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The Times of Halcott

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ANIMALS ARE PEOPLE, TOO!

One of the questions we often receive from visitors to the farm is, “Do cows and other farm animals have different personalities?” After 30-plus years of being around livestock of various species and hearing the interesting stories of other farmers and ranchers, the answer comes back an emphatic “Yes, definitely!” Although to the casual observer it may appear that farm animals are pretty much all the same, truly they can be quite different from one another. Not unlike humans, these personality differences can make for ease (or challenge!) in our relationships with them as well as provide lasting memories of special individuals with unique traits. In this issue I will introduce our readers to a few of the more colorful characters that have graced our pastures and barns.

Gina and Genie: No discussion of memorable cows is complete without mentioning this mother-daughter duo. Though quite different in personality -Gina was a no-nonsense, “just stay out of my way” cow that invoked respect from the rest of the herd without her having to shove her way anywhere. Genie, on the other hand, was much more laid back and gregarious; nothing fazed her. Because of this, she was our first choice when leading the rest of the herd into unfamiliar

surroundings and when introducing an apprehensive child or adult to a large cow for the first time ever. Both were great assets to our herd. Thankfully, we have many descendants of these two queens and their offspring tend to be among the most easy-going cattle in the herd.

Google: A granddaughter to the old Gina, Google is currently our fanciest looking cow. Just a two year old, this lovely cow is also a favorite for her goofy, laid back personality. She is one that likes to be where the action is, “helping” by rubbing her head on people who are trying to work, mouthing the equipment someone is trying to use or just putting her 1250 pound body in the middle of what we are doing. She doesn’t do any of this to be mean, she simply seems to believe that she must supervise whatever is going on.

Glitter: Another member of –you guessed it– the Gina family. Although she is a mature cow, Glitter is also one who still loves the occasional bucket of milk. Mind you, we don’t offer the milk to her, she manages to snatch it as she walks by if we forget and leave a bucket at the top of the milking parlor steps. We even have to be watchful in taking milk past her when we’re feeding calves, otherwise her long, black head stretches forward to yank it from our hands!

The Horned Ewe: This miracle sheep has to



make the list of colorful characters. She is one of the sheep I wrote about a few years ago that was born to a mother that died shortly after safely bringing her lambs into the world. Perhaps such a beginning was the precursor to the Horned Ewe's feisty, independent spirit.

She is not afraid to take on any other sheep (or dogs) that try to cross her. She and our current ram have a mutual dislike for one another and although the ram is considerably larger, the horned ewe will courageously tangle with him from time to time. Earlier this week she managed to butt him to the point that he was left with a sore, bloodied head. It will be interesting to see whether they call a truce now. This ewe also has a penchant for getting into trouble by going places she shouldn't. A few days ago she made her way under a fallen tree where she wedged herself between the jutting limbs. Her lambs were unhappy because they couldn't nurse her in that position and she was unhappy because she was really stuck. It took two of us to pull her backward out of the tree limbs. Her attitude was "Finally, what took you so long? I was just doing what I wanted to do."

Elizabeth: Another ewe that makes the list as a favorite, though not for her antics but for her steady, almost sage-like presence among our sheep flock. Even when something out of the ordinary is going on and most of the other sheep are panicking, this ewe will be the calm in the eye of the storm, casually regarding what's happening with a quiet confidence and unflappable demeanor. She's part of our original flock and, like the Gina cow, much of our current flock traces back to her.

Choncho: A mostly white, floppy-eared character that loved to eat cookie crisp cereal, this is the only pig we have had on our farm. He came to us as a fairly small piglet and we had a pen in the barn for him. As he grew, he would jump up on

the door to his pen, draping his lower front legs over the board and grunt at us as we went by on the way to do other chores. Of course, the grunts turned to loud squeals around meal time but otherwise they were just low grunts of greeting. He, like most pigs, enjoyed being scratched, especially along his back. He enjoyed this so much that he would flop over in delight as we rubbed his back. The barn cats, though comfortable up close to the cows, sheep, dogs and chickens, didn't quite know what to make of this funny looking, curly tailed creature. Sometimes the cats would get up on the gate, look in and then speed off, not wanting to take any chances as Choncho ran over to see them.

Well, this list is far from complete, but I hope it gives the reader a glimpse not only into the colorful animal personalities on our farm but also into the kinds of interesting characters found on farms everywhere.

