

## Our Chalet in New York



Look carefully at the picture--yes, it is a replica of Our Chalet. This building served as a welcoming center to the Children's World of the 1939 New York World's Fair located at Flushing Meadows.

The New York replica of Our Chalet was given by Gimbel Brothers, a well known dry-goods department store in New York City. Dedication occurred on March 12 with Mrs. Herbert Hoover cutting the silver ribbon stretched across the doorway. The blessing of the house ceremony included Girl Scouts wearing costumes of all nations--welcoming the world to New York. Special invitations were mailed to all Girls Scouts. June 3rd was designated as Girl Scout Day. Girls were instructed to come "completely uniformed" to qualify for the special entrance fee of 25 cents.



Troop Five from Arlington, Massachusetts made the weekend trip. On Friday night they took the Arrow from Providence, Rhode Island that docked about eight the next morning in New York. There were twelve girls and four leaders. They visited Our Chalet and witnessed the Girl Scout Pageant. The girls enjoyed the synchronized swim spectacular, the Aquacade, a gorgeous symphony of fountains, music, and colored lights, the Garden of Eden, a dazzling firework display, the globe-shaped Perisphere, General Motors and Kodak exhibitions, and many more attractions. They bought food to make a Sunday night picnic supper on the boat and returned to Providence early Monday morning. The cost of their trip--including the boat fare, overnight at the YWCA and food--came to \$11.19 per girl. The troop had budgeted twelve dollars per girls and had earned half of the expenses.



The Girl Scout Leader Magazine reported that Queen Elizabeth, mother of Queen Elizabeth II, HRH Crown Princess Ingrid of Denmark and Iceland and HRH Princess Martha of Norway visited the Girl Scout Chalet and received special crystal ball souvenirs. Thousands of Girl Scouts and Fair goers visited the welcome center, Our Chalet, at the New York World's Fair during the two seasons--1939 and 1940.



But there is much more to this story. In the fall of 2009, Karen Hening-Speedone of Maryland visited Our Chalet in Switzerland. She wrote that she wanted to see "a bit of her own history". Her grandfather, Robert Schneps, had a knack for being in the right place at the right time. He was able to purchase the Our Chalet replica at the end of the World's Fair. He took measurements, prepared a foundation, built a basement and moved the Our Chalet on a flat bed truck to Long Island. This American Our Chalet became the Schneps family home for the next forty-six years. Karen fondly remembers spending summers with Nanny and Grampy and is sure some of the Girl Scout-Girl Guide spirit soaked into her soul. Karen is a committed Girl Scout, a mother of six with five daughters. Her visit to Our Chalet validated her belief of the importance of our movement.

Karen has shared photographs of the Schneps Our Chalet home. The home located in Port Washington was sold in 1986.

By Diane M. White, June 2010