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If You're Thinking Of Living In:

Sleepy Hollow, NY

A Sense Of The Past In A Diverse Village

By **CHERYL PLATZMAN WEINSTOCK**

AFTER living in Beverly Hills for seven years, Laura and William Carraro, a freelance film producer, longed for the things they couldn't find there.

"I grew up looking at the Hudson River outside the window of my parents' apartment on Riverside Drive," said Mrs. Carraro. "I really wanted to be back looking at that river. I also wanted to live in a neighborhood where I could borrow a cup of sugar and where my kids could have a lifestyle where they could get off the school bus, dump their knapsacks and go out and play."

Also crucial to the Carraros was that their two children grow up in a diverse environment. "I think a lot of life's lessons are learned spending time with people not like you," said Mrs. Carraro.

Last year, the Carraros finally found the place for them -- Sleepy Hollow, a culturally and socio-economically diverse village sloping toward the Hudson replete with many historical landmarks.

When he was 16, Washington Irving hunted and fished in what is now Sleepy Hollow and was inspired by its customs and whimsical stories, said Henry Steiner, the village historian. Irving then wrote "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" about the schoolmaster Ichabod Crane who left a neighbor's party after he tried to court Katrina Van Tassel and encountered the Headless Horseman on the site where Major John Andre was captured with the plans of West Point during the

Revolutionary War. Crane vanished as he rode away from the ghost along what is now Route 9, leaving behind a shattered pumpkin.

Though its connections with its Colonial past, evident in the Philipsburg Manor Restoration, make it an interesting village for children and adults alike, Mayor Philip E. Zegarelli said his village had other merits.

"Sleepy Hollow is really a mirror reflection of the greater metropolitan area," he said. "Its diversity from a socio-economic point of view and the blending of the different ethnic backgrounds present a challenge, but also provide a great opportunity to meld all the groups together."

ANDRES VALDESPINO, a villager who works in neighboring Tarrytown at his law firm, Valdespino Copland, said: "Although the Hudson River is a natural boundary of this village, there are few boundaries within it. This is not a bedroom community. It's more like a corridor. A lot of our neighbors work in town, or nearby and we all gather and play during lunch at the Y.M.C.A."

Barbara Eisert, a sales associate for Houlihan/Lawrence in Tarrytown and Irvington, said the village "used to be a harder sell because of its diversity." Now, she said, "whatever comes on the market sells fast. We have no inventory. Maybe because our name has changed it's put us on the map."

The Village of North Tarrytown was renamed Sleepy Hollow in December

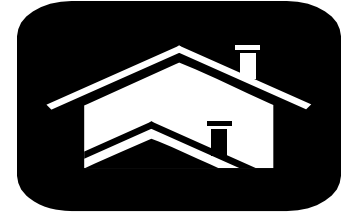
1996. Since then, it has attracted many newcomers. Janet Nold, a broker who is district manager of Coldwell Banker in Tarrytown, said that quite apart from its river views and "affordable price ranges," there are myriad housing options ranging from multifamily homes and single-family dwellings to stately colonials and Tudors on the banks of the Hudson.

Ms. Eisert said housing prices begin in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 range for small, two-bedroom, one-bath colonials, ranches and Cape Cods on 50- by 100-foot properties around the village and in Webber Park. Houses in the \$300,000 to \$375,000 range are larger, but may back on to Route 9.

From there, she said, houses jump to \$450,000 for 1940's and 1950's three- and four-bedroom ranches, split-levels and old colonials with about 2,200 square feet of space on a quarter to a third of an acre in Philipse Manor and Sleepy Hollow Manor. Both neighborhoods have many cul-de-sacs and river views. Ms. Eisert said that renovated homes in the Manors sell for \$450,000 to \$500,000 and that larger homes go for \$650,000 to \$750,000.

Nineteen condominium units are available in two town-house complexes, A.R.C.H. and Pocantico Park Condominiums. "But they rarely turn over," said Ms. Eisert. A two-bedroom town house with a one-car garage on the market is selling for \$128,000.

Downtown there are also 415 two- and



three-family homes scattered along Beekman Avenue and two federally subsidized low-income housing projects with a total of 117 apartments.

"Apartments are rented quickly," said Ms. Nold. They rent from \$950 for a one-bedroom to \$1,200 for a two-bedroom.

