



September 1, 2025

Hello everyone!

I am so excited to see you in just a few short weeks! Yes, we are in the 'burbs of Chicago and not downtown...but there is plenty to explore nearby on the North Shore of Chicago. I was born on the North Shore and have miraculously ended up back here so I am eager to share all the insider info I have. At the venue, we are a ten-minute drive from the Chicago Botanic Gardens, multiple cute town shopping and dining centers, and the beach. I live a convenient 7 minutes from the hotel, so feel free to ask me anything. I want you to have a great time in a part of Chicagoland you might not visit otherwise!

Transportation/Parking:

From airport: If you are not renting a car, it's easy to grab an Uber, Lyft, or even a taxi from the airport. To meet your rideshare or taxi driver, head out any of the sliding doors at baggage claim. You can tell your driver what door you are at (or they will tell you where to wait). I often call 303 Taxi from the airport (847-303-0303), which offers a flat rate of \$40 to the city of Northbrook, where the hotel is. You can wait for your car in the first lane of traffic for rideshare and the second lane for taxi.

If you are driving to ASP, there is complimentary self-parking at the hotel.

Airport Info:

O'Hare Airport is one of the busiest airports in the country. However, they are usually pretty efficient. If you are checking a bag, please plan to be at the airport ~1.5 hours before your flight. If you are walking straight through security, an hour should be sufficient, but I am usually on the safe side and give myself 1.5 hours. Midway is smaller, but I would give yourself a similar time cushion there. Just be warned that the drive to get there is at least an hour, so plan accordingly.

Meeting Info:

If you are staying at the Renaissance Chicago North Shore Hotel, you'll only need to ride the elevator down to the lobby to participate in the conference. Most of the conference rooms as well as our amazing vendors and fun silent auction will be on the 1st floor. 1st floor meeting spaces include: Northbrook Ballroom, Winnetka Ballroom, and the Glencoe Room. Lower level meeting spaces include: Highland Park, Skokie, and Wilmette Rooms. Each day will start in the Northbrook Ballroom. Vendors will be outside of the Northbrook Ballroom, and the silent auction tables will be in the Glencoe Room next door.

The opening reception will be held at the conference hotel on Wednesday, September 17th from 6pm-9pm in the Northbrook Ballroom.

Most sessions will be in the Northbrook and Winnetka Ballrooms. If you are looking for a quiet place to rest and recuperate from the busy pace of the meeting, head down to the Quiet Room located in the Skokie conference room. If you need to prepare, the Speaker Ready Room will be in the Highland Park room. The joint ASP/MPIG poster session will happen on Friday night in the Northbrook Ballroom. Join us on Saturday afternoon in the Winnetka Ballroom for the business meeting.

In-hotel Dining:

RLounge – This bar/restaurant is open every day from 3pm to midnight (1am on weekends). Conveniently located between ballrooms in the lobby, it is an easy stop for food and drinks.

Pancetta Regional Kitchen + Bar – If you're feeling hungry earlier in the day but don't want to venture out of the hotel to forage for food, this restaurant is located behind RLounge and is open all day (6am-10pm on weekdays, 7am-10pm on weekends).

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse – This famous steakhouse is located within the hotel and is open daily from 4pm to 9pm with a happy hour from 4pm-6pm.

Eating Out:

If you want to get out of the hotel but don't want to drive to a nearby town (see below), there are plenty of food options within walking distance of the hotel.

Groceries:

Mariano's is a 2-block walk from the hotel.

Quick Bites:

Starbucks, Potbelly's, Chipotle, Roti Mediterranean Grill, and Panera are all within a couple blocks of the hotel.

Restaurants:

[Prairie Grass Cafe](#) – New American cuisine using fresh, local ingredients. This is a favorite in my family.

[Ron of Japan](#) – Teppanyaki steakhouse where servers do tricks on a communal stove. Come here if you want shrimp thrown at you and onions turned into a volcano.

[Morton's Steakhouse](#) – Another fantastic steakhouse in the area. Classy as usual.

[Barnaby's of Northbrook](#) – A self-serve restaurant known for its thin crust pizza. Casual and dependable. Non-pizza options on the menu as well.