JD

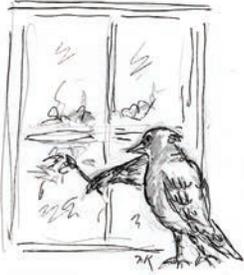


These Windows are for the Birds

For years our house windows have experienced bird hits.

All's quiet on the western front till BAM! And then a quick run downstairs to check for bodies on the patio. Usually yes, but is it dead or just stunned? If it's dead and particularly colorful, into the freezer it goes for show and tell when the grandkids arrive. If it's stunned and we get to it before a cat does, a few minutes in a quiet room in a dark shoebox and it's generally good to go. Occasionally the unfortunate avian missile withstands the hit and can drunkenly fly to a low branch for recovery. (None of this applies to the erstwhile grouse that was flying so darned fast that it crashed through a 2x5 window into our living room. Which we discovered after returning home late one night.)

Last year the combination of grandkids and water-soluble paints set off a light bulb in Michael's head, and soon the windows sporting little tiny feather debris were turned into canvases.



From spring till fall our feathered friends are safe from a reflected landscape, and we have a gallery of sweet artistry. *PD*

TOMMY THE COOL CAT **Jean Kelly Wells**

Tommy, a black and white “alley” cat kitten was born in Ulster Park, NY and by luck or love was taken to my mother and father in Halcott Center. He soon became the chief and only cat they had and he was much loved by the whole family. Unfortunately, he became ill with a feline-type flu. My sister gave him castor oil, which he hated but it did the trick and he recovered. Tommy soon grew into a full-sized cat and “ruled” the house and surrounding acres.

My father raised chickens (broilers) as he and my mother ran a small summer boarding house. He purchased the baby chicks and housed them in a brooder coop between the house and the bee shed. The chicks were newly hatched when he got them and had to be kept in a warm place with a heated brooding area for their comfort, under a metal canopy. Dad, of course, would visit the coop about 3 or 4 times a day to check water, feed, etc. He let Tommy into the coop but he had to sit by the door and not hassle the chicks. He obeyed the firm order but if a chick wandered close enough to him, he’d “flick” them with a paw and the chick would go head over heels! But he never hurt one!

When the chicks grew feathers and weighed nearly a pound, my father let them out of the coop to enjoy the green grass, bugs, etc. Tommy would be off somewhere and when he came back and saw the chicks outside on the grass, his first reaction was, “Hey.. you guys should be in your coop.” He would then proceed to herd them back in the open door and sit in the

doorway washing his face and keeping the chicks in the coop. Dad laid the law down about his wish for the chicks to be outside! The result would be Tommy leaving in a huff and the chicks returning to the yard.

My father (a carpenter) often had a building project underway. That same year of the chicks, he decided to extend the end of the bee shed. It was at a right angle to the rest of the shed and was clearly visible from the house. Dad framed and sided it, no problem. He put on a roof of boards, then began to shingle it with manufactured shingles. At the outer end of the addition he had left a 2X4 at the corner extending up a few feet to carry the electric wire that gave light to the shed.

Tommy was expert at perching on the narrow top of this 2X4 while watching Dad work.

When Dad started shingling the roof, he put a ladder up on the side toward the house, carried up the bundle of shingles, nails, and a hammer. Everything was arranged neatly and handy. Tommy decided to check it out, climbed the ladder easily, and sat watching Dad place and hammer the shingle nails. Of course, Dad had to put the hammer down to fit another shingle and this operation started at the peak of the roof with plenty of room below it. This apparently appealed to Tommy, because with Dad busy with the next shingle, Tommy would start pushing the hammer down the roof until it fell off onto the ground! Now, my father was partially handicapped with a bum leg from an old injury. Going up and down the ladder plus kneeling and standing was a chore and he didn’t appreciate Tommy’s idea of fun. It always resulted in Tommy being chased off the roof and going to the house in a bad mood!



