

# CHAMBER CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF THE METUCHEN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT CHAMBER MEMBERS, EVENTS AND MEETINGS

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## President's Message

By John Jeney



As I turned the page on my calendar to December, once again I was smacked in the face with the thought, "Where did the year go?" Making matters worse was the fact that the picture for the month was a beautiful sailboat, making me long for the warm months of summer. I never was one for the cold, so the early snap of temperatures barely in the 30's was particularly brutal for me.

I looked back through each month and saw all of the events and special days that passed: The Installation Dinner Dance, when I became the President of the Chamber of Commerce, sworn in by our new Mayor and a former teacher of mine; The patriotic yet somber Memorial Day Parade; the first ever and very successful Junebug ArtFest; Cruise Nights; the Golf Outing; the Country Fair, and what would have been our biggest ever Winter Festival Parade; just to name a few

Not to sound like I am accepting an Oscar, but there are so many people that made everything possible. First and foremost, is Caroline Woodruff in the Chamber office. Caroline is an amazing woman that juggles fifteen things at once for us, not to mention her own family (after all, she IS a mother!). She does so much behind the scenes on a daily basis, on top of what she does for each event.

I also need to thank the Metuchen Police Department, the Auxiliary officers, and Fire Department for their assistance at our events. The Metuchen EMS has been there not only for the town itself, but also providing support as well. The biggest thanks goes to the Department of Public Works who provides assistance before, during, and after each event. I am always amazed at how quickly the streets and sidewalks show no signs that an event happened.

A huge thank you goes out to all of our members, especially those that have

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*Photo courtesy of the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen*

## Remembering Ruth

By Evelyn Finck

In Ruth Hancock's 94 years in Metuchen, she touched the lives of many others, both personally and professionally. Regardless of the connection to her, so many people remember her warm personality and appealing smile, as well as her competence. Ruth died on September 20th.

Marty Jessen, who grew up next door to Ruth on Main Street, knew her in the context of her family, which included 2 brothers and a sister, her father who worked for Standard Oil, and her mother, who Marty says was called a "semi-nurse". (It was she who was able to get him to swallow some cod liver oil when noone else succeeded.) All predeceased Ruth.

The back of the Hancock home boasted a large garden, a chicken coop, and a big tree with a tree house which Marty called "robin's nest" and which was a frequent destination of his. Ruth lived at the family home all her life.

Ruth's tenure as executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce extended from 1971 to 1993, and was preceded by secretarial positions elsewhere, including one at Ronson Corporation just prior to the Chamber assignment. Marty, who was President of the Chamber of Commerce in 1972, commented on her efficiency and said, "with Ruth on hand everything clicked."

I spoke with two other Metuchen business leaders whose comments follow.

Sandy Mercer of About Faces recalls: "Ruth was an inspirational woman who encouraged me to take on the challenge of the Presidency in 1987 and guided me through my term in a loving, yet professional, style. She always knew the right answers and gave me confidence to continue on the path to success."

Seldow's Jack Belowich wrote, "Ruth's cheerful greeting on the phone and beautiful smile in a chance meeting will always be remembered by those who experienced it. Ruth never felt overwhelmed by her work or the amount of it. To her it was a labor of love. She knew instinctively how to plan each day's schedule. She was not a clock watcher."

"Ruth accomplished a great deal in her lifetime and brought great success to the Chamber of Commerce. The business community will never forget her."

When I mentioned Ruth's passing to a friend, Charlotte Sheratsky, whose late husband Charles was Chamber President in the mid 70's, her spontaneous comment was, "Chuck loved Ruth!"

I am personally grateful to Ruth whose pleasant, supportive ways eased my transition in 1988 from a protected academic environment to a livelier, diversified community. Although I am no longer in business, I still value my connection to the Chamber of Commerce, and it all began with a conversation with Ruth.

In addition to her professional responsibilities, Ruth was active in a broad array of community organizations, many of them in a volunteer capacity. Her membership in the Presbyterian Church, where she was an elder, spanned 80 years, the longest on record.

Clearly, Ruth's life was one of giving and sharing, and, we trust, also rewarding for her. We can only say with certainty that her contributions to Metuchen were impressively large, as is our sincere gratitude for all she was and all she did.