

Ep #28: Telling the Story of a Home to Sell a House with Jane Schneider



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Harriet Libov

[Your Real Estate Connection in Westchester](#)

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Welcome to *Your Real Estate Connection in Westchester*. A show for people looking to buy or sell homes in the Northern Westchester County area. Join local real estate expert Harriet Libov as she shares her professional advice on the local real estate market, connects you with knowledgeable community residents, and gives you helpful insights behind the home buying and selling process. Now, let's dive into today's episode.

The fall is a beautiful time to sell a home. This autumn we are entering a shifting marketplace, but in my opinion, we are in a more normal balanced marketplace. Everyone knows it in 2021 and early 2022, the post COVID market for real estate yielded very high prices to sellers and buyers. They bought any property that came on the market regardless of condition, location, and price.

When I sit down with my sellers in any market to list a property, I always ask about the story of their home. What they loved about living there, and what its best features are, and why they bought it. Because chances are the next buyers will be attracted to the property for the very same reason, and that holds true in any market. Then there is a property like 73 Whippoorwill Road in Armonk, which I have currently listed.

The owners were empty nesters when they bought it. They raised their family in Irvington, sent them to public school there, and when the kids went to college, they bought this antique farmhouse on over eight acres of stunning meadow in Armonk. The house is five minutes from the town of Armonk, and just 10 minutes from a North White Plains Express Train to Grand Central. When the family who owns it bought the house, the dad could still commute to Montefiore Hospital, where he worked as a surgeon for 52 years.

They found their perfect place, the best of country life, but still close enough to conveniences, the city, culture, family, and friends. They love

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nature in the views of the pond. This idyllic setting gave the family many wonderful years and memories.

So when listing the home for sale, their daughter told me the story of the home, we crafted a description together, and photos that captured the feeling of the house and property. We still don't know who our buyers are yet, but we believe it will be someone who wants to create a similar lifestyle and enjoy the rustic underground horse stable, stone shed for gardening, and views of the pond.

Ironically, their daughter, Jane Schneider, is a marketing specialist and an interior stylist with over 20 year's experience in business development. She has covered the arts, retail, wholesale, healthcare, and hospitality. She has a background in interior design and floral styling so she's able to create images, vibrant spaces, and stories to help brands blossom. Today, we will talk to Jane about telling the story of a home to sell a house. We will speak to her about her work and tell our listeners about the story of 73 Whippoorwill Road. So let's settle in and enjoy the conversation.

Successful real estate agents that list properties are skilled at noticing a home's great attributes like working fireplaces, open floor plans, and a great kitchen for gathering. I tell the story of a house by imagining what it's like to live there. I always quiz the family about their favorite qualities of the home and ask what they loved about living there. That's the narrative. Then I craft sentences with powerful language to describe the property.

For example, there's nothing like relaxing before a warm fire on a chilly autumn day. Lifestyle is the obvious story. The way the home has been lovingly maintained can be the subplot. The location is the subplot, and so are the possibilities for the next owner to make it their dream home. Recently when I listed 73 Whippoorwill Road in Armonk, I listed the copy to

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read an exciting and unique opportunity to own one of the most sought after properties in the premier estate area of Whippoorwill.

This enchanting home is situated on 8.879 acres, perfectly sited away from the road in a quiet private setting. The property is adjacent to 115 acres of the Fordham Calder estate for Ecological Research. The residence has an idyllic porch that overlooks a meadow and pond with abundant flora and fauna. The parcel includes a garden shed, detached two car garage with an unfinished studio above.

The incredible natural surroundings make it a breathtaking retreat to escape from it all. Yet it's convenient to the vibrant town of Armonk, North White Plains metro north to Grand Central, and located within the award winning Byram Hills School District. So many possibilities to either build your dream home compound or expand or renovate this historically charming home.

The copy was created with the help of the owner's daughter, Jane Schneider, who is a stylist and marketing consultant. She developed strategies to effectively target and expand client base, generate creative ideas for branding, and enhance profitability. Launch and strengthen social media, and to stage homes for rent and for sale.

I brought my local real estate knowledge to the equation, and a photographer that I knew would capture the magic of the property to best market Jane's parents' home for sale. Neither of us set out on this journey to sell this home in a nanosecond as properties were selling in the COVID era. We know we are looking for a special buyer. One that could build their dream home or compound and be one with nature in this incredible setting. Bring animals to the meadow and begin the next chapter to the story.