Hitting the Hay: Irene and After **Carrie Bradley Neves**

Now ten months after her catastrophic visit, it seems like Hurricane Irene is both a distant bad memory and just a heartbeat ago. The land-

scape so dramatically changed by the storm, and starkly accented against the bare bones of winter, is changing again. Summer is growing up lushly around some of the damage and debris, concealing fallen trees and crumbled or littered streambeds. Elsewhere, streamsides and flats have been meticulously cleaned, graded, and reinforced for the future; roads repaired; new bridges are open. In every town, village, and hamlet, there is the bustle of building, aided by FEMA, state, and private monies, on homes, parks, and business storefronts. At the same time, many structures remain boarded up, some stickered with condemned notices. At any turn, we see signs of renewal, regrowth, and also the painful losses and persistent challenges of fighting back to normal.

A similar balance of hope and hard work can be found in the essential hayfields in Halcott Center that fell into Irene's path. From the Carolinas to northern New England, farmers suffered massive losses in the destruction of late-summer crops from corn to cotton, pumpkins to tomatoes to raspberries. Up and down the roads of Halcott, the floodwaters swallowed up many acres of our important local crop. In the days and weeks following the storm, it seemed likely that affected hayfields would be ruined for the upcoming season, or seasons, or even permanently. Tons of gravel had been deposited in the fields, along with trash and other debris and a thick layer of silt, sand, and clay.

With the help of early heat this spring, the hay is flourishing in every field; but only after months of grueling work and circumspection by the hay growers in our town, the Bouton, Johnson, and DiBenedetto families, who, working together and with friends, undertook the long process of undoing Irene's handy work in the hayfields. Because we live across the road from Dennis and Jennifer Bouton and family, and face the beautiful hayfield their family has been farming for generations, I checked in with Dennis to see what his

hopes were for the hay. His report was characteristically one of optimism, resilience, and community effort.

Right afterward, he said, there was just so much stuff out there, it was impossible to know what could be saved. But immediately, forces gathered to help; he attributes their success to the generosity and uniting of the community. Every member of Dennis and Jennifer's close-knit family joined in to work and support. Teddy Johnson and his two sons, Kenny and Kevin; Russell and Nicky Bouton; Cody Fronckowiak; and many other neighbors donated their time, skills, strength, and stamina along with heavy machinery: truck, backhoe, bulldozer, and roller. They

removed upwards of 20 loads of gravel and silt from the flats, repairing the driveway and using some of the gravel to create a new berm to protect the barn. The biggest pieces, including about 20 full-sized trees, were hauled away by truck and bucket loader.

But there were still tons left, a hurricane blend of boards, sticks, metal scrap, cans, and glass and plastic bottles. Luckily, a double stroke of luck countered Irene's hard hit. First, the timing of the storm fell before the second cutting, so the long, strong grass deflected the force and crushing weight of water from the foundation of the fields. (Of the two crops key to dairy farmers, Dennis noted, hay and corn, cornfields are always more vulnerable to a huge loss of topsoil in the flooding from a storm like Irene. His father, Donald, who presided over their field for decades, was always leery of planting corn, for that very reason.) Second, 2012 delivered an "open winter," that is, virtually no snow cover for much of the season; with normal snowfall, Dennis explained, saving the crop for the year ahead may not have been possible. Once the grass died down and browned, with the fields uncovered it was easier to see what needed to be removed; and while the

DRIVERS:-

Please remember you are sharing the roads with bikers, joggers, and people walking, sometimes with dogs and small children.. .

Thank you!

bare fields were frozen, it was possible to use a bucket loader to scrape away debris without removing too much sod. Dennis and diligent helpers pushed the debris into long snakelike lines, then moved along the line, scraping the debris into the bucket with a snow shovel.

The process continued painstakingly. In April, with the ground thawed, the hay rake proved to be a great tool for the next stage of combing out the remaining bad bits. Even after that round of cleaning, though, the farmers have to keep a sharp eye out. Dennis keeps a five-gallon bucket with him when he's riding through the field, and gets out and picks every lingering piece he sees by hand. The vigilance is crucial—a large stick is enough to damage the baler, a broken bottle can destroy an \$800 tire in one slice; and even a single can that gets shredded in the baler could be lethal to a cow that swallows the metal without detecting it in the hay.

I spoke next to Chris DiBenedetto. Crystal Valley Farms' fields had debris and gouging (from diverted water paths) damage to clean up and repair on about 30 of the acres they hay in Halcott. Chris and his son, Greg, are still spending extra time handpicking the remaining debris. But like Dennis, he is optimistic, likewise observing that Halcott farmers fared better in the floods than others elsewhere because they grow the permanent grass, which anchors the topsoil. "We just feel very lucky that we didn't lose buildings or have cows float away in the flood," he said. They have started baling, and so far the hay is good to go. And Chris was pleased that they had just finished, with the help of government emergency funds, the repair of all the fencing they lost in the flood.

