

Confessions of a Reluctant Holiday Shopper

by Roberta Smith, scrabblebuff@hotmail.com

I'm a "local."

I was born in *Veterans' Memorial Hospital* (now *Congregation Ezrath Israel*), waved to President Johnson when he dedicated the "new" *Ellenville Community Hospital*, saw Melanie and the Buckingham's at that Cousin Bruce marathon at the *Nevele*, and even tried to bicycle to the Woodstock festival. I shopped at *Woolworth's*, the *A&P*, *Rothkopf's*, *Richie's* and *Eddie's*, went to *Agway* with Grandpa, and ate "overtown" for 30 to 50 CENTS a day at *Bessie's*, *Pizza King*, and *Balotin's*. I saw countless matinees at the *Shadowland*, had my first date at the *Norbury*, spent winters skating on Village ice rinks, and summers listening to Blood, Sweat & Tears, Jefferson Airplane, Pete Seeger, and Jimi Hendrix at local venues.

So, you ask, "Who's Cousin Bruce? What's *Balotin's*? Hendrix... never heard of him! And what's all this have to do with holiday shopping?" (I can almost hear my son cautioning me: "Maaaaaaaaa, you're embarrassing me! Make your point!")

Simply put, you CAN "go home" again, and shop here, too! Although I'm waxing nostalgic for the "good ol' days," they were good, and still are. The richness of our area IS something I brag about, regularly, and now I claim bragging rights to our shopping.

I'm not a great shopper. I'm frugal, relatively old-fashioned, and on a budget. I'm grateful to have major stores nearby, but frankly don't shop for sport (or didn't 'til this week). I hate those long days at the mall, wandering aimlessly, juggling packages, cruising for parking spots and losing sight of my budget as well as the meaning of the coming days.

So, on a dare, I shopped Wawarsing this year. And I found our little hamlet "nestled in the valley" to be a shopper's paradise.

Take a peek at my gift list. I did well over three-fourths of my shopping right here in the village, was done well before Thanksgiving, and stayed on budget. (One caveat: I'm not much of an electronics person, but nonetheless found some great toys for those who are. And most of the "kids" on my list are young men and women now, so I've added a couple of hypothetical items that would've been on my list five or ten years ago, as well as a couple of fantasy gifts.)

I've listed the store, recipient (with names thinly disguised), gift and cost, with comparisons from various national and area stores, and comments as to my "finds."

ELLENVILLE REGIONAL HOSPITAL GIFT SHOP

For the newlyweds, abroad, first Christmas together. A beautiful fleece-stuffed 12" Santa, with three matching ornaments (Santa, moose, and snowman) on a spring. \$16 for Santa, \$3 each for the small ornaments. Online stores show similar items ranging from the same price up to \$25 for big Santa and \$8 each per ornament. Gift shops and large chain stores showed the same range. This was a great find!

ORLANDO'S MARKET

For the young college woman in her first apartment, and bragging about her cooking skills: Large caldero (a cast aluminum "dutch oven") filled with Sazon, extra virgin olive oil, spices, and gandules. Mortar and pestle. Cost \$18 for 4.5 qt IMUSA-brand caldero, \$7 for a

Happy Holidays

From All of Us at

 **Sand & Gravel, LLC**

299 Main Street

Napanoch, NY 12458

Office: (845) 647-7263

www.209SandAndGravel.com



OPEN WEEKDAYS 7 AM – 3:30 PM
OPEN SATURDAYS 8 AM – 12 NOON

We Deliver

M&M Variety Stop

"A Full Service Gift Shop"

-BROWSING ENCOURAGED-

We Feature a

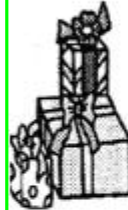
Large Selection of Gift Wrap

• Party Supplies • Albums •

• Blue Mountain Arts Products

• Children's Gifts •

• Russell Stover Candies



50% OFF

CARDS & BOXED CHRISTMAS CARDS
CHRISTMAS GIFTWRAP & CALENDARS

**"ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW FOR
YOUR SHOPPING PLEASURE"**

6314 Rt.209 Kerhonkson, NY (Corner of Webster Ave.)

Mon.-Sat: 9:30am - 6pm Sun: 11am - 4pm

845-626-5350