

Big Lake

Dude, do the

It's not just about the water.
Well, almost!

By Mark Bond

On a tree-lined stretch of seemingly endless interstate, Exit 20, off I-84, differs little from the previous exits you've passed. However, by making the decision to detour, whether intentionally or by accident, your northward journey will provide ample bragging fodder at the Monday morning water cooler.

Having not succumbed to the digitally enhanced marketing of our South Pocono cousins, the Wallenpaupack region relies primarily on local advertising to post her calendar of events. Of course, you can log on to chamber websites, like www.hawleywallenpaupackcc.com, for an itinerary, or thumb through your most recent edition of *Connections Magazine*, but it's an academic exercise from your inner city flat- the heat is unbearable, the noise intolerable, and the air...well, we won't even go there! You sat in your car and wrestled with the debate- "Relive the previous fifty-one weekends or do something adventurous."

If after topping off the tank and heading west, you can make a quick stop in any of the numerous eateries along Wallenpaupack's southern coast to find, tacked to corkboards, a vast array of entertaining possibilities: dancing, dining, and dreams at their absolute finest. The most unique feature of Lake Wallenpaupack is her many dining ports along her coast.

If you've come for the water, it's a 5700 acre dream come true. Boating rentals, sunset cruises, paddling, and swimming are only a few. Should you crave an authentic adventure with bold-faced bragging rights, weigh anchor with Captain Art Philipp at the Pocono School of Sailing to become certified in keelboat navigation. Imagine leaving the desk on Friday a landlubber then returning to the boardroom on Monday, standing a bit taller with a misty gleam in your eye and wind-blown hair. www.poconosail.com.

Dotting the shoreline of Wallenpaupack are numerous restaurants and cafés offering an equally diverse ambiance and cuisine. While a few sports bars boast big screens, live bands and dancing, other establishments, like Ehrhardt's and The Boat House, offer fine dining amidst candlelight and patio sunsets. Just off the lake, yet close enough to feel her breath, you'll discover all manner of activities that celebrate the native lore; Chicken BBQs, Firemen's Picnics, Parades, Car Shows, Fireworks Displays, All You Can Eat Breakfast Buffets, and Clam Bakes.

Honesdale is the destination, throughout the summer season, for Summer Festival in the Park events, arts and crafts shows, Roots and Rhythm Music, and social occasions Norman Rockwell would have loved to capture.

The 24th Annual Audubon Arts & Crafts Festival is being held at the Wallenpaupack School complex on July 18th where local artisans and nationally renowned painters display their creations in a variety of mediums.

The Delaware Opera, Bethel Woods Center, and the Toyota Pavilion at Montage Mountain serve up acts to liven any evening: REO Speedwagon, Styx, Rascal Flatts, Def Leppard, Cheap Trick, and Dave Matthews Band...all on the same tank of gas.

Hiking, biking, and sightseeing abound, sure to rekindle the romantic flame, just about anywhere you find yourselves within our boundaries. If, however, you left the babysitter cowering after her last session with your children and they're clawing at the car's interior in a hyperglycemic state, a short drive from the lake will welcome you to Costa's Family Fun Park with acres and acres of water slides and rides, golf, batting cages, and adolescent release. www.costasfamilyfunpark.com.

Claws 'N' Paws Wild Animal Park, located just south of 590 in Lake Ariel on Ledge Dale Rd., has been entertaining and educating crowds for thirty-six years with over 120 wild and exotic animals, petting zoos, animal demonstrations, lions and tigers and bears, oh my. Allowing the kids to hand feed the parrots, mine for gemstones, or dirty the knees in the Dino Dig, it's sure to be a hit...still on the same tank of gas. www.clawsnpaws.com.

Don't worry if you find yourself off the beaten path. Besides our BBQs and parades, we're also famous for our fence-side chats. Anyone leaning on a shovel, painting a house, or tending a garden will be happy to point you in the direction of civilization and your next adventure.

As for dreams,
we look forward to
seeing you next weekend.