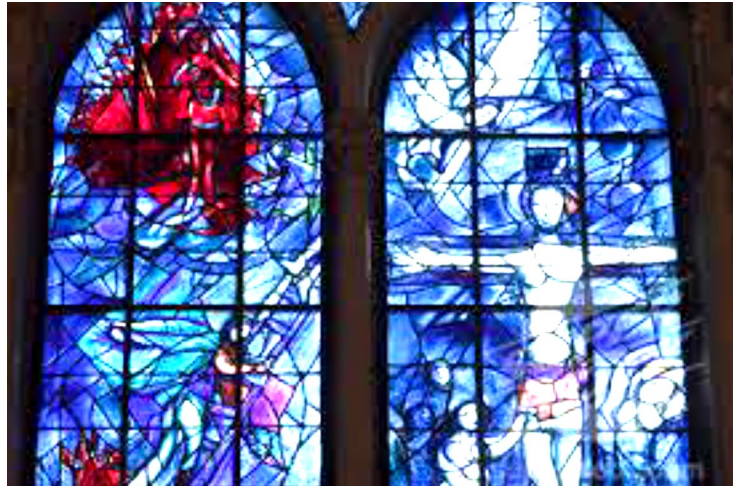


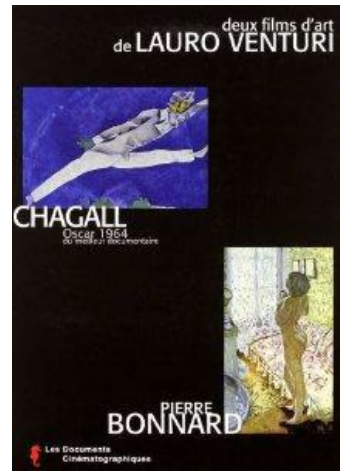
I painted the ceiling of the Paris Opera House and refused to be paid for it.



"I did accept lifetime tickets."

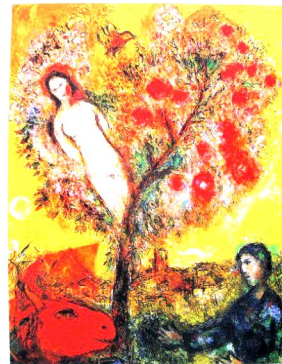
Saw God through church windows...



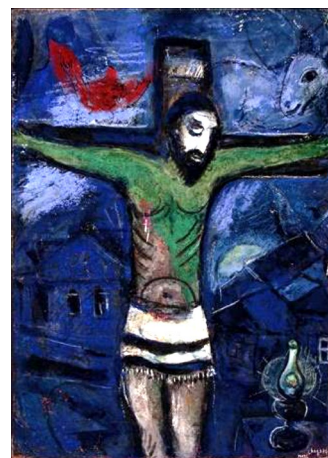


"Don't miss my 1964 documentary."

And the next year...



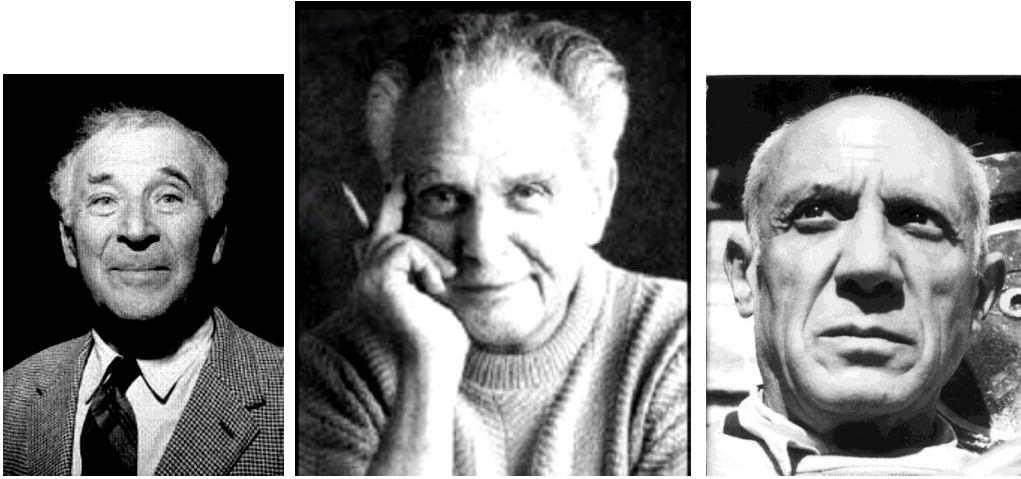
"Work isn't to make money; you work to justify life."



