

# UPPER SADDLE RIVER VOICES SPOTLIGHT



## A VISUAL AND ANECDOTAL INVESTIGATION INTO WHY THIS TOWN IS SPECIAL

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# THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A fresh and exclusive look inside my creative process



Upper Saddle River is a pretty unique place.

But there must be some reason why this small town, with no sidewalks or downtown and with a handful of traffic lights, must be special.

And that's how my project got started. I focused on one central question: Why is Upper Saddle River special to our residents?

In other words, why did people choose to live here?

My goal was to create something memorable to answer that.

Something small, yet impactful. I relied on what I knew best - a bit of investigative journalism.

That meant interviewing, collecting photos, and research.

I contacted USR Cares, a local organization that reaches out to residents.

I also reached out to the Historical Society - more on that later.

Each one of the residents I interviewed has lived here for a different amount of time for different reasons and have had varying levels of community involvement.

Through those interviews, I've collected heartfelt anecdotes and touching images to hopefully create unique

responses as to why this town is special.

That being said, I am extremely honored to be able to tell their stories and share their photographs.

Also, it's important to recognize that our town is physically built on some pretty unique land.

That's where the USR Historical Society comes in.

They helped me understand the complex history hiding within the boundaries of our town and how that's impacted our residents.

Through extensive interviews and detailed research from informative sources, I pieced

together an answer that's held in the coming pages.

A collection of stories and conversations, connected by photographs, is why this town may be special.

USR is a tight - knit community filled with residents of all different walks of life and experiences.

Residents' stories shape this town. Our complex history shapes our town. And it makes a great story to tell.

With your efforts, I've compiled this time capsule that can remind our residents how special it is to be a USR resident.

I hope you all can enjoy what I've put together and the contributions everyone has made.

There are many people I need to thank for their contributions to my project.

To USR Cares - for connecting me with residents and getting my name out there with my project.

To USR Historical Society - for detailed information and beautiful photographs.

To Mrs. Christine Ferrarie - for advising my project and guiding me in with next steps.

And to all my participants - for taking the time to talk to me about your experiences and sharing your photographs. Thank you.

# TURNING THE PAGE ON NEW CHAPTERS IN TOWN

## A look at Upper Saddle River's history and its legacy today

How does such a small town manage to connect residents from all different walks of life and engage them in various ways?

It has something to do with how Upper Saddle River was developed.

European settlers claimed pieces of land in the valley during the 1600s.

For the next two hundred years, immigrants who settled in town were mainly farmers.

They owned scattered farms and grew fruits, grains and corn, which continued through to the twentieth century.

For example, Walter Weiss' poultry farm by the Old Stone Church raised chickens in the early 1900s.

The Carlough family ran an apple farm that sold the crop by the bushel until the 1950s.

John Kroner's strawberry farm, the last strawberry farm in town, was

(at the end of its existence), a pick-your-own place popular among residents. His farm operated until the mid-1970s.

Similarly, Mettowee Dairy Farms attracted townspeople because of their freshly churned milk and produce.

Those farms left their legacies on the street names all around town.

Artifacts and photographs of these farms are



(Left) Walter Weiss feeding chickens on his farm near present-day Weiss Road. (Above right) Sam Kanreck, a farmer for the Carlough Apple Farm, loading apples onto a wagon to sell. (Below right) John Kroner posing by his farm with his home-grown strawberries. Photos courtesy of the USR Historical Society.

owned by the Upper Saddle River Historical Society today.

from the USR Historical Society tells me.

Upper Saddle River was no exception.

In the span of a few years, the population grew from eight hundred to several thousand.

This is when the USR we know and love today began to truly develop.

“Our town owes a lot to the people who did the zoning in the 1950s”, Nona Maher, a trustee of the USR Historical Society tells me.

“When a lot of farmers that had been here for generations began to sell their land, our town started to change.”

The land ordinances passed during this time by the mayor and council regulated that the town would have one acre zoning, which was different from other towns that allowed homes to be built on smaller plots of land.



