

Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission  
2015 Essay Contest Question

How would you like to live in a town where almost everyone knows each other? To know who baked the bread you eat for breakfast, the person that delivers your milk in the morning, or even the family that lives around you. This is not a fiction 90 years ago.

Reading the newspaper from 1925 gave me a glimpse glance in the past on how a child like me would have lived. Although there were no cellphones, computers and video games to past your time on a timid weekend afternoon, some community issues are the same.

On the January 9, 1925 issue of The Woodbridge Independent, an article on an optimistic expectation regarding the ratification of the Child Labor Law the would have been the 20<sup>th</sup> amendment of the federal constitution which was passed on June 24, 1924 and the first meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the same month. The amendment provides that "Congress shall have power to limit, regulate and prohibit the labor of persons under 18 years of age, etc." Rules on road safety are continuously being discussed. Safety driving tips are staple of every issue. This is a strong example on how the citizens protect the youth and people regardless of time or generation. Legislators never stop on finding ways to keep everyone safe. This caught my attention because this was not only going on within Port Reading and Avenel, but it was country-wide. Technically, this law is still pending and it would be cool to go back to the Legislators to finalize the decision.

Port Reading and Avenel students, together with other schools participated in Educational Thrift bank where Port Reading was reported to make the record of having 100%

saving bank deposit on January 23, 1925. This program helped students to learn how to save and be frugal. Like today, every students and school employees are being protected to diseases that might be contacted in the premises. The January 16, 1925 news states that school attendance was cut down because of the strict health ruling. The health board does not allow children or any person to come to school if they belong to a family that has a case of Chicken pox keeping them out of school for long periods.

These days, it is not just the chicken pox that we are being protected from. Schools are being sanitized if there are reports of infection and keeping people away until cleared by the agency.

The source of heat during that year was coal which was highly coveted during winter months which was supported by the news on January 16, 1925 where 5 youngsters and their parents were severely lectured by the judge and was given a warning for stealing coals from cars in Port Reading. A man from Avenel was fined \$5.00 for the same charge the following morning.

Most of the homes now uses a different fuel for heat during winter. Coal is uncommon these days and is no longer the primary source of heat during the cold months. Technology and industrialization made our lives a lot easier.

So much has changed in those years compared to the present. Even the extent of the articles on the newspaper. Weekly activities of a lot of families are mentioned, car engines are left running while they watch movies or dine, Studebaker is not just a restaurant but an automobile. Back then, there was much more face-to-face conversations. But there still a few

things that stayed the same. One example would be how the citizens and legislators work hard to keep everyone safe.

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