"I got to the Promised Land!"

At age 97, alone in an elevator going up to my studio, I fittingly became history on my way to work.

The most prolific artists of the twentieth century:

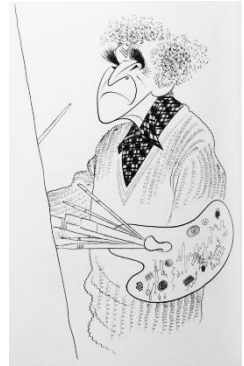
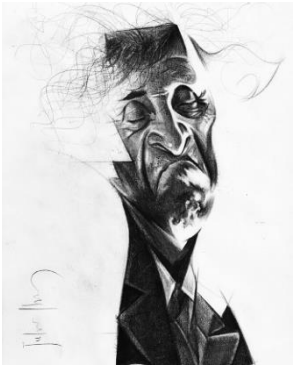


"Jacob Kurtzberg will outlive us all!"

All kinds of creations over years and years, thousands of works and millions of prints, lithographs and books still selling.



"When I am finishing a picture, I hold some God-made object up to it - a rock, a flower, the branch of a tree or my hand - as a final test. If the painting stands up beside a thing man cannot make, the painting is authentic. If there's a clash between the two, it's bad art.



Which reminds me. Ever since my 'pastoral period' on Mohonk Road, the fate of one my most uniquely colourful artwork remains a mystery - Did anybody ever buy that bathtub I painted in High Falls?

MARC CHAGALL

Stone Ridge Public Library



iStock
Credit: RockingStock

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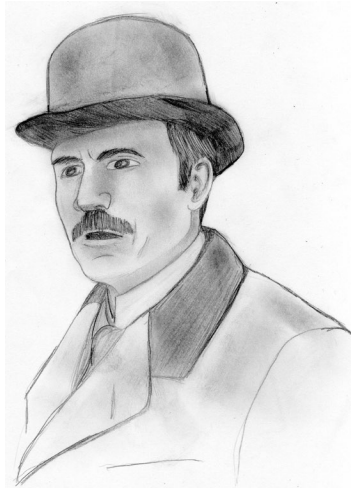


The Case of The Struggling Storyteller



" I fear that Mr. Sherlock Holmes may become like one of those popular tenors who, having outlived their time, are still tempted to make repeated farewell bows to their indulgent audiences."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



'The body was discovered in the Reference Room. As he did almost daily, the Local Author came in shortly after the library opened. He returned one book and two DVDs and then went to tear out the cryptogram puzzle from the county newspaper when no one was looking.

'Shortly thereafter, they heard him scream.

'Awaiting our arrival, the body and the crime scene have not been touched.'

From the journal of John H. Watson MD



In our legendary suite of rooms at 221B Baker Street in the heart of London...

"The game is afoot!" said Sherlock Holmes, bursting out of his study, already in his trademark deerstalker cap and flowing cloak. "We don't have a moment to lose."

"What?" I said, not inclined to go anywhere. "A Local Author has met an untimely end. Hardly a sinister conspiracy aimed at the written word."

"So it would seem," said Holmes, stuffing his pipe with that vile Turkish tobacco. "But Local Authors are wont to burn out at home surrounded by their unread works. This one suddenly succumbs in the venerable heart of his literary community...The Stone Ridge Library!"

"The Stone Ridge Library," I replied, not about to don my bowler. "Never heard of it."

"Nor have I. But the Stone Ridge Library has most certainly heard of us, especially you, dear Watson. They've been preserving and lending out your every word for more than a hundred years. I'd say it's time we paid them a visit."

"Wait, Holmes," I said, pulling out my service revolver and placing it on my desk. "I will not enter any library carrying a gun."

"From the most successful fictional writer in the history of English Literature, I expected no less," he said, putting down his pistol next to mine. Then he handed me my hat.



I came to my feet in stunned disbelief. Who was *this* Holmes?

Sir Arthur created me to be Holmes' biographer, his 'Boswell'. Endowed with great talent and consummate skill, I *wrote* Sherlock Holmes. But always with a trick up my sleeve, a 'literary device' which never failed me: I portrayed my 'consulting detective' as cool and aloof, in a perpetual 'state of ennui', bored by bungling criminals and their lackluster crimes.

From Word One it would be my privilege to present a case so original and unique that Holmes would be instantly piqued, and of course, so would my reader.

But this Holmes---full of energy and enthusiasm, enthralled by...a minor literary demise...at the Stone Ridge Library!

Who's writing him *now*?

