

How Far Would YOU Go?

Town-Hopping Beyond the Chappaqua Borders

BY NANCY SHENKER

Like most Chappaqua residents, I love the convenience and community feel of local rituals—week-end morning coffee and a variety of gourmet treats...roaming the aisles of familiar stores, basket in hand, buying “the usual”...window-shopping and splurging at the many great boutiques...finding that perfect pair of cleats for my mini-Mia Hamm...and more.

But, we all need a great “road trip” every now and then. Whether we’re leaving town for a specific service or product or just have caught “suburban wanderlust,” there’s a town-hopper in each of us. “Sometimes you just have to get out of your own primordial soup,” advises freelance writer Susan Goldberg, who works from her home in Chappaqua. Lisa Jacobson, founder of a tutoring firm, who splits her work time between Manhattan and Chappaqua, echoes this sentiment. “It’s important for me to take some time out.”

Even some long-term residents of Westchester have not yet fully explored the county. I recently mentioned to a group of neighbors the name of a newly-opened restaurant, a 10-minute drive away. They asked, “Where is that?” I told them the name of the town (which is a mere five miles from Chappaqua) and it also met with a “Where is that?”

As a Westchester veteran of 18 years and a consummate explorer, I have become a de-facto “tour guide” of Westchester. It is, indeed, a county filled with a wide range of services, cuisines and fun shopping finds, not to mention some great architecture and outdoor activities. Jobs and “away games” for our sports-minded youth are the two obvious commitments that take us off our home turf. But what else compels Chappaqua residents venture beyond Route 120? Food and entertainment seem to be high on the list.

Virtually everyone I polled mentioned at least one restaurant that

had drawn them out of Chappaqua. Exotic and international cuisine and great hamburgers were some of the lures that inspire residents to travel. A quirky new film release in Pleasantville or a big box office hit in Hawthorne also compels us to get on the road.

And, when we want to be pampered, many of us choose to travel for specialty services beyond our immediate area. Whether it’s changing our hair or taking it off, women will invest in a full gas tank to visit their favorite stylist or day spa.

Of course, any parent is willing to travel great distances for reliable childcare. Laura Leites, who lives in Chappaqua and owns Workstation Business Support in Mount Kisco, will readily drive to Shrub Oak and back to drop her kids off with her favorite babysitters (her parents!)

New residents are more likely to drive long distances for various things. In fact, some “cross state lines” to New Jersey or Connecticut until they have established comfortable sources for shopping and services closer to their new home. Others tend to be “loyalists,” frequenting the handful of establishments they discover their first months in town and not venturing further unless they get a word-of-mouth endorsement from a trusted new friend, neighbor or realtor.

Conversely, long-time residents have done more “exploring.” For example, Suzanne Ponsot, a 15-year Chappaqua resident and Executive Director of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, frequents about 15 towns on a regular basis, traveling as far north as Peekskill and south as Hastings for a variety of retail and cultural reasons.

One of the great joys of living in Chappaqua is its proximity to major highways, giving us a straight shot to the great outdoors. Farms, hiking trails, county fairs, lakes and real ice

skating and skiing are all day-trip distance. Can’t stand the cold? Some families have discovered an indoor sports center in Brewster that has basketball facilities which “rival New York’s Chelsea Piers,” reveals Jacobson.

If you have a passion for culture, architecture, or antiques, you can find them all within a short drive too. Beacon (home to the Dia Gallery), Cold Spring (which boasts a waterfront gazebo), and even parts of nearby Pleasantville (like the Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired Usonia community) are all journeys that will make you feel like a cultural time traveler.

So, the next time you’re feeling claustrophobic or adventurous, punch a new town into your GPS or grab a map and flee across the borders—but be sure to come back!

Nancy A. Shenker is a confirmed town-hopper. A resident of Chappaqua/Briarcliff Manor/Mount Pleasant, she runs a marketing consultancy in Thornwood and hops to Pleasantville, White Plains, Port Chester, Croton, Cold Spring, Tuckahoe, Elmsford, Valhalla, Ossining, Manhattan (of course), and wherever her clients or her daughter’s soccer opponents happen to be.

Also, See Resources Box on Next Page



So...Hop Along

Starting with the next issue, a regular feature, "Town Hopper" will offer up new and interesting recommendations to Chappaqua residents about the communities that surround us—as well as those that make great day trips.

We encourage readers to contribute their "great finds" across the border! Simply send an e-mail to townhopper@insidechappaqua.com

Need to "Get Outta Town"? Some Helpful Resources

Navigation

www.randmcnally.com www.mapquest.com
Maps of Westchester County: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nywestch/maps.htm>

Destinations

Zagat Survey: Westchester//Hudson River Valley:
2006/2007 Edition*

Things to Do in the Hudson Valley:
<http://www.thingstodo.com/states/NY/hudsonvalley.htm>

Resources

The Westchester Business Council (the County Chamber of Commerce: www.westchesterny.org) and the Westchester County Office of Tourism (<http://tourism.westchestergov.com/>) both have activity listings and resources

—Nancy Shenker



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