Tim Johnson, who hays 500 acres (about 300 of them in Halcott) with his wife, Chris, for their dairy farm, agrees they were lucky overall. Most of the field damage was localized near the streams, and only one area of about 10 acres (plus small spots here and there at other sites) was severely damaged—but to an extreme. In a field above Steinfeld Road, a large tree came down and the flow of the floodwaters around it carved a

gully 10 feet deep and about 1,500 feet long. Working with his son-in-law, Brian Enck, and emergency funds from the Watershed Agricultural Council, they filled the "miniature Grand Canyon" with gravel that had washed down from higher up, covered it with topsoil, and reseeded the field. He expects to be able to cut there later this season, and has already successfully cut and baled hay from his other fields, following the same scrupulous cleanup process as his fellow farmers. He figures that by the time most of the last pieces of debris shake out during baling, the hay is 99 percent clean of Irene.

Deceptively simple seeming, a cycle of beautiful fields of grass growing and then mowing, the work of haying goes on around us in Halcott nearly year round, requiring extreme expertise and intense labor and attentions, at the same time dependent on the caprices of sun, wind, timing, and time. There is a deep history of hay in this valley, intertwined with the fate and prosperity of the dairy farms here, both past and present, and containing a complex story mixed of science and agriculture, instinct and inherited knowledge, traditions handed down and evolving technologies. Brief digressions in my talks with Dennis turned up things like the mysterious ways of "greening" and how doing it wrong can set a barn on fire, and the nuts and bolts of round bales versus (now less and less common) square bales. It was clear how much fascination there is in hay; I hope to learn more and share the results here in these pages. Meanwhile, it is a pleasure to witness the optimism of the hay farmers in Halcott. As Dennis says, "We're going to get started and then we'll see!" And we may see, in the hay around us, with the wind and light and insect and birdlife at play within it, a symbol—like the rampant wildflowers and graceful maples and sleek cattle and brimming streams and waves between neighbors—of the special vitality of our town.

CLEAN HALCOTT

Although we live in a pristine valley, washed by fresh rains and warmed by pure sun, our roadsides somehow collect trash flung from passing cars driven by people who obviously don't

value the beauty as much as others. Some of us have chosen to take matters into our own hands. A few years back, Adina Johnson organized a pick-up of trash along County Route 3, with the Halcott UMChurch helping. This past spring, Nan Reynolds and Lee Austin gathered multiple good-sized bags of trash, collecting along County Route 3 all the way from Hubbard Road down to the County line. They were helped by Simone, Harlan and their families. We thank them for their efforts. Hopefully, drivers will come to appreciate uncluttered culverts and road shoulders as they come in and out of Halcott. *IK*

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!

Nancy Reynolds

The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life is an annual country-wide effort to raise money for cancer research. Local volunteers solicited donations from friends and on April 27th walked all night in 32 degree weather around the field of the American Legion in Delhi. Pictured



here is Nancy Ballard who took part in the cancer survivors' walk. The picture was snapped by Nancy Reynolds, who participated with the Country Cutting Gallery team from Margaretville. Millions of dollars are raised around the country each year for this important cause and this year the CCGteam raised over \$16,000 with various fund-raisers. Go team!