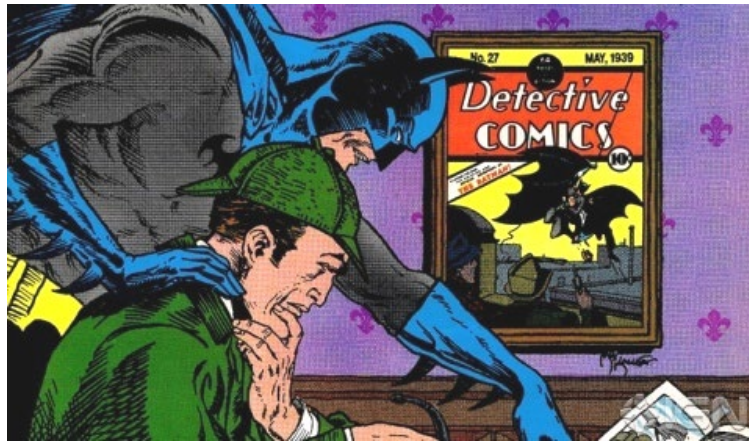


Sir Arthur was a grand, opportunistic creator, in the business for a penny and a pound. When 'Sherlock Holmes' was first staged by the British Theater, the Royal Company asked permission to have the immortal detective *get married*, a travesty of the canon.

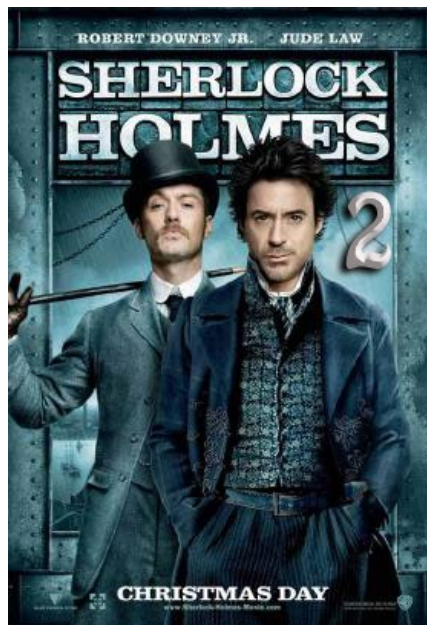
"Do what you want with Holmes!" decreed Sir Arthur. Just as long as he got paid.



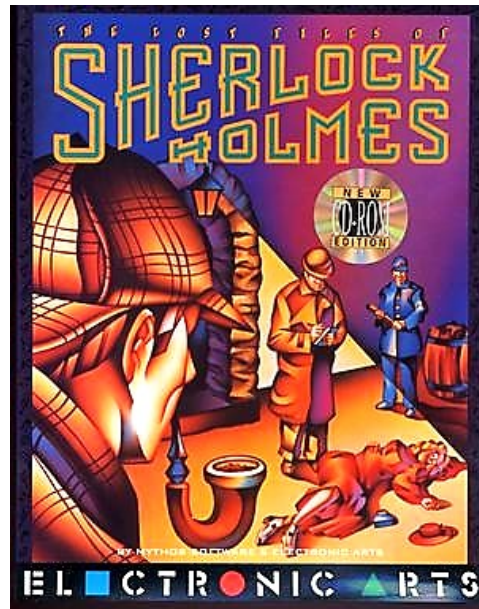
After His passing and that of his English copyright, Holmes and I have fallen into the 'public domain' and at the mercy of a host of authors who have created a veritable Sherlock Holmes universe -- novels and short stories, plays and programs, movies and television shows, cartoons, comic books and advertisements.



Have you seen us in Hollywood's latest mega-blockbuster?



Or played us in a video game?



But the *Stone Ridge Library*? I held on to my bowler as our immortal literary spirits lifted out of London and we left England far behind.



And our unfortunate victim? Towns have their drunks, villages their idiots, and every library has its Local Author. Of course, I'd never met this one and wouldn't conceive of reading his work, but I knew of his ilk quite well. In command of and with full respect for the language, year after year he'd toiled, never able to find his voice or was it that he never had anything to say?

"Read me!" begged the Local Author.

"Make me!" demanded the market.

One becomes a Writer only when one is read. This one hadn't because he wasn't.

Across the Atlantic in a flash to New York City, then north for a hundred-plus kilometers...we came out of the fog in the gravel lot in the center of Stone Ridge.



"Strange, wouldn't you say, Watson?" said Holmes, filling his pipe and lighting up after the long journey. "We are here to solve a capital crime...Where are the police, the medics? Worst of all, have our loyal and faithful readers deserted us?"