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With this podcast, you can now listen to the actual story of the house. It's not just copy and photos, but a wonderful narrative. Let's talk to Jane today about the art of storytelling, and how we are targeting our special buyer for this home.

Harriet: Good morning, Jane. How are you?

Jane: Good morning. Nice to be here with you.

Harriet: Thank you so much for joining me today. It's been a pleasure working with you to bring our marketing and real estate expertise together, and finding the synergy to find the buyer for your parents' home. I gave a brief intro of your professional background, but please tell our listeners what you do related to real estate with staging and styling.

Jane: Okay. I usually assist homeowners who are getting their properties ready to rent or to sell. Whether it's renting or selling, my goal really is always the same. It's to transform a space and make it more attractive. So a lot of times people think that that means purchasing art and furniture and decor. But honestly, 80% of the work I do is editing. Editing things out, subtracting things.

Harriet: Decluttering.

Jane: Right, decluttering, reframing. You'd be surprised. For example, some people have beautiful art in their homes or interesting art, but it's in frames that don't fit the space or the picture. So I'm going—

Harriet: Or it's in the wrong place.

Jane: Or it's in the wrong place. Exactly. So I have a client I'm working with in Sag Harbor and helping her buy art for her home. So she's not selling or

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renting, that's a little unusual. But one of the first things we did was look at all her art, and we reframed half of it. It was an investment to do so, but it made such a difference. Yes, we relocated so that it fit the furniture that was over in the spaces.

So a lot of it is repurposing furniture, reframing things, what I call while clearing the decks. So it's putting away all the knickknacks, all the personal photos. People love those, but the prospective buyers or renters don't seem to. Considering things like lighting, adding or adjusting the lighting, bringing plants and flowers into interiors. So things of that nature. I always tell clients to make sure they allow plenty of time to do this.

My parents property, I started over a year ago clearing the decks. Taking everything out of the attic, taking everything out of the garage, trying to get a lot of personal things out of the space. So it's a long process.

Harriet: Right. I'm sure there are so many stagers that, at least in my experience, that come in and really want the sellers to live in a house while they're showing it. That doesn't feel like theirs. That's a big hurdle to cross for a lot of sellers. So I'm sure there are agents and stagers out there who do that. So you must be a breath of fresh air.

Jane: A little bit. I always try to encourage people it's not about making this picture perfect home, but it's about enhancing what you have. That's what I really try to do, and also try to stay true to the house.

Harriet: Which is great, because from my perspective, I actually don't have anybody here in Westchester who takes it from that point of view. I try to do that as best I can, but there are sellers that would prefer something like that and find it much so much less intrusive than the stager who rents and paints and changes their home.

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Jane: Well, painting can help. Painting can help.

Harriet: Right. For sure. But I'm just saying changing your home. As you well know, we have several people considering changing up their life and quite interested in 73 Whippoorwill Road, each with a different goal in mind, but fascinated with the possibilities. It's such an incredible and unique offering, and I feel so privileged to be the one presenting it.

I know you and your siblings still come up and stay. But tell us what it was like for you briefly to live in your parents' home, and for your kids to visit their grandparents through the years. The memories skating on the pond, the birds, the deer. I actually yesterday when I was there talked to a family about skating on the pond, and they loved that. So share with us a little bit.

Jane: Well, I didn't grow up there. I grew up in Irvington, New York, but after I went to college, my parents moved there. I lived on the west coast for a while, and when I came back to go to graduate school, I had the opportunity, lucky enough, to live there full time for two years. It was the perfect place to go to graduate school. Very, very serene and quiet. So it was great for studying.

At that time, I was running a lot, and I was training for the New York Marathon. So it was perfect. Because in my backyard if I went very early, I had the golf course. So of course I had to go before anyone was on it, but I used to do a lot of my short runs on the golf course. For the longer runs, I would head to Banksville and go down towards the mill, which was perfect because it was about nine miles there and nine miles back. So that fit the bill.

So the area I mean, you always see bikers in the area too, but the area is just ideal for that. The home itself is in such a quiet place. When I was in school, a lot of my friends were living in Manhattan. So socially, I could just

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jump on the train and I could be down in the city and see them. So it was perfect for me. My brother also lived there. My oldest brother went to law school and lived there as well.