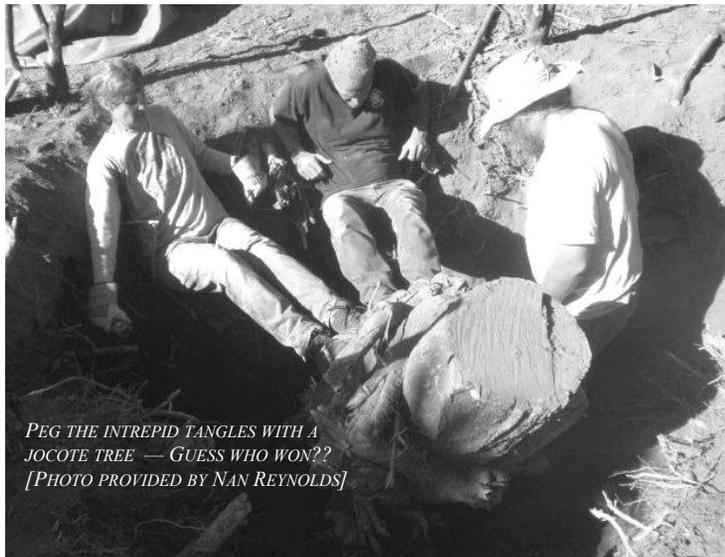
An Invitation: As Green As It Gets

That pretty much describes Guatemala – lush, green vegetated mountains, patch-worked with squares of crop fields and plantations of coffee trees. It's where I met Franklin Voorhees – a burly and friendly American ex-pat who has dedicated his work and life to furthering the cause of agricultural best management practices and improving the economic lot of Guatemalan rural farmers. To that end, Franklin founded the organization As Green As It Gets (AGAIG) which micro-finances sound business opportunities in his community.

I spent 6 hours in a hole owned by one of Franklin's farmers. Timotillo sells his coffee through the AGAIG coffee co-op, and had recently received funding for another enterprise: to annually raise 10 pigs for food and for sale. The effluent from said pigs will flow into a methane digester that will produce enough gas to run his household lights and little refrigerator, and then some to sell to another household. Finally, the remaining effluent will run into a small pond to fertilize the algae that will feed, annually, 500 pounds of tilapia fish for him to sell.

And so Franklin led our project group (including my sister Nancy and 6 others) to Timotillo's for the day to work on the pig barn and methane digester, and I ended up in the methane digester hole. With a jocote tree stump that needed to be dug out and disconnected from all its roots, of which Franklin had no idea a jocote had

so many. Or that a jocote stump extended so far down. The longer I dug & cut roots, the deeper I got. So that by the end of the day, my head was at ground level and we had to bucket out the dirt. By the time we left, the digging was done and the roots, chopped. All that remained was for Timotillo to find a donkey and/or 5 men or to haul it up and out of there, leaving just enough room for the methane digester. (Note: Franklin vowed never to tangle with a jocote tree again.)



PEG THE INTREPID TANGLES WITH A JOCOTE TREE — GUESS WHO WON??
[PHOTO PROVIDED BY NAN REYNOLDS]

Our group plans to return to Guatemala to work with Franklin again next January. We will be hosting a Donor Fundraising Party on August 18 from 2-10 pm at the DiBenedetto's at 85 Hubbard Road. Everyone is invited. The concept is simple: please send a donation for our project, and join us for a barbeque, bike ride, bonfire, drumming, and some honkin' good music. Bring your own beverage and lawn chair, bring your bike for a moderate 10 mile ride, bring your kids — we have a play area and ponds. Please leave your dogs at home because we have enough already! If it rains, still come; we will hold the activities at the Grange.

The suggested donation is \$25 per person. We gratefully accept less, and gladly welcome more. Please make your checks payable to

me, Peg DiBenedetto, or for a tax deduction, to FUMC (the Fleischmanns Church supports the program as well), and mail to me at 85 Hubbard Road, Halcott, NY 12430. It will make our paperwork and planning for the day much easier if we receive your donations by August 11. Call 254-6508 if you have any questions.

For more information on Franklin's adventures and foundation, check out AsGreenAsIt-Gets.org. It is informative, amusing, and thought provoking, to say the least. And if you decide you'd like to buy some of the co-op coffee, let us know; the Vly Mountain Spring Water Man has it in stock. So come out to see your neighbors, enjoy the day, and support a great cause! *PD*



FEMA – STILL WORKING!

Although Irene blew through 10 months ago, the process of working with FEMA to get financial assistance for our damages continues. It was a huge storm and Greene County alone has had over 28 million dollars in "PWs" (project worksheets, separate descriptions of each site) written. So far, Halcott has 13 PWs in various stages of completion, each of which has required time sheets, copies of contracts, bid requests, vehicles used, cancelled checks — you name it,

CLERK'S NOTICE:

As of June, I will have hours by appointment only. Please call me at 845-901-2625 if you need to see me. I can also be reached at elenadib89@yahoo.com Thank you! Elena DiBenedetto."