"Yes," I admitted, somewhat disappointed; I treasured those brief moments with a crowd of admirers who made me feel like a star. "Or have we been set up, the way clear and convenient?"

"Rather than less," said Holmes, surveying the scene. "There may be *more* than meets the eye. Why the *Stone Ridge* Library?"

Indeed. From coast to coast, American small towns began as trading posts, then came the churches and the saloons, but libraries? Before radio and TV, Americans read. Libraries often began as book collections set up in 'guest rooms' and foyers of private homes. As towns grew, so did the need for books; the library became the intellectual and literary community center.



Cities, big and small, with growing tax bases, invested heavily in landmark libraries as if they were sports stadiums, status symbols that would last forever. Stone Ridge didn't have that option. Instead, not one home, but *two* became the library.

'The original larger building, built by John Lounsbery around 1798, was purchased by Cornelius Hasbrouck in 1859. Then to his brother, Garret Decker Hasbrouck, in 1861 who lived here with his wife, Julia Lawrence Hasbrouck. It was the childhood home of their daughter, Julia Hasbrouck Dwight, who presented it to the community in 1909 to be used as a library in memory of her parents. Two original fireplaces as well as hardware and woodwork date to the house's construction. A large entrance hall with the typical two-section Dutch door and a banistered stairway rising to a turn at the halfway landing highlights the unusual floor plan.'



'The main entrance today is through a wood and glass addition that joins the original building to the Wood-Elmendorf House which the Library bought in 1978. This house was built in the early 1800's with Dr. Isaac S. Hasbrouck as the earliest confirmed resident. A porch and Victorian dormer as well as interior trim and woodwork were added to the house...after a court-ordered sale in 1868 when the property was described as "...fences very much out of repair and the buildings old." Fillmore and Mary Wood bought the house in 1890 and it remained in the family until the deaths of the two Wood daughters, Jennie Sutton and Grace Elmendorf.'

"These stones were cut by former citizens of the British Empire," said Holmes, stroking the wall with affection. "There's *English* in this house! The connected buildings bridge two centuries. Not just an historic landmark, a 'double-decker!'"

But time had taken its toll...

In 2005, the historic 1798 stone building's structural report revealed the structure's walls were separating. It was decided that external bracing with attic support rods would stabilize the building while an assessment would take place to create a renovation and revitalization plan. The braces went up in 2006 with a lifespan of ten years to protect the structure from further deterioration and misalignment. It was also determined that the 18th and 19th century buildings and the 1970 addition had plumbing issues, space constrictions and electrical issues. In June 2011 the library spent \$3,500 to get the braces reassessed and to have minor work done.



"Timbers to shore up the library," I said, inspecting the north weight-bearing wall. "Are they afraid it will sink into the earth like Poe's 'House of Usher'?"



"Like bookends, a bracing metaphor," said Holmes. "In these troubled times, Marbletown property owners are propping up their library."

"A necessary but expensive project," I added. "Purse strings are tight. This is not merely a place...The Stone Ridge Library is...a *symbol* of small town libraries everywhere!"

For a moment I felt ashamed; it had been years since I'd visited any local library. A Writer without a library is a lesser one for it.

Thankfully we were alone; the library would speak for itself. At the front desk, I could feel its warmth. More than an historic landmark...the Stone Ridge Library had begun and always would be, a *home*.

"Do you feel it, Watson?" asked Holmes, taking in the tasteful furnishings and the timbre of the rooms; I remembered him doing the same in Baskerville Hall and Musgrave Manor. "*Pride*...The Stone Ridge Library has an abundance of it."



But even a cursory glance revealed that this quintessential smalltown treasure was in dire need of restoration.

"Holmes," I said, as if issuing a warning. "The entire library is in danger of crumbling. If action is not taken soon..."

"Do not underestimate the community, Watson," said Holmes. "To abandon the Stone Ridge Library in this time of crisis would be unthinkable, *unforgivable*."

In May of 2008, the library received an anonymous pledge of \$10,000. Shortly thereafter, the Stone Ridge Library Foundation hired an Albany architectural firm to prepare a master plan for the restoration of the library's two historic buildings and probable additional space to meet the library's needs in the decades ahead.

Whatever the 'master plan' was, and how much was spent to prepare it, would be a closely guarded secret for more than three years.



We proceeded to the Reference Room. With its original fireplace, fine wood paneling and Early American furniture, the setting was not unlike a room in a modest British gentlemen's club.



Most unexpected was the state of the body. Local Authors are a frustrated, sorry lot whose stories do not end, but stop. More and more are women, but this poor soul was a man whose insignificant literary life...

