

The Times of Halcott



Autumn 2012
Volume 60!

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GROWING UP IN OUR MOUNTAINS

Linda Kelly Armour

It was a beautiful summer morning and I was just starting out for my part-time child care (we called it babysitting then, even though they weren't babies) job. Every day I rode my pedal bike (no gears, just my pedal power, no handle bar brakes, just back pedaling) the 5+ miles to Pat and Bob Moran's house on Old Route 28 outside of Fleischmanns. It was longer the way I went, through Covesville, but the road down the "gulley" that came out in Fleischmanns by Gale's store was narrow, winding and undesirable, especially if you were a bike meeting a car. Besides, going down the big hill into Covesville was a thrill. You could really get up some steam and speed on a bike. And yes, this was pre-helmet days. Yikes.

Bob worked days, and Pat worked in the phone company as an operator. I took care of their 2 kids, Jimmy and Kelly from around 9-1 for her morning shift. At 50 cents an hour I was happy! Not bad wages at age 14 in 1964. We played outside and inside, weather dependent, and I made a lot of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches that summer.

At the end of Pat's shift, that was the end of my shift. If I caught Mom at the end of her mail carrier route, I would sometimes get a ride home with her, my bike in the back of the Scout. If not, I would pedal home through Covesville, and if I was hot and tired, would stop

at Ezra and Stella Todd's home. Ezra was always willing to serve up a bowl of ice cream and we would chat. Then he or his son Bobby would throw my bike in the back of their pick-up and drive me the rest of the way home. I didn't mind not having to pedal/walk up the big hill outside of Covesville.

I walked into the garage to get my bike. My brother Lynn was outside the garage gassing up the old red Cub tractor. At age 11, his major mode of transportation was the tractor. He would take it anywhere in the valley he wanted/needed to go. Up to Uncle Tom's (Wellington Kittle) or Uncle Eldon's (Eldon Kittle) to visit or work in the hay. Or further up to our grandmother's house (Edith Kelly). It went off road as well, and he could often be seen in Uncle Gilbert's (Gilbert Streeter) fields and pastures next to and behind our house.

Dad had a 500 gallon gas drum that sat above ground next to the garage. Hauling milk to the creamery in Roxbury daily, along with his trucking business, and Mom's 6 day a week mail run, demanded a lot of gas, so he had his own tank. It made it easy and convenient for Lynn to fill the tractor as well. (It was also a good deal a few years later when I got my driver's license).

As I picked up my bike and headed out of the garage I could hear the idle of the tractor. Odd I thought, since Lynn was filling it with gas and it was usually off. Guess he just didn't turn it off this time. Then I heard him yell. As I ex-

ited the garage and looked to my left a HUGE flame was coming from the top front of the tractor, reaching skyward. The tractor was still connected to the 500 gallon gas tank by the hose running from the tank to the tractor. Along with the tractor in flames, the black rubber hose was beginning to burn.

I don't recall Lynn's and my conversation, but we both grabbed onto the bar in the back of the tractor and pulled it back as far as we could, to get it further away from the big gas tank. Then I ran to the house. I told Mom about the fire and



she gave me a box of baking soda. I ran back to the garage and tractor and starting shaking the baking soda on

the hose. Well, I didn't really have to shake it since I was already shaking pretty well. I was quite sure I didn't want to be anywhere near that tank and the fire, but I knew we needed to get the hose fire put out or else...we didn't even want to think about that.

Then I ran back up to the house and told Mom we should call the fire department. Why that didn't occur to us at first I don't know. I guess we might have thought it would just burn itself out, or we'd be able to put it out somehow.

And then we stood back and waited and watched. The rubber hose to the tank melted and dropped off the nozzle. The nozzle was stuck in the tractor, and the black hose lay on the ground, NOT afire. Thank goodness. But flames were still shooting skyward from the tractor. Later a neighbor across the valley said he could see the flames shooting as high as the top of the garage roof. And it's a tall, gambrel roof, well over 20 feet! Finally after what seemed like an eternity, the firemen started to arrive.

Not everyone came in a fire truck. When

the sirens went off for a fire, after finding out the location, firemen would come in their personal cars if they weren't at the station to ride the truck (s). Anyone wanting to help out, even though not a fireman, also showed up. Almost as amazing as the fire, was the turnout for the fire. There were cars parked all along the road for at least a quarter of a mile. The line of parked cars went all the way up to Uncle Gilbert's and Merchant Kelly's house at the intersection of Little and Big Red Kill Roads. Below us cars were parked well past the knoll by my Aunt Helen and Uncle Buck's house. That's the way it was, and likely still is, in a small rural town. Everyone shows up to help when help is needed.

