

The Little Land Conservancy that *does*

WLC and DeWan recognized with Evers Award

Woodstock Land Conservancy President Michael DeWan, usually caught making statements to spur on donations to such noble local causes as the ongoing effort to preserve Overlook Mountain, was almost speechless when asked to comment about the honor he and "the little land conservancy that could" will be getting from the Catskill Center for Conservation & Development.

At its annual meeting in Arkville Saturday, July 29, the Catskill Center will present DeWan and the Land Conservancy with its 2006 Alf Evers Award for Excellence, initiated in the late historian's spirit to annually recognize individuals or organizations who have made outstanding contributions in community development, education, arts and culture or natural resource protection in the Catskills.

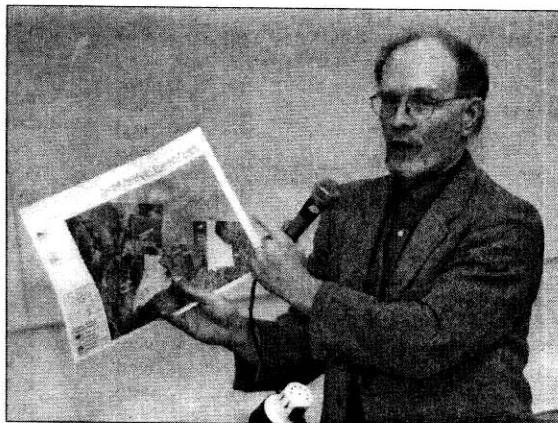
"For centuries, people, with both insight and foresight, have made significant contributions to our past, present and future that should not go unnoticed. Alf Evers was one of those people," said CCD Executive Director Tom Alworth. "We are extremely proud to present this year's award to Michael DeWan and the Woodstock Land Conservancy for their excellent work protecting the landscape that Alf Evers so cherished."

"I was overwhelmed with all kinds of emotion when Tom called to inform me that I and the WLC were chosen to receive this award," said DeWan, noting that not even his wife Deborah, Vice President of the Catskill Center Board of Directors, knew the award was coming. "I keep seeing Alf at his 90th birthday party at the Bearsville Theatre, saying 'I wish my arms were long enough to embrace you all!' And here he is again, embracing us through this wonderful recognition of all the hard work so many of us put in, to see to it that Alf's beloved Overlook remains wild, for all generations to come."

"Just as *The Catskills* — the single best history of our region and Alf's best work — begins and ends on the summit of Overlook, so has the Woodstock Land Conservancy's work been focused on Overlook, preserving both its upper reaches and those of its sister Mount Guardian, as well as fabulous mountain vistas from below, such as the Zena Cornfield," DeWan continued, speaking of the many successes of the small organization, started in 1988 with the Zena campaign. "To date, our 'Save Overlook' campaign — launched in 2004 with the help of The Open Space Institute — has saved over 400 acres of the most fragile and threatened land at the highest elevation, and we are looking to increase that soon by another 250 acres."

DeWan said his mother will be coming in from Chicago and his twin brother and sister-in-law coming up from Brooklyn for the ceremony this weekend. But he added that his sense of pride and accomplishment in the award goes beyond the personal.

"Really, this award is to be shared with all the supporters and friends of the Conservancy, who have shared our vision and have been there with us," he



Michael DeWan

said. "We are grateful, and humbled, and privileged to be doing this good work and to be recognized for it, in the name of our beloved mentor Alf."

Evers passed away just shy of his 100th birthday in 2005. He was the author of major histories of The Catskills, Woodstock and the City of Kingston, as well as numerous essays and children's books.

In addition to presenting the award, The Catskill Center's Annual Membership Meeting will feature keynote speaker Barbara "Charlie" Murphy, Director of Local Government at the New York State Department of State. In keeping with The Catskill Center's mission of balancing environmental conservation and sustainable community development, Murphy will speak about smart growth and the "quality communities" movement in New York State. ++

Paul Smart

The meeting will begin at 11 a.m. and is open to the public. Music, light refreshments, a silent auction and presentations by staff will start at noon, following the formal meeting. The Catskill Center's offices are located on Route 28 in the hamlet of Arkville. For more information, call (845) 586-2611 or visit www.catskillcenter.org.