

# THE TIMES OF Halcott

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## No-Account Tree No More: Scion Grafting with Paul Steinfeld

My surgery instructor Paul Steinfeld and I were a little late in the season for our task, but we had a very good reason. Our last adventure entailed pruning my ancient apple tree in preparation for the grafting of quality scions from one of Paul's trees. The grafting process is akin to a low-tech organ, or appendage, transplant, and is optimally completed between the middle of March and the middle of April, but my teacher had a very joyful reason for being absent from Halcott Center during that period. Paul's first great-grandson, named Gilead in honor of Paul and Lillian's tree farm, was born on April 8, 2003, in Jerusalem. The happy great-grandparents had recently returned from a long trip to witness Gilead Aviezri's bris and to spend time with the newest member of their family. Obviously, my apple tree and I were glad to wait.

"We're very late in the season, we're trying our luck, but it won't hurt to give it a shot," Paul said. (I appreciated his attitude — we writ-

ers are used to coexisting with the demon procrastination, and I am quite cozy with the phrase "better late than never.") "The vigor of the blossoms is a good indication of the health of the tree," began Paul, and we both agreed that my tree was looking good after last year's pruning, full of fragrant, white blossoms. I, however, was not quite prepared for the fate of many of those fulsome branches.

"You are going to have a rehabilitated new tree," Paul said, gazing up at our patient. I was quite proud of how healthy and robust the apple tree looked, but Paul pointed out the sad truth. "Did you ever taste the apples from this tree?" he asked. "This is a no-account tree." Pretty flowers notwithstanding, I had to agree, and we got down to work.

"All of the blossoms don't come out at once. A little bit of elevation makes a huge difference," Paul said, arriving upon his chosen grafting site. It was a branch about two inches in diameter that led to many smaller. "Cut here," Paul instructed. I stood there, mouth agape. "Take a hand pruning saw and, to prevent the

bark from ripping from the weight of the branch, do an undercut first,” continued the surgeon, impassive. I winced upon the first cut that dropped the beautiful branches to the ground, but, fortunately, it soon got easier.

“You have to look towards the future when deciding where to graft,” instructed Paul in his lyrical way, and once again I was struck by the relationship between tree stewardship and living a conscious life. “You have to visualize the tree of the future — its height, its care. You don’t want branches that reach too high, you’ll need to be able to do your pruning and harvesting easily. Ideally, you’d cover the four points of the compass — north, south, east, west — when you are choosing branches for your scions,” Paul continued. “A branch with a bend is not ideal—you tend to get heavy knots, which restrict the circulation of the sap.” It turned out that our patient only had good sites for grafting at three points of the compass, a fact Paul greeted with characteristic equanimity: “You can’t always have everything ideal.” Thus I repeated my amputation operation — with a very sharp saw, of course — two more times.

Paul had brought me tiny Northern Spy branches from one of his best fruit trees. Only last year’s growth can be used for grafting, and Paul showed me how to tell: “You look for a branch that is uniform in color with only one terminal bud, the bud at the end of the branch. It must be last year’s growth because that is where the life of the tree is. We took it off the parent tree and now we’re putting it on a new parent tree.” Sort of like flora adoption, I noted, and hoped that these scions would be very happy with their new family.

Paul had decided to place two scions in each graft to improve our late-in-the-season odds of survival. The microsurgery — relatively speaking — came next. “Look on the



parent tree for a spot that is as smooth as possible, and locate the cambium layer,” instructed Paul. (Avid Times of Halcott readers may recall that this is

the whitish or light-green layer directly under the bark — this is the live part of any tree, the portion that its lifeblood flows through.) “Then you take this, a splitting tool,” a handheld metal object with a sharp edge and a surface for hammering it in, “and choose a slightly-off-horizontal line with visible cambium layers at both ends.” I hammered, not much happened, so we switched to a knife. “Hammer it in to a depth of about an inch, so that we can later pry it open with a screwdriver,” instructed Paul.

Cut made, flat-head screwdriver inserted, we were ready to prepare the adoptees. “Choose scions with tight buds, they’re more likely to take, then you take pruning shears and, counting down three or four buds from the terminal-end-bud, make a fresh cut in the end of your scion,” said Paul, pulling the small branches from his shirt pocket. After the trim was made, we ended up with a tiny branch only about four inches in length. “Now, you take a very sharp knife, said Paul, handing me his Swiss Army pen knife, “and you make a cut about an inch in length from the bottom of the scion. Cut from the top down, removing only the top layer of bark, and exposing the cambium layer of the scion. Now repeat the process on the other side of the scion, making

sure that you don't cut too deeply." We prepared two such baby branches.