"By Jove!" cried Holmes. "I dare say we've never seen quite the likes of this."



In our adventures we'd come upon dozens of bodies, freshly slain or long dead, and in my duties during the Afghan War, I'd seen yet dozens more...of men, women and children all cut down in what they wanted to believe was the prime of their lives...and then life abruptly ended---the brutal unfairness of it all!

The remains of the Local Author sat in a tasteful reading chair, his every muscle still tense, his hands up in front of him, as if defending himself from...? His tortured face...full of pain and terror.



"Was he frightened to death?" I asked.

"So we have been summoned to determine," said Holmes, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "As a Writer, Watson, it might be better if you interviewed the staff."

"I've read their sworn statements," I replied. "The Local Author saw the library as a cathedral run by the 'nuns of literature' and by Literary Law, regardless of age, gender, race or shoe size, defers to every librarian with profound respect."

"And they him?"

"Politely tolerated," I said. "Librarians are blessed with a professional skepticism. The temerity of this Local Author who thought himself worthy of the Stone Ridge Library.

"Was there any...?"

"Nothing like that," I said, knowing it would have been reported and dealt with severely. "The Local Author was a gentlemen, and sometimes witty, but he came on with a literary arrogance; he believed that there'd always be something new in the world, and was utterly convinced that, one of these days, it was going to be him."

"Then what, most of all, scared him?"

"Probably the reviews of the few who bothered to begin his stories," I said, my tone growing harsher. "He produced a short novel and gave an autographed copy to the library. In three years, only a couple of readers bothered to borrow it.

"Every year at its annual fair, the Stone Ridge Library offers Marbletown writers a booth so that they can meet potential readers. In his arrogance, the Local Author thought it all beneath him."



"Of course, he was writing his autobiography and joined the monthly 'memoir writing club', but they threw him out for being 'too advanced.'



"Even the Saturday morning 'knitters' complained about his 'obnoxious chatter' and he never returned.

"Perhaps the unkindest cut of all," I continued, the staff affidavits being quite thorough. "The Stone Ridge Library prides itself on its local history selection, first-person accounts from the 'old days'. The Local Author's story of his childhood was rejected and he was handed his manuscript back in this very room."

"Unfulfilled to the letter," said Holmes. "Yet always trying, aspiring, believing always that he was on the verge of a breakthrough story."



"Him? Not a chance!"

"Sir Arthur's 'breakthrough' was you, Dear Watson," said Holmes. "If not for your 'voice', neither of us would have been in the Stone Ridge Library for more than a hundred years."



"Holmes, you're beyond literary license!" I said. "He's nothing but a smalltown hack who never learned the first rule of writing: 'Keep the reader reading.'"

"Sir Arthur gave you that incredible talent, *Doctor Watson*," said Holmes with a smile. "Thanks to you, neither of us ever got old."



"Holmes," I tipped my bowler. "You are in an age all by yourself."

"And I'm afraid, so is he. His face frozen in stark terror, a lethal mix of intense fear and terrible pain...note the eyes...What was he so afraid of?" said Holmes. "What kind of Writer did this Local Author aspire to be?"

For this we came across the pond to Stone Ridge? How I longed for a cup of Mrs. Hudson's tea at Two, Twenty-One, Bee, Baker Street! I looked hard at the corpse; beyond foreboding, what horror had the Local Author envisioned in his last moment?

"Sir Arthur saw writing as business," I said. "I, of course, performed it as an art, but this Local Author was a *romantic!*"

"And therefore, doomed to fail?" asked Holmes.

"Because he wanted too much. Storytelling, to him, was a quest for intimacy. On the page together, he is telling you, with his every word, how life *feels*."

"And nobody's listening?"

"Not enough; his quest was idealistic: to make his reader *imagine*."

"Imagine *what?*" said Holmes, reaching out to touch the corpse, as if...

At that moment, the body suddenly began to decompose. First its skin and then its bones until, within a few seconds, it had completely disappeared.

"Gone!" I blurted, completely flummoxed. "What mystery is this?"



"Was he burned?" I asked. "Or perhaps some hideous microbe devoured him?"

"Not a trace of anything," said Holmes, closely inspecting the chair where the body had been. It's as though the Local Author never existed."

"But...that's impossible!" I insisted.

"Or all too common?"

Then came that novel instant. Holmes' piercing eyes filled with his trademark purpose; he had broken the case.

"Watson, we have been the unknowing accomplices in a desperate act, perpetrated by the most cunning advisory of our literary careers, of which there is no defense."

"What?" I demanded.

