

**CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY - MARGARET KEISLER MEMORIAL**  
**SCHOLARSHIP**

ESSAY: Chatham: My Town by a River. The history of our town is made up of individual, unique stories. Please share your own distinctive story about growing up in Chatham. Your story may become part of the Chatham Historical Society anecdotal history archive.

I live in a house with a long white fence on the corner of Fairmount Ave and Mountainview Rd, a two minute walk from the Fairmount Country Store, in the deep Chatham Township. Living on a corner in deep Chatham Township meant two things: 1. I had to take the bus to school. 2, Our corner was the bus stop for all the kids around the block. This meant that every morning before our public escorts to Southern Boulevard School, our lawn was the neighborhood playground. When I was in kindergarten, my brother was in the third grade, which meant he also went to SBS. My brother was the *coolest* kid on our little lawn playground. When we played running bases from oak-to-oak across our driveway, he was always the first one to be “it”, which meant tossing a tennis ball up in the air singing “one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go!” and then subsequently pelting any poor kid who wasn’t on one of the oak tree bases yet. We also played the occasional game of wiffle ball, a game which also employed the strategy of pelting kids with tennis balls. When it was winter and ice had frozen over our grass and driveway, we would play figure skating. We probably only played for about 15 minutes each day before the bus came, but it felt like much longer to us. We made friends, talked about birthday parties with Mr. A and school with Mr. Pesepane, pretended we were ninja turtles and teen titans and jedi knights with sticks for lightsabers.

It has been many years since I waited for the bus at my house, but I recently found that time has transcended our playground lawn. For the first time in my CHS career, I had a study hall in my morning schedule, which meant I could try to sleep in a bit on some days. On the first morning that I tried, I was woken up early to savage screaming coming from my own front yard. A sound shockingly similar to that of the Ewok’s rebellion on Endor in *Return of the Jedi*, I approached my window to find the kids from around the block running around our lawn like a bunch of Looney Tunes characters, awaiting the bus.

“Do these monsters yell like this every morning? How do you get any sleep?” I asked my Mom wearily.

“Every day. Just like you used to!”