The Hopper Goetschius House, photographed around the 1920s. Photo courtesy of the USR Historical Society.

Additionally, the 1739 Hopper Goetschius House was home to the Hoppers (later the Goetschius family), a family of farmers who owned land that extended up Lake Street to Montvale and north along East Saddle River Road to where Cider Hill is currently.

Their house has remained an important historical site and reservoir of information and artifacts.

Most residents lived simple lifestyles, with social life centered around farming and religious life at church.

Kids knew each other through classes at the one-room school.

“It was like a big family here,” Kay Yeomans, a curator

“People took care of each other - that was the colonial way.”

After World War II and during the 50s baby boom,

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**“It was like a big family here. People took care of each other - that was the colonial way.”**

*USR Historical Society curator Kay Yeomans*

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small farm towns underwent tremendous population growth, leading to the rise of suburbs.

“Those zoning laws have kept our town’s historical and rural quality, even though there are so many large homes

and fewer older homes today,” Nona continues.

“But the fact that we are a much more rural town than the towns around us is because of those on the council who fought to get the zoning laws passed.”

Since the sixties, the town's population growth has plateaued.

It has become more of a commuter town, where families plant their roots and send their kids to local schools.

Today, Upper Saddle River is no longer the farm town it used to be.

It's now filled with large private residences, paved roads and a slew of new faces and families.

However, traces of USR's past are still visible.

Some mills on former



USR at the corner of Lake Street and East Saddle River Road in 1964. Photo courtesy of the USR Historical Society.

The Hopper-Goetschius house has now become a museum.

Local churches and the

Saddle River remains relatively rural. There are no sidewalks, or a downtown. And this is what helps bring residents together.

“Talking and meeting someone on a side street on my daily walk - it gives a much more relaxed feel,” Nona remarks.

“You just talk to people and I think it is much easier to connect with them.”

Those connections are strengthened by the variety of activities offered in town.

Scouts, sports and volunteering are ways that families stay connected with each other.

And even though the town may feel more like an extended family now, residents can still find a way to provide for those in need.

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**“I hope that USR continues to grow and change, but in a subtle way where it keeps its rural flavor. That will keep our community more friendly and close-knit.”**

*USR Historical Society member Nona Maher*

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farms have been preserved and designated as landmarks.

library are a hub of activity for various clubs and groups.

Also, compared with surrounding towns, Upper

“For example, USR Cares makes sure that residents who fall through the cracks get the assistance they need,” Kay Yeomans notes.

“It’s nice to know that the community will still step in to make a difference, even three hundred years later.

Although old landmarks are disappearing and new faces fill the town, there’s no doubt that USR has been able to maintain a unique rural atmosphere.

“I hope that USR continues to grow and change, but in a subtle way where it keeps its rural flavor,” says Nona. “That will keep our community more friendly and close-knit.”



The *Once in Upper Saddle River* watercolor painting done by William Yeomans displaying former structures reminiscent of older times in town.

# USR VOICES SPOTLIGHT

## *RESIDENT OPINIONS*

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### MEMORIES AND MOMENTS FROM OUR FORMER MAYOR

#### Former Mayor Ken Gabbert shares his thoughts on his time in USR

Upper Saddle River's population stands at eight thousand residents.

There's one store and there are three traffic lights.

"Despite that, I think people are starting to appreciate the quiet and the intimacy of this small community", Dr. Ken

Gabbert tells me over the phone.

Ken Gabbert has lived here for thirty-three years with his family.

His career brought him from Glendale, Arizona in 1988 to White Plains, New York.

He settled in Upper Saddle River.

At the time, the borough was mostly filled with single family houses and scattered farms. USR has grown significantly since the eighties, but has still maintained its rural feel.

Most houses occupy an acre of land and streets are kept quiet. Facilities are within three miles of borough hall, making local governments easily accessible.