When I had my twins and I got married, they loved visiting grandmas. I raised them in Larchmont, and when we would drive up 684, they would sing that song over the river and through the woods because it felt like they were really going. I mean we were 22 minutes away in Larchmont, but it felt like they were going to the country. At that time in the meadow, there was some pear trees, and my son Sam was obsessed with pears. So my dad and Sam would go down and pick them.

My parents bought them these pretend tractors. I don't think they were even motorized. You pushed them with your feet, and the kids would pretend to mow the meadow. But you know, we spent, every holiday it was their place that we would go to and gather with the family. We have big gingerbread—Every holiday would make gingerbread cookies. So they just have all these memories of being there.

My daughter was just happy to sit on the porch and play her little musical instrument and look at the birds honestly. It really didn't matter what was going on there. When you enter and you step onto that property, you just feel like you're on a preserve. Whether you're an adult, the child, young, old, everyone feels that way. So it was really ideal for me and my siblings and for my children. They have a lot of fond memories.

Harriet: Right? Fast forward to today, I mean, Armonk is a suburb, and very different from when you brought your kids up. But yet sitting and being on that property still feel the way you describe it, which is quite amazing. So the property's located near the Fordham Calder preserve, and it feels more private than the eight plus acres. Was that an attraction for your parents when they purchased the house?

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Jane: It was. My mom grew up on a large farm in Blairstown, New Jersey, She went to a one room schoolhouse, and she was used to a working farm. So although she wasn't ready at her age when they moved there, they weren't really ready to have it be a working farm again, she considered having goats. She could have or horses. She was thinking of chickens at one point. They named the property Goat Springs Farms, actually, when they moved in. So for her it was kind of bringing her back to her childhood.

But yet, she also studied—She was a nurse. But she studied at SUNY Purchase and went back and got her art degree there. She loved that although it was very country, it was close to a lot of culture in the city. She did a program with the Folk Art Museum. In a heartbeat, you could be in North White Plains jump on the train and in Manhattan, or Westchester has a lot of great museums and things to take advantage of. So it really, for them, it was the kind of the best of both worlds. Quiet, land, nature, but yet not way upstate somewhere.

Harriet: Amazing. I mean it's amazing how it still feels very much that way. I think I mentioned to you yesterday when I was there, a woman came by who played there when she was in kindergarten, and talked about the people who live there prior to your parents. And the farm and the orchards and they had horses. So I got to hear more history about the property. That was really wonderful. Anything else you want to share with us that will further tell the story? You've told us so much, and it's wonderful.

Jane: What's exciting about the property, as you mentioned, is that you can do a number of things with it. You can re envision the existing house where it is, or you could start from scratch and build your dream house there. You could subdivide the property and have a probably a saleable usable lot, or you can kind of create a family compound. A lot of people today are doing that and having their parents as they age in a separate home, but on their property. So there are so many options there. It's kind of exciting. That's

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what I guess you and I have seen with the people who are interested is that they all have different ideas about what they might do.

Harriet: Correct. Want to add that the stable allows for somebody to have a minimum of two horses. I mean if somebody has multiple dogs, I can't imagine a more fabulous place for their dogs to wander. It's almost like they have their own dog park. All the way around. I mean it's a very, very bucolic special property.

So thank you. Thank you for joining me and sharing your thoughts and ideas. It's been a privilege to be there and be a part of this. So thank you for that as well. I'm hoping our conversation will find the right family to buy this property and take it into the next chapter. Wouldn't that be wonderful?

Jane: I as well. I as well. Thank you so much for helping me do so.

Harriet: Okay. Talk to you soon.

Jane: Take care.

I hope you enjoyed this episode with Jane and I talking about her family home. Maybe you know someone looking for a special property like this one. Please ask them to reach out to me. Stay tuned as I highlight other exciting fall events coming up and new topics in real estate.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to miss an episode, you can subscribe on Apple podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts. If you haven't already, I would really appreciate it if you would leave a rating and review to let me know what you think and to help others find *Your Real Estate Connection in Westchester*. It doesn't have to be a five star rating, although I sure hope you loved the show. I want your honest feedback so I can create an awesome podcast that provides tons of value.

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