"A hoax!" said Holmes. "And to pull it off, the Local Author sacrificed what he valued most...*his truth*. Murdered the soul of his writing, ideally, for a greater good."

"I-I don't follow you, Holmes," I blurted, ashamed of myself.

"Your modesty betrays you, old friend. Sir Arthur's truth of 'Sherlock Holmes' was never me, but *you*, Watson, the great writer Our Creator yearned mightily to be."



My spirit nearly lifted a league; for a heartbeat, he had become the 'Sherlock Holmes' as I had written him.

"This 'body' was never flesh and bone, but noun, verb and adjective, a metaphoric apparition," I replied. "A 'literary device'...the lowest of stoopers!"

"First he created this effigy of himself," said Holmes. "Then stole us from Sir Arthur and brought us here...to this Stone Ridge Library."

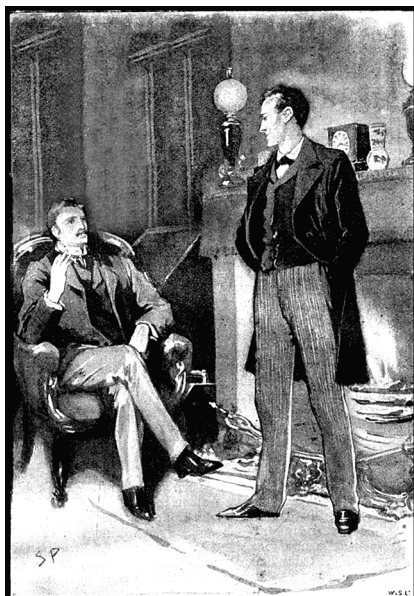
"Why?"

"To kill forever who the Local Author *used to be*, a lifelong struggle to find a story. And here in the Stone Ridge Library..."

"A literary crime of the highest magnitude!" I cried. "But why you and I?"

"Because he loved us. I'd wager he encountered 'Sherlock Holmes' when he first learned how to read. He especially admired you, Watson, reading every word you ever wrote."





"I admire only his taste," I said. "Sir Arthur's other works do pale by comparison."

"And he loved the Stone Ridge Library, the one fixed point in his literary universe and the intellectual heart of his community," said Holmes who believed that education was a series of lessons with the greatest saved the last. "It is the curious who come here, burning to find out. Men, women, families, and especially schoolchildren."

"Brilliantly put, Holmes," I said, for he never ceased to amaze me.

"Elementary, my dear Watson. And high schoolers, too. Here we are all students."

"But what did he hope to gain?" I asked. "By Literary Law, this Local Author won't be able to collect a penny."

"The ironic touch!" Holmes exclaimed. "He's donating his story to the Stone Ridge Library."

"And it should be rejected," I huffed. "But why was he attacked?"

"That terrible fear in his eyes, Watson. His every word unread forever. He wasn't being attacked. He was being *ignored!*"

All his life by editors, agents, publishers, friends and family, and even the Stone Ridge Library. Would the Local Author ever be read?

In May of 2011, the library director, its foundation and trustees finally unveiled their \$3,992,000 legacy vision: an added 4,500 square foot 'book mausoleum' with a cathedral ceiling and a \$200,000 reading porch.

Once approved, and the addition built, the original buildings would be stripped of books and be restored as a 'meeting place'. Gone would be the *home*, and in its place, yet another 'full-service' modern library.



The Local Author expressed his dismay to the library director who was surprised by his lack of support. When the Foundation refused to let him sit on their monthly meeting, the Local Author wrote letters to the *Shawangunk Journal* and the *BlueStone Press* proclaiming his love for the Stone Ridge Library and calling the Expansion Plan a 'Sugar Daddy' deal the town didn't want, didn't need and couldn't afford.



"'What's in your wallet', Marletown property owner?" penned the Local Author. "Your Stone Ridge Library card is going platinum!"



Replies from the Foundation and the Trustees called the Local Author 'mean-spirited', ill-informed' and 'inaccurate'.

On October 12, 2011, at the Stone Ridge Library, the expansion plan came to a vote and was overwhelmingly *rejected* by Marbletown property owners.