"Here, if I have an issue I'd want addressed, I can just

call up the mayor or a council member if they've got a minute to meet," his voice echoes.

"We didn't have that in Glendale."

Residents can contact borough hall about their concerns and easily get involved.

Community engagement and volunteering are important in a town like USR.

Dr. Gabbert first became involved with volunteering when he was invited to chair the town's centennial anniversary in 1994.

"With the help of many levels, we got all the clubs, social groups and youth organizations involved," he recalls.

"We planned some activities that culminated in a picnic in September."

That was the first annual USR day, which became Oktoberfest nineteen years later.

After years of recreational volunteering, his



Dr. Ken Gabbert's official mayor picture. Photo courtesy of Dr. Ken Gabbert.



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**“ If I have an issue I’d want addressed, I can just call up the mayor or a council member if they’ve got a minute to meet.”**

*Former mayor Dr. Ken Gabbert*

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kids inspired him to get more involved.

He joined the USR Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

“Now, I’m a lifetime member of the ambulance corps,” Dr. Gabbert informs me.

“Also, I’m chairperson for the USR Republican Municipal Committee.”

He has served as chairperson of that committee for the past five years.

The Municipal Committee gets representation closer to the people for each political party.

Each of the five precincts in the borough selects two individuals, chosen by voters during the primary election.

Dr. Gabbert’s political involvement doesn’t stop there.

He was also the mayor from 2004 to 2011.

During those years, he also served on the Northwest Bergen County Mayor’s

Association as the chairman for seven years.

“At that time in USR, there was a lot of division between the two political parties



Mayor Gabbert reading to children at Reynolds Elementary School, 2011. Photo courtesy of Dr. Ken Gabbert.

and within each party,” he recounts.

“My goal was to bring people together and get

everyone back on a focused future.”

Some of his endeavors as mayor include working on state-mandated affordable housing projects, renovating parkland and preserving historic areas.

He also made frequent appearances at local events, schools and organizations.

One of his most notable achievements as mayor is the work he’s led for Lions Park.

The fields weren’t in great condition when he came into office - so Dr. Gabbert and municipal officials organized efforts to get them completely

renovated and build new fields.

With the help from the USR School Board, Dr. Gabbert also helped commission a field house in the early nineties.

It was originally a concern voted down by citizens.

“Whenever people have concerns, we want to address and resolve them quickly,” Dr. Gabbert states.

“I want people to speak up if something’s wrong and I’ll work to resolve those issues.”

Most of his projects have come from Vision 2020, a program Mr. Gabbert implemented back in 2005 with the co-chairs of Borough Hall, historian Bill Yeomans and councilwoman Debrorah Viola.

Vision 2020 surveyed residents on where they wanted to see changes in town.



Dr. Gabbert giving blood during a blood shortage in 2004.  
Photo Courtesy of Dr. Ken Gabbert.

Possible areas of improvement included recreation, roads, schools and political engagement.

“We’ve completed virtually every single

“They’re no longer concerns for us.”

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**“We’ve completed virtually every single recommendation on that list by the time I left office in 2011. It’s gotten us far into the future and where we are today.”**

*Former mayor Dr. Ken Gabbert*

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recommendation on that list by the time I left office in 2011,”

Dr. Gabbert says proudly.

“It’s gotten us far into the future and where we are today.”

Dr. Gabbert got that philosophy started. Our current mayor, Joanne Minichetti, did a follow-up survey in 2014 after revising the original list.

All the recommendations are completed on that list as well.

“What’s great is that things that have taken a decade to address are now getting resolved,” he reminisces.

That’s one of the other benefits of living in a small town.

Concerns are quickly addressed and resolved. And residents are quick to spring into action.

But one of the best benefits of Upper Saddle River is still the peaceful life.

There’s a certain sense of comfort and familiarity when people can just walk into borough hall or stroll through parks, old churches and cemeteries.

“USR is one of the places that seems average at first,” Dr. Gabbert tells me.