And then there were the fire trucks too. All those fireman... and then... one of the Todds, I think it was Jimmy, walked up to the fire with a tank on his back and squirted it out with a few squirts from his hose... Very much lacking in drama for such an emotional scorcher! But everyone was relieved that no one was injured, and no property was damaged. That is, except for the tractor. And the hose to the gas tank. And one box of baking soda.

The tractor went on to live and run again. Repairs were made and Lynn's mode of transportation was restored. But recall that the four classical elements are air, earth, fire, and water. The tractor had a debut with one of them. It would encounter another. Stay tuned for Part II.

And I'm pretty sure I was late getting to the Moran's that morning.

TOWN HAPPENINGS

GARBAGE:

The Town Board is preparing a local ordinance to govern our small recycling center. As a convenience to Town members, the center accepts cardboard (tied), newspapers and magazines (tied or in paper bags), tin cans, certain plastics (#1, 2, 3 or 5), and glass containers, all separated and placed in the appropriate bins. These are the only items collected at the center. Anything else, dumping of garbage, computers, old grills, couches (??) and

any other item not on the above list is considered an abuse. Most of us are pleased to comply with this arrangement, but there are some who have not gotten the message. The new law will allow the Town to collect fines for abuses. When it is finalized, we will post it on the Town's website and publish it in the *Catskill Mountain News*.

Copies will also be available from our Town Clerk.

YELLOW DOT PROGRAM

Lt. Karl Gonzalez of the Greene County Sheriff's Office presented an important new program to the Halcott Town Board at the August meeting. The Yellow Dot Program, is free and could save your life, informing first responders about your health concerns in an emergency. Participants receive a (yellow, naturally) personal information card and a yellow dot decal. Contact names and numbers, medications being taken, doctor's name and number, medical conditions, allergies – all are listed on the information card and placed in your glove compartment and/or a

plastic bag in your freezer. Then you stick the yellow dot on the most prominent window, entrance to your home or rear driver's side window, to alert first responders that this information card exists, in case of an emergency. You may place

an information card in both your freezer and your vehicle. No one sees it except you and the medics who come to help. You may obtain the form and the dot from Elena DiBenedetto, our Town Clerk, or request it online at www.nysheriffs.org/yellowdot or call the Greene County Sheriff in

Catskill to request the forms. It is a safe and sure insurance policy, free of charge and invaluable in case of disaster.

HOTLINES AVAILABLE

As the Town Board begins the development of our emergency plan, we are learning how our townspeople can be better prepared. For those who have the internet available to them, they can register at www.nyalert.gov to receive (through email and/or telephone, landline and cell) updates on emergencies that are specific to our locality. Red Alert is the Greene County version which sends text messages or automated phone calls to all on their list when there is a threat in our area. To sign up for Red Alert, go to the Greene County website

(DiscoverGreene.com) and you will see a large red box to click on. Because our town is geographically poised be-

Letter to Halcott Landowners:

Dear Friends: You are receiving this newsletter because you own land in Halcott. *The Times of Halcott* is published four times a year and is a reliable way to get the message out about our town and its happenings. It is funded thanks to the Halcott Community Fund.

After our battle with Tropical Storm Irene, we are discovering that effective communication is essential to managing a crisis. We didn't have effective communication here in Halcott on August 28th 2011, and we are currently looking into the options we have to improve this problem. Half of a disaster is the panic of not knowing the procedures or feeling uncertain about what to do. The Town Board, with the help of both the Delaware and Greene County Emergency Services, the Fleischmanns Fire Department and others, is working on an emergency plan that will include information for homeowners on how to prepare for future disruptions. One of our goals is to publish a pamphlet that will contain these guidelines. We also suggest that those who have internet access visit our website www.townofhalcott.org frequently to view updates of events, minutes of meetings, etc. Finally, again for internet users, please consider sending your email address to supervisor@townofhalcott.org to receive the Town's periodic emails, including town board meeting agendas. Life is not always in emergency mode, but good preparation can ease the pain of a crisis. We hope to be better prepared when and if another disaster ravages our town.

Innes Kasanof

tween the two counties, it is recommended that both are subscribed to. Those without internet access can still receive the informational phone calls, but registration happens best on line. These are two non-invasive methods for keeping abreast of

potential emergencies in our area.