Now we were ready for the exciting mother-and-child union. "Wiggle the screwdriver in to open up the cut," said Paul. "Now, place the scions as close as you can to the cambium layer of the parent tree, and place them in at slight angle so that your chances of a connection between the tree and the scions is optimized. Then you pull our your lever — the screwdriver — and your scions are held in place." We ended up with a cut-off branch with two little branches sticking out of it, looking like funny antennae. We repeated this process at our other two compass points and then applied the bandages. To protect the wounds that we had just inflicted upon the tree, we needed to seal them. In the good old days, Paul told me, one would use pruning wax to do the job, but it's a product that's getting harder and harder to find. Technology has led us, of course, to a product in a gas-propelled pruning sealer in a can. "Spray it on the grafting sites, ensuring that all cuts and splits are completely covered," instructed Paul. I doused the grafts in the black, tarlike gunk — believe me, pruning sealer in your hair is no fun — and then stood back to admire our work.

Branches and blossoms littered the ground, ugly black stumps where they once were. However, Paul and I had taken a chance towards improving the future. He told me that he'd had scions that had grown up to two feet in the very first year, and that, if they took, I could expect to have large, juicy apples in about three years. I hope that little Gilead will be in Halcott Cen-

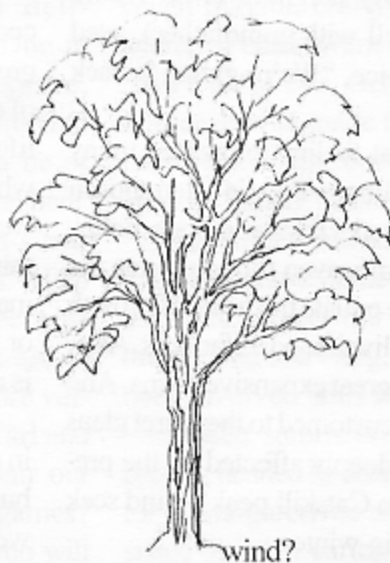
ter that fall, and will help us enjoy those delicious apples. *Laura Vogel.*

### A Favorite Tree, A Place in Time

Trees have a way of taking root in your heart. I've been lucky to live in two Catskill houses that were photographed at the cusp of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To me, this is a unique gift because I can read in those photos about the trees that grew there. Since few of them still stand, they're like maps of another time and connect me to the land's past. I stand in the yard, behind the house or across the road with the old photos and try to picture what it was like back then. Halcott looks more beautiful to me than I can imagine, especially the narrow roads.

The few trees that do still stand are a timeline of the seasons that came and went. I try to imagine who planted them. Was the

idea born on an impulse in late April when everything's new or was it a pledge made during the long winter night when just the thought of a fresh tree provides hope in the dark days? Was it a conscious act or did the seed simply drop where it was and settle in just right? Was it the



Everyone likes planting trees. After returning home from college, I found myself helping my grandfather stack a pile of wood that

was once a towering spruce living in our front yard. The tree was cut, having grown too big for its space, too close to the power lines. I decided to replant the spot with a young fir chosen to serve also as a Christmas tree inside the house for a few days. This controversial plan was hotly contested by grandfather, mostly I think because the winters in his memory were somehow colder than today. I went ahead with my plan, without his blessing, but with plenty of his attention. The fir tree survived, even though I vowed to replace it before he returned from Florida if it hadn't.

Then I moved to my first Catskill home in Pine Hill, once called Elm Tree Cottage. In my old photo, all the land around the house was cleared up to a railroad bed on a short ridge. When I first saw this photo, the naked hill astonished me since I didn't yet know how to judge the age of the woods around me. My neighbor (who would have gotten along well with grandfather), used to say in a crackly voice, "We're giving it back to the Indians!"

I've heard that feeling expressed many times by Halcott neighbors. People often mourn the loss of unobstructed views and open fields. It's not surprising to me, even though I love the deep forest too. Some equate the years of growth with their diminished livelihood as farmers. Also, hotels no longer need great expansive lawns. And even as I've grown accustomed to the secret glens around me, I'm still deeply affected by the precious vistas on certain Catskill peaks – and seek them out, especially in winter.