“But once you’ve lived here long enough, you can see the positive relationships and great memories you’ve formed here.

# LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

## Long-time resident and Lion Robert “Bob” May’s view

Mr. Robert “Bob” May first came to Upper Saddle River forty-four years ago.

He attended school in Ohio, graduated and got married and served in the Air Force.

His job with IBM in Franklin Lakes brought him here to USR. He retired in 1986.

10 years later, a neighbor asked if Mr. May would like to attend a Saddle River Valley Lions Club Meeting.

Mr. May said, “I didn’t know much about the Lions. I

just went to the carnival and Lions park. I also knew about the apple and potato sales, but that was it”.

So he joined. The Lions are a group of volunteers from USR, Saddle River, Ramsey, Mahwah and Allendale who raise money and serve people in need in local communities.

After he joined, Bob May was named secretary of the club. He has made sure the records were kept and took minutes at meetings for nineteen years.

He has also been the club’s treasurer and served as the club’s president for four years.

As treasurer, he kept track of files and funds. As president, he was the leader and organized events.

The Lions took on many community-based projects to improve the livelihood of citizens.

There are a few that residents might remember, such as the Saddle River Valley Cultural Center renovation back in 2001.



Robert M. “Bob” May as President of Saddle River Valley Lions Club at a meeting, circa 2006. Photo courtesy of Bob May.



Lion Bob May (right), along with fellow Lions, building a ramp for handicapped persons at former Saddle River Valley Cultural Center in Upper Saddle River.

“There was no handicapped access to the building”, Mr. May points out.

“We Lions funded and provided the labor to build the ramp you’ll see today.”

The Saddle River Valley Cultural Center was a place for youth activities such as artistic endeavors, shows and entertainment.

Although the building was repurposed a few years ago, the ramp is still there.

When the Lions organized back in 1958, USR was pretty much all rural.

And in the middle of town, there was a patch of swampland.

Citizens quickly realized the town needed a recreational area for the youth.

That’s where the Lions came in. They drained the swamp and built the first baseball fields. Over the years, they honored former members by adding memorials.

Appropriately, the park was soon renamed Lions Memorial Park.

Early on, the Lions also hosted many fundraisers. One of the first was the Apple and Potato Sale.

“The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts assisted the Lions and went house to house selling apples and potatoes,” Mr. May reminisces. “Shortly after came the first carnival and the car

continue to be at the annual town carnival.

Mr. May is still an active Lions member. He is also involved with our town's emergency response efforts.

For five years, he was the first leader of the USR Community National Response Team (CERT), which was organized seven years ago.

He coordinated efforts to provide resources for USR EMS, police and the DPW during major emergencies.

Over the past forty-four years, Mr. May has seen some major changes in town.

“The one thing that hasn’t changed is that it’s still a good place to live, an excellent place to send your kids to school, and there are still many

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**“There was no handicapped access to the building. We Lions funded and provided the labor to build the ramp you’ll see today.”**

*Lions Club member Robert “Bob” May*

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raffle back in 1959.”

Today, the apple and potato sale is now an annual golf outing.

The car raffle and carnival was held every year up until the pandemic and will

opportunities for townspeople to volunteer and give back to the community,” he informed me.

But not everything is the way it was. Back in 1977, it was a garden farm town.

Old farms don't exist today. They've either disappeared or become shopping centers and residences.

"There's people who do, for nostalgic reasons, who wish USR could go back to the apple orchards of the 1950s. But this is progress," Mr. May concludes.

"You can't turn back the clock. So look through the windshield and not through the rearview mirror."



Lion Bob May working a game of chance booth at the Lions Club Carnival in Upper Saddle River. Photo courtesy of Bob May.

## FROM NEW YORK CITY TO UPPER SADDLE RIVER

### Eleanor Ivory's journey and how she settled down here



Eleanor Ivory, circa. 2014. Photo courtesy of Paul Ivory.

Eleanor Ivory's house is a tiny brown cottage, tucked away behind trees.