BRIDGES

We lost two bridges in Halcott from Irene’s ire, and a third was badly compromised. The County was swift in replacing the two with temporary crossings, and posting the third, (where Hubbard Rd. meets County Rt 3) but now the permanent ones must be built and placed. The Greene County Route 3 bridge near Mead Hollow Rd has a temporary bridge while it is being constructed, but the Elk Creek Rd. crossing has a wide detour that begins behind the Highway Garage and continues across the fields of Chris DiBenedetto. According to Greene County Highway Superintendent Gary Harvey, both permanent bridges will be ready before the first snow flies.

Hubbard Rd. Bridge will be replaced by a large concrete box culvert, sunk the DEC-recommended 2 feet into the stream bed and edged by “wingwalls” on each side. The engineers have designed the structure and bids are being requested from qualified contractors as this is being written. The length of time here will be the casting of the concrete culvert “box.” However, predictions from the experts are that this bridge as well will be in place before winter sets in.

With the setting of the bridges, the recovery from Irene can be called almost “done.” There is one more set of projects that are on the calendar for 2013:

STREAM BANK RECONSTRUCTION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Resource Conservation Service, working through the county Soil and Water Conservation Districts offers a program to help with disaster clean-up called Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP). Funded projects try to remedy the problems that will happen in future “high water events” at sites damaged by the raging torrents, streams that have been forced into



unnatural channels, and valuable streambanks that have been washed away. It has been a real privilege to work with the amazingly knowledgeable men and women who are tasked with healing these streambanks. Halcott has four such sites, three along Greene County Route 3 and one on Turk Hollow Rd. Each site will get its own design, but the most common fix calls for lining the streambank with rocks, each weighing 3000 pounds or more, that are stacked and then “pinned,” which is to say that rods are driven through them to hold them together. Nothing will be done to the land around the streambank, as the program focuses only on the banks themselves, but the result will be a hopefully greater ability for the streams to hold onto the water and channel it safely downhill away from roads and property.

Defensive Driving

Many in Halcott have taken advantage of this enjoyable, informative course that also helps to reduce car insurance costs. The course must be taken every three years and if you took it last in Halcott, your three years are up this autumn. May we suggest the following course offered in Roxbury at the Fire Hall:

Call Instructor: Pat Clarke (607) 326-4158 for more information and to sign up.

Dates: Saturday, October 6th (All Day) 9:00 AM-4:00PM

Tuesday, October 9th, 12:30 PM - 4:00 PM AND (continuation) Wednesday, October 10th, 12:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Costs: \$17 - AARP Member; \$19 - Non Member

Preserving Greene County History One Site at a Time

Jean Bush, Greene County Historical Society

The Greene County Historical Society was established in 1929, and, through the years, has been dedicated to promoting and preserving the history of Greene County. On May 30, 1990, the Historical Register was created to document the County’s structures and sites of historic and architectural significance, and by doing so ad-

vance public awareness, appreciation, and preservation of the County's historic resources. Since that time, over 250 historic homes or sites have been listed on the Register.

With the 2009 publishing of our book "Historic Places in Greene County, NY," which included the 1824 Okon House, it became obvious that we needed more registered sites in the town of Halcott. We hope people will join us in this effort.

The history of this original four-room stone house goes well beyond its style and construction date. It illustrates a sense of place in your town, in Greene County, and beyond. Family migration, farm life, business, and politics are all entwined.

Beyond serving as a homestead, the house was often the hub of local political affairs. Conger Avery was postmaster at West Lexington and served as supervisor in Lexington prior to the formation of Halcott. He also served as supervisor in Halcott. On April 6, 1852, Avery and Benjamin Crosby presided over the first Halcott town meeting, at which Benjamin was elected Justice.

In the early 20th century, Wallace Crosby served as supervisor. In 1871, David Crosby built a school for the district, and he also donated land for the town's first creamery. As most of you probably know, that creamery built in 1889 now serves as your town hall.

After years as a rental property and deterioration, thanks to Michael and Carol Okon in the 1970s, the home of these early settlers was returned to a well-maintained, owner-occupied residence.

We are aware that there are other worthy homes and sites in Halcott that are at least seventy-five years of age. Please help us document history by encouraging property owners to submit applications for entry on the Register. There is a small application fee; however the fee is waived for non-profit groups, which would include your town government applying to register the town hall.

The hurricane in 2011 proved how valuable it is to document history. Some of the sites

on our Register were swept away or badly damaged. We were able and proud to provide texts and pictures from our files submitted years earlier by applicants.