FEMA wants it. And it's a good insurance policy for future possible audits to have all these documents together. The process is slow and meticulous, and usually seen from the perspective of my kitchen table as the FEMA reps visit once again to patiently go over the paperwork with me. However, recently I visited their headquarters (a rented space, formerly a warehouse in Albany) to sign some more of the PWs and was overwhelmed by the size of their operation. Take a look at the cav-

CALLING ALL

Just in time for the Fair, we are asking our Halcott kids to draw/paint a picture (or two or five!) to include on our Arts Table. The picture should be on paper that is letter-size (8 1/2 x 11") and the subject should be something to do with Halcott: a flower, barns, mountains, cows, etc.

Please have your child sign the artwork and send/bring to Norika Zellner, 900 County Route 1, Halcott Center, NY 12430, 254-5403.

EAST BRANCH FLOOD COMMISSION

A new Flood Commission has been formed to discuss high water issues in our watershed and has been meeting monthly. The Commission hopes to identify flood risks in the Towns of Middletown, Roxbury, Halcott and Hardenburgh. Plans are to work together with local, state and federal officials to find programs that will help prevent future disasters while simultaneously working together with local residents to develop "risk reduction" practices. It is a daunting task, but the meetings include all the players, experts in technical as well as administrative knowledge. More can be learned at the Middletown website. Go to <http://middletowndelawarecountyny.org> and click on "Flood Commission," one of the green tabs along the top. You will find minutes of the meetings as well as a mission statement and a list of the participating agencies.

The Flood Commission is exciting for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, it marks an effort of a locality to try to educate and protect itself from future horrors like Irene. It also gathers communities together that belong naturally in the same room, but have been separated by county lines over the years. We each bring to the table our different viewpoints and hopefully will meld



ernous football-field space that they work in. After the storm, there were over 1200 FEMA workers working together, each with his/her own computer and cell phone. By the time I visited in May, it was down to 600, still a huge number of people working on our behalf. **IK**

HALCOTT FAIR NEXT

July 21st will be our next Halcott Fair. Do come! We'll have all the regular activities and offerings (remember the Rubber Ducky Race?) plus some new surprises. We had contracted with a clown last year who fell ill and couldn't make it. We'll try her again. There'll be Attic Treasures, music, crafts, maple syrup, perennial plants, petting zoo, popcorn, hotdogs and chips, bake sale for sweet-tooths, kids' fun, tables and chairs for sitting and visiting, all for the benefit of Halcott.

them together into some good, strong plans. The goal is prevention as well as protection: working with Ms. Nature to put good sense into practice, and of course, being better prepared to hold firm, when and if she chooses to wallop us again. **IK**

HAROLD WEST

PAM KELLY,

EDITED BY LAURILYN WEST FRASIER

This interview, broken into two parts one for summer, one for autumn, with Harold West was done in July of 2009 at the Halcott Grange Fair and a follow up at Bob Johnson's, summer of 2011. It is filled with the nostalgia of names and places that do not figure as prominently in today's world, but provide pleasant memories of years past. Harold died on January 28, 2012. We are thankful that Pam and Harold both took the time and effort to get his life written down, that his daughter Laurilynn was able to edit his stories, and that TTOH is able to share them with our readers. He will be missed!

Harold's mother was Bertha Kelly West, born on the Kelly farmstead in Halcott Center on June 28, 1898. Her parents were Effie Crosby Kelly and Lemuel Kelly married on December 28, 1892. Effie was born, 9/11/1867, on the farm that we think is across the road from the Grange Hall. The house is no longer standing. The farm is now owned by Chris and Judy DiBenedetto. Lemuel was born on the Kelly Farm (what is now Silas Lake Road) on February 4, 1860.

Harold was born February 9, 1924, in Hobart, N.Y. Before he was old enough to work and was still living at home with his parents, they paid \$40 to \$50 a month for rent, which included their milk and firewood. Harold attended several different schools. As was common during the great depression era, folks had to go where they could find work, even if temporary. The last school he attended was in Delanson, N.Y.

Harold said his family always had a big garden. When he was 13 years old, the family lived in East Jewett. That summer he raised his own garden, including 90 hills of pole beans.

What he didn't sell, his mom canned. With the money he earned from his pole beans, he bought a second hand bicycle for \$15.

When he was 17 his father, Charles, passed away. His mom, Bertha, sold their house and everything and they moved in with her mother, Effie Crosby Kelly, in the Kelly family farmstead in Halcott. Bertha's father, Lemuel, had died in 1926.