[The Claim Company](#) – American comfort food. Need I say more?

[Charlie Beinlich's Food and Tap](#) – A small, local tavern with a limited menu but known for its burgers and shrimp cocktail. I grew up hearing my parents rave about both since this hidden gem has been going since 1950. This is a longer walk, but worth it.

[Francesca's Hole in the Wall](#) – Another small restaurant that's been around for a while (30 years) but this time known for its Italian. This is also a longer walk but worth it. This is a limited menu, and they don't take reservations, so be ready to wait.

Activities:

[Chicago Botanic Gardens](#) – 385 acres of gardens and green space, including areas for research and conservation. The gardens are a true gem of the area so be sure to check them out. They are a short 7-minute drive from the hotel.

[Ravinia Music Festival](#) – Reserve a seat under the pavilion or grab a blanket and picnic in the grass. This outdoor music venue serves food and drinks, and you can also bring your own. A range of musicians come to play including Weird Al, the Beach Boys, Juanes, John Legend, Counting Crows, and the Roots. There are also sing-alongs and classical concerts. Of course, now that I am writing this, it looks like there aren't concerts in September, but I'm leaving it on here anyway. It is an 8-minute drive from the hotel.

[Skokie Lagoons](#) – This 894-acre nature reserve has boat access, canoe and kayak rentals, fishing, biking and walking trails, and picnic areas. My family loves to ride bikes here and rent canoes, and there is a variety of local wildlife. We've even seen bald eagles. This is a 5-minute drive from the hotel.

[Glencoe Beach](#) – Every town that has lakefront property on the North Shore has a local beach. This one is only an 8-minute drive from the hotel. The weather should be nice enough to sit, walk, or even swim, but since the summer is over, there is no charge to get in.

[Baha'i Temple](#) – This is a little farther drive (20 minutes), but I had to add it since it is one of only eight in the world. Not only is the architecture beautiful, but it's right across the street from the lake and a block from the Wilmette beach (Gillson Park), making it a fun visit on multiple levels. Feel free to walk in and explore. There is information about the Baha'i faith and the temple itself inside. Fun fact: Rainn Wilson went to the same high school as I did, and it's because his parents moved to Wilmette to live near the Baha'i community.

[curaleaf](#) – This dispensary is within walking distance from the hotel. That's all.

Bonus! Movie locations – If you are an 80s movie buff, you might be interested to know that the *Home Alone* House (681 Lincoln Ave, Winnetka), the *Home Alone* church (1024 Lake Ave, Wilmette), the *Home Alone* corner store and associated chase scene (940 Green Bay Rd, Winnetka) and Cameron's house from *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (370 Beech St. Highland Park) are all within relatively short driving distance.

Most John Hughes films were filmed somewhere in the area with *Home Alone*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, and *Uncle Buck* all shot scenes at the Northfield campus of New Trier High School. (The *Home Alone* basement scene was shot in the pool at New Trier because of all the water.)

Sixteen Candles had scenes shot at the Winnetka Campus of New Trier. The term 'breakfast club' is what we really used (and still use) at New Trier to refer to morning detentions, and where the movie borrowed its name from. Breakfast Club was also shot at Glenbrook North High School. Finally, the original *Mean Girls* was based on New Trier High School and Evanston Township High School and refers to places like Old Orchard Mall and Walker Brothers Pancake House that are all in the area. Ok, I'll stop now...I think I've made my point

Shopping and Dining:

We are a short drive from lots of cute towns on the North Shore of Chicago. Check them out for boutique-y shops and restaurants:

Downtown Glencoe is a 7 minute drive

Downtown Northbrook is a 9 minute drive

Downtown Winnetka is a 10 minute drive

Downtown Highland Park is a 12 minute drive

Downtown Highwood is a 14 minute drive

Like I said, there's a lot more in the area than meets the eye at the hotel so please feel free to explore. I can think of lots of other things to do as well so let me know if there is something you don't see on this list, and I'll get some recommendations. Looking forward to seeing you all soon!

Best,

Katie Amato, ASP 2025 Local Host

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