Applications can be obtained at the Vedder Research Library, from any committee member, or by downloading a Word version at <http://www.gchistory.org/historicalregister.html>. Our mailing address is Greene County Historical Register Committee c/o Vedder Research Library, 90 County Route 42, Coxsackie, NY 12051. If you have any further questions you may contact Jean Bush at 518 756-9268 or vealey@mhcable.com.

The Historical Register Committee represents the fourteen towns in Greene County and meets monthly at the Vedder Research Library on the Bronck Museum Grounds in Coxsackie to evaluate applications. At this time, there is no representative from Halcott. We encourage anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the Committee to please contact our Chairman, Ken Mabey at 239-4362 or kmabey@earthlink.net.

FAIR FOURTEEN!

Clear blue skies and a fairly forgiving dip in the mercury from the hottest of hot drought days set the perfect stage for the fourteenth-annual Halcott Summer Fair. Per tradition, a multitude of townspeople stepped early into the choreography of volunteer efforts, led by Jennifer Bouton and Kari Pagnano, the tireless co-chairwomen of the Halcott Community Fund. The season began with planning klatches followed by a growing hum of activity in summertime elfin workshops up and down the valley, turning out fair fare from applesauce cake to yarn goods.

Friday, setup day, had a healthy turnout, with Lee Austin as usual captaining the ranks in a nimble raising of heavy tents and placing of fixtures and furniture, while the dinner team cooked up a storm of activity in the kitchen. Special attention was paid this year to giving each area a distinct identity and unique character—aided immeasurably by Kari's new colorful graphic signage—and trying to create and connect flow from front to back, in-

side to outside, and perimeter to the centers of activity of our small but charmingly diverse “fairgrounds.”

Out front, the left flank of the fair boasted newcomers JoAnn (Kelly) Catsos and her husband, Steve, who kindly ported a portable basket-making studio along with their formidable talents, and gave fascinating demonstrations of those arts throughout the day. Next to them, Camille Vickers and Kari presided over the Attic Treasures table, with its overflowing assemblage of glitter and intrigue; of objects small and large, from super-useful to total whim. Next door to the attic magic was proprietor Judy Patrusky with this year’s crop of gorgeous perennial plants. At the far end, the Neveses’ 1948 Willys pickup truck offered its red bed and fetching combination of muscle and creak to a watermelonade stand hosted by the Community Garden and staffed by garden coordinator Alex Brock and her daughter, Lucy. In between, the red-checked comforts of the Cafe offered shady tables for eating, drinking, resting, people-watching, and visiting. In the center of it all, in the words of Fair Fairy Extraordinaire Innes Kasanof, was “dear, dear Vic Pagano, selling hotdogs and swatting flies ALL DAY. He was most faithful.”

As the day went on, more fair-goers arrived and County Route 3 was lined with cars. Many stopped first at the petting zoo in the front yard of Crystal Farms, another annual tradition erected by the DiBenedetto family (whose cows also provided a backdrop of utter contentment across the stream on the far side of the fair). Stepping through the Grange Hall doors brought visitors into the lovely indoor market that defines the fair—a profusion of local goods, history, art, community participation, and conviviality. Free popcorn was being popped and offered in bags all afternoon by Laura Kasanof. Whoopsey Daisy the Clown was twisting balloons into new life, making smiles (and roses and kittens and other favorite things) with her face-painting skills, and generally dazzling the short-pants set. The soundtrack of great music, courtesy of David Grossman, enlivened the room as people toured through ma-

ple wares by Ronald Morse (who said that his take for the day was the best in fair history for him); knitted goods by Sue Witte and her son Matt from Andes; yarn spinning by Robin White, from the wool of her own alpaca (each yarn color is named after its hairy donor); and miscellaneous treats like tabletop bamboo plants and jars of pickled garlic. Nina Kasanof hosted the gallery of prints and paintings by local artists, and photographer Greg Beechler screened a slide show of dramatic images of Hurricane Irene. Innes, who manned, with her partner-in-everything Tony, the non-edible Halcott signature goods shop (this year featuring hats, T-shirts, thermal cooler bags, and a number of great local books; contact her if there’s something you wish you didn’t miss!) saluted one of the fair’s favorite booths: “Ruth and Patty Kelder’s bake sale managed to fill everyone’s mouth and sticky everyone’s fingers with edible Halcott goodies.”