In the spring of 1942, Harold and his cousin, Stanley Kelly, were hired by Halcott resident pilot, Ruth Reynolds, to cut down some big maple trees along the stone wall property line, between Willie Griffin, (now the Kasanofs) and Garold Johnson (now Jim and Karen Rauter). This would give Ruth, as well as the other local pilots, safer take off and landing on the "airport strip". The flat between Kasanof's and Rauter's was utilized by several area pilots in the '40's. The two young men wielded a 5 and 1/2 foot cross cut saw. Harold said when they got to the middle of the huge maple tree, they could hardly move the saw. They succeeded in downing the tree. Ruth paid them with a free airplane ride plus \$5.

PASSAGES:

Carmen Helen Norwick arrives, June 6th! Grandmother Peg DiBenedetto writes: "All went fast & very smoothly -Claire looks great, feels ok, the baby looks like Simone did when she was born...You would think I'd remember the data but - 6.9? 7.6? 7.9? She weighs more than a sack of sugar, yet less than a gallon of milk. 19.5 inches long though - I picked up on that! Older siblings Simone and Harlan are thrilled, of course & Michael [DiBenedetto] & I are doing the child-care bit for a few days with them. Lots of pond time & walks & little wet clothes hanging all over the house."

Marshall Bouton

He graduates this summer from MCS and moves on to SUNY Delhi for a couple of years and then plans to transfer to SUNY Oneonta. What does Marshall want to do? He's good at just about anything. Take a peek at the picture below, taken

by Dick Sanford of the Cats News and capturing the joyful exuberance of yet another triumph. And at the MCS Athletic Banquet the other night, Marshall won the Henry Dietrich Outstanding Sportsmanship Award. This is a great honor and reflects much more than just being talented at sports, and is awarded for attitude, determination and sportsmanship. In a nice touch, his brother Lucas won it as well, back in 2004-5.

But his special love is rapping. Rapping, for us oldsters, refers to spoken or chanted rhyming lyrics. Wikipedia, the internet source of knowledge tells me that rapping is the primary ingredient of hip hop music, but that it is much older than this; one can find references to it as early as the 16th century in Britain. It denotes quick speech or repartee. African Americans use the word to mean to converse together. Marshall has four published songs on the internet (go to Youtube and type in Marshall Bouton to find them). I listened to one with great pleasure. It's hard to describe listening to rap. The clever use of wordsounds making the rhythm, and then the realization that those words have meaning, combines to provide a surprising grin of delight at some parts and a thoughtful nod of agreement in others. He allowed us to publish part of one of his songs here, but you should really treat yourself to the complete experience by going online to hear them:

I know in life it gets hard
 But you gotta keep your head up pointed at the stars
 Never look back always push forward
 Even if you're off track always push towards
 The goals you set you'll get mad respect



*Picture taken by Dick Sanford,
 Catskill Mountain News*

Even if you fall you'll take off like a jet
 Ive had ups and ive had downs
 But ive had the strength to make my own sounds
 Yeah im not signed havent seen a check
 Up all night just chillin with the best
 The team im with yeah we like the musketeers
 We each have our part been here for years
 We all for one and we one for all
 Take our ladys shoppin buy out the mall
 We all had our dreams and we made it here
 Losin the crowd was our biggest fear
 I always tried my best and handled it good
 Saw me here i knew i would
 If they said no i just laughed
 I knew it would be all in the past
 So when they said no i showed them how
 And its not no just not right now
 So at first nobody believed
 Then i sat down to write and I followed
 my dreams ... yeah.

CHORUS

You need to keep faith through out your life
 Hold your head up high it'll be alright
 Never give up show the haters how
 See all the faces smilin back in the crowd
 Never look back and chase your dream
 Havin fun you and your team
 It'll be hard but you'll succeed
 So everybody get up and follow me

We send best wishes also to our two other 2012 graduates, **Kristin Finch** and **Christy Archibald**. Kristin has not made up her mind as to which of her different interests to follow: working outdoors, continuing flying lessons, or criminal justice. She plans to take time off to review options while she works for Mountain Valley Nursery. Christy could not be reached for comment by the time this issue was sent to the printer, but we'll try to catch up with her to find out her plans in time for the September TTOH. Graduating from high school is a wonderful achievement and also a first step. We wish all our Halcott graduates the very best and may the road ahead lie smooth, open and inviting. **IK**



The Times of the Halcott Methodist Church Spring, 2012

Pattie Kelder, Correspondent

Worship Leaders and Guests

Services will be held at 10:30 a.m. during the summer and fall months. The five churches of the Upper Catskills Larger Parish have recently experienced a staff reduction. As a result of sharing Pastor Adrian Todd with the other churches, we will have an occasional guest preacher in Halcott.