Maybe we need the drama of contrast. Or maybe there's an essential human need to ex-

perience open space when you live in a place that's full of mysterious cloves and mossy hollows. Though it could also be this: looking down from the top of a mountain or standing at the edge of a wide green field, we somehow feel in control of all that's uncontrollable.

At my house, a lovely full grown Eastern cedar grew close to the bedroom window. Maybe planted about 50 years ago, about the time the Johnsons started their new lives at this farm. The cedar gave us a full green view from indoors, its pendulous boughs reaching toward us in the house. I often watched a pair of cardinals who made regular visits there, along with a lot of other birds attracted to the marsh across the road. During the hot days of summer, the cedar gave shade to our old dog during his last tired days. It was a presence, that tree, even when we weren't thinking of it.

A heavy November wind snapped that cedar one night, and as we saw it on the ground, we thought about all it gave. The chore of clearing its brush gave a last note to its own life as its familiar sweet resin filled the air. So what is it about these trees? Planting them, we attempt a design for nature. Or gamble that things just might turn out okay. A tree I plant may grow tall and live a hundred years or more or like the lost cedar, remind me that chance is nature too, and the plan can always change.

I can imagine a night sometime soon in early summer when we'll sit by the fire pit, burn the cedar logs and talk about all the things we like about our life in Halcott. We can talk about these trees from over the years like the great pets or friends that are gone now too.

How can they be replaced? They can't, but I'm thinking about what to plant for the cardinals, who I sometimes still see perched on the cedar stump looking for clues. *KR*

### COME TO THE FAIR

On July 26<sup>th</sup> from 12 to 9, we'll be celebrating the FIFTH annual Halcott Fair at the Town Grange Hall. Please come. And please help! Here is a list of the different areas where we need your input, along with phone numbers of the chairpeople.

We need donations of any old books

you have finished reading or are never going to get to. We also would like attic treasures of quality. How can we say this delicately? Due to limited space, we are forced to

accept only those treasures that might be of value to others. Please use your discretion here. For drop-offs, call our Attic Treasures Chair Kari Pagnano at 254-5744 on weekends. Help us set up the Grange the day before. Lee Austin and Nancy Reynolds (254-5924) are in charge of set-up and can always use more volunteers. Help us prepare the dinner. Karl and Bertha VonHassel (254-4340) will chair our dinner committee again. Help with games? Please call Bob Axelrod (254-6329) who will head up the "Midway Committee." If you have any crafts to donate, Gloria German (254-5515)



is our Crafts Chairman. Help with plant donations. Contact Chairs Judy Patrusky (254-5275) or Innes Kasanof (254-9920). This year, for the first time, there will be a \$5.00 admission for adults over 15 to Hilton and Stella's square dancing that begins at 6pm right after dinner. Kids are free!

As you can see, this is a big venture, not only a chance to make some money for the Halcott Community Fund but also a perfect opportunity to spend some time with neighbors who we keep meaning to spend time with but are always too busy to do so! See you at the fair. *IK*

### CAT TALES

Cats, cats, everywhere! At least that's what it seems around our place. Go in the house, four rather pampered felines will vie for attention and a spot on someone's lap. In the barn, seven playful, crafty hunters are a constant source of entertainment. So yes, I guess we do have a lot of cats. Originally we had only two housecats who made the move east with us almost 15 years ago but since then we have managed to "inherit" many others.

Although a few of our cats were given to us, most have come from a terrific project our children, Elena and Greg, have been involved with for the past three summers. This project, headed by Joan Victor of Margaretville and assisted by other caring individuals, brings homeless kittens to our farm for some



TLC until they are ready to be adopted out to suitable homes. The process of taking these scared, rather wild kittens that have had no to little (or unfortunately only negative) prior contact with humans takes anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. This time spent nurturing the kittens is a great experience for humans and felines alike.

Usually, the kittens come in groups of 3-4. At first, they go into a large crate so they can safely get used to their new surroundings. The crate is in our barn where we spend a lot of time anyway and where there is always something happening. This way the kittens receive as much attention as possible. For a few days we just feed the kittens and talk to them until they calm down a bit. Little by little we let them smell our hands and get to know us until they will trust us enough to pet them. Eventually, we try to hold them (sometimes gloves are needed with some of this in the beginning) and maybe even let them wander a bit. The goal is to have the kittens as gentle as possible before they go to their new homes; no kitten leaves until it is ready.