Outside, behind the Grange, a large tent housed more chatters and shade seekers, and provided a natural perch for partakers of a snack and drink from the adjacent Pub, ably operated by Bill Bernhardt. At mid-afternoon, Heinz and the Hotdogs (made up of me and my husband, Marc; Fleischmanns crooner Nick Lewis; and Big Indian -and-beyond singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Josh Roy Brown) fired up their set of old-time country music. Delilah Bellamy blended fruity smoothies at her stand nearby. At 3 o’clock, a nail-biting crowd assembled on the banks of Vly Creek for Karen Rauter’s Rubber Ducky Race, which went off without a hitch and in a blur of yellow swimmers. (Somebody won by a beak.) For the rest of the afternoon, while the sun continued to shine, the stream and streamside were enjoyed by waders, dippers, Ping-Pong enthusiasts, and picnickers.

Then the dinner bell rang. The expertly executed dinner was another memorable menu from chef Susan Benedetto and her team, including her daughter and son-in-law Katy and James Barber, this time a summer classic of pulled chicken or beef barbecue, baked beans, corn on



the cob, and an array of fresh salads. For dessert: luminous thick, dark pink slices of cold watermelon and (forever famously) misspelled but delicious “Halcot Fair” cake.

Number fourteen was an all-over smashing success—perhaps, as hoped, the best yet for presenting an interesting range of fun and food-stuffs, in a way that was easy and comfortable for all manner of fair lovers and fans of Halcott young and old, local and visiting. It was heart-warming to look around and see four generations of Bouton-Sanfords present, with young sir Landon at the center, dashing in a dapper plaid jumper; three generations of Johnsons; and three generations of DiBenedettos (as well as all four Reynolds siblings), with Claire and Eddie Norwick’s newest addition, beautiful baby girl Carmen; alongside many other longtime Halcott families [Kellys!]and newer ones too . . . a portrait of a town that prizes family, history, and tradition, sharing a full day of activities and communing with friends and beautiful country views.

Many thanks to all the hard-working volunteers and participants. In addition to those mentioned above, a special thanks for the extra-mile efforts of Nancy and Pete Ballard, Nancy Reynolds, Susan and Fred Herzog, Ben Patrusky, Patrick Pagnano, and Elizabeth Bernhardt. Visit the Town of Halcott website for beautiful photos, including a series you shouldn’t miss that I’ll call *The Yellow Balloon*. See you next year! **CBN**

Farm Report

Many of our dear friends and neighbors have asked how our local farms fared during and after last years’ flooding so here’s an update for our readers:

The main issues for farms here in Halcott, once the water receded and the roads were again passable for the milk and feed trucks, were



damages to hay fields and pastures. Grass fields make excellent filters and erosion stoppers, but even they were overwhelmed in some cases by the sheer volume of water, rock, and other debris. Thankfully, those fields that were badly gouged and strewn with debris by the raging waters have been repaired, replanted and cleaned up and fences that were destroyed are now back in place, as good as new. We are extremely fortunate to have such a great network of Cooperative Extension, Watershed and other agricultural agency personnel, as well as wonderful neighbors, who were very quick to respond to the specific needs of each farm affected in so many different ways. All in all, life is back to “pre-flood” mode on Halcott’s farms and, happily, most of Irene and Lee’s damage is just a memory now.

Well, what a difference a year makes! As our gardeners can also attest to, this season has presented very different challenges: heat and dryness. After a warm, early start to spring it seemed the rain pretty well shut off for weeks on end even as temperatures continued to soar. As a result, pastures and other crops (and lawns, and flower beds...) suffered for the lack of moisture. Indeed, a mid-summer walk through our pastures reminded me of my native California as the thirsty grass crunched under foot while the smell of drying forages permeated the warm air. Although we were able to continue moving cattle through the pasture rotation, we were forced not only to give the cows larger than normal sections to graze each time but also graze fields usually set aside for 2nd cutting hay. Furthermore, supplemental hay and baleage needed to be fed as pasture growth dwindled to a near stand-still. Truly a very different set of circumstances from last years’.

Thankfully, prayers for rain were answered and the fields have bounced back quite well. We count our blessings in this especially as we see our farming neighbors in the Midwest continue to endure hot, dry weather that has been devastating to the crops there. We still could use more rain at the time of this

writing but I am amazed at how far just a few showers go toward rejuvenating a dry field making what was yellow and brittle green and lush again so that haying and grazing, though a bit light on quantity at present, can continue. The forgiveness of our Catskill Mountain flora is really something to behold!

In other farm news...