Speaking of guests, **Howard and Daphne Kil-ion** have announced plans to come east for the Bouton reunion. Readers may recall that Daphne is the niece of the late Dorothy Bouton and that Howard works with International Students, Inc. Their Sunday with us will be July 29th. It will be a great opportunity for the community to meet and greet them again.

Halcott Fair: Bake Sale and Time Capsule

Stop by for an array of goodies – something for everyone – at the Halcott Fair. The time capsule (courtesy of Gene Gormley) and its contents will also be on display for you to see. We really encourage everyone to bring pictures and other memorabilia to round out the historical files. Please take a minute to talk to us about your memories of the church or stories told to you by a previous generation.

Spaghetti Supper

Thank you for a very successful Super Salad Supper in May. Next up – a Spaghetti Supper to enjoy in mid-August. Watch for details. As at any of our events, please let us know how we can pray for you.

Congratulations and Thank You

With pleasure, three Janet Kelder Riss Memorial Graduation Awards were presented to MCS graduates Christy Archibald, Marshall Bouton and Kristin Finch. Congratulations and God's blessings to each in the next chapter of the journey.

Some wonderful young artists designed and filled school bags in May for UMCOR. According to aid

workers, the third world recipients really get excited about the pencils. It's their version of technology!

Flowers provided by Todd's Greenhouse are looking pretty perky at the church. Members of the church also planted flower boxes for the Grange Hall. Hope they brighten your day!

Giving: Whom Does It Serve?

Earlier this year, Pastor Adrian led us on a study of a disciple's path. One of the chapters was devoted to financial generosity, a topic often misunderstood and misapplied across the ages. Not surprisingly, then, it was often a topic of Jesus' teachings. He knew that "the love of money [not money itself] is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs." (1 Tim. 6:10)

In Jesus' day, people routinely practiced tithing (giving 10% of one's income) as had been specified in God's law when it was set forth centuries earlier in Numbers and Deuteronomy. For the well-to-do teachers of the law, giving a tithe was no more than a mathematical exercise in fulfilling a legal obligation. This "what a good boy am I" approach was automatic for them. It involved no financial hardship. Neither did such duty require any love. Jesus summed it up this way:

"Beware of the scribes who like to go about in long robes, and to have . . . the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses . . . They will receive the greater condemnation.' And he sat down . . . and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him, and said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living.'" (Mk.

12:38-44 RSV)

Since Jesus realized that “No one can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and mammon [i.e. money;],” (Mt. 6:24), tithing, in and of itself, wasn't the main issue for him. Rather, it was the attitude of the giver's heart that concerned him. And for good reason. God was preparing to give his people the most extravagant gift of all time. Jesus was well aware of this. After all, the gift would require every drop of his own life blood. Time was short. Jesus needed to prepare people to comprehend and accept God's gift of salvation. Nearing the foot of Calvary, Jesus healed and taught practically non-stop. And voila! Some of the people actually “got it” and were overwhelmed with an attitude of gratitude, the natural result of reflecting on any of God's undeserved gifts.

Consider the thankful leper and the woman at the well.

“On the way to Jerusalem (Jesus) . . . was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' When he saw them . . . they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks.” (Lk. 17:11-16 RSV)

“Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well. . . There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. . . Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered

him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. . . I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am he.' . . . the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?' . . . Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony . . .” (Jn. 4:6-39 RSV)

Notice the reaction of the leper (praise and thanksgiving) and that of the woman (sharing her discovery with others). Gratitude invoked a desire, indeed a compulsion, to do something in response. Suddenly they were thinking and functioning beyond the ends of their own noses. They realized that God's gifts of health, forgiveness and salvation should not be grabbed up, taken for granted or hidden for their own exclusive use. They desired to invest them in the well-being of others. Such gratitude begets more gratitude, and the circle of giving widens. For us, as for them, when attention shifts toward awe over the many things that God is doing for us, the acquisition of possessions becomes less important. And so in time, we find ourselves serving God more and focusing on money less.

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