

## The Last Word



# With a song in my heart, for halcyon Haddonfield

By Walter Weidenbacher

Be it “the best of times [or] the worst of times” – or both at the same time – any time is the right time to count our countless blessings and give thanks for all we have, both seen and unseen.

Good fortune gives me the opportunity at this time (for which I’m thankful) to shine a spotlight on two Haddonfield wonders. One is the oasis I like to call Halcyon Haddonfield. The other, our town’s trove of musical talent.

Haddonfield’s long tradition of music endures, with concerts and recitals galore, presented by our churches, schools, community organizations, ChildrenSong of New Jersey, the New Jersey MasterChorale, the Pick-Up Band, Symphony in C (formerly the Haddonfield Symphony), and any number of smaller performing groups and individuals. Private study flourishes among residents of all ages, tutored by a host of music teachers in town, including those at the acclaimed Haddonfield School of Music.

Not long ago, while walking through town and thinking, “How I love this scene,” the idea came to me to encapsulate the more obvious delights into some kind of poem. The poem developed into a song – *A Haddonfield Idyll* – and then into a video. With the benefit of access to several photo archives, the websites of various town organizations, my camera, and a few computer apps, I was able to cobble everything together and post several versions of my effort on YouTube. We can be thankful for modern technology, too. The result – my little “Don’t let the old man in” labor of love – can be found online at [wawego.me/idyll](http://wawego.me/idyll).

Most difficult in the writing was squeezing the many town amenities into the verse. The line “And do flowers still abound all around Haddontown?” can be understood as a metaphor for all those excluded beauties.



Wouldn’t it be great fun for some poet to come up with additional verses? And photos, too? Possibilities are endless – a Realtor’s veritable checklist – starting with the architecture, churches, restaurants, stores, streets, trees, and outdoor sculptures; the many clubs and non-profit organizations; the parks, ponds, woods, and gardens; local publications; our American Legion Post 38; the Rotary concerts; the

parades, patriotic celebrations, and Revolutionary War reenactments; the whole town ambiance – any one of which could be a song unto itself.

Last January, resident Joe McElroy premiered *A Haddonfield Idyll* at the Mayor’s Breakfast (sponsored annually by the Lions Club at the Presbyterian Church). A video of that performance, recorded by town videographer Bob Parsons, will soon join the growing list of performances of the song, at the website noted above.

One of the more notable videos is Tish Colombi’s heartfelt narration. In her introduction, Tish mentions a piece from the past, *Hymn to Haddonfield*, by Tom Patton, long-time music teacher and Pick-Up Band founder. Tom’s original score and notes are being curated, meaning performances are surely forthcoming.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are of good report, think on **the people** – the people behind the scene, making all these town delights possible.

Isn’t there always one more thing to be thankful for? Always.

TISH  
COLOMBI  
NARRATES  
THE IDYLL