There's a new cow at the Johnson Farm! Christl is the proud owner of "Asa", a registered Brown Swiss cow she purchased at a dispersal sale held near Otego. Christl has long admired the Brown Swiss breed with its docile nature, dairy strength and high protein milk so "Asa" is a special addition to the Johnson's herd. The excitement of having this new cow was compounded when Asa gave birth to a beautiful heifer (female) calf named "Aja" on July 29th. Best wishes to the Johnsons on their growing Brown Swiss herd! ***JD***

Part-time Dog Sitter

Judy Diaz

Three years ago I was introduced to the most adorable little dog in the world, a Shi Tzu named Oreo. His black and white coloring was perfect but it's the little pony tail at the top of his head that made this male get mistaken for a female. When my friend said she had to put him in a kennel while her family went on vacation, I jumped at the opportunity to dog-sit. At the end of the week, I was madly in love with Oreo. His



expressive eyes and gentle demeanor won us over. For the next year, every time they went away, we were Oreo's dog sitter and we couldn't be hap-

pier.

Then, two years ago our friends purchased another Shi Tzu named Harry. When we first met him, he was a ten week old furry ball of vigor. He was half the size of Oreo but tough as nails and has remained that way to this day.

When my friends realized that it's just as easy to love and care for two dogs as one, they always left these precious animals in our care. Even if they weren't on vacation, they dropped them off at least one week a month. We spoil them like parents spoil their grandchildren. They eat chicken and steak and every table scrap they can get by begging.

I'm convinced that these dogs understand every word we say. They sleep in bed with us and have the run of the house. I have a pillow on the couch that sums it all up: "dogs love you, no matter what". The only drawback to this is when they go home to their 'real family', it takes us a few days to adjust to their not being there but we know that it won't be long before we get them again.

Some of our friends wonder why we don't get our own dog but they don't understand that Oreo and Harry are like our own – only part time.

Halcott Community Garden

Fall Harvest Feast

Saturday October 6th, 6-10PM

Town Grange Hall

Our annual potluck dinner with suggested \$7.00 donation at the door.....looks like we'll be having live music again so stay tuned for the line up..

See me, Alex Brock, for details.

Propane Buying Group

Alan Adelson

The Halcott Center Propane Buying Group has accepted new terms with Suburban Propane which for now will keep rates equal to or reduced from last year. All pricing for our group is 75 cents over cost. As of August 14, 2012, that wholesale price was \$2.0331 per gallon. Costs have been rising daily over the past two weeks and will most likely exceed 2.399 by mid-September. However our members can chose to prebuy 250 or more gallons @2.399 or they can be billed at 75 cents over cost. If you use 250 gallons or more a year, you are eligible to lock in the rate at 2.399 but you must sign and return the

contracts that went out around the 1st of August. Our group customers who use less than 250 gallons a year are also on a cost plus 75 cents rate, but with a ceiling price from now through October at \$2.399. After that, if energy prices rise, our non-contract buyers' price can exceed \$2.399.

Suburban offers 35 free gallons to customers who bring in new "automatic delivery" customers. Contact Donna Ward at Suburban in Grand Gorge, 1-800-524-5923 or dward@suburbanenergy.com with any questions.



Kellys, 2012!

Kelly Reunion

Virginia (Ginger) Kelly Jacobs

Thirty-nine descendents of Lemuel and Effie Crosby Kelly met for their annual reunion at the Halcott Grange on Sunday, August 12. The oldest in attendance were Bob Johnson and Doris Kelly. The youngest was Kathryn Kelly, daughter of Keith and Joanne Weiner Kelly, of Inlet, NY. The person who traveled the farthest was Virginia (Ginger) Kelly Jacobs, from the Villages, FL. Anna Guile Kelly, wife of Emerson M. Kelly, has not missed a reunion in 47 years.

The Kellys first began getting together at the Kelly Farm, at the corner of County Rt 3 and Elk Creek Rd in Halcott. Later the reunion was

moved to the Halcott Laundry on Elk Creek Rd, owned by Emerson and Mildred Ballard Kelly, and eventually to the Kelly saphouse flat. This year, due to the ravages of Irene, which did major damage to the Kelly saphouse, the reunion was moved to the Halcott Grange. The family took up a collection to restore the saphouse property so future reunions will be on Kelly land.

