

# Scotch Plains-Fanwood Press

## Memories of Fanwood live on in book by early resident

Author Jacqueline Harper Cecchetti hopes readers will enjoy the recollections of her youth in the book *Fanwood — The Way it Was, The Way We Were*.

"Whether or not the reader is of my age group or has grown up in Fanwood, I think there is something in it for everyone to enjoy," said Ms. Cecchetti, a former resident. "That is the feedback that I have been receiving. Even my daughter told me she could not put it down!"

"As for how the booklet all came about... I've always loved to write — stories, poetry, letters, what have you — and I had been transcribing oral taped interviews of older Scotch Plains-Fanwood citizens, as they recounted their memories of the old days, for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Historical Society," she said.

Society members were most lavish in their praise of her work, said Ms. Cecchetti, and suggested a 'self-interview.'

It seemed like a good idea, said Ms. Cecchetti, who was busy jotting down bits and pieces of things as they would come to mind. "I was always jamming hastily scratched notes into my pockets, as I'd think of them, wherever I might be," she said. "I typed them up, edited them, rearranged, proofread over and over and finally had the finished product, amounting to 31 pages. At one point, I was home from work for two days with the flu, and that is really when I got the bulk of the work onto my computer."

Ms. Cecchetti then decided to coordinate the booklet with the town's Centennial Celebration.

At first Ms. Cecchetti thought she would write the booklet in chapter form; e.g., a chapter on municipal services, a chapter on transportation, a chapter on

school and teachers, a chapter on the stores, the people, one about recreation, one about wartimes, etc., but soon realized this would entail a great deal of outlining and work.

"So I decided just to write it in a 'conversational' way, as things would come to my mind that I remembered, as if I were just chatting with an old friend, and I really think people enjoy it more reading it that way," she said.

"Writing the booklet was really pure pleasure for me," she said. "People are always asking whether I used any kind of reference books, or kept a journal all those years. The answer is an unequivocal no. As I sat before my typewriter, the memories just drifted out onto the keyboard, one being the catalyst for another; and, in fact, I dare say I could probably sit down right now and do a sequel."

Call it photographic memory, or whatever you will, Ms. Cecchetti does not know just what it is that enabled her to recapture so much of "yesteryear."

"I've just always been able to remember in vivid detail everything that happened in my growing-up years," she said. "That's probably why I'm a good speller ... If I see a word once in print, I'll always know how to spell it."

The book is selling for \$4 at the Martine Avenue Book Shop and the Pyramid Book Shop.

In addition, said Ms. Cecchetti, her "terrific mother," a Fanwood resident for over 62 years, has a supply of booklets, or write to Ms. J. H. Cecchetti, 27 Old Forge Dr., Warren, N.J. 07059. Ms. Cecchetti will donate a portion of the sale of each booklet to the Fanwood Rescue Squad.



JACQUELINE HARPER CECCHETTINI