Her son, Paul Ivory, answers the door and welcomes me in.

Streaks of sunlight stretch from the treetops, dotting small rainbows on her carpet.

"That's Eleanor," Mr. Ivory says. He gestures to a small figure sitting on the floral-printed couch, who gives me a shy wave.

There's a number of wedding photos, shots with parents holding their

kids and a large family portrait.

Some of them are hanging up on the wall. Others lay on the table in front of me.

I turn my attention back to Eleanor, who's doing a crossword puzzle.

She sets it down as I take my seat in the armchair across from her.

"I'm ninety-four, soon to be ninety-five," she begins with a soft voice and leans back into the couch and nods.

Mrs. Eleanor Ivory was born in the Bronx.

She attended grade school in Corona and Flushing High School.

“I came from an Italian family,” Eleanor tells me. “I speak very little Italian, though I understand it.”

She explained that her grandmother only spoke Italian. “It was a matter of listening and trying to learn it myself.”

That skill came in handy when she became a registered nurse at Brooklyn Hospital. She was called in to translate for Italian patients.

After finishing rotations,



Eleanor Ivory posing for her nursing school photo in 1945. Photo courtesy of Paul Ivory.

Eleanor settled on the medical floor. There, she nursed all kinds of patients.

“The kinds that want you to wipe their behinds. And

the ones who are always apologizing. And some just want to hold a hand,” Eleanor recounts. “Those were some

wing added next to the kitchen”, Paul remembers.

“His office was literally connected to the house.

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## **After finishing rotations, Eleanor settled on the medical floor. There, she nursed all kinds of patients.**

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good memories.”

At the hospital she also met her future husband, Neil who was a doctor finishing his residency at the time.

“We were both Catholic. We’d walk from the hospital to the church,” Eleanor says. The two devoted their time to a more serious relationship in the coming years. They were married soon after.

In 1980, her husband spent two years in the Air Force as a doctor during the Korean War. The couple settled in Washington DC for a while and moved to Ridgewood in 1955, where Dr. Neil

Ivory started his practice as a cardiologist.

“Mom and Dad’s home in Ridgewood was a three-story colonial home with an office

The family also grew with the addition of nine children who went to Catholic school and participated in a variety of activities, including scouts, sports, music and dance.

“They’re all over the country now”, she gestures to the collection of wedding photos on the coffee table.

But that isn’t all of her family. Eleanor’s youngest sister, Dolores, deserves mention.

When Eleanor was eighteen months old, Eleanor, along with two of her siblings, were placed in an orphanage by her mother, who took Dolores and divorced her husband.

“Her Aunt Francis took her out of the orphanage and raised her,” Paul adds.

“This was 1928, when familial ties weren’t well-traced. We always wondered what happened to Dolores.”

But today, with DNA tracing, Paul's sister tracked

Eleanor's mother also raised another family.

Later, they found out Eleanor had half-siblings named Preston and Gloria.

"We try to keep in touch with them with Zoom," Paul says. "It's been going on for two years."

He turns his attention back to his mother.

"My family is scattered all over but it's been nice in Upper Saddle River," Eleanor replies.

"It's a great place to retire. The community is cozy and quiet.

And we've celebrated many major anniversaries here. I'll always remember that."

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**"My family is scattered all over but it's been nice in Upper Saddle River. It's a great place to retire. The community is cozy and quiet. And we've celebrated many major anniversaries here. I'll always remember that."**

*Resident Eleanor Ivory*

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down Dolores' daughter ninety years after the two were separated.

After she left Eleanor at the orphanage, her mother started a new life with a new family in Philadelphia.



The Ivory family's portrait, taken in 2007. Eleanor Ivory seated in center. Courtesy of Paul Ivory.

# Let's go, let's go, let's go

## A Look Inside the Life of Mrs. Sydney Sue Helfand

When I rang the doorbell to Sydney Sue Helfand's house, I heard a cacophony of squawks and chirps.