HAROLD WEST (con't)

[*Ed. Note: Harold West, who spent much of his life connected to Halcott, died on January 28, 2012. Pam Kelly and Harold's daughter Laurilyn Frasier with the help of Harold himself in a 2009 interview, put together a description of his life. In the summer issue, we had just enough space for half of it. It's a good story and rather than trying to snip it down to size, we publish the remainder of it here below.*]

Harold boarded with his uncle Dave, aunt Helen, cousins Norma, Donald and Wally Todd, while working for them on the Mead farm, located in back of Ward Reynolds' toward the head of the Halcott valley. In sapping season, Harold worked just up the road from the Mead place, on the farm owned by Jim, Deborah and son Bob Johnson. He enjoyed the work and the sweet smell of the sap boiling in the spring time air. He remembered working with a team of horses, one of which he termed "vicious". The stallion, named Prince, not living up to his name, would bite the workers if they weren't careful.

For a while Harold worked for Harley Warfield Brothers Lumber Co., a sawmill in East Branch. His job included starting up the mill and cutting logs. He worked with a team of big beautiful horses (apparently friendlier than Prince).

Harold joined the Marine Corps at the age of 18, in 1942. When I asked which he liked better, the Marine Corps or working at the sawmill, he replied that they were completely different and he

guessed he preferred the sawmill.

When he returned from his service in WWII, his uncle Dave Todd was ill and hospitalized in Margaretville. Harold stayed with the family and helped run the farm for many weeks until Dave's health returned. He also remembers working for his uncle Emerson Kelly, at the Kelly homestead, in sapping season. His pay was \$25 a week. And working for Jim and Deborah Johnson also in sapping season. Harold 'peddled' the syrup, following the milk route. His 1933 Chevy served as the transport vehicle, with the rumble seat full of gallons of the fresh maple syrup. Jim told Harold he wanted \$3 a gallon, anything more than that was considered Harold's profit to keep. Harold usually sold it for \$5 a gallon.

When Mike Morse owned the farm across from the Halcott Grange Hall, there were dances almost every week end. Dave Todd was the main fiddle player in the orchestra (later replaced by Hilton Kelly). Harold and cousin Norma had a lot of fun at the dances. They also enjoyed going to the movies in Fleischmanns, with Harold driving his first car, a 1935 Terraplane - Hudson. He later acquired a 1933 Chevy Roadster with a rumble seat. (Norma - did you ever ride in the rumble seat??)

Harold remembered clearly when U.S. Army Airforce MIA Paul F. Johnson, Roy and Neva's son, made his unexpected arrival home. . Paul called his brother, Garold, from the bus stop in Fleischmanns to come pick him up. The year was 1944.

Harold's wife, Mable, said when they were going to get married, Harold didn't have a suit to wear. So, while peddling the fine maple syrup in the town of Catskill one day, he traded two gallons for a suit. What a sweet deal! Maybe it was good luck, because Harold and Mabel were married for over 65 years!

Harold shared some memories of his WWII service.
November 4, 1942: Harold enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in Albany, NY a resident of Halcott Center.
November 11, 1942 – January 1943 he was sta-

tioned at Camp LeJeune, NC.

March 1943 he contracted spotted fever and was in the Camp LeJeune hospital for three weeks.

June 1943 he was in Camp Pendleton, CA and shipped out Oceanside on an LST.

November 1943 they were caught in a typhoon and almost capsized – one man killed, who Harold knew well. After three days, a destroyer came back and stayed with them until they reached the Marshall Islands, the Island of Roi Namur.

December 1943 was their first battle and it lasted 2 days. He was in the thick of much action. He always said he must have had an angel on his shoulder, because many times he was nearly hit or the soldier that replaced his position was hit.

January – May 1944: Maui, Hawaiian Islands: Largest convoy ever assembled. He was on LST 121. June 1944: (Another) Pearl Harbor, 12 ships tied up side by side in two lines, six exploded; he was in the second ship in the second line and his did not explode, Thank God.

February – March 1945: Iwo Jima: Harold was unloading supplies on the docks, when the flag was raised on Mt. Surabachi. The flag for the famous picture was a new flag taken from our ship. Many men carried flags with them. The first flag was one a soldier was carrying on him and it was quite tattered.

He then went to Guam to be retrained to go to Japan, but didn't make it as the war ended August 1945. Guam to California took five days. They were quarantined in camp until shipped home by train to Great Lakes Naval Base and discharged on December 5, 1945. When they were on Iwo Jima they found a homeless dog and brought him back to the States but authorities would not allow the dog into California, so he stayed on board with the Navy Boys. They called him Surabachi.

Years after his return home from the war, he learned the blood type stated on his dog tags was incorrect! Lucky for him he went through the fighting unscathed, and not needing a transfusion. He didn't know how to swim, but was lucky enough to not need to. One landing from sea to land, he was in water up to his neck.





