

'A Google for Greenwich:' Town resident forms Greenwich Newcomers Club

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After [Greg Kraut](#) moved with his wife from Manhattan to Greenwich last June, he had questions about everything from beach passes to restaurants to the byzantine Greenwich Representative Town Meeting (RTM).



"I didn't know which restaurants and shops were good or what the community groups were. I didn't know anything about the town government, which was different than any other government I had ever encountered," Kraut recalled. "It took me several months to navigate through the system and learn how to do things."

Nearly a year after moving to town, Kraut is running the Greenwich's Newcomers Club for people who are new to Greenwich to meet each other and exchange information. "We're a portal when you move to Greenwich, with everything from how to find a nanny to the important town phone numbers to how to fight a parking ticket in the city," he explained. "You want to get involved with the YMCA or volunteer for a non-profit? Here's who you speak to. You want to know more about Greenwich real estate? Here're three realtors to speak to. We're like a Google for Greenwich."

The Greenwich Newcomers Club also offers monthly wine and cheese gatherings for newcomers every first Wednesday of the month at Jewels by Viggì on Greenwich Ave. The club is hosting plenty of events this spring and summer, including a cocktail party on May 20, a poker night at [Greenwich Water Club](#) on June 17, a barbecue at Tod's Point on June 19 and a trip to the polo grounds on July 11. "We're just trying to get people together to really enjoy everything that Greenwich has to offer," said Kraut.

He decided to form the club after learning that the [Greenwich Newcomers & Neighbors Club](#) was defunct, and the Old Greenwich - Riverside Newcomers Club catered to their own neighborhoods.

"I started out just talking to people -- when I was at a restaurant, on the train commuting to New York, or playing tennis or golf -- wherever I would go," he said. "It turned out that a lot of people had the same need. They didn't know where the shops, restaurants and community organizations were, and they wanted to meet other people."

Then Kraut set up a dinner last January for 15 people he had just recently met. Everyone seemed to know someone else who was interested, and within four months, 55 residents had joined the club. He hopes the club will have a few hundred members within the next two or three years, and offer different interest groups.

Kraut considers a newcomer anyone who's lived in Greenwich for less than five years. "What we're finding you can live here for two to three years and not really know anyone, depending on where you live," he explained. "It's really for anyone who wants to get involved in the community."

He has also generated enthusiasm among Greenwich restaurants and vendors to support the organization. Several restaurants have agreed to give a 10% discount off the bill of newcomers when they present their membership card.

There is no charge for membership at this time, though Kraut expects that the club will eventually charge a small fee for yearly membership. He is currently funding much of the cost of various activities himself with support from restaurants, vendors and individuals who have been volunteering their time.

Helpful information for Greenwich newcomers about the town as well as a full roster of the club's upcoming events is available at www.greenwichnewcomerssociety.com. Those interested in joining the club can register directly on the site, then make reservations for the events. Residents with

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questions can also call Kraut at 203-278-8044 or email him at

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