

## **Artful Thinking 005**

**Happy New Year**

**By Artie Maglionico**

**Those of you who have been reading this column over the years know that, for the most part, I write about the past...my past, your past and America's past. When I discuss with you current affairs it's mainly to create a contrast between the "now" and the "back then." True, the term "back then" can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. For some the phrase might be when cell phones were used only to make or receive calls. For others it might refer to when telephones were plugged into the wall and had a rotary dial. You had to share the line with others on what was called a "party line." It was anything but a party especially if you had to make an important call only to pick up the receiver and have it tied up by two house wives talking about a recipe over a cup of coffee. "We know you're listening" they used to tell me as I eavesdropped "we can hear you breathing!" Back then, by the time you finished dialing the number, you had forgotten why you made the call. No sooner did you reach your party, when someone was telling you to hurry up and get off the line. Yes folks there were, in fact, remote phones in those days...we called them "phone booths."**

**Artful thinking family member Angelo Salvato has his own version of "back then." To Angelo it was when he first**

**discovered the Borough of Lodi back in 1954 after marrying a local girl by the name of Norma Perini of Washington Street. Angelo, who was born in New York City in 1927, moved to NJ in 1936. After serving in the military at the end of WWII, he married Miss Perini whom he had met at a Passaic YMCA dance. They were married at the St Joseph Church in September of 1953 and moved to James Place in Lodi in the spring of 1955. Norma was a product of the Lodi school system and graduated from LHS in 1944 as class valedictorian. She became an office worker at Lodi's United Piece Dye Works and later an executive secretary at Teterboro Aeronautics. Angelo went to work for ITT as an electronic technician where he remained a worker in good standing for 40 years. Angelo recalls Lodi's "old" Main Street upon which many of his memories were built. He can still see the American Theater, Mayor Joseph Luna, Durcee's Bakery and of course the now legendary Modern Bakery where folks came from surrounding towns to buy a few dozen of those fresh baked, still warm rolls. That was Angelo's "back then" and he is first to admit that although some of the changes have been overwhelming he has enjoyed every one of them.**

**The next time you happen to be driving down Farnham Avenue picture it being a dirt road surrounded by hills and vacant barns with no more than a house or two along the way. Somewhere up in those rolling hills my cousin Anthony Maglionico and I, along with the rest of the kids from Westervelt Place, used to camp out, roast potatoes and**

**drink water out of WWII canteens. The potatoes probably came from Albano's Grocery store on the corner of Arnot Street and Westervelt Place compliments of their son Rocco who was one potato short of getting his "you know what" roasted if his mother found out. How's that for a "back then" folks?**

**Now this is going to sound a bit farfetched but it's true. When I was a kid growing up on the Lodi hill, better known "back then" as Nanny Goat Hill, an old man used to pick up discarded kitchen appliances, car parts, copper tubing and glass bottles with a horse drawn reinforced wooden cart. I'm not kidding folks, the horse had to be at least 17 hands high and had hooves the size of tennis rackets. My Father called it a "work horse " since it was reduced to pulling all that reusable junk up and down the steep hills of Lodi. This one particular day the horse, as it clippity clopped past my house, threw one of its shoes. The old man climbed down from the cart, picked up the large metal shoe and handed it to me. "Keep it" he said "It will bring you good luck." Here I am sixty years later with that same horse shoe in my possession still waiting for the good luck to arrive. Well I guess living long enough to actually write about it in this column could be considered "good luck." In that case I'd better end this column now before my luck runs out!**