So I wasn't surprised when I saw why. Nine birds.

They're bouncing around in their cages, some of them flapping their wings.

Others are quiet and observant.

A retired English teacher and avid birdkeeper, Mrs. Sydney Sue Helfand is a long-time USR resident who has lived here for 54 years.

"The noise doesn't bother you?" I asked as I shut the door behind me.

"They get quiet as soon as I turn off the lights," she responds. "At night, they're quiet."

In the "bird room", there are a variety of cages.

One of the parakeets is a light cyan color. Another is lime-green.

"This is Fred", she gestures to a grass-green Amazon with a light-coloured beak.

His companion, Cricket, is also an Amazon,



Fred, Sydney Sue's green Amazon parrot in the "bird room".

with a black beak and red touches.

"Let's go, let's go!" Fred squawks.

He sits on his perch, bright eyes examining me and jangles his bell impatiently.

Chuck is in the next cage. She's a female miniature macaw named after that one "Peanuts" character with a deep voice.

Chuck's got a green hue and black beak.

There are also two senegals, Gamby and Ernie.

She extends her arm out to Gamby, who steps up.

Mrs. Helfand holds Gamby up for me to see. Gamby's companion, Ernie, looks like Gamby.

Both birds have yellow-orange breasts and green plumage, complimented by their black beaks.

There are also four parakeets.

One of them is named George for a teacher at Highlands whose daughter found the parakeet.





One of Sydney Sue Helfand's photos in the Northern Highlands 1987 yearbook.

The rest of the parakeets are unnamed.

Mrs. Helfand calls them big brother and baby sister, even though they're probably not siblings.

They're the smallest of the group.

"It all started with one kid whose sister had a parrot," Mrs. Helfand informs me as she sets a coffee mug with hot chocolate in front of me.

We've moved to the kitchen now, so she can hear

me better over the chirping of her birds.

"Everybody in the family hated the bird. So I said I'll take him. And that's what started me with birds."

She did return him back to the student's sister after 2 years, though.

But bird keeping grew on her.

The student was a Highlands student Mrs. Helfand supervised in her senior study period.

"He had been here a couple years and preferred to

talk to me," Mrs. Helfand notes.

"So I talked to him a great deal. We've kept in touch".

At Highlands, Mrs. Helfand taught English.

She had started with ninth grade English where students were introduced to Fitzgerald and Hemingway.

"I taught a course called Visions of the World - Utopias," she says.

"Conscience and Crisis" was my favorite.

It was an advanced course and the classes were usually small.

The heroes or heroines always faced big crises and that was the basic theme."

She was also the advisor for the girls cheer team at Highlands and coached the girls for ten years.

"I even learned to drive the bus", she reminisces. "The principal suggested it, because the boys took too long cleaning up."

After 33 years as a teacher, 25 of them at Highlands, Mrs. Helfand retired.

Her husband, Mr. Sandy Helfand, also worked at Highlands as a substitute

teacher after he retired from the IRS.

At Highlands, he

shared, a small house tucked away by trees near Old Stone Church.

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**“I taught a course called Visions of the World - Utopias. It was an advanced course and the classes were usually small.”**

*Former Northern Highlands English Teacher Mrs. Helfand*

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served as the DECA advisor for eighteen years.

His photo is on display in the case by the auditorium, the Highlands Hall of Fame.

“He was so well liked”, Mrs. Helfand remarked.

“Kids used to say, ‘Ask Mr. Helfand! He would know!’ even if they didn’t have him as a teacher”.

The pair met on July 4th, 1969 and were married Christmas of that year.

They were married for 42 years.

Mrs. Helfand still lives in the same house they once

It was originally a tractor shed for a nearby apple orchard.

However, after 42 years, some things have changed.

Now, Mrs. Helfand’s time is truly her own.

She goes to bed late, usually two or three in the morning because there are no demands.

This year, Mrs. Helfand is eight-eight years old and is going on her fifty-third year as a USR resident.

