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A Change in Plans: My Truro Summer

by Deb Flohr

Where do you see yourself in two years? What is your five-year plan? Being asked these questions has always been the bane of my existence, considering I never know where I'll be in six months.

My life has always been a story under construction... written and rewritten more times than I can tell you.

At one point, I thought I had it figured out. I was working a lucrative job in financial sales. I owned a house in Vermont, and had an apartment in New York City. I dated a series of interesting men. I traveled extensively for work and took fabulous vacations all around the world.

Then 9/11 occurred, and New York City's financial sector didn't feel nearly as secure. A transfer to Boston only complicated things. My life needed a more fundamental change.

I was jogging down Massachusetts Avenue one Sunday morning when I noticed a sign in a window. The Cambridge School of Culinary Arts was holding an evening information session. I went back to my boyfriend's apartment and told him I was going to go and see what it was all about.

Upon return from the evening session, a few weeks later, I announced that I was applying to the school. Call me crazy, but I really felt like bells went off in my head the day I ran past that notice – and felt even more passionately about making some big changes after attending the information session.

My first plan was to take classes at night while keeping my day job, but when I got laid off that summer I decided to start school full time in September. I was – and still am – so glad that I enrolled. It was an amazing year, and the best thing I ever did for my professional (and personal) life.

Towards the end of the school year, Adrian Cyr, my regional Italian Chef/instructor, threw out the possibility of working for him and his wife Annette at their restaurant on Cape Cod after graduation. The idea intrigued me.

My original plan had been to sell my Vermont house and move to Italy after graduation but, lo and behold, that plan didn't work out.

With my house still on the market (and pushing plans for Italy onto the back burner) I jumped at the chance to spend the summer on the Cape, working at Adrian's Restaurant in Truro.

I lived in one of the cottages on Adrian's Truro property. My cottage had one bedroom, one bathroom and a kitchen.

My roommate, a coworker from the restaurant, took the bedroom and I took the bunk bed in the kitchen to save on rent – so yes, I literally "lived" in a kitchen for four months!

Each morning, I biked the five miles to and from work for my breakfast shift. Afterward I would ride to one of the glorious Truro, Provincetown or Wellfleet beaches to walk, run, wander or plant myself on a towel to read for an hour.



Race Point Beach

Then I'd bike home, shower and head back for my evening at the restaurant, acting as garde manger, expeditor or whatever other position needed to be filled on a nightly basis.

Most weeks I had Sunday night and all day Monday off. The best Sundays were spent joined by my boyfriend for brunch, beaching it in Wellfleet and catching the Incredible Casuals at the Beachcomber.

The next best thing was driving up Cape to his home in Marstons Mills, to have a somewhat normal home life for a night and day. Despite the amount of hours I spent in the restaurant kitchen, I still found relaxation in cooking for just two people.

Mondays were spent running errands or hanging out by the pool with my sister in Harwich. As an added bonus I got to spend some quality time with my niece and nephews that summer, something I hadn't had much time to do in my previous career.

The Cape got even better after Labor Day. The beaches and roads became less congested and I had more time off to explore what the Cape had to offer.

I traveled the back roads, drove Routes 6, 6A and 28 from end to end. I took jam-making class at the Greenbriar Nature Center, visited several lighthouses, explored the Heritage Gardens and Museum, went to the Sandwich Glass Museum, and saw performances at the Cape Cod Melody Tent.

I went to the flea market in Dennis, the drive-in movie theater in Wellfleet, miniature golf in Harwich, and I enjoyed the stereotypical Chatham day of shopping on Main Street followed by cocktails at The Squire.

I hope Cape residents realize just how lucky they are. Cape Cod has some of the most beautiful beaches, sumptuous restaurants, and an abundance of cultural venues.

The Cape also has quirky local customs and spots that can be best described as endearing. My favorites include the oyster festival in Wellfleet, the annual Provincetown Parade, Spiritus Pizza, the Beachcomber, PJ's, Brewster Seafood, Gina's on the Beach... the list goes on.

I spent that summer reacquainting myself with the person I'd grown into and figuring out what direction to move toward next.

My summer on Cape Cod gave me the time and space to reflect and examine where I'd been and where I wanted to go with my life.

It was a very bittersweet moment when I finally (gasp) crossed the bridge and left the Cape that October.

I never did sell my house – which made it very convenient when I landed a job last fall 16 miles from my home. Imagine that... I had to travel the country and overseas, quit one career, go back to school, explore new options, and move a dozen times to find myself back where I started.

Though I'm sure it's not the end of the story, I find myself in that familiar position of being happy where I am but not knowing where I'll be six months from now.

What I do know is there's no place like home, wherever that may be.



Deb Flohr lives in Vermont (again) and is the banquet manager at the Woodstock Inn & Resort.

She has fond memories of the Lower Cape beaches and visits the Cape every chance she gets.