

# Monticello dubbed 'Bagel Capital'

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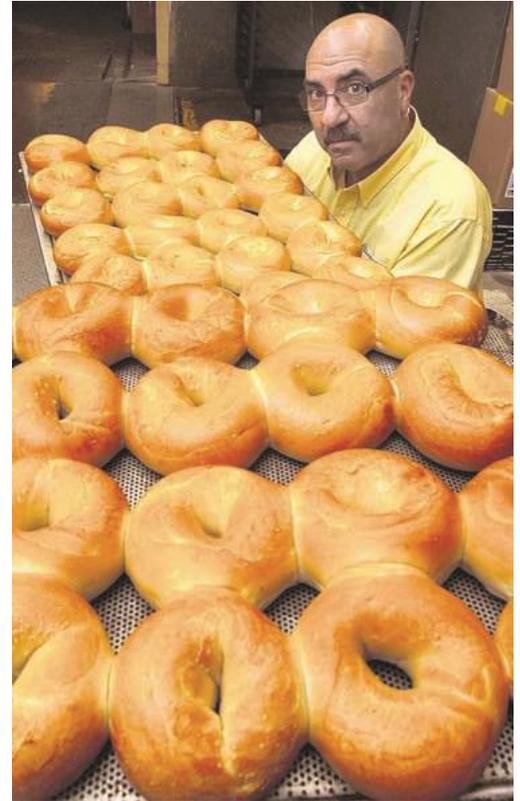
By Victor Whitman

Posted Mar 16, 2013 at 2:00 AM

**MONTICELLO —** By resolution of the state Assembly and Senate, Monticello is now “The Bagel Capital.”

Jeff Siegel, an entertainment and production specialist, has convinced the two branches of state government, Sullivan County and two local governments to hang this designation on the village.

The village is home to the Monticello Bagel Bakery, a local landmark on Broadway opened by the late Ed Fleischman and his wife, Anne, in 1967, and now a third-generation family business. The bakery makes an average 25,000 bagels a week. But Siegel said the real reason that Monticello takes the bagel crown comes from an obscure bit of history.



“We have the guy who invented the bagel-making machine,” Siegel said.

According to the 1988 story in the New York Times, Hurleyville native Louis Wichinsky, a baker’s son with a resemblance to Mel Brooks, was spending the Jewish holidays with two brothers, Dave and Sam Wolinsky, who owned a London bakery.

As Wichinsky told the New York Times reporter, Sam Wolinsky started him down the road to his invention in 1942 with the following challenge: “Louis, you Yanks can do anything. How come you can’t build a bagel machine?”

A vending machine mechanic, Wichinsky returned to Hurleyville and tinkered for the next 22 years, finally succeeded around 1964 to produce a machine that reportedly could make 600 bagels an hour. He later discovered that another man had made a nearly identical machine in 1904. All the same, Wichinsky was able to claim to have produced a unique machine. He obtained a U.S. patent based on one difference, a

kneading plate. Wichinsky was also something of a pioneer in alternative fuels, and invented a vegetable-fuel-driven car. But wealth and fame eluded him.

Until now.

Siegel is determined to give Monticello a new identity thanks to Wichinsky's invention. Siegel, a founding member in the Monticello Business Association, has organized a bagel festival on Aug. 16 and 17. He also plans to get Monticello in the Guinness Book of World Records for producing the longest continuous bagel chain of locally baked bagels.

It is unclear how long this chain will be. Such a record does not yet exist.

"When we get done, there will be," Siegel said.

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