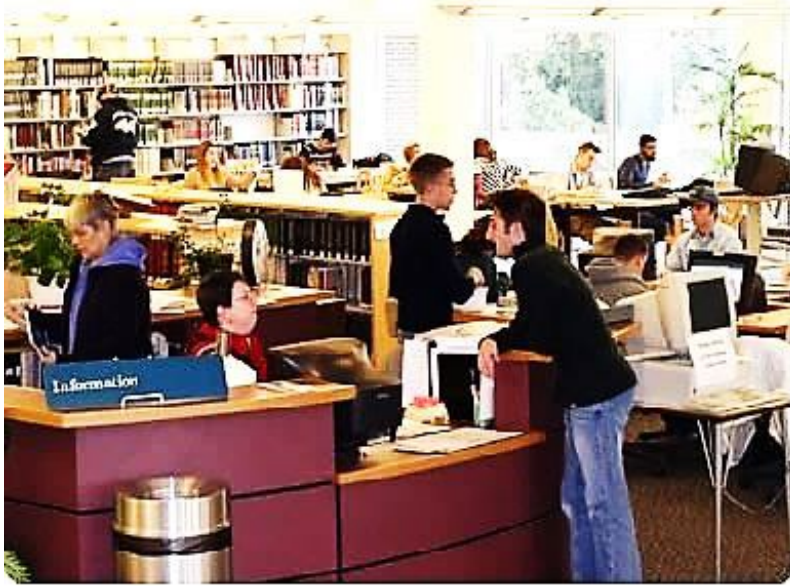
"Yet another failed Local Author," I said. "But in defending his beloved Stone Ridge Library, he found his 'voice', then put it to the ultimate text."

"Why?" Holmes arched an eyebrow. "Where's the *story* here?"

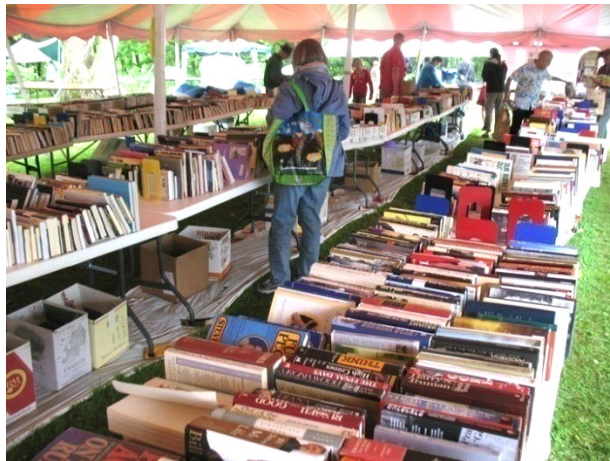
Less than a mile away, at the State University Community College at Stone Ridge, the Macdonald DeWitt Library is available to community residents, and includes an online library catalog system and access to a full range of electronic databases and professional search assistance, geared exclusively for its thousands of students and faculty.



Which begs the question: must Marbletown residents pay for *two* libraries?



Designated by the Town Board as an historic landmark, The Stone Ridge Library had supported itself for generations thanks to donations and contributions by its grateful patrons, but the New Millennium had greatly devalued the library's lead item: used books.



The annual Stone Ridge Library Fair was the biggest event on the Marbletown calendar. Back in the day, 'early birds' would line up in anxious anticipation of the opening, then charge in to scoop up donated used books at bargain prices. The fair goes on, but cannot raise the funds it used to.

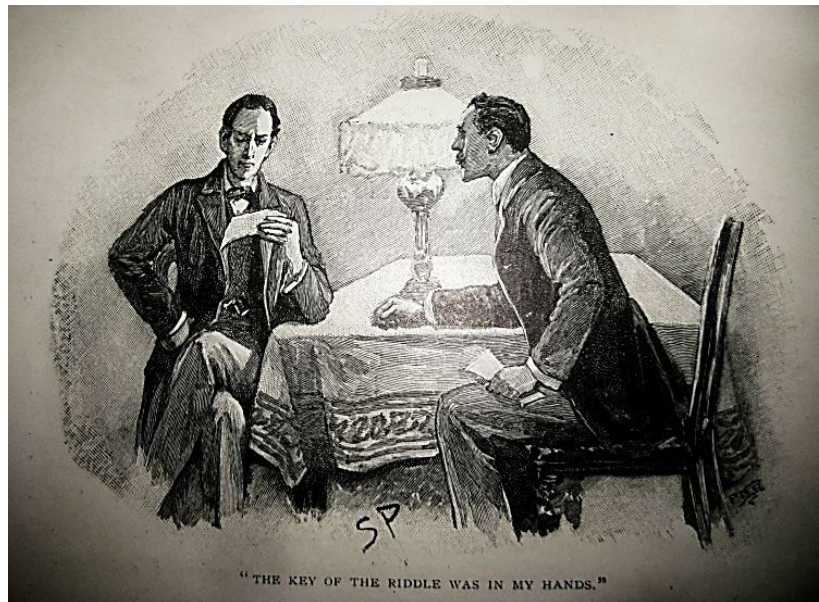
In 2004, the Stone Ridge Library became an added tax for Marbletown property owners, rising almost every year to \$250,000. And every August, loyal patrons would file into the library to approve its annual budget.