What the schools offer is as varied as the housing stock. "They really have something here for each individual child," Mrs. Carraro said. "They can address everyone's needs. From an academic standpoint of view, I think the district compares favorably to the Beverly Hills school district we left. I feel it's just as challenging."

Donald R. Kusel is superintendent of the 2,194-student Public Schools of the Tarrytowns. The district, which serves the village and adjoining Tarrytown, has five schools -- a kindergarten building, one for first grade, a second and third-grade building, the Washington Irving Intermediate School serving grades four through six and the Sleepy Hollow Middle School/High School.

Dr. Kusel said what made the district work so well -- with its diverse student body that is 8 percent black, 5 percent Asian, 38 percent white and 49 percent Hispanic -- was that "we encourage our teachers to experiment."

"A few years ago some teachers in the district began teaching first-graders Spanish after school," he said. "Then our teachers, on their own time, starting extending the classes to kindergarten and second grade and then integrated the curriculum into the school day. Now we're institutionalizing teaching Spanish."

HIS philosophy of melding the student body together is somewhat unique. "We prefer not to focus on a specific holiday, but to study about our students' different lives every day," Dr. Kusel said. "Even though we don't necessarily work a special day in with a party, we want our kids to know about it and we put it on the school calendar."

In addition to sensitizing the students about one another, Dr. Kusel cites as an example of his policies "our absolute

commitment to run an advanced placement course even if only seven or eight kids register for it."

In addition to 15 advanced-placement courses, the district offers several computer science courses and a three-year science research course.

Of the 124 graduating students this year, 77 percent are going on to higher education.

The village has its own police and fire services, as well as the 235-bed Phelps Memorial Hospital Center, which includes a Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Satellite.

VILLAGE landmarks on the National Register of Historic Places include the Tarrytown Lighthouse on the Hudson, the Manor House at Philipsburg Manor, the Captor's Monument at Patriots Park where Major Andre was captured; Kykuit, the mansion that John D. Rockefeller and his son John D. Jr. built in 1913, and the Philipse Manor Railroad Station, restored by the Hudson Valley Writers Center three years ago. The center sponsors readings, courses, performances and other educational events there.

The Old Dutch Church of Sleepy Hollow, a massive stone and brick edifice built in 1685 and immortalized in Irving's ghost story, is also a national landmark. The church, which is still active, is one of six in the village.

The village has a plethora of recreational opportunities in more than 57 acres of parkland.

Visitors to the 18-acre county-owned Kingsland Point Park can picnic, fish and view Kidd's Rock where, said Mr. Steiner, legend has it that Capt. William Kidd conspired with Frederick Philipse to dispose of the pirate's treasure. The private Philipse Manor Beach Club has a 40-slip marina for its members. In 1996 the village opened a catch-and-release trout stream program at the section of the Pocantico River alongside the Old Dutch Church where Irving fished.

But the best opportunity for the village is yet to come.

In June 1996, the 2.8 million-square-foot General Motors plant just north of the Tappan Zee Bridge, which had been primarily producing minivans, shut down, displacing 2,100 employees and creating a large revenue gap for the village. Since then three proposals have been offered for redevelopment, all calling for a mix of housing, offices and retail space.

The proposals for the 96-acre property are now under consideration by both the village and General Motors, which before it closed the plant paid close to \$1 million a year in property taxes and now pays \$185,000, according to Deputy Mayor Mario DiFelice.

Deborah Lindsay, president of the Sleepy Hollow Chamber of Commerce, said that the anticipation of the development of the downtown had attracted many new restaurants to the village, including Casey's Tarry Inn, an Irish pub; La Pastora, a Chilean restaurant, and Hudson Restaurant and the Sleepy Hollow Castle, which serve American fare.

In 1693, Frederick Philipse owned 100,000 acres of land, including Slapershaven (sleepers' harbor in Dutch), which later became Sleepy Hollow. But because his descendant Frederick Philipse 3d was a Loyalist, the land was confiscated during the American Revolution.

A portion of the village became known as Beekmantown in the early 1800's, after Gerard Beekman purchased 750 acres of the property.

The village was incorporated as North Tarrytown in 1874. Farming and milling continued there until the late 19th century when several manufacturers moved in. General Motors opened its complex in 1918.