The best part of her experience here is that she’s still in touch with a lot of her former students.

It gives her a true feel of a close-knit community.

“My former students that went to school here have come back,” she tells me.

“They send their kids to the same schools and that makes me very happy.”



Mrs. Helfand posing with her third cat by her house, pre-renovation. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Helfand

# MAKING MEMORIES THROUGH ART AND STORIES

## How this small town is special to one resident with a big personality

Anne Guadango sent me something last week. I received it today.

It's a thick yellow envelope with my name and address scripted in black ink.

I opened it to find a collection of stories based on Anne's memories.

She writes for her family, she tells me. She writes so her children - or grandchildren - can see how she has lived.

"I'd like to vanity-publish someday," Mrs. Guadango, who invited me to call her Anne, tells me.

"A couple of short thirty - paged books to send to my family."

In addition to writing, she's done watercolor painting and photography.

Her art involvement does not stop there.

She's also served as the chairperson for the arts and creativity portion of the Woman's Clubs in the district.

The clubs recruit panels of judges to decide on artwork and photography, which is sent to Atlantic City and Washington, DC.

One year, Anne submitted two photographs. The winner? A snapshot of a "gingerbread house" she had constructed.

"It's just so silly," she jokes. "In all the Woman's Clubs, my little gingerbread house won the best photo."

She's still an active member of the Woman's Club and she used to be involved with school-related activities.



Mrs. Guadango's submission "Gingerbread House" for the Woman's Club that won the national competition. Photo courtesy of Anne Guadango.

For example, Anne used to be a lunch aid at Bogert, the local elementary school.

The job gave her the chance to spend time with children, which she loved.

She's one of the lunch aides I remember because she taught us how to play paper football.

"Very few people beat me at that game," she points out.

Her town involvement traces back to when her oldest son Joseph entered Reynolds, the other elementary school.

Before that, Mrs. Guadango and her husband weren't too involved in town and didn't know many people.

Originally from Montvale, the family moved to



One of Anne Guadango's watercolor pieces, painted in October of 2014. Photo courtesy of Anne Guadango.

Upper Saddle River in 1983 because they needed a larger home.

Soon, scouts and baseball quickly occupied her free time.

With her cub scouts, they decorated the town hall for parades and events.

In fact, one year Mrs. Guadango was able to get the largest Cub Scout turnout for the Memorial Day parade.

Mrs. Guadango met her two best friends, Margaret Pangert and Donna Bach through such activities.

Both those casual friendships grew into deep relationships, lasting more than thirty years.

When she first moved here, she was just well acquainted with her neighbors and a few local friends.

But throughout her time here, her network has grown.

“I was the person you’d call if you wanted a certain number of people to show up for an event”, she says.

“If there was a meeting at town hall, I’d make a hundred calls to get fifty people there.”

Although it’s a small town, Anne Guadango’s network of townspeople is quite the opposite.

“If it wasn’t for this town, I wouldn’t know all these great people.” Mrs. Guadango notes. “I can’t picture myself living anywhere else.”

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**At the time, there were only four houses on their street and the area was still significantly farmland. And it was perfect.**

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The couple spotted their future home and made the deal just as the agents were nailing the “House for Sale” sign in the ground.

At the time, there were only four houses on their street and the area was still significantly farmland. And it was perfect.

“Bought the house in one day,” Mrs. Guadango tells me proudly.

“We moved right in the next day and it’s been our house until now.”

She got more involved in town when her family joined the Church of the Presentation and when she became a class mother at school.

“When you’re involved in school, you’re involved with the community,” Mrs. Guadango states. “That’s when my town involvement really began.”

She hosted meetings at her house and took the boys on local trips, such as tours of the Hopper Geotschius House, the local historical museum.



Anne Guadango, center, posing with friends Donna Bach, left and Margaret Pangert, right at a woman's club meeting. Photo courtesy of Anne Guadango.