Happily, all of the kittens fostered here have found permanent homes. With careful handling and patience, most kittens become as friendly as any regular housecat. Last year, however, we had a particularly tough group of three kittens that had been abused so were understandably extra-leery of people. Additional time and gentle care allowed one of these kittens to find a new home but we ended up keeping the others. Although they are super barn cats those two kittens never lost that "edge" enough to make suitable pets for someone else.

This project has been a wonderful learn-

ing experience for our entire family. As you might imagine, it is both interesting and rewarding to watch these scared little creatures slowly relax and develop their true personalities. Also enjoyable is watching people come pick out their new pet and knowing that kitten is going to a loving home. Anyone looking for a kitten is invited to inquire here, particularly during the summer months when Elena and Greg are likely working with a batch.

One final note on a similar topic, if I may, even though I doubt this has to do with our readers. A common occurrence on many farms, the Johnson and ours included, is having unwanted pets dumped off at the barn. Well-meaning but misguided people must figure that a farm is a good place to leave an animal because there will be plenty of food and room available. While that may be true, please remember that someone else's responsibility becomes the farmer's burden when the animal they just dropped off inevitably needs shots or other veterinary care, doesn't get along with the farmer's own pets, or creates problems with livestock on the farm. Please encourage everyone to practice responsible pet ownership. *JD*

#### **ABOUT US:**

The number of senior citizens living in Halcott is increasing and increasing at a faster rate than the rest of the county; the population in 2000 was 193 people, up 2.1% since 1990; the number of households has increased 9.1% and the number of houses increased 9.5% (from 263 to 288 dwellings); the town has a high percentage of seasonal homes;

and income has increased. While the unemployment rate is down substantially in Halcott, the number of people on retirement income has increased 19%, and the number of people living below the poverty level has increased from 13 people in 1990 to 44 people in 2000.

Want to know more? Please join us for a **presentation and a public hearing of the draft Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Halcott on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am at the Town Grange Hall.** Copies of the draft will be available on June 2<sup>nd</sup> from Chairman Pete Ballard, 254-4141, Town Clerk Ruth Kelder, 254-5589; and on the web at [www.townofhalcott.com](http://www.townofhalcott.com) *IK*

### *Soccer's Suz Sees Stars*

Kane and Suzanna DiBenedetto heartily thank friends and family who purchased chances on the trip for two to Holland, with special thanks to Scott and Bonnie Moroff. The European soccer trip was a huge success - educational, highly fun, and "awesome". The weather cooperated, the soccer was challenging, and opportunities for socializing abounded [Ed. Note: that's a very enigmatic comment, Ms. Mom]. Despite a blow to Suzanna's head towards the end of the games, resulting in a concussion, our Section IV girls' teams placed 1st and 5th in the European competition of 16 teams! Suzanna's team, in addition to their 5th place finish, also received the "Good Sportsmanship" award from the game officials. Kane's team faltered early on; a result of no practice time before the competitions, but performed well during the second day to receive a 7th place award. Kane also received an invitation to tour 5 more countries in July and Au-



gust as a goal keeper with the National Soccer Academy. More to follow.... *PD*

### **GUIDE HELPS NEW YORK LAND-OWNERS PROTECT LAND, SAVE MONEY**

Farming is crucial to New York's economy and way of life, yet the state loses over 26,000 acres of its best agricultural land each year. To help curb this loss of land, and to help landowners identify options, the American Farmland Trust has developed a new tool, The New York Agricultural Landowner Guide to Tax, Conservation and Management Programs. "Many landowners are not aware of

the statewide and federal programs available to help them conserve their land, cut tax expenses and improve environmental stewardship," said AFT Northeast Director, Jerry Cosgrove. "American Farmland Trust's new guide identifies these programs and walks landowners through the initial participation process."

The guide summarizes strategies for reducing tax burdens on agricultural landowners and provides techniques for keeping land in farming and limiting development pressure. It also offers advice on how to keep the land healthy with resources on incentive-based programs for conserving wetlands, wildlife habitat, soil and water and other natural resources. A resource guide at the end of the publication directs users to 17 state, federal and private organizations that are also available to assist landowners.