The Times of the Halcott Methodist Church Autumn, 2012

Pattie Kelder, Correspondent

Good Eats – Mark Your Calendars!

Thank you to all who baked or bought goodies at the Halcott Fair. Please plan to get together with your neighbors again soon at the Grange Hall for supper. Watch the newspaper for ads to confirm these dates. Spaghetti Supper – Saturday, September 15, 2012
Crock Pot Supper – Saturday, October 13, 2012
Both start at 5PM at the Grange Hall with take outs at 4:30PM. Tickets are available in advance and at the door. The cost is \$7.00. Children under 5 eat free.

Then, before we know it, will be the Election Day Bake Sale on Tuesday, November 6th. Can't you almost smell the aroma of something delectable coming from the oven on a chilly fall day?

Kids Helping Kids – Again!

Somewhere between the end of October and the middle of November, the children in and around Halcott will be invited to shop and fill Christmas shoe boxes for children in other parts of the world. Adult help with shopping, packing and funding is always appreciated. It is interesting to see what delights the hearts of children who have very limited means and much less technology than most of us. Would you believe that *pencils* are especially popular and bring forth some of the loudest cheers?

Christmas Is Coming . . .

Right around the corner of November is the Community Christmas Program at the Grange Hall. The first Saturday of December is on December 1st this year! The program will start *promptly* at 7:30 and not run too late. Holiday treats and juice for the refreshment table will be needed.

It is amazing how many neighbors and former residents work behind the scenes on this event. Both the preparation and the night itself feel a bit like "old home week". In the hectic pace of today's soci-

ety, we are blessed to still have this century-old tradition of gathering as a community to celebrate Christmas together. There is always something for all ages. Come early for a good seat.

Providence Trumps Coincidence Every Time

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;

He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm."

William Cowper, 18th century (references Jesus walking on water in Mt. 14:22-33)

One fall or spring at the beginning of my career, while teaching in the Fleischmanns Building, I attended a conference for educators in Sullivan County.

It was necessary to drive to the Margaretville Building, pick up the school car and backtrack through Fleischmanns at an early hour, then reverse the procedure at the end of a long day. I grumbled at the extra driving time, but I didn't get to make the rules. The shadows were long when I pulled into Fleischmanns after exchanging vehicles in Margaretville that afternoon. While driving from the lower entrance on Depot Street on up Main Street to Lake Street, I was looking forward to a hot meal and some shut eye.

Now, my sister was living at home then, too, commuting to work at the hospital in Margaretville. As things happened, she and another RN were on the road that same day to attend a CPR training event near Kingston. No need for them to start their day in Margaretville; they simply carpooled from Fleischmanns.

Back then, nurses were not routinely trained in CPR. Their instructor resented the presence of these professionals in his class. From the start, he went out of his way to be hard on them,

demeaning them and demanding a higher standard of performance from them than from the EMTs. Never mind that my sister was asthmatic and her friend was eight or nine months pregnant. They were on their knees on the floor resuscitating “Annie” repeatedly until their timing was flawless and Annie was “breathing” without a hitch. They, as well as their classmates, expressed feelings of discomfort with the situation, but the instructor was unrelenting. Proper inflation could take until doomsday as far as he was concerned.

The shadows were long when the nurses turned into the upper entrance of Fleischmanns at the foot of Highmount. A startling scene awaited them at the Emory Brook. Moments earlier, domestic violence had erupted in a shootout at the upper end of Main Street. The RNs arrived to find two men unconscious from their wounds – a rookie police officer and a shooter. Fresh from CPR training, they went into immediate lifesaving action while awaiting the ambulance.

All these years later, I still marvel at how God was involved in the events of that day. Had I been driving my own car, I would have turned into the upper end of Fleischmanns just as bullets were whizzing around. I would have been of no earthly

use to the injured and might even have been hurt myself. Had the CPR instructor been less exacting, the nurses might not have succeeded in sustaining the men until more help arrived, or they might have passed through the area before the shooting occurred.

Though the end (precision performance) did not justify the means (classroom intimidation), God was working on an umbrella plan the whole time. He was busy equipping and assembling a team that could mitigate the decision the shooter would make later in the day. He was arranging a timetable that would minimize collateral damage to passers-by. There was unmistakable evidence that “in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

Once in awhile, when I am inconvenienced in some way, it will still occur to me to wonder if the situation at hand might be part of a more pressing sequence of events. It’s a little like stepping out of my own moccasins and trying on another point of view.