Last year, only 55 people showed up, but the 2012 vote may be different. Formulated over four years, the \$3.992 million expansion plan had revealed the Library Foundation, its Trustees and its Director to be completely out of touch with the needs of the community, as if the enjoined buildings of an historic landmark weren't good enough for them.

In these difficult economic times, was the Stone Ridge Library *worth* a quarter of a million dollars per year? All it would take was one local politician promising to cut property taxes and after a century of selfless service, the Main Street location would vanish forever, reverted back to its owners and the tax rolls.



Was there any way the Stone Ridge Library could be saved?



"Watson, the days of the library as an 'information warehouse' are over. We are entering the 'Age of Equalization' which, like a forgotten borrowed book, is long overdue," said Holmes, running his hand across a shelf lined with aged volumes as if they were artifacts in an ancient tomb. "With technology in hand, individuals, young and old, rich and poor, healthy and sick, free or enslaved, elated or outraged, can tell the world, *show* the world in an instant, how it feels to be in their shoes."

"And the smalltown library?" I asked, fearing the worst "Yet another casualty, crushed under the soulless cranks of 'technological progress'?"

With that Holmes turned and glared at me as if I had threatened his very existence!



"No, never!" he said emphatically. "For the readers on the Rondout, the Stone Ridge Library is our birthplace. To read us is to know us, not as a pair of 'action heroes' or machine imagery, but as immortal characters *written*."

"Unread and ignored, the Local Author knew that better than anyone."

"The library, big and small, the *idea* of a library must live forever. Not just as a building or buildings where one goes to borrow, but *to receive*. A library's mission and its impact lie as much *beyond* its walls as within them."



An omnivorous reader with a strangely retentive memory for trifles, Holmes should know. At 221B Baker Street, his study contained an array of rare volumes, scientific journals and criminal studies. I never saw him consult any and was convinced he had memorized the lot.

Sir Arthur wrote four short Holmes' novels and 56 short stories. The complete collection, annotated and illustrated, makes for a fine coffee table book. The official Sherlock Holmes' Museum

is in London, of course, but a score of Holmes' enclaves dot the globe, each dedicated to his eternal mystique, and the sale of memorabilia.

But the bulk of Holmes' data is online, millions of references, dozens of websites and near 8,000 original stories posted by his loyal fans the world over. The sun never sets on Sherlock Holmes.



"An American emblem of smalltown awareness, this Stone Ridge Library!" exclaimed Holmes, joyously throwing up his hands as if we were celebrating Christmas at Westminster Abbey. "May this two-century landmark be restored to its historic splendor and its leadership rejuvenated, fresh hopes and dreams eager to take on the challenges, and the chores ahead."

Bubbling like a teapot! What secret or power had Holmes discovered in this, this Stone Ridge Library that has so far escaped me?

"A crime against literature has been committed," I insisted. "Where's the justice?"

"Where it has always been, where we were born...*on the page.*"

"An unforgivable contrivance!" I railed angrily. "Neither justice nor literature has been served."

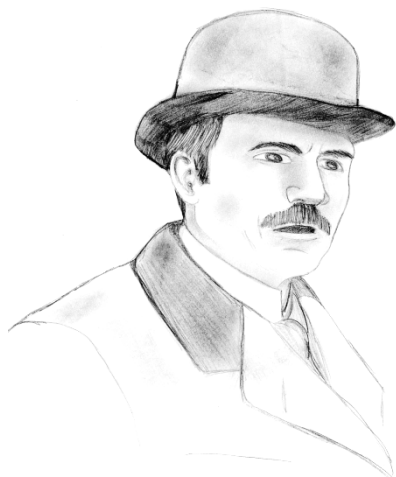
"On the contrary," said Holmes, filling his pipe, a signal that we'd soon be going. "The Local Author created a mystery to achieve what he'd been fighting for all his life: *to be read.*"

"'Writing', at its every heart, is the joy, the *thrill* of being read," continued Holmes, then eyed me sharply. "Should you ever forget that, Watson, *quit!*"

Our spirits drifted out of the building. As Holmes puffed, for a long moment I took in the warmth, the beauty, the authenticity of Stone Ridge. Then it struck me.

"You mean, this Local Author may still be alive?"

"*Now he is,*" said Holmes, as happy as a schoolboy. "And thanks to him, and the Stone Ridge Library, so are we!"



"Well," I huffed as we vanished away. "I still say he's a smalltown hack!"

