

Editorial

14 Reasons We Love Queens On Valentine's Day

Today, February 14, is Valentine's Day 2007. How do we love thee, Queens, our home borough? Let us count 14 ways:

1. We love thy restaurants, at which we can savor food that's eaten in almost every corner of the earth, all of them within easy reach and kind to every budget.

2. We love thy grocery stores. When we feel like cooking at home we can bring the same culinary diversity to our own dinner tables, whether we're preparing our own particular version of comfort food or an elaborate dinner for friends and family.

3. We love thy shopping venues in general. From neighborhood shopping strips lined with local stores with our neighbors as owners and proprietors or big-box, national chains at the borough's shopping malls, all offer quality merchandise at reasonable prices.

4. We love thy parks, from handkerchief-sized pockets of green to vast expanses like Astoria (where we look forward to concerts featuring the Cab Calloway, Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller Orchestras this summer, presented by the Central Astoria Local Development Coalition), Flushing Meadows-Corona and Alley Pond Parks, all established for us by far-sighted civic planners who thought that the people of this borough deserved recreational facilities that ranked among the best in the world.

5. On the subject of the best in the world, we love thy schools. Universal Pre-K, some superlative elementary schools and magnet intermediate schools are found throughout the borough. Our specialized high schools, such as Townsend Harris H.S., are ranked among the best in the city. La Guardia and Queensborough Community Colleges and Queens College, part of the CUNY

system, stand among the best of their kind in the entire country. Our private schools and universities also are considered among the best in existence.

6. We love thy hospitals. No, we're not hypochondriacs, but we know that if we need medical care, some of the best to be found anywhere is right here in this borough and accessible to all.

7. We love thy Mets. No, we're not masochists, either. Our own National League franchise has demonstrated its winning potential many times over. More important, the team consistently demonstrates its heart. The Mets get in there and do their best. That alone is a reason to be proud of them.

8. We love thy USTA stadium. For 11 months out of the year this facility is available for anyone in the borough who wants to play on its courts. During the U.S. Open, the best tennis players in the world come to Queens to compete to see who will emerge the champion, all right at our doorstep and in an easily accessible venue.

9. We love thy libraries. The Queens Borough Public Library system has more materials in circulation than almost any other county library system in the world, and all of them are free for the use of anyone with a library card. Getting a library card is simplicity itself and completely free of any kind of official regulation. You want a card? Get a card. Then borrow anything you like—books, magazines, videocassette tapes, DVDs—all yours, all free.

10. We love thy museums. And by "museums" we don't mean only art museums, although we have plenty of those. The first copier was invented in Long Island City, and there's a museum to celebrate it. The Museum of the Moving Image

offers a hands-on look at the way movies are made and screens films of every kind, from classics to little-known but significant independent productions. See New York City in miniature at the Panorama at the Queens Museum or visit the Queens County Farm Museum for a look at a working farm within the city limits.

11. We love thy zoo (excuse us, we meant Wildlife Center). It has wildlife not usually found in a zoo where bigger, better-known animals attract more attention, and it's a people-friendly place. Since it's a manageable size, you can see it all in one trip, but we urge you to make several visits—there's always something new and different to see.

12. We love thy music. From one end of the borough to the other there's always some sort of a concert or recital going on. From classical to the latest in popular music, from the well known to the esoteric, it's all here, and, like so many of the borough's other offerings, performances usually don't break one's budget.

13. We love thy history, not least because it's so easily accessible. Almost every neighborhood has its own historical society, offering a wealth of information about the borough, from the time the glaciers retreated to the present moment. The Kingsland Homestead, Bowne House and Quaker Meeting House provide a look into the country's past and the forces that shaped this nation.

14. We love thee, our neighbors and readers! If it weren't for you, we'd never know about some of the marvels we've described here. In bringing the news to you, we've discovered a lot of things we think we're far richer for knowing about. You've broadened our knowledge and widened our outlook. We could have no better Valentine's Day gift. Thank you.

Banning Cellphones, Etc. From Crosswalks Is Absurd

State Senator Carl Kruger (D-Brooklyn) announced last week that he intends to introduce legislation that would fine pedestrians and bicyclists if they use their MP3 players, cell phones or other devices while crossing city streets. Anyone found crossing the street while using an electronic device would be issued a summons carrying a \$100 penalty.

We've banned indoor smoking throughout most of the city. We've eliminated trans fat from most restaurant foods; some manufacturers of shortening sold for both domestic and commercial use have announced that the substances will be eliminated from their products as well. We've

enacted laws that summons anyone using a cellphone while driving or not wearing a seatbelt in a moving vehicle. While most of the banned items or practices are definitely harmful, and we're better off for doing without them, the idea that a police officer is to be stationed at a crosswalk to ensure that everyone about to cross a street has switched off or disconnected their cellphone, Blackberry, iPod or MP3 player is completely impractical and patently ridiculous.

We can think of a number of laws that have improved public safety, no matter how unpopular they were when they were first introduced. Kruger's bill is not one of them. Anyone crossing

a street at the signal should be able to continue a phone conversation or text messaging or listen to a musical selection without interference from law enforcement—already fully occupied with keeping the peace and enforcing existing laws. It is plainly the responsibility of this city's drivers to obey traffic signals when the light is against them. As for pedestrians who jaywalk, the risks attendant upon the practice are obvious and, as far as we can see, the responsibility of the individual. Adults do not need the city of New York to serve as their nanny when crossing a street. Kruger's legislation is unenforceable and totally lacking in merit.

Offers Food Card Access

To The Editor:

I have been reading reports in the local papers that highlight the low participation in the Food Stamp/Food Card programs among eligible populations, mostly immigrants. Not surprisingly, Western Queens, with its amazing diversity and large population of recent immigrants, has been identified as one of the two areas in the five boroughs with the lowest levels of participation. So I would like to take this opportunity to mention to everyone that Sunnyside Community Services operates a Food Card Access

Program. Our bilingual outreach staff go out daily to areas with the greatest concentration of eligible individuals to provide information about the Food Card Program and help individuals apply for the benefit.

Sunnyside Community Services has been operating the Food Card Access Program since it was established in 2003 by United Way in partnership with Community Food Resource Center, Seedco, and other community organizations. This program is specifically designed to identify those individuals who are eligible for but not receiving this essential benefit. Our staff set up their spe-

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