

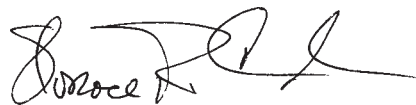
A Preface to *Our Towns*

Reminiscing may be in many of our thoughts as 1999 comes to an end. But in Fanwood and Scotch Plains, we don't need visions to see signs of our history. There are many real things today preserved that instill pride of our history and the accomplishments of our forefathers. The 260-year-old Stage House Inn is a thriving reminder right in our midst. For a casual tour of the past, visit the charming Osborn Cannonball House dating back to about 1760. Scotch Plains had its first school about the same time in 1768. There's a Tale of Two Communities that takes you on a ride from the past to the present day, arriving at the Fanwood train station for its 125th anniversary.

Our Towns are nestled in cozy, tree-lined neighborhoods, although within in a bird's eye view of metropolitan New York City. One may commute or work at the village store, but they're always glad to be home. Neighbors are friends in our small towns. There are few strangers, and visitors receive warm welcomes. Volunteers protect us through our fire departments and rescue squads. Volunteers give us business energy and creativity through the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association.

But, Our Towns are big enough to be the home of admirals and the State Senate President. Our high school kids are skilled enough to win 7 state soccer championships over the last 14 years. Then, there's DECA, students learning business and winning national awards. There are many things to fill us with pride, yet there's still time to smell the wildflowers at the Fanwood Nature Center.

The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood is pleased to present the annual *Our Towns* publication. This year, the staff takes you on a trip through community history. Many organizations helped put this together, and we're proud to be part of it. Thank you to all, particularly Suzette Stalker who served as editor, Pete Billson who plied his technical skill and Joanna Marsh who managed the commercial necessities.



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Our Towns

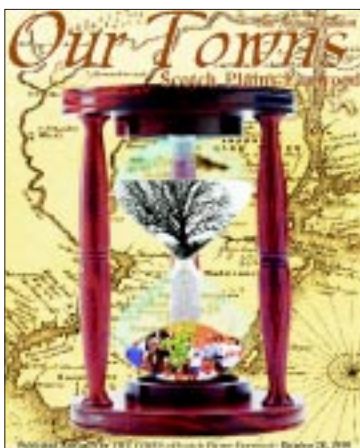
2nd Annual Edition

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The cover of our second annual edition of *Our Towns* depicts the transition of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood area from its past to its present, in keeping with the historic theme of this year's publication.

Pictured in the hour glass are the Fanwood Oak, which was a part of the local landscape for more than 300 years, and the recent planting of a tree by students at Coles Elementary School in Scotch Plains. The hour glass is set against a 1656 map of "New Netherlands" — what was to eventually be called New Jersey.

Our special thanks to Richard Bousquet, President of the Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood, and to Joseph Nagy for their contributions to this year's edition of *Our Towns*.

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