



■ IN MY HUMBLE OPINION

By Jonathan Charles Fox

Marvelous Milford

Doing it by the book

There are many reasons to visit Milford, PA. Long before being incorporated in 1874, the Native Americans and settlers who lived there enjoyed the forests, lakes and fresh waters of the Delaware River. The village itself was laid out in 1796 by Judge John Biddis, who named the streets after his children and family, and the lanes after his favorite fruits and berries. Rich in history and historically significant, Milford has been drawing folks to settle, and visitors to spend time exploring its many charms ever since. Years ago, I took advantage of a walking tour that focused on the wide variety of Victorian architecture that Milford boasts, while stopping at two stunning landmarks: the Hotel Fauchere (www.hotelfauchere.com) and the Tom Quick Inn (www.tomquickinn.com). Honoring the past is important to the town, but living in the present is equally so, and the plethora of fine dining, art galleries and cool storefronts keep Milford current and alluring on many levels. For me, part of that allure is local legend, activist and



Wendy Stuart Kaplan's memoir, "She's the Last Model Standing," is available at shops like The Milford Craft Show, where the author is a local celebrity.

author Wendy Stuart Kaplan, whose new memoir, "She's the Last Model Standing" has just been published and is making headlines far outside the town limits.

Having done some of my homework (actress, comedienne, model) before meeting up with the author, I suggested sitting down with her to discuss the book, but Wendy is not the kind of woman to sit. "Instead of just having a cup of coffee, lets stroll through town," she suggested. "I love Milford. Let's explore!" I was up for that, but insisted on interviewing her during the process, and as she showed me some of the sights, I peppered the author with questions regarding how the book came about. I already knew some of her story, having read a few chapters, and it was clear from the notes on the back that Stuart-Kaplan has led a colorful life. Recounting the exploits of "one of the most successful 'fit' models in the country," Wendy's story is "told with humor untarnished by malice," the cover notes read. The book takes the reader on a hilarious journey of self-discovery that leads her to studying voodoo in Nigeria to the mean streets of Manhattan, all the while pursuing her dream of becoming a famous model.

"I have thousands of photos and hundreds of stories" Wendy said as we drove through town, stopping to pop into some shops along the way, "and perusing them served as triggers for many of the anecdotes that I touch on in my book. From my earliest memory, I was posing for the camera, so that part was easy. Becoming famous was another story," she laughed. "I'm still working on that."

What is clear is that Wendy is definitely famous in Milford, where she is active in community projects, organizations and the revitalization taking place. "I visited a friend here 14 years ago and fell in love with Milford" she said. "Six months later, I bought my house." Frequent stops in between attractions were necessary, as wherever we went, folks called out to Wendy. "Oh yes, I'm very involved here" she commented. "We are an exceptional community in many ways." Like so many small towns, Milford has had its share of setbacks, but the entire town is galvanized into making sure that it is still a destination, attracting visitors from all over the world. "Milford is a crown jewel, but we have to keep it shining," Wendy shared in her quotable style. "I wouldn't live anywhere else."

She does, in fact, split her time between New York City and Milford, however, because her career as a model is far from over. Although her dream of strutting the runways of Milan and Paris may not have totally come to fruition, Stuart-Kaplan has had a 30-plus year run as a professional "fit model" serving as a "living mannequin" for some of the biggest names in the business. "My career has taken me all over the world," Wendy says, "and has led to my commitment to conservation groups, both here and abroad." Aside from animal rights, the author's involvement with the LGBT community is a driving force in her life and this book "is



Author, actress, comedienne and animal rights activist, Wendy Stuart Kaplan took time out from her book tour to pose with Dharma the Wonder Dog and stroll through Milford, PA.



Author Wendy Stuart Kaplan is asked for autographs everywhere she travels, including Milford, PA's newest hangout, The Frisky Goat Coffeehouse, where proprietor Rebecca Roa, left, enthused about Wendy's new memoir.



RRR photos by Jonathan Charles Fox
"Last Model Standing" author Wendy Stuart Kaplan is still active in the industry, while simultaneously promoting the many virtues of Milford, PA.

only the beginning." One thing is clear: while Wendy has many passions, Milford is her true love and the next chapter is (IMHO) just unfolding now. "Oh, there are many more stories in me," she says. "Writing my past has been the catalyst for writing my future. Look out world, I am on fire!"

Wendy Stuart Kaplan's book "She's the Last Model Standing" is available in print and Kindle versions at www.amazon.com and bookstores. For more on the author, visit www.wendystuarttv.com.



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