The American Farmland Trust is a private, nonprofit farmland conservation organization, founded in 1980 to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. AFT's Northeast Regional Office is located at 6 Franklin Square, Suite E, in Saratoga Springs, NY, 12866. Its action-oriented programs include public education, technical assistance in policy development and demonstration farmland protection projects. To obtain a free copy of the Guide, visit AFT's web site at <http://www.farmland.org> > <http://www.farmland.org> or contact Kirsten Ferguson at (518) 581-0078 ext. 205. **KR**

### *Doing the Wave in Halcott*

Waving in Halcott is the greeting of choice. And the greeting of necessity, too,

come to think of it. Waving fits the lifestyle of folks on the go, constantly having to travel in and out of the valley to accomplish daily chores. Most meetings occur as two



cars approach each other or as one car passes a bystander. A nod is

difficult to discern at such speeds; leaves you wondering whether that was a sneeze, a grimace, or what? And there's simply no time for words exchanged. Yes, the wave is a country thing. It is brief, friendly, reassuring. It says, "Hey, neighbor, how about this beastly cold?" Or just as happily, "How about this lovely spring day?" A wave acknowledges our mutual busy lifestyle in its brevity. No strings attached to a wave!

I first came to Halcott from a large city environment and to meet someone I knew during the day was unusual. What a sense of comradeship to find a friend on the road; I'd toot the horn, flash the lights, grin and carry on big time to celebrate this special event. But gradually, I began to realize that one of the bonuses of living in a small town is that you know everybody. Tooting horns and all that became a bit tiresome. I fell to just waving. And I began to notice that waving is really a most civilized greeting, capable of endless variation and infinite expression. My post-city wave tended to be a simple flapping of



the hand. But I soon learned of other choices. There is the steering-wheel-grip-one-finger-lift wave. A variant of this is the steering-wheel-grip-two-fingers-lift. Three and four finger users also exist. Then there is an open hand extended with palm outwards held steady towards the windshield. In other types, the hand waggles nicely. If the weather is warm and the driver's window open, there is the full arm extension with open hand at the end.

Certain waves belong to certain people. Sometimes if I don't catch a good glimpse of the face, but do see the wave, I know exactly who it is. The Johnson family members drive their tractors to and from fields past my house every haying season. The different waves perfectly identify the driver. Unfortunately, by the time I've re-acquainted myself with who waves how, the summer's over again. Of course, a tractor wave is totally different from a wave from a car.

My next dilemma was when to wave. I started memorizing license plates so that I could wave if I knew the oncoming driver. When I was mistaken about the person I waved to, I felt like taking back the wave. (I'm not sure how I proposed to do that). When passing someone who waved to me and I didn't notice until too late, I felt bad enough to turn around and go back to apologize. How silly! Real country people wave at everyone. Or at no one, depending on their mood. Waving is as smooth as a smile and much easier to see. *IK*

### Letters

I enjoyed your last Times – a correction: on

page 8 in the letter from Arlene Needleman – Richard Ball's grandparents were Jean and Katherine (VanValkenburgh) DeMott. I think Arlene spoke with Richard and telephone conversations can be confusing. The Jessie was no doubt a reference to Richard's great grandmother (mother of Jean) Jessie DeMott Scudder. Good luck with your efforts, Sincerely,  
*Mary (DeMott) Ball,*  
*mother of Richard.*



“Cold, wet May,  
barn full of hay.”  
W.D. Griffin

### PASSAGES

Congratulations to our Halcott high school graduates — **Samantha German, Kane DiBenedetto,** and **Carrie Asher!** Although not technically from Halcott, **Carrie Asher** has been very active in our community through the church, Sunday School, and Grange events, and so we've adopted her as our own. Carrie has a real interest in our environment and would like to work towards its protection, and to that end, plans to attend SUNY Cortland in the fall and will major in Health Science. Alright, Carrie!

**Kane DiBenedetto** is registered to begin the fall semester at the University of Southern Maine. He will enter with an undeclared major and will be the first-string goal keeper for USM's men's soccer team. Go, Kane!

**Sam German** has been accepted at several colleges, but has not yet determined which she

will attend. Way to go, Sam! *PD*

### **George Crosby, 1916-2003, Halcott Native Son**

This spring we lost a colorful old-timer, born and bred in Halcott. George was the child of Wallace and Abby Crosby and lived in the stone house on the main road of Halcott that is Mike and Carol Okon's today. He started school with Ward Reynolds at District #3, the schoolhouse on Elk Creek Road, and they went on to high school in Fleischmanns. Ward and George together with Winton Streeter, brother to Virgil, Bob Morse, and Russell Morrison were all in the 4-H Club. They learned how to raise Jersey calves and build furniture. They used to take their calves to compete in the Greene County Fair, held in Cairo, and then on to the New York State Fair in Syracuse if they won at the county level. W.D. Griffin or Willie Griffin would take them in a truck and they would spend the nights in tents close to the calves.

George worked in the creamery with Russell Morrison after school and in the spring would boil sap with Ward. Illicit wine and cigarettes seemed to have accompanied the sapping, and often the arch, forgotten, would catch on fire.

After graduation, George started a feed business with his brother Louis in the first floor of the house where he lived until his death, on the corner of County Route 1 and Route 3. Before then, it had been an ice cream parlour run by Marion Morse, as well as the Halcott Post Office. The feed business grew bigger and bigger and finally they moved the store to Arkville.

When he was 35, delivering feed in Roxbury, he was involved in a serious accident with an oncoming train. Apparently, George was late getting home for milking and had tried unsuccessfully to beat the train across the tracks. Ward remembers giving blood for George. He recovered but lost a lung because of it. When the farmers began to go out of business, George changed the store to machinery.

Ward says that George only had one sweetheart all his life and that was Hazel, who eventually became his wife. He remembers a night when George, Hazel, Ward and Helen Lasher all drove to Saratoga for a double date when they were teenagers. They didn't have much money and after dinner, they didn't have ANY money and no gas. So coming home, they would stop at every gas station and drain the gas tank hose. "We got home, but it was a wonder."

George touched lives. He spent many years as a Halcott Town Councilman and at one time was the major shareholder in the Roxbury Bank. He was a wily businessman with a good sense of humor. Dennis Bouton, who worked at Crosby's Farm Store for 21 years, says that the most important thing about George was that he loved what he did. He just loved what he did. Who could ask for anything more? *Ward Reynolds as told to Innes Kasanof*





# ***THE TIMES OF THE HALCOTT METHODIST CHURCH\****

***PATTIE KELDER, CORRESPONDENT***

It hardly seems possible, but Pastor Charlie Gockel and family will be moving at the end of June. Fresh challenges in ministry await, but Charlie, Tracy, and Jacob, Gabrielle, Naomi, Abigail, Lydia and Caleb will all be missed. We pray God's blessing upon them.

As we bid good-bye to one, we say hello to another. Pastor Bill Hawes and his wife, Kay, will begin serving the Roxbury and Halcott Churches in July. He has a background in music education including teaching, directing, and playing the church organ. Currently he is pastoring two churches near Holmes, New York. We hope they feel equally at home here in the Catskills.

In other Parish news, Pastor Joon and Sunny Lee (Margaretville and Fleischmanns) became the parents of a baby boy, Nathan, on May 9th.

Here at home lots is being planned: a work bee, a farewell event, a welcoming reception,

a Sunday School field trip, a bake sale at the

Halcott Fair, Vacation Bible School and more. The Sunday School is rehearsing skits adapted from the book, *What Would Jesus Do?* to share during the church service on Father's Day. Meanwhile, the children are busy assembling health and school kits to accompany the "Hope For The Children Of Africa" offering — a nationwide appeal sponsored by United Methodist Bishops.

Vacation Bible School will be a weekend event at the Fleischmanns UMC, with lunch served. It will be held from 9:00-1:00 on Saturday, August 9th and from 9:00-1:30 on Sunday, August 10th. Visitors are welcome, and helpers are needed.

The tulips in front of the church outdid themselves this year - ten lovely red blooms,

*\*The Times of Halcott makes this space available for items of community interest from the Halcott United Methodist Church.*

all on the north side of the church steps. **Of course** there is some history to this annual pattern of bloom. It began some years ago when church leaders consulted Paul Steinfeld for advice on landscaping with Biblical varieties. He told us that the red tulip is North America's equivalent to the Rose of Sharon. That year the Sunday School planted red tulips. They were told how Mike Morse had kept them in cold storage in order to grow them in Florida. They were not told that I have a black thumb when it comes to tulips. Instead, we said a prayer over them. Donald and Shirley Bouton's cat took up sentinel duty on the top step and I breathed a little easier. The follow-



ing week we found the bitten corms strewn atop the fresh earth. Chipmunks! So much for growing tulips.

Fast forward a few years. Another Sunday School class, aware of past failure, decided to try again. We prayed harder this time, before the children ran off to play. As I tidied up, I realized that Marshall Bouton, age 4 or 5, was patiently replacing the sticks and leaves I was removing! Curious, I asked him what he was doing. "I'm marking them so God knows where to find them, he said."

As you might guess, the tulips Marshall planted are on the north side of the church, where they continue to outperform those